

## PRELIM 2

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**Uganda: UNELTA** (Uganda National English Language Teachers' Association) with **ITTC** (International Teaching and Training Centre) the sister school of **BEET** (Bournemouth English Exams and Testing)

August 2022

# Project background

Partnership overview		
<b>Course overview</b>	<b>ETA partner</b>	UNELTA, the Uganda National English Language Teachers' Association.
	<b>UKI partner</b>	ITTC (International Teaching and Training Centre) the sister school of BEET (Bournemouth English Exams and Testing).
	<b>Course length</b>	8 weeks, 16 live lessons, 1 week break in the middle.
	<b>Number of groups/cohorts</b>	1, divided into 2 groups taught simultaneously.
<b>Participant profile</b>	<b>Total number of CPs</b>	45
	<b>Language level(s)</b>	C1, C2
	<b>CPs' teaching context</b>	Extremely varied. Cps mostly secondary teachers, some state institutions and a few from private schools and universities. Ages taught between 5-year olds and adults. Class sizes from 15 to 200. Some had access to many resources: books, photocopiers, interactive whiteboards, video, enough data, good WIFI and connectivity. Some from rural contexts with only benches, tables, and a large chalk board.
<b>Mode of delivery</b>	<b>Synchronous platforms used</b>	Zoom and WhatsApp, Google Drive
	<b>Synchronous session length</b>	60 minutes
	<b>Synchronous session frequency</b>	Twice a week
	<b>Asynchronous workload</b>	Read session notes, experiment with techniques and report back, read articles, watch videos. An offer of 2 hours weekly.
<b>Course content</b>	<b>Language development focus</b>	None. Not required.
	<b>Methodology focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classroom and behaviour management, including introducing Teach like a Champion techniques. Strategies for getting to know learner needs and collecting data.</li> <li>Motivation for teachers and students, the positive benefits of mindfulness.</li> <li>Sharing self-limiting beliefs.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health issues and depression in the context of COVID lockdown.</li> <li>• How to differentiate materials.</li> <li>• Inductive approaches including guided discovery and how to create worksheets.</li> <li>• Exploiting traditional folk tales for language teaching.</li> <li>• Introduction to dictogloss and its use with large classes.</li> <li>• Low resource games for language learning.</li> <li>• C007A competency based education.</li> </ul> <p>For each session documents were put on the Google Drive in Word and PDF formats. Copies of session slides in PowerPoint were available and each Zoom lesson was recorded and a YouTube link available.</p>
	<b>Technology focus</b>	Using Zoom for live lessons.

## Description of the partners

**Unelta** is a non-profit making association incepted in 2011 by former students of Makerere University concerned about the very few students who pursue English language studies at university in Uganda and persistent poor performance in English language, especially in national examinations. UNELTA's conviction is to contribute to the cause of effective teaching and learning through teacher and learner empowerment. Despite challenging circumstances there is a passion and resilience towards education and pedagogical development.

**ITTC** joined BEET language school as a training partner in 2011, having previously worked independently since 1984. The centre has offered Cambridge CELTA, DELTA, business courses, courses for teaching young learners and CLIL to thousands of people over the years. They have also provided speakers at conferences and helped support the local state sector with their EAL provision. The centre is accredited by the British Council and is a Cambridge Teacher Training Centre.

## Key features of the context

The diversity of participant cohort was a key feature; ranging from people with many years' teaching experience to others relatively new to the profession. Some people were able to dedicate themselves to the course, whilst it was often the case, for women in particular, that they were juggling the project with raising children and performing domestic tasks as well as their teaching workload.

Data and connectivity was a great area of frustration and prevented some people from completing the course. Participants found themselves in extreme situations trying to connect to Zoom or download worksheets, this included one person even going to the top of a tall tree! Some participants only had enough data to connect infrequently and check emails or WhatsApp messages.

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The course started at the end of a 2 year period of lockdown due to COVID and teachers were just coming back into the classroom. Uganda had one of the longest lockdowns globally for schools, 83 weeks in total with no remote learning offer.

Data and connectivity proved challenging. Fluctuating costs and the added variables of the different providers used by the CPs and added costs for accessing the course were not included in the Connectivity Fund application. The initial estimates were difficult to get right; the data Unelta provided did not only facilitate the Zoom sessions but also the accessing of and downloading of materials from the Google drive and the daily WhatsApp interactions. Some CPs requested data to do their research as part of their homework and assignments as part of the course and thus the demand could not meet the available funds. Data was given mainly for attending sessions. 1GB was estimated to be enough but this was not the case for all CPs due to the difference in telecom companies.

## Outline of the course and rationale

Due to the significant impact of the lockdown, one of the biggest areas to focus on was self-esteem and motivation. This needed to be the thread running through the course design, creating opportunities for Ugandan teachers to support one another. Most teachers would need very little help with their own English but may want support with resources and ideas. Some of the teachers had completed another project focusing on the use of online platforms for remote teaching. It was decided that practical ideas could be shared amongst participants and trainers to help develop confidence and repertoire.

The teachers were invited to twice weekly Zoom sessions, the first more input led, the second more reflective. 2 trainers worked with the CPs, swapping groups halfway through. Banks of asynchronous materials were available as pre work and post session follow up.

## Project findings

### Working in partnership

The ETA had clear ideas of who they hoped to target and the UKI was happy to leave this entirely to their discretion. ITTC did significant research into the Ugandan context and Zoom meetings with Unelta leaders were helpful in clarifying the situation on the ground. They were also useful in setting up timelines and project parameters and to start to negotiate ideas for the course.

ITTC found pre course discussion useful to manage expectations. For example, one of the asks was to focus on teaching large classes of up to 200 but no one available to tutor in the UK had experience of this. Talking via Zoom also clarified other key issues; however they did not give true insight into future connectivity issues that would be encountered as the ETA leaders themselves had good connectivity.

Prior to the launch of the course, Unelta worked hard to onboard participants. Once it had started they monitored those who had not accessed live lessons using a shared register of attendance. A representative attended live lessons and so was able to see who was there and what was being delivered content wise. They were also able to answer queries about teaching context and to confirm

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whether the tutors were on track with their choice of topics. This offered the UK partner another layer of support.

## **Working within the CoP**

The use of a CoP for the UK partner was positive. The use of Slack as a platform was helpful in prompting different stages of the project and alerting the partners to time scales and expectations. It was also useful to know that there was a place to find solutions quickly, especially since many of the UKIs had participated in Prelim 1 and knew what to expect. Being allocated an overall project manager was reassuring as there was someone to turn to if there were any issues such as those experienced with the connectivity fund. It was also useful to have their experience when putting in a bid for the fund initially and helpful to see templates for reports shared on a Google Drive. Meetings with project managers helped spur on course design and delivery.

## **Working with the CPs**

It was hoped that the course would work with a 50-50 balance of input from course participants and tutors. However, data and connectivity and time constraints proved to be a major factor and the idea of flipped learning was hard to apply. As a result, the course was led 90% by ITTC with a 10% contribution from Unelta members. A small number of participants were able to access live lessons with their cameras and microphones on and use the chat box. Most CPs joined the WhatsApp groups and were able to see lesson links and materials. WhatsApp was used during the course for ITTC and Unelta to communicate. Both these uses provided a sense of community.

## **Designing/delivering the course**

The ETA and UK partner both sent out forms to CPs prior to the course starting, the ETA's was more for recruitment purposes whereas ITTC's was a detailed needs analysis asking for video and contextual photographic information. Responses indicated that the needs of CPs would be disparate. The UK partner learnt that they would need to adjust their expectations of how much pre-planning and timetabling could be achieved. Retrospectively our forms could have been merged and simplified into a single ask for CPs.

ITTC and Unelta consulted together on agreed platforms, meeting times, course participation expectations and criteria for receiving certificates. Due to the extreme variation in needs broad themes were concentrated on and the course was not planned in detail beforehand. This proved to be a sensible strategy, tutors used an emergent style of teaching based on the participants present and their needs. Course tutors made sure that their lessons had local examples for CPs to follow.

The course itself was launched with an opening ceremony on Zoom. ITTC and Unelta spoke of their hopes for the partnership and participation expectations and then tutors went into breakout rooms with CPs to try and gain a better understanding of needs. The UK partner and ETA learnt that this was a good way of signposting the stages of the course and sharing aspirations which created a positive start

to the course. The ETA commented that the welcome session proved vital to allow participants to understand the course aims, manage expectations and to assess spoken English.

Some CPs were able to benefit from the interactive nature of Zoom and Active Inspire flip charts which were initially used. Tutors changed to PowerPoints and PDFs when it was clear that participants could not use the remote control or drag and drop functions. The tutors shared their screen with content for discussion and reflection. Numbers at live lessons were lower than hoped. Trainers had a steep learning curve in how to adapt their interactive sessions into more of a lecture format with questions at the end. Their efforts were well received.

Thank you so much @Marie PETTIGREW. That was challenging especially talking to people you couldn't see but it was successful. Big ups!

13:13

Tutors asked for regular feedback. A Google form was sent out mid-course to get feedback from participants. ITTC felt that with so many connectivity issues it would be wise to try to decrease live lessons and increase asynchronous content however this was not met with enthusiasm as there was great aspiration to keep the technological side going, therefore a compromise was found whereby teachers were able to join the calls with their cameras off and materials were sent out in formats which used the minimum amount of data possible. The situation allowed the UK partner to develop a deeper understanding of other learning contexts and transfer this empathy and knowledge into other training being delivered.

## Course outcomes

CPs benefited from the chance to share experiences with other teachers working in different areas of the country. Teachers grew in confidence and enjoyed the camaraderie of working together and sharing challenges and solutions. Some participants were able to try out techniques and found that it made their students more engaged, and this had a positive impact on their own self-confidence. This was evidenced by enthusiastic comments in the WhatsApp groups.

Task 3: On Wednesday I asked you to try a classroom activity with three classes and reflect on this. Please briefly describe the activity and your thoughts on it in the chat box (or in the the Whatsapp group label 'Session 2 Task 3')

Oh, at least I tried this. I use in the activity in Senior 2. It worked very well.

Learners were attentive and participating. I came out class well I aware that the kids enjoyed and loved the lesson as well as learnt something.

12:07

Fran TRAYNOR

Thank you for all of your participation! We will miss you!

Thank You for you're a great trainer and I have learnt alot from your sharing 🙌

13:24

Today's lesson was fantastic, great thanks to Marie 🙌🙌🙌

18:35

Testing teachers was not an appropriate way of assessing the impact of the course. Constant verbal feedback was used instead as well as a Google form supplied at the midpoint. Feedback on the content and delivery was positive throughout. The only issues ever raised were those of lack of data, devices and connectivity issues which caused frustration to participants.

**Marie PETTIGREW**  
 Are you having data problems? Is the course using too much data for you? Just asking to see if we can come up with a work around for you. 🙏 Marie

The course is using too much data,that's why some of us are missing some lessons 16:02

Network connection is poor on my side 12:15

Hello Marie am here to inform you that I will not be able to attend today's lesson because I don't have power and am in an area that that doesn't have good network.thanks 16:01

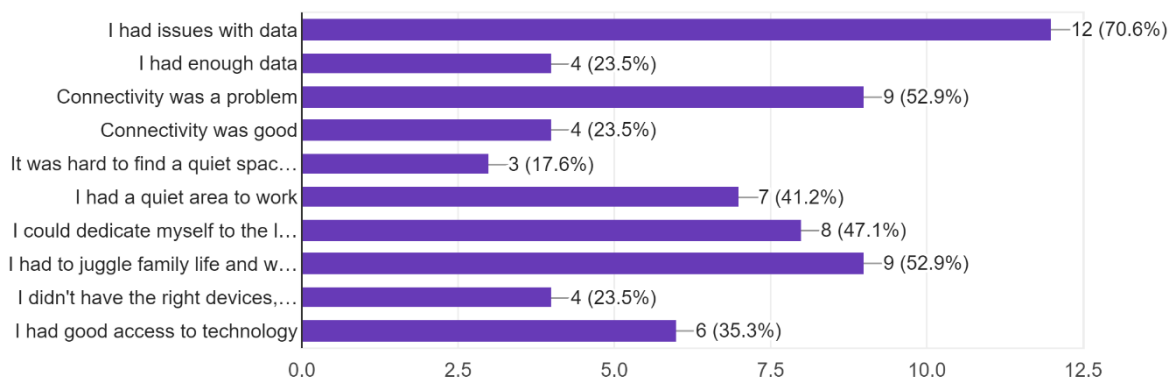
Am trying to connect but am failing 16:42

I have missed coz I have completely failed to connect 16:45

I hear you! Sadly, a lot of our group don't have the data to join in on Zoom. I will ask Anna to talk with the other leaders and see if they can help us! 13:01

Tell us about Data and Connectivity and Work Space - Tick the true statements.

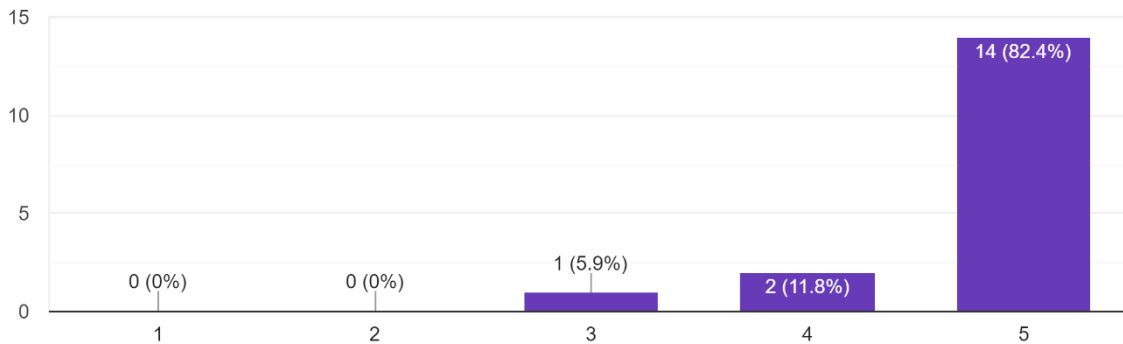
17 responses



Taking connectivity and data issues into consideration it was felt that the issuing of certificates for 80% attendance or above needed to be lowered to 50%. Despite issues, final course feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction and also that most teachers felt more confident and motivated.

Do you feel more motivated having completed the course?

17 responses



- **Emergent learning**

Early indication of the commitment required from students and their agreement to this reduced the drop-out rate and so the value of the opening ceremony and learning agreement is not to be underestimated.

CPs would have benefitted from instruction on how to use videoconferencing platforms on their phones as students from the outset.

Delivering training without always getting immediate feedback; teaching a Zoom class where people are muted and with cameras off proved to be a challenging experience for some of the tutors at times. They also had to lower their expectations of the speed at which material could be delivered and how much content could be covered. This was a valuable experience.

In terms of connectivity issues, a pack of materials could have been developed prior to the course for distribution amongst Unelta members. This would have given teachers time to read and process materials before live sessions and also to contribute via WhatsApp or email. The ETA commented that while email was useful as a backup, Zoom and WhatsApp was the most effective method of communication.

It would have also been useful to use a platform such as Blackboard so that tutors could see who was able to access the materials that were put on the Google Drive and to gauge their engagement with them.

Amoni Kitooke, President, UNELTA said, "We greatly enjoyed working with ITTC as our partner and have learnt so much from everyone involved. UNELTA has shown a real professionalism and enthusiasm for collaborative work. We will always be looking for ways to further our collaboration and extend our partnership." Working within the CoP and the appointment of NILE to oversee the delivery of projects proved to be a great success.