

PRELIM 3

PALESTINE: PATEFL
(Palestine Association of
Teachers of English as a
Foreign Language)
with
CELT

August 2024

Project background

Partnership overview		
Partners	ETA partner	PATEFL, Palestine
	UKI partner	CELT Centre for English Language Training, Cardiff
User Profile	Context overview	English is taught as a school subject between Key Stage 1 and 12 in governmental schools and private schools. Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank are taught by a UN agency, UNWRA. Education is often disrupted because of ongoing political instability and largely ceased following the October 2023 attack
	Learner age group(s)	12-13 years old (Grade 7)
	Curriculum overview	Standard coursebook, <i>English for Palestine</i> for KS 1-12, supplemented by teachers and by the British Council English for Palestine Digital Catalogue
Teacher support resource package	Resource format and organisation	Standard coursebook, English for Palestine for KS 1-12, supplemented by teachers and by the British Council English for Palestine Digital Catalogue
	Resource content	Supplementary listening, reading, writing and speaking resources Integration of 21st Century skills and the 5 Cs framework
	Resource sustainability	60-minute lessons (with extension activities) for each main unit of English for Palestine Grade 7, Books A and B (14 units in total). Detailed teacher notes and Audio files
Dissemination	Methods	Planned as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Via Google drive • Teacher training events • Informal cascading by attendees of teacher training events
	Timeframe	Intended for October 2023-April 2024 (interrupted by hostilities in Palestine, October 2023)
	Number of teachers reached	Number not available (see above)

Description of the partners

CELT is a private language school in Cardiff, Wales, which offers the following provision both face-to-face and online:

- general and specialist English courses for young learners (aged 13 to 17)
- general, exam (IELTS, OET) and specialist English courses for adults
- teacher training.

Created in 2016, **PATEFL (Palestinian Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language)** is a non-profit English teacher association in the Occupied Palestinian Territories which strives to promote professional excellence among English language teachers in all possible ways by engaging them in active professional learning communities where they meet, share and collaborate to maximise their impact, potential and well-being. These activities include CPD courses, conferences and research. PATEFL had over 500 members at the time of the start of the PRELIM 3 project and a reach of a further 1000+ non-members. The membership represents the gender profile of English language teachers with the vast majority (75%+) being women.

Key features of the context and resource design rationale

English language teaching support in Palestine is multi-agency. The Ministry of Education runs the governmental schools, while the private sector runs a limited number of schools. UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency) provides education to Palestinian refugees in Gaza and the West Bank. There is also a strong relationship between PATEFL (predominately Gaza-focused) and the British Council, which is based in the West Bank.

A key contextual feature for the project is the instability of daily life in Palestine. While this was a feature from the start of PRELIM 3, it became much more so at the point when dissemination was due to begin. As noted in the PRELIM 2 report, 'Palestine is a vulnerable and complicatedly unstable area, which is subject to repeated conflict. The blockade on Gaza and the restrictions on movements in the West Bank are among the main issues that affect all aspects of life in the Occupied Palestinian Territories'. This instability came to a head with the outbreak of hostilities between Israel and Hamas on 7 October 2023, leading to an immediate and profound impact on the availability (and safety) of PATEFL's PRELIM team to continue work on the project. Given the strong links between PATEFL and the British Council, there was high-level discussion about trialling the materials in that area, but it was not possible to implement this within the PRELIM 3 reporting period. Attempts will continue to be made to implement the trialling and dissemination stage.

Outline of the teacher support resource package and rationale

The resources developed for this project are intended for use by teachers in governmental and UNRWA settings, as well as for use in the popular English Clubs which provide additional, after-school English-language teaching support.

The resource was designed to modernise and supplement the existing coursebook, English for Palestine (EfP), which is used for each KS level 1-12. The coursebook was previously supplemented at each grade level with online resources by mapping them with existing resources available on

British Council websites. This project focused on skills development as it was felt this was the area where more development would best complement the existing supplementation available (e.g. grammar).

The resource package integrates 21st century skills and 5 Cs into the existing themes of the EfP coursebook and modernises content, providing learners with a realistic but aspirational world view rooted in the local context but which also references the more global aspects of experience. For each of the 14 units in the coursebook, there are separate listening, reading, writing and speaking resources (52 in total), each accompanied by detailed teacher notes. These teacher notes identify explicitly where the 21st century skills and 5 Cs are developed during the lessons.

The materials were created in digital format for primarily digital dissemination. As it is anticipated that individual teachers and institutions may wish to locally contextualise the resources even at learner level, original master copies will be retained by PATEFL and CELT. The resources are created in pdf format and are sharable on a Google drive. However, to address the issue of possible interruption to Internet access and for areas with poor connectivity, PATEFL planned to save these files onto SD cards (many teachers access the Internet via mobiles and SD cards are commonly used) and USB sticks. In addition, provision for hard copies of the resources, to be printed locally on demand is also possible.

Project findings

Working in partnership

The same CELT and PATEFL teams involved in previous iterations of PRELIM were involved in PRELIM 3 from the start and this experience of partnership benefitted PRELIM 3.

The PATEFL core team comes from a range of ELT backgrounds. The team's wide-ranging interests and expertise informed the ETA's initially wide interpretation of the possibilities of PRELIM 3, which required clear scoping in order to bring about an achievable project outcome.

Initial meetings between the PATEFL and CELT staff members designated to manage PRELIM 3 were held to discuss the options for the project and to finalize its scope. These meetings took place on a regular basis on Zoom and were followed by consultation within PATEFL to make decisions on outcomes, which were communicated to CELT by email and discussed in follow-up Zoom meetings. This continued on a semi-regular basis until the outbreak of hostilities in October 2023.

Communication with the core PATEFL team then became impossible. It was decided to reach out to the British Council in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, which has its base in the West Bank, with a view to transferring the project there. Unfortunately, the circumstances were such that this also became difficult to sustain.

The enthusiasm and passion for ELT that characterises PATEFL and its PRELIM 3 team were exceptional, as was the guidance from the British Council. While it remained possible, partnership working was fruitful.

Working within the CoP

Significant support was provided at all stages of the project by the NILE project management team and was supplemented by guidance from the British Council London following the events of October 2023.

Unlike previous years, and in particular when compared with PRELIM 1, the virtual support opportunities offered by Slack did not achieve a critical mass. As each project had different project outcomes and timescales, the ongoing co-construction of project-related knowledge was much more diffuse during PRELIM 3, reducing day-to-day UKI to UKI interaction. The CoP was most useful when members met in meetings arranged by the NILE project management team. These meetings enabled sharing of good practice and opportunities to discuss solutions to the challenges which inevitably occurred at the different stages of the project.

Designing the teacher support resources

PATEFL initially expressed interest in the development of a combination of teaching materials across a range of age ranges plus teacher training events and the development of assessment tools. This was narrowed down at an early stage to the production of skills-based supplementary resources. These materials modernised EfP where necessary (for example U10 Technology focused on AI and energy storing bricks rather than mobile phones) and introduced 21st Century and 5 C frameworks to meet the needs of students today.

It was agreed that these resources would follow closely the unit themes of the EfP coursebook, enabling learners to use any existing schematic knowledge to facilitate learning.

The challenge of creating materials for Palestine's specific context informed CELT's decision to use resource writers who have a good understanding of the local context. The CELT team was made up of a project lead and two main writers. Both writers have experience of living and teaching in the MENA region, with an intended positive impact on the resources. Each writer chose two skills areas for all 14 units of coursebook material. Regular meetings with the project lead took place as did meetings between the two main writers to ensure complementarity of the resources in each unit and variety in the activity types written.

Work on completing the initial versions of the resource continued through Spring and Summer 2023. By early October 2023, writing of the reading and listening resources was complete and was near to an end for the speaking and writing materials. The completion of the resource, its further trialling and dissemination was then interrupted. It was decided to complete the creation of all remaining resources in the hope that the political situation would improve. It is hoped to review options for the remaining trialling and dissemination of the resources if/when the situation stabilises in Gaza and/or the West Bank, possibly towards the start of the school year 2024/2025.

Optional Activity 2

FAVOURITE TECHNICAL INVENTIONS

Choose one of the five inventions and write about them, using the ideas below to help you.

Write three sentences using these sentence beginnings:

1. My favourite invention is....
2. I chose this because...
3. It can improve my life because...

Figure 1: Example of scaffolded writing extension activity for U10, Technology

<p>21st Century skills & 5Cs: Communication Collaboration</p>	<p>Timing 7 mins</p>	<p>Stage 1- Lead in Put students in groups of 3. Ask them to brainstorm different types of crafts they have done or would like to do in 30 seconds. The group with the longest correct list wins.</p> <p>OCFB: <u>ask group with longest list</u> to say places and tell the other groups to cross out the places they hear that are already on their list. <u>Once group</u> finishes saying all the items on their list, <u>the</u> other groups say the items the first group didn't mention and that are uncrossed on their list.</p> <p><u>Notes</u> You can ask the students to spell the words and give extra points for correct spelling.</p>
<p>21st Century skills & 5Cs: ICT and information literacy</p>	<p>7 mins</p>	<p>Stage 2 – key language/pre-teaching stage Write on the board any words from the text that you think the students may not know such as <i>clay modelling, messy, beads...</i>etc. Tell the students to check the meaning of any words they are unsure of either in a paper dictionary the school provides or online with a learner dictionary (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com or https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/learner-english are good resources)</p> <p><u>Variation</u> If students don't have access to paper or online dictionaries, you can provide a glossary for the students to read through prior to listening OR pre-teach the words: create a table with the words on one side and the definitions on the other. Students need to match the words to their definitions. Don't forget to check meaning by asking concept checking questions, the form and the pronunciation through choral and individual drilling.</p> <p><u>Notes</u></p>

Figure 2: Example of Teacher Notes for U12, Listening, showing clear identification of 21st Century and 5 Cs skills

Disseminating the teacher support resources

Following initial piloting, dissemination was scheduled to begin in October 2023, shortly after the start of the school year (and therefore in the weeks following October 7th), mostly in Gaza, with some additional trialling and dissemination in the West Bank. Planned activities included a social media campaign, four F2F workshops in Gaza and one in the West Bank. Initially, 100 direct beneficiaries (Grade 7 UNWRA and governmental school teachers) were anticipated, each of whom would receive guidance on how to cascade training to their peer group. Four thousand learners were expected to be indirect beneficiaries. This dissemination activity did not take place as it was interrupted by the outbreak of hostilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation resource use

Feedback on material design and use was gathered at the trial stage, regional workshops and after material use. This was done using Microsoft forms, WhatsApp, Zoom focus groups and by questionnaire at regional workshops. UNELTA project coordinators also observed some teachers to gather feedback on the appropriacy of materials for learners, learners' response to materials and ease of use for the teachers.

Project outcomes

The project led to the successful production of resources which fulfilled the brief agreed by the ETA and the UKI. However, the ongoing humanitarian situation had a significant impact on the ability to bring the project to completion within the timeframe of PRELIM 3. It is hoped, however, that the work remaining (further trialling and dissemination) can be achieved in the future.

Emergent learning

Early piloting of materials avoids major changes at later stages of materials development. Even clearer guidelines regarding the intended initial scope of PRELIM 3 would have enabled faster and more realistic scoping of the teacher resource package.

The early piloting of materials enabled the project partners to identify strengths and weaknesses in the resource design which could then realistically inform the development of improved resources as the project continued.

Communities of Practice seem to work best when members are at similar stages of project work and can share problems and solutions which are shared. They are less effective when projects are more individual in their development.