

## PRELIM 3

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# **Thailand: Thailand TESOL** (Thailand Teachers of English as a second or other Language) with **Lewis School of English**

August 2024

## Project background

Partnership overview		
<b>Partners</b>	ETA partner	Thailand TESOL
	UKI partner	Lewis School of English
<b>User Profile</b>	<b>Context overview</b>	The aim is to support primary school teachers across the whole of Thailand, but more specifically those in rural areas with lower levels of English and fewer professional development opportunities. This support comes in the form of supplementary materials to use alongside the course books selected to be used in their schools
	<b>Learner age group(s)</b>	Primary years 4-6 (9-11 years old)
	<b>Curriculum overview</b>	Materials correspond with the strands and indicators specified on the Thai curriculum and focus on a competency-based approach
<b>Teacher support resource package</b>	<b>Resource format and organisation</b>	A website of downloadable sets of materials, with student worksheets, teachers' notes, templates and videos
	<b>Resource content</b>	A range of topics to support the development of reading skills, communication skills and pronunciation
	<b>Resource sustainability</b>	Materials are digital, with teachers able to print the number of copies needed for classroom use. We have factored in a 5-year financial plan for web maintenance and have created a site that teachers can add to as a community, to hopefully allow it to evolve over time
<b>Dissemination</b>	<b>Methods</b>	Resource training with a focus group of teachers, Project Ambassadors selected to promote the website at Thailand TESOL's annual conference, a live launch of the site and advertising through webinars
	<b>Timeframe</b>	Focus groups – August to November 2023 Thailand TESOL Conference – January 2024 Live launch – January 2024 Webinars – throughout 2024
	<b>Number of teachers reached</b>	1054 users have accessed the website at the time of writing

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## Description of the partners

**Thailand TESOL** is a non-profit organisation which was established in 1981. It supports teachers of English at any educational level by undertaking research, offering scholarships, providing training and disseminating information. It comprises of 16 voluntary key members of staff and has approximately 6,000 members.

**Lewis School of English (LSoE)** is a private language school in Southampton, UK. It was established in 1976 and offers English language courses to adults and juniors, as well as online and in-person teacher training courses. It has around 25 members of staff, some full-time and some part-time.

## Key features of the context

Many in our given context feel that the level of the prescribed course books for primary schools is above that of the learners, with content being classed as too advanced for most. Additionally, primary school teachers often have low levels of English themselves and lack confidence in sourcing or creating their own supplementary materials. Internet coverage in Thailand is approximately 85%, with relatively reliable download speed and online resources being a 'go-to' for many teachers. Teachers have a positive attitude towards professional development and career growth.

## Outline of the course and rationale

Focus group discussions revealed that online resources are favoured by teachers in Thailand, so we created [a website](#) with individual downloadable sets of materials; these are intended to be used as supplementary materials, and focus on the language areas that are lacking in course books – communication skills, reading, and pronunciation. Each set of materials is cross-referenced with the strands and indicators on the Thai curriculum, and as there has been a shift towards competency-based learning, materials are also searchable based on activities that require analytical skills, teamwork, problem-solving etc. To further support teachers with an interest in professional development, we provided templates for a number of activities that could be adapted with the help of support videos, and incorporated a page where these could be uploaded and shared to promote the ongoing development and sustainability of the site, as well as a sense of community amongst its users.

# Project findings

## Working in partnership

The partnership between Thailand TESOL and LSoE was a collaborative one from start to finish, with both partners bringing valuable skills and insights to the project, contributing to a productive working relationship.

## Contextual Insights

The English Teaching Association (ETA) was able to provide contextual information which was instrumental in shaping the project. This included insights regarding those teachers most in need of resources, statistics around internet access and shifts in Thai teaching towards a competency-based curriculum. They were also key in choosing the name of the website (English Cuppa), taking into consideration what would be memorable for our target market.

## Human Resources

The ETA sourced a very reliable focus group of teachers to help us at the research stage, and some of these took on further responsibilities as English Cuppa Ambassadors, launching the website on our behalf with a workshop at the Thailand TESOL conference and promoting the website to their contacts.

## Engagement

In collaboration with Thailand TESOL, LSoE was able to deliver two teacher training webinars to its members to increase engagement and visibility of the website.

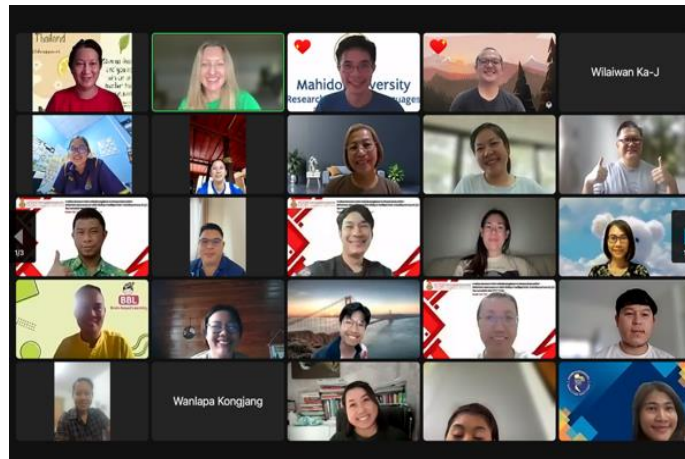


Figure 1. Collaborative webinar on adapting and creating materials

## Learning points

- Make use of the ETA's invaluable contextual knowledge to make key decisions around target market and resource package type.
- A reliable group of 'teachers on the ground' can help to drive the project and make for a mutually beneficial relationship.
- Branding should be discussed and agreed with key stakeholders to ensure uptake of the resource package.
- Engagement through other training opportunities helps to increase visibility of the resource package.

## Designing the teacher support resources

LSoE encourages its teachers to create their own materials rather than using a fixed course book, and so the teachers were well placed to use these skills for the purpose of this project.

Furthermore, our in-house web designer was able to make suggestions around website format and functionality.

Despite LSoE teachers designing their own lesson materials regularly, this was the first collaborative design project. Participation was optional, and, surprisingly, the majority of contributors were teachers who were either less experienced or had recently joined the school. All were keen to learn and develop their skills. Contributors could be given as much or as little guidance as necessary, either choosing to adapt existing sets of materials or coming up with their own ideas. They could also work to their own strengths, with some choosing to focus more on creative ideas, while others tried to get their materials as close to the finished product as possible. These different working styles all complemented each other.

A training session was given to each teacher involved, and 20 initial sets of materials were created as a benchmark for style, grading and presentation. Contributors could use these as a template for further sets of materials, and this was essential in creating a cohesive feel.

A shared spreadsheet tracked the materials that had been created, with contributors encouraged to add their own ideas rather than treating it as a definitive list. This enabled LSoE to learn about a range of relevant skills and experience that the teachers had, such as poetry writing for children, illustration and storytelling.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Who	Abby	Abby	Amber	Amber	Abby	Abby	Josie	Lara
Communicative Activities	Word search in teams - famous people	Crossword communicative pairs	Project to create a biography - different roles - relationships with other ASEAN countries (or compare languages in Europe with this of ASEAN countries)	book creator	Communicative task to deconstruct and reconstruct a text	Back to the board	Running dictation variation	communicative drawing task - describe a thief and a costume.
Student Copy	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
Teachers' Notes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Template	✓		✓					
Communication skills	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Problem-solving skills		✓			✓			
Analytical skills					✓			
Decision-making skills			✓	✓	✓			
Teamwork skills	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Comprehension/interpretation F1.1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Opinions and justifications F1.2					✓			
Information exchange F1.2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Presenting information F1.3			✓	✓				
Culture F2.1	✓		✓	✓				
Language awareness and comparisons F2.2					✓			
English to access other subjects F3.1	✓		✓	✓				
The community F4.1								
Student research F4.2	✓	✓	✓	✓				

Figure 2. Spreadsheet to track materials created and add ideas

The focus was on quality over quantity; rather than aiming for a fixed number of materials, teachers were given an approximate guideline for how long a set might take to create and would track their

hours for budgeting purposes. I think this helped them to invest more in the quality of the content rather than how much they could produce in a given time.

### Learning points

- Exploit opportunities to help less experienced teachers develop their skills, rather than only enlisting those who already have the relevant skills and experience.
- Allow for flexibility in individual contributions to enable each person to work to their strengths and preferred working styles.
- Create benchmark materials before involving more contributors to establish a style that can be replicated.
- Provide opportunities for contributors to make use of their lesser-known skill sets and to give their own input and direction.
- Adopt a ‘quality over quantity’ approach, where contributors are paid for their time and not the number of materials they produce.

## Disseminating the teacher support resources

As the resource package would be handed over to Thailand TESOL once created, we felt it was important to recruit local teachers who could help to promote and increase the visibility of the website. To incentivise these teachers, we wanted to invest in their professional development, as we know that CPD is taken seriously in Thailand and counts towards career progression. Members of our focus group were invited to attend a free online teacher training course on materials design, adapted to feature the English Cuppa website. Three of these participants expressed an interest in becoming English Cuppa Ambassadors, who were then sponsored and mentored to lead a workshop at the Thailand TESOL Annual Conference, talking about their first-hand experience of using the website.



*Figure 3. English Cuppa Ambassadors at the Thailand TESOL Annual Conference*

Flyers were printed and distributed at the conference with a QR code to access the site. Time was factored into the workshop to allow attendees to explore the site and ask questions, as we thought the sooner they accessed the site, the more likely they would return to it later.

Additionally, we felt engagement through webinars would help with visibility, and 85 teachers came to a session delivered by LSoE on Adapting and Creating Materials, centred around making use of the resource package’s free, downloadable templates. Certificates of attendance were issued as an incentive.

For dissemination beyond the project dates, we created a blog page on the website where users could upload their own materials using our templates, with the aim of creating an online community where teachers can share ideas. We also created themed news articles which were scheduled to be released every couple of months to help promote the site further.

## Learning points

- Enlist the help of local teachers within the target market.
- Run workshops for users to explore the resource package in a collaborate environment and increase engagement.
- Offer training which doubles as promotion, adding a more personal touch and incentivising potential users.
- Factor in different angles for continued promotion over a period of time, to keep the resource package visible and fresh.

## Monitoring and Evaluation resource use



During the initial stages of resource development, we engaged with a focus group through live sessions and questionnaires to get feedback on website functionality and suitability of resources. These methods led to an adjustment in the grading of the materials and added web features such as the ability to comment on community posts. We also created more video tutorials to help users make use of the site's features.

Figure 4. A video tutorial created after focus group feedback

Indirectly, by inviting our focus group to take part in a free online teacher training course which was centred around the use of the resource package, we were able to make observations around which resources they more frequently navigated towards, and which topics interested them. We could then take these preferences into account when designing future sets of materials.



Figure 5. An online course where use of the resource package could be observed

## Project outcomes

Google Analytics enabled us to gather quantitative data on use of the resource package, while a feedback questionnaire allowed for more qualitative data. Here are some of the key findings from data gathered at the end of March 2024.

Data	Comments	Source
<b>Accessed by 1054 different devices</b>	939 in Thailand, 21 and 19 from Vietnam and the US respectively, the rest from six other countries	Google Analytics
<b>Access in Thailand across 15 regions</b>	Majority of access from Bangkok, but reaching more remote places too, including a seaport and Thai island	
<b>406 file downloads by 115 different users</b>	Over a 2-month period	
<b>105 accounts created</b>	Allows users to comment, favourite, and upload resources	
<b>67% mobiles, 27% desktops, 6% tablets</b>	Longer engagement time on desktops, suggesting mobiles used for browsing, and desktops more for downloading, etc.	
<b>56% accessed in Thai language, 42% in English, 2% other languages</b>	Likely due to language settings on devices, but good that lower-level teachers can translate pages/descriptions of materials, even if resources themselves are in English	
<b>10 people responded to feedback questionnaire</b>	A smaller number than hoped, possibly due to the detail required for feedback to be useful, despite offering a competition prize as an incentive	Questionnaire
<b>All gave positive feedback on the website design, with nine out of 10 saying it was either 'quite easy' or 'very easy' to navigate</b>	Colours and branding were well received and multiple search functions were incorporated	
<b>Videos described as <i>informative, interesting, useful for lessons, easy to follow and cute</i></b>	Pronunciation videos were an important feature so teachers could play these in class if not confident in their own pronunciation	
<b>Five said the grading of materials was <i>just right</i>, two said <i>maybe a little</i></b>	Spread of comments suggests the level is about right. One respondent said that levels between rural and urban areas are likely to vary a lot	



<b><i>difficult, and three said maybe a little easy</i></b>		
<b>All 10 said that in their context they were <i>easily able to download and print materials, as well as play videos in class</i></b>	Although positive feedback, it is hard to know if the 10 who responded are representative of all regions	
<b>All 10 said the materials were appropriate in terms of <i>relatable character names, easy-to-follow student instructions, topics, and class sizes</i></b>	The focus group had completed a questionnaire to indicate popular Thai names and topics of interest. Culture was highlighted as being an important topic, which was taken on board	

**Other feedback comments:**

*'I didn't know about this website before. It is awesome because sometimes it's hard for me to find attractive materials to teach young learners. Thank you so much.'*

*'It's good for the class with WiFi but it may be uncomfortable for the remote class without WiFi.'*

*'I think English Cuppa is a playground for me. I can create materials by using your template. I think your template makes me create more and more materials with the right directions... (because, sometimes, I don't know how to start creating sheets). It makes me really enjoy in this website.'*

*'English Cuppa has already catalogued everything, so with a simple click, you can find whatever you want without feeling cumbersome.'*

Regular communication between partners throughout the project has ensured that realistic timeframes for each phase were established and met, and there was balanced input and feedback from both LSoE and Thailand TESOL as the resource package developed. The strong working partnership has not only enabled the project to be successful but has also allowed us to develop a relationship that we are sure will continue for years to come. We are proud of the product that we have created together and we hope that it will continue to be well received by Thai teachers. It has been a pleasure working together for the last 15 months, and we would like to thank the PRELIM sponsors and collaborators for this opportunity.