

ELTEACH IMPLEMENTATION REPORT TUNISIA



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Front Cover:

Ancient Roman aqueduct, Tunisia

James L. Stanfield /National Geographic Creative

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Challenge and Program Selection

Tunisia's stated policy goals are reducing unemployment, attracting investment from Europe, and increasing technology skills and the mobility of its labor force across the Gulf region.

Since 2009, the Tunisian Ministry of Education has identified areas to address in order to help meet these goals. One important area is English language training.

Historically, both Arabic and French have been taught in the public school system. However, to ensure that Tunisian youth remain competitive, the ministry now wants high school and university graduates to be proficient in English as well.

To achieve this goal, the ministry is considering increasing the number of hours of instruction in English starting in lower grades.

In order to provide more hours of English instruction, the Ministry of Education recognizes that a first step is to provide teacher training across the country's 24 governorates. This will

ensure that students in both rural and urban areas have access to effective English language instruction.

In early 2014, National Geographic Learning (NGL), partnering with Justech, a local organization specializing in technology-based learning solutions across Tunisia, approached the Ministry of Education (MOE) to propose a trial implementation of *ELTeach*. This online, self-access program, which includes two courses and associated assessments, *English-for-Teaching* and *Professional Knowledge for ELT*, had been previously piloted and implemented in several countries in the region, including Italy, Bahrain, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia.

Because of the need for a scalable training solution with measurable results, the MOE agreed to begin a trial with 52 primary school teachers starting in October 2014.

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Implementation

The Ministry of Education appointed Mr. Rachid Najar to work with Justech and NGL as coordinator for the program.

Fifty-two teachers from the capital, Tunis, were selected to take part in the program, with half of the teachers taking the *English-for-Teaching* course, and the other half taking the *Professional Knowledge for ELT* course. An initial orientation for all the teachers was delivered by NGL and Justech in Tunis in October 2014.

The teachers recruited were largely veteran teachers, with over 50% reporting that they had more than ten years of classroom experience. During this orientation, the participating teachers were introduced to the underlying principles and objectives of the *ELTeach* program.

They then registered for the appropriate course and answered a set of questions in the form of a pre-course planner. The pre-course planner creates a personalized path of learning for each individual, allowing them to focus specifically on areas of teaching that they feel would be most beneficial to their classroom work.

Mr. Najar monitored the teachers' progress through the two courses, and provided critical support, encouragement, and



Figure 1: Map of Tunisia

technical guidance to the teachers, many of whom were doing online professional development for the first time in their careers.

Upon completion of the online course, participants traveled to Tunis to take either the *TEFT™ Assessment (Test of English-for-Teaching)* or the *TPK™ Assessment (Test of Professional Knowledge for ELT)* at a test center set up and managed by Justech.

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Results

The overall completion rate for the program was very high at 88%, representing teachers who took both the course and assessment. Participants in the *English-For-Teaching* cohort spent an average of 30 hours in the program, while the *Professional Knowledge for ELT* cohort spent an average of 32 hours.

Based on a post-course survey instrument, 100% of the participants said they would recommend the program to their colleagues. 40% of participants found the program very useful to their teaching, while 60% found the program useful, i.e., 100% of participants in total found the program useful or very useful for their immediate teaching needs. Access to the course content continued for several months after the assessment, with teachers continuing to engage with the program content into 2015.

The results from the assessment were released in late January 2015. Test-takers receive both an individual scaled score and a band score. The former represents how the individual has performed on the test; the latter represents that individual performance in terms of broad aggregate patterns described in the band description. The distribution of the scores for both groups of teachers was impressive.

The high percentage of teachers scoring in Band 3 – the highest band – for both tests is a reflection of the work the teachers did on the program and their success in learning the course content.

Score reports were distributed to the Ministry of Education in early February. The reports detail the competencies of this cohort as a whole, in terms of their ability to teach English in English, and in terms of their knowledge and practical application of the skills learned. See Figures 2 and 3 for distributed scores by band for *TPK™* and *TEFT™ Assessments*.

“I particularly liked how it links the theory, methodology and different approaches to the teachers’ classroom experience, and adapting and reflecting on the usefulness of the content to the teachers’ own teaching environment.”
– Hayfa Medjoub, program participant

Mr. Najar expressed his satisfaction with the program, stating, “Most participants appreciate the experience they have gone through...This can be considered as the first experience of online training in Tunisia, and I truly believe that it has been a fruitful experience and even wish teachers – and trainers – could have the opportunity to go through it soon.

“Even newly-recruited teachers could benefit from this by following the *English-for-Teaching* course, which is very convenient for this category of teachers.

“As for ‘experienced’ teachers, the *Professional Knowledge for ELT* course is very suitable for them. A teacher even told me that this course had ‘put together’ what she had acquired in 20 years of teaching.”

The teachers were also surveyed after the program implementation. When asked about the benefits of the program, 71% of respondents who took part in the *English-for-Teaching* program cited the amount of classroom language practice as one of the main program benefits, indicating the practical applicability of the program content.

“It was an opportunity to refresh and develop our professional knowledge about both learning and teaching... and linking them to the classroom situations to find the right solutions for better, efficient teaching.”

– Sawsen Abid, program participant

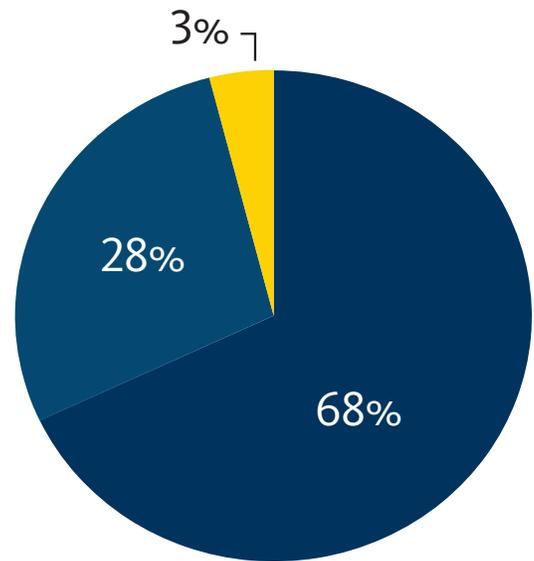


Figure 2:
TPK™ Assessment (Test of Professional Knowledge for ELT)
Scores by Band

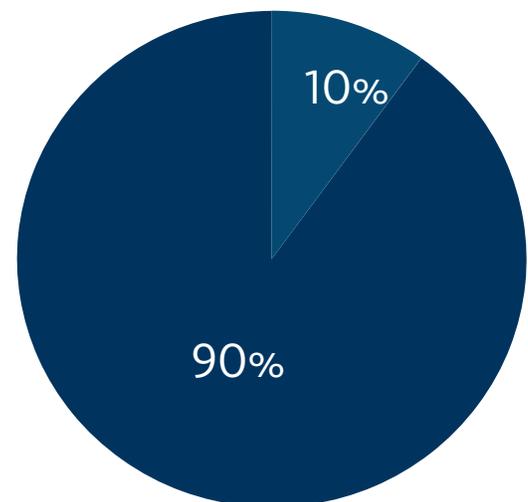


Figure 3:
TEFT™ Assessment (Test of English-for-Teaching)
Scores by Band

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Next Steps

Given the success of this trial implementation for teachers in Tunis, it is recommended that all English Language teachers across the governorates of Tunisia be given the opportunity to undertake this training. A proposal is to be submitted by Justech and National Geographic Learning to this effect in the coming months.



Coliseum, Tunisia

David H. Harvey/National Geographic Creative

“I really did appreciate the course and learned so much. An enriching experience for both novice and experienced teachers.”
– Ahlem Ben Hassem,
program participant



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