

The British Council's aim in creating this publication, A Celebration of the CBB Teacher Training Project: 2005-2020, is to highlight the success of the English Language Teacher Training Project in Sri Lanka which was funded by the Council for Business with Britain, with HSBC as the main sponsor, and supported by the Ministry of Education. This project was implemented through the resource persons of the thirty one Regional English Support Centres islandwide. Starting as it did from a series of weekend workshops, the project grew to gain islandwide impact and leaves a powerful legacy..

After an overview of the project, the volume contains case studies of teachers spanning the whole project both from its inception in 2005 to the present day and geographically across the island. The volume also contains personalised stories from the RESC mentors. The case studies and stories illustrate the impact the project had on their classroom teaching through personalised stories of children becoming more confident in their use of English and becoming more motivated to use English. The case studies taken as whole clearly illustrate the move from teacher centred classrooms to student centred classrooms and a corresponding increase in confidence in teachers and students alike.

The collaboration of the Council for Business with Britain, the Ministry of Education and the British Council demonstrates the potential of state and private organisations to positively impact on education and is a role model for future collaboration



A Celebration of the CBB Teacher Training Project: 2005-2020 : Case Studies from Across the Country by the Council for Business with Britain and the British Council



Case Studies from across the country by the Council for Business with Britain and the British Council

Edited by
Lesley Dick

**A Celebration of the
CBB Teacher Training
Project: 2005-2020
Case Studies from
across the country
by the Council for
Business with Britain
and the
British Council**

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Designed by Sampath Senanayake



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Message from the President of the Council for Business with Britain (CBB)

Roshanie Jayasundera Moraes

President - Council for Business with Britain

The Council for Business with Britain was established in July 2000 with the main objective of promoting two-way trade and investment between Sri Lanka and the UK and to maintain and foster a harmonious business relationship between the two countries. At present CBB has over 160 member companies with business links with the UK.

Given that the English language is the universal language of business, it was important that CBB had one of its initiatives in that area. Therefore, CBB launched the English Language Teacher Training programme (ELT) 15 years ago as a skills building initiative to support local businesses in their quest to becoming world class companies. This programme, conducted in collaboration with the British Council and the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka has yielded the desired results.

Today, we are proud and happy to have funded the training of over 2300 teachers and positively impacted over 300,000 students in the Country.

I take this opportunity to place on record our gratitude to our sponsors who made this programme possible over the years.

We hope that these teachers and students will now make the best of the opportunity they have received, continue to enhance their English language skills and contribute towards society in a positive manner.

I congratulate all those who completed the programme and wish them the very best.



Message from Country Director British Council

This project to support teachers of English in their professional development has reached more than 2000 teachers across the island, over its lifetime – more than 15 years. It has been a wonderful journey generously supported by CBB - with a significant contribution from HSBC, and this booklet has been created to celebrate the achievements of all involved. Not least, it gives us an opportunity to look back and understand the impact that the programme has had on individual lives, and to reflect on the lasting effect. As we know, enhancing the skills and ability of a teacher leads to better learning in the classroom, with a consequential lifetime impact on the hundreds of students each individual teacher reaches during their career. Better teaching and learning of English is key to improving the life chances, the educational and career opportunities of young people, and is a cornerstone for this society as it aims to build economic resilience and global trade links for a better and brighter future for all Sri Lankans.

I would like to thank our partners CBB and HSBC, my colleagues at the British Council who have sustained the programme through many challenging times, and especially our delivery partners without whom it would not have been possible. Special acknowledgement goes to the Ministry of Education and the RESCs for their openness and willingness to facilitate the programme. And a note of gratitude to the mentors at the RESCs who have supported teachers in their development journeys. A final word for the many teachers involved – it is because of your passion and professionalism and your willingness to put in those extra hours to achieve the goals, that we can proudly talk about the success of this programme.



Message from the Ministry of Education

Professor K Kapila C K Perera

Secretary to the Minister of Education

The Ministry of Education has supported the Council for Business with Britain Teacher Training Project from its inception in 2005 to its closure this year. In-service English teacher training and development is key to maintaining standards in the schools islandwide. This project has delivered on its aim to upgrade the English skills of pupils which is achieved through improving the quality of the teaching practice in their schools. Teachers use the new knowledge and inspiration gained from the training to deliver more motivating lessons with a communicative focus so that pupils' real language skills are improved. The project has trained a cadre of mentors from the Ministry of Education's Regional English Support Centres (RESCs) ensuring a wide geographical coverage across Sri Lanka. The mentors have delivered in-service teacher training to over 2000 teachers in their areas using a distance learning course which leads to the internationally recognised University of Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT). The Ministry of Education is delighted to be able to support this Case Study Publication which celebrates the success of this project through profiling the teachers and mentors and allowing them to tell their own stories through the case studies. This publication contributes to the narrative of successful English language teacher instruction which the Ministry whole heartedly supports.



Message from the CEO of HSBC Sri Lanka and Maldives and principal sponsor

Mark Prothero, CEO of HSBC Sri Lanka and Maldives commented, “Education is a forerunner of development and continued prosperity of any nation. That’s why at HSBC, we believe in empowering our employees and our communities with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in a global economy that connects all corners of the world to each other. The English Language Teacher Training programme of the Council for Business with Britain (CBB) was an ideal fit for what we aspire to achieve with our projects focussed on community empowerment through education. The programme develops the core skills required of a person for employability such as cooperation, collaboration, critical thinking skills along with fluency in the English language. Dynamic skills development of this nature gives our youth an increased awareness of their own employment choices and how they need to groom themselves to grasp the opportunities available.”

Mr Prothero, who is the immediate past President of the Council for Business with Britain (CBB) further elaborated, “The importance of developing English literacy skills is a highly-topical and important national debate. Through this project the CBB aligned itself to what the country requires to build a stronger economy and a more able workforce. It is important for the learning community, in particular the teachers, to foster a generation of students who can use the language as a base in their future careers. We feel that this project specifically helps bridge the urban and rural divide in education and has a wide geographical spread across Sri Lanka allowing CBB members to ‘give back’ to the wider community.”

Acknowledgements

The ELT Project Team of the British Council would like to acknowledge the Council for Business with Britain and the main funder HSBC for their continuing funding and support for the project over the last fifteen years and the Ministry of Education for their continuing approvals and provision of resource people and venues for the project.

We would also like to acknowledge the RESC mentors without whom the implementation of the project would never have happened and the over 2000 English teachers whose hard work on and commitment to the project is displayed in the case studies themselves. We would also like to thank the teachers who took the time to be part of the questionnaire and interviews that were conducted to compile the case studies. Through their stories and reflections, we can better understand how the project has made an impact on each of their learners. The project has also inspired teachers to continue their professional development. We also thank the RESC mentors who took time to share their project memories. Ultimately, the impact of the project can be seen in the classroom practice of the teachers and in the increasing proficiency of the pupils; both can be witnessed in the stories provided by the teachers in this publication.

A special mention must be made to acknowledge the work of Jennifer Gnanamuttu, Manisha Ruwanpathirana and Shane Martenstyn for their communication and coordination with the RESCs and for the British Council trainers (too many to mention) who contributed to the project over the last fifteen years.

We would also like to acknowledge the hard work and skills of Sampath Senanayake for designing the case study publication within a very short time scale. Without his talent for design, the publication would not look so impressive and professional.

The ELT Projects Team

Lesley Dick, Norma Swyngedauw,
Sharon Martinesz and Rizley Dawood

Introduction: The Council for Business with Britain English Language Teacher Training Project

The CBB Teacher Training Project ran from 2005 to 2020. It grew out of 6 weekend workshops round the country and developed into the annual delivery of English language teacher training to approximately 200 English language teachers nationwide. Over 2000 teachers were trained through this project. To celebrate the end of the project, the British Council and the Council for Business with Britain is presenting the CBB Teacher Training Project Case Study publication. The aim of this publication is firstly to describe the work of the project here in the introduction from its inception to the present day. Secondly it highlights the work of the 31 Regional English Support Centres (RESCs) in the delivery of the project through the stories of the mentors and the teachers involved over the years. Each case study presents the story of a teacher from the area of the 31 RESCs to illustrate the impact the project had on their lives. Mentors' case studies have also been collected and are presented here. Thirdly the products from the Employability Project in 2019 are included. Employability skills were added into the project in 2019. A competition was held in schools to find the best poster produced by classes to illustrate the theme of employability. Teachers worked with their classes to produce posters using the employability skills of cooperation, communication and critical thinking among others. The winners of the competition are included here. We hope that this publication will showcase the impact the project had on so many teachers and mentors round the country over its 15 year lifespan.

Since 2005 the Council for Business with Britain (CBB) worked through the British Council to deliver the well-regarded English Language Teacher Training Project. The project comes to an end this year after fifteen very successful years. The overall goal of the programme was to upgrade the English skills of pupils and this was achieved through improving the quality of the teaching practice in their schools. Teachers used the new knowledge and inspiration gained from the training to deliver more motivating lessons with a communicative focus so that pupils' real language skills are improved.

The project trained a cadre of mentors from the Ministry of Education's RESCs ensuring a wide geographical coverage across Sri Lanka. (For a map showing the RESCs' locations, please see *Appendix 1* The mentors delivered in-service teacher training to teachers in their areas using a distance learning course (branded as 'the CBB distance training course') which led to the internationally recognised University of Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT). Teachers following the training also received a CBB / British Council Certificate.

The project therefore functioned on two levels:

- a) training mentors to facilitate the CBB distance training course;
- b) training teachers through the CBB distance training course.

One additional objective of the project in 2019-20 was to address the perceived need for skills for employability: 21st century skills as well as the project's prior focus on the English language. This was in part achieved through an additional module in the training course to and in part through a portfolio of classroom-based tasks through which teachers developed their ability to foster employability skills in their learners. The project participants demonstrated their understanding of the skills for employability and how to help their pupils develop them. That the pupils developed them was demonstrated through a class project that every teacher coordinated. This project was evaluated and judged by a team made up of British Council staff and CBB members. A sample of the winning projects are displayed in this publication.

The need for English teacher training and employability skills

The EF English Proficiency Index (EF EPI) is increasingly cited as an authoritative and globally well-recognized source by journalists, educators, officials, and business leaders for ranking of countries by English skills. The EF EPI places the surveyed countries and territories into five proficiency bands, from Very High to Very Low. The bands make it easier to identify countries and regions with similar skill levels and to draw comparisons between and within regions. According to the 2019 report, Sri Lanka has 'Very Low' proficiency of EF EPI score 47.10 ranking 78 out of 100 countries. This index reflects a -2.29 score change from the previous year.

In addition, pupils in rural areas of Sri Lanka perform far less well at GCE English 'O' level than

those in Colombo (English 'O' level pass rates 2003: national average 30%, Colombo 68%, rest of Sri Lanka 24%¹), which has a correspondingly negative impact on their employability once they leave school. In the ex-conflict affected areas of the North and East and the predominantly Indian Tamil hill country areas, the situation is worse. This English language proficiency skills gap is having a detrimental effect on Sri Lanka's long-term national and international economic development and the workforce's ability to participate in the domestic and global economies. A key factor in enhancing the performance of pupils learning English at school is the teacher's level of English and confidence in using English in the classroom. In 2007 Sri Lanka's Ministry of Education said that more than 60% of teachers in Sri Lanka lack the computer and English literacy skills that are needed in a modern teaching environment.²

In 2005 the CBB's vision of "Prosperity Through English" led to the establishment of their partnership with the British Council Sri Lanka and the launch of the CBB ELT Project to address the key factors of English teacher confidence and classroom teaching ability and the need to target specifically teachers in rural areas unable to access the training opportunities and resources of their Colombo peers.

The link with Future Skills

Research completed by Lancaster University highlights the skills requirement identified by employers in Sri Lanka. These include English, 21st century skills, confidence and resilience. The project worked in three ways: (1) improving teacher performance has the knock-on effect of

¹ Resource and Development Branch, Department of Examinations, 2003

² Lanka Business Online, 3 January, 2007

improving learners’ performance. This shift in pedagogy also builds core skills required by employers as it encourages cooperation, collaboration and critical thinking skills.

(2) teachers use content focusing on employability skills thus increasing student knowledge in turn (3) delivery is in English, one of the key employability skills, therefore they practice the skills in English. The combination of these leads to the activation of student knowledge of employability issues and skills and an increased awareness of their own employment choices.

Through working with the RESCs which are strategically positioned in these rural areas, the project could target the people with the most need for both English language proficiency improvement and employability skills. By training the teachers the project had a wider reach over a longer period of time thus making it more sustainable. Evidence from past phases of this project suggests that the teachers participating in it have had a positive impact on their pupils and helped them develop their mastery of the English language. In turn, this may enhance the pupils’ employability and their prospects of earning a higher salary.

The Project Phases

| | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 | Phase 4 | | | Phase 5 | Phase 6 | Phase 7 | Phase 8 | Phase 9 | Phase 10 | Phase 11 |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | | | Stage 1 | Stage 2 | Stage 3 | | | | | | | |
| | Aug-Oct 2005 | 2006-2007 | 2007 - 2010 | 2010-2011 | 2011-2012 | 2012-2013 | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | 2017-2018 | 2018-2019 | 2019- 2020 |
| IMPACT | Work-shops | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT Project | CBB ELT project |
| RESCs | 6 | 8 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 31 |
| New Mentors trained | 0 | 16 | 40 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Teachers trained | 150 | 48 | 378 | 155 | 168 | 200 | 168 | 205 | 207 | 204 | 153 | 180 | 136 |
| Pupils reached | 12,000 | 3,840 | 30,240 | 28,603 | 13,440 | 35,106 | 13440 (est.) | 33,554 | 35,338 | 37,267 | 29,303 | 30,770 | 20,945 |

Project Development Overview

The project developed over the years in separate phases depending on needs of the teachers, the funding available and the reach desired.

Phase 1

In 2005 the pilot stage of the project delivered a series of teacher training workshops in Jaffna, Badulla, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Ratnapura, and Matara. The workshops, attended by 150 English and English medium teachers, focussed on upgrading teacher skills in teaching English for the Workplace. The pilot impacted on approximately 12,000 pupils.

Phase 2

In 2006 16 mentors from 8 districts (Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Matale, Hunguranketha, Hanwella, Balapitiya, Eheliyagoda and Hatton) followed the University of Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) preparation course at the British Council in Kandy and Colombo and gained the TKT qualification. In addition, the mentors received mentoring training to equip them with the skills and knowledge needed to deliver the CBB course as a distance-training product to other teachers. Subsequently, 48 teachers from the 8 districts completed the CBB distance training course and gained a TKT Certificate. Phase 2 impacted on approximately 3,840 pupils.

Phase 3

This phase culminated in March 2010 with a TKT awards ceremony at the Ministry of Education. This phase saw the expansion of the project to include 26 RESCs³ with 40 new mentors completing the TKT preparation course at the BC, passing the TKT exam and receiving mentor training. The mentors cascaded the training to over 378 teachers who passed TKT in January 2010. These RESCs included Jaffna where the TKT exam was delivered for the first time during the conflict. Phase 3 impacted on over 30,240 pupils⁴.

Phase 4

2010 to 2013 saw 3 stages of Phase 4 being delivered. This stage culminated in May 2011 with a TKT awards ceremony at the British Council. Stage One saw the expansion of the project to include putting a trainer in the RESC in Vavuniya through the course by attending study sessions in Jaffna. She passed the TKT exam and received mentor training in Stage Two. All the mentors cascaded the training to over 155 teachers who passed TKT in January 2011. Phase 4 Stage One impacted on 28,603 pupils⁵. Stage Two culminated in October 2012 with a TKT awards ceremony. This phase saw the expansion of the project to 28 RESCs in the country including the new Vavuniya RESC. The mentors cascaded the training to 168 teachers who sat the TKT exam in July 2012. Stage Three saw the consolidation of the project to 28 RESCs with all experienced mentors supervising the distance teacher training course between July 2012 and January

2013. 200 teachers were involved. Sponsors targeted specific areas and increased numbers of teachers in some areas. This meant that in Hatton, Baddegama and Jaffna there were more than 6 teachers being trained by the RESCs: 15, 25 and 10 respectively. Most of the teachers sat the TKT exam in January 2013. The remainder either sat the exam in April or in July or October. They impacted on an estimated 35,106 pupils

Phase 5

The project continued to grow. This stage saw the expansion of the project to 29 RESCs. 1 new mentor from Tangalle completed the University of Cambridge TKT course over two terms at the British Council in Colombo from August to December 2013. This extended the coverage of the project to all but one RESC in the country. All experienced mentors supervised the distance teacher training course between October 2013 and March 2014. 168 teachers were involved. They sat the TKT exam in April 2014. They impacted on an estimate of over15,200 pupils. An impact evaluation was carried out of the project by an international consultant. Results were positive.

Phases 6 to 11

These phases saw annual delivery of the project maintained at similar levels from 2014 to 2020. See the Project Phases table for statistical detail. 2014 saw the inclusion of teachers from Tangalle. Valuable feedback from the RESC audit was also received which pointed out gaps in the coverage which were then filled. 2018 saw the addition of one Provincial English Support Center at

³Ampara, Anuradhapura, Badulla, Balapitiya, Batticaloa, Bolawalana, Chilaw, Eheliyagoda, Galle, Gampaha, Hunguranketha, Hanwella, Hatton, Jaffna, Kahawatte, Kalutara, Kandy, Kurunegala, Mahiyangana, Matale, Matara, Moneragala, Nuwara Eliya, Polonnaruwa and Trincomalee
⁴ This conservative estimate assumes that each teacher has two classes of 40 students.
⁵ Data collected from teacher applications. They were asked for the number of pupils they were teaching that year.

Yakarawatta in the North Western province being used to deliver the project. The final stage of the project ran until March 2020 and was completed just before the pandemic hit. In total the project trained 67 mentors, 2352 teachers and reached approximately 323,846 pupils over its 15 year history.

Factors of success of the project

a. Project Features

The project was successful because it sought to develop the human resource capacity within the education system, equipping teachers with the skills they need to deliver high-quality English teaching in their real-life low-resource classrooms. The skills gained are therefore realistic and meaningful in the teachers’ working contexts. Additionally, the project sought to redress the imbalance between the quality of rural and urban English education with its design as a distance-learning training project that could benefit teachers in rural areas as much as, if not more than their urban counterparts. Importantly, from the Ministry of Education’s perspective, the project worked within existing school structures and curricula and focused on long-term, sustainable development rather than short-term, expensive, resource-based inputs. In 2018-2019, the British Council focused on strengthening the project’s longer-term sustainability, in line with Ministry of Education objectives, by fostering autonomy of project participants. In 2019-2020, the project added a focus on employability skills.

b. The TKT qualification

The TKT certificate is recognised by the Ministry of Education as a benchmark of excellence. The State Secretary to the Education Ministry Mr

Thissa Hewavithana, said in early 2018; “Education is the key to the development of employability skills in our country’s young people...With its focus on training English teachers in practical classroom based skills, this project impacts nationally on the future youth and job market of Sri Lanka.” He also praised the overall objectives of the programme, adding: “I would like to pay tribute to the Council for Business with Britain for recognising that in-service teacher training is at the heart of improving students’ performance in language learning and in terms of language skills for the workplace.”

c. The British Council

The British Council in Sri Lanka is the UK’s international organisation for educational and cultural relations. Its purpose is to enhance the reputation of the UK, to strengthen Sri Lankan-British co-operation in education and culture and to support educational reform in Sri Lanka. Its work is based on partnerships, and the creation of opportunity for people to develop themselves. Through its work in Sri Lanka it aims to enhance the UK’s reputation as a source of expertise and a partner for skills development and increase the use of English as a tool for intercultural understanding. With 70 years of experience in Sri Lanka, the British Council is uniquely placed to understand the context and develop a programme of study that draws on and develops local expertise to ensure that the project is sustainable. In addition, British Council is working in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education to support the education reform agenda of the Government of Sri Lanka in the areas of professionalisation, systemic reform and transition from education to employment under

the TRANSFORM programme. The CBB Project was aligned to both the professionalization strand and the transition from education to employment strand.

The teacher training programme funded by CBB is based on several core principles, which represent the British Council’s basic beliefs about training:

- Trainees become motivated and develop a positive attitude to learning when the training relates to a purpose appropriate to the trainees’ needs and interests and teaching context; for example, the resources, syllabus, learners’ assessment procedures.
- Collaboration through group work has positive effects on learning, generating more discussion and allowing for purposeful learning. Group work also provides participants with valuable feedback from their colleagues.
- Trainees need to become autonomous. Given the appropriate level of support, each person can manage their own learning and set their own goals.
- Through the use of carefully selected documents and well-designed tasks and activities, trainees can develop skills that transfer directly to their classrooms.
- Mentors are exposed to and acquire skills necessary for the autonomous running of the project (administration, training new mentors, monitoring and evaluation, etc.) through their engagement with British Council

consultants. When these skills are transferred, the project gains a crucial element of long-term sustainability.

- Secondary school pupils will become more independent and confident by participating in well managed project work developed to encourage the practice of employability skills.

The Benefits for the Council for Business with Britain

The area of English language skills development and employability skills in young people was a natural fit for the CBB’s CSR agenda. CBB’s members were uniquely placed to recognise the importance and growth of English as a tool for domestic and international business success and to experience the disadvantages of having a workforce lacking in these essential skills. English literacy can:

- create access to education, information and technology
- create social equality and cohesion
- promote local and international communication
- provide a better employability profile

The project also enabled CBB to continue to align itself to what is now a key and highly-topical national debate on both the importance of developing English education and of improving the transition from education to employment.

The partnership between CBB and the British Council was a natural one. As a British non-profit making body, with extensive and highly valued experience in the field of English Language Teaching in Sri Lanka and a wide brand-recognition

across the island, the British Council was uniquely placed to deliver a project that achieves its objectives through its close relationships with both high-level and grassroots educators. In addition, its goal of ensuring ‘mutually beneficial’ relationships between Britain and Sri Lanka ensures that aspects of the programme carry a uniquely British flavour from the design and quality of training materials used through to the adoption of the TKT qualification, an internationally recognised UK product. This project helped bridge the urban and rural divide in education and had a wide geographical spread across Sri Lanka such that it allowed CBB members to ‘give back’ in areas where their operations were based. It also produced pupils who possess more of the employability skills that employers currently need.

Main Project Activities

Pre-Training Course

The British Council every year applied for Ministry of Education approval for the continued delivery of the project. The British Council also checked on the availability of the mentors over the period of the project. Teachers were recruited annually through marketing at the RESCs. Applications were reviewed and appropriate teachers were selected. The selection took place at the British Council and each teacher had to meet specific criteria relating to qualifications, grades taught, level of English and length of service remaining to ensure they and the country would benefit fully from the course. Selectors also strove to ensure a balance of gender, ethnicity, school size and urban-rural schools. Mentors were then refreshed at a briefing and training meeting. They then returned to their RESC to support the delivery of the course.

CBB Distance Training Course

Approximately 6 teachers from the 31 RESCs were typically selected to study the CBB Distance training course. At the beginning of the course, teachers were observed in the classroom by mentors and this provided baseline data from which progress could be measured. The observations also provided mentors with an opportunity to give formative feedback to the teachers.

The teachers then completed 22 units of study at home designed by the British Council to introduce a learner-centred, activity-based methodology embodying recent approaches to teaching English to young learners. They also completed a portfolio of tasks which provide a bridge from the training material to the classroom; the tasks required teachers to try things out in the classroom and reflected on the results.

For the duration of the course teachers met regularly at the RESC for Study Group sessions (SGs) with the mentor to discuss news ideas and how they were applying them in the classroom and of course the results. They also discussed current TKT units being covered. When required, mentors provided further input on problematic TKT syllabus items during the sessions. Towards the end of the course the teachers were observed a second time and the data collected was used to measure progress and development over the course. Once again mentors provided formative feedback to teachers, who produced an action plan for continuing professional development to carry out once the course was finished. The teachers also sat the TKT exam at the end of the course. This was very motivating for teachers as it is an internationally recognised

UK qualification. Three months after the course was completed the teachers were observed a third time by the mentor to determine more long-term impact of the training.

Post training

At the end of the course there was an Awards Ceremony held in Colombo. All participants were invited to receive certificates of achievement and TKT certificates. Chief guests typically included the Honourable Minister of Education and His Excellency the British High Commissioner. This was also an opportunity for members of CBB to raise awareness of the project to the media and wider community as well as meeting the beneficiaries directly.

Project Evaluation

Mentors

RESC moderation visits were organised for each CBB distance training course that ran. These were carried out by training consultants from the British Council. The visit ensured that all courses were run to a high standard and that mentors provided adequate support for teachers. In Phase 4 Stage One experienced mentors were trained to carry out peer moderation during these visits. This helped to ensure the sustainability of the programme. In Phase 4 Stage Two RESC visits were combined through peer moderation with visits from BC training consultants to both monitor progress and compare feedback. In Phase 4 Stage Three mentors carried out peer moderation visits and with extra ODA funding BC training consultants also completed monitoring visits of 18 out of the 30 RESCs in the project. In Phase 5 five BC training consultants with grant funding completed monitoring visits of all RESCs. In

Phase 6, BC training consultants conducted monitoring visits to 30 RESCs. In Phases 7 to 11, BC training consultants conducted monitoring visits to 30 RESCs and 1 PESC. For a sample of the feedback on the project’s impact on pupils and teachers gathered during the 2019-2020 monitoring and evaluation visits, see *appendix 2*.

Teachers

Teachers were evaluated in three ways.

They sat the TKT examination to evaluate their knowledge of the input for the CBB distance training course. They were then awarded a TKT certificate from the University of Cambridge with their scores.

They were observed by mentors in the classroom to gauge how the course impacted on their classroom practice. They were observed twice during the course. The first observation took place in the very early stages on the course and provided baseline data. The second observation took place near the end of the course and allowed the mentor to measure change. In Phase Four Stage Two and Three a third observation was introduced and this was done three months after the course finished to measure settled behaviour in the classroom.

They submitted a portfolio of work to the British Council at the end of their studies in order to evaluate how successfully they were applying the new ideas on the course in the classroom and how they were developing as reflective practitioners. This was graded by British Council consultants and participants received a British Council teaching certificate on submission and successful completion of the portfolio.

Pupils

During Phase 3, The Ministry of Education cooperated with the British Council to obtain data on pupil examination performance before and after teachers have followed training and determine whether there was an improvement in average pupil performance between the two dates. The assumption was that any noticeable improvement in the average marks could be attributed at least in part to the training and its effect on teachers' ability to teach English effectively. The exercise analysed exam results of pupils in classes taught by teachers who have followed the CBB distance training course. Two sets of results for each class were compared, one set for December exams taken before the teacher followed training, the second for December exams taken after the teacher followed the training. The results were analysed to look at the change in average pupil scores between the two periods. Conclusions were drawn depending on an analysis of the results. It was tentatively concluded from the analysis that following the CBB ELT Programme leads to a positive effect on examination performance by pupils in Grade 9 and Grade 10. However, it should be pointed out that the data we were supplied with has led to a small sample size which means that conclusions can only be tentative.

In Phase 4 Stage Two, an alternative method of evaluating pupils was used. Mentors and teachers tested two parallel classes in each of 10 schools supervised by different RESCs at the beginning and end of the course. The results of the tests carried out in Phase 4 Stage 2 were analysed. There was evidence to demonstrate an increase in the speaking ability of classes taught by TKT teachers as compared to classes taught

by non TKT teachers. The following year's results also showed a perceptible improvement in speaking skills.

Detailed information was collected about the classroom performances of students whose teachers participated in the project at eight RESCs in 2018-2019, the results analysed and a report written. The combined results of speaking and writing tests showed stronger overall improvement in the TKT teacher taught classes. While the rate of improvement in writing was higher in the control group, the overall percentage increase of scores in speaking was substantially more significant in the TKT teacher taught groups.

Impact evaluation

From February to April 2014, an external consultant funded by the British Council carried out an impact evaluation of the project from its inception. The impact evaluation used observational data from pre and post course and from blind observations. Of 24 indicators for classroom performance every one showed improvements (50% in 4, 20% within 20 of the 24) affecting lesson planning, classroom management and increased student involvement. Blind observation of 3 cohorts of teachers (not done the course; recently done the course; done the course over 3 years ago) verified the findings and demonstrated the project's sustainable impact as the teachers completing the course over 3 years ago showed the greatest classroom achievement.

Public Relations and media coverage

Communications and visibility contributed to raising the profile of the project with the wider public. The annual TKT awards have enjoyed continued and robust support of the Ministry of

Education since the beginning of the project through the use of the Ministry auditorium for the annual ceremonies and the presence of their key officials in these events. This is a recognition of the project's important contribution to teacher training and to improving professionalization in education in the country.

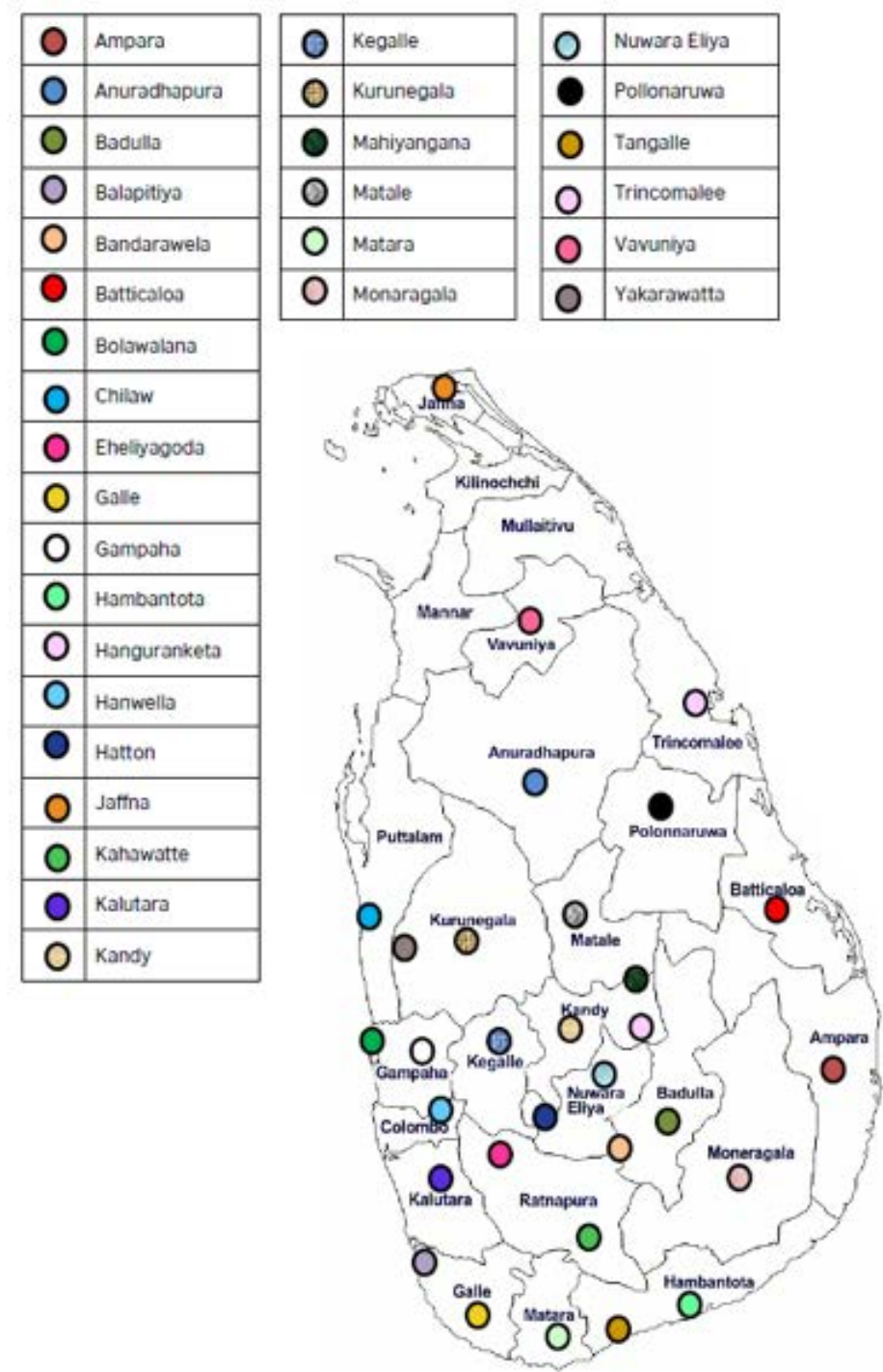
The awards ceremony for the 2018-2019 project that was held in October 2019 was graced by: Mr Mark Prothero, President, Council for Business with Britain, Ms Gill Caldicott, Country Director, British Council Sri Lanka, Ms Hasini Thalagala, Director, English and Foreign Language Branch, Ministry of Education and Mr B D C Biyanwila, Chief Commissioner – Teacher Education, Ministry of Education.

Every year, the CBB and the British Council visited a RESC to meet the RESC mentors, participating local teachers and students. The CBB officials held informal focus groups with the teachers and students to get an insight into the participants' perception of the impact of the teacher training programme on their professional development and learning. These visits demonstrated the commitment of the CBB to the programme. In 2018 CBB Members visited Hanwella RESC in May and were given presentations by the pupils and teachers. They also conducted focus groups with the pupils which allowed them to speak directly to the pupils and teachers. These events attracted media coverage and enhanced the reputation of the British business community in Sri Lanka and the profile of the CBB.

Case Studies

The above information presents the facts of the project. This case study publication though aims to present the human interest and impact stories behind the facts. Teachers were selected to reflect the whole time span and geographic reach of the project. The case studies are based on in depth interviews carried out over three months in 2020. RESC mentors were also asked to contribute stories for the publication. Starting as it did from a series of weekend workshops, the project grew to gain islandwide impact and leaves a powerful legacy. The collaboration of the Council for Business with Britain, the Ministry of Education and the British Council demonstrates the potential of state and private organisations to positively impact on education and is a role model for future collaboration.

Appendix One: RESC geography



Appendix Two: Evidence of Impact – Sample comments and feedback from Monitoring and Evaluation visit reports about the project’s impact on teachers and pupils in Phase 11 2019-2020:

| RESC | Impact on teachers | Impact on pupils |
|---------------|--|--|
| Anuradhapura | Teachers appreciated their increased awareness of employability skills through the course. | “The techniques we use to promote employability skills have resulted in students showing more interest in lessons, more confidence in using English even if they make mistakes... more motivation and creativity in activities.” Techniques they’ve used include ranking activities, group and pair work, activities that engage students in deeper thinking, e.g. Asking questions like “if you were in their situation, what would you do?” According to one teacher, her students had said they liked the employability activities. |
| Batticaloa | Teachers said that the course was confidence-building, (improving) student motivation in class. Teachers were “enjoying different new methods, e.g. techniques in reading, more student-centred practice...making teacher work easier, less TTT.” “Making mistakes – realized that this is part of learning.” “(We are learning to) extend the coursebook materials, promote group work.” | Teachers felt that their students are developing critical thinking- they require students to use their imaginations in activities, e.g. activities that make them think deeper, problem-solving activities. |
| Bolawalana | “The course is enjoyable and developing our teaching strategies.” “Portfolios encourage teachers to be innovative in tasks. | “Students show more confidence and motivation given the opportunity for creative work.” |
| Polonnaruwa | Teachers said that they were developing in “lesson planning, managing the class and giving instructions. We always think about increasing student participation by reducing TTT, using more games for language practice and using motivational techniques. I’m using more English and less L1 in my classes.” | Students are “increasingly becoming more confident in working in groups. They are making more effort to speak in English.” |
| Nuwara Eliya | Teachers said they were improving in their “lesson planning, classroom management, English language knowledge, time management and staging lessons.” | Teachers said that group work was helping in maximizing class participation. “Students learning self-development – making notes, writing answers). |
| Chilaw | The mentors said: “The teachers are enthusiastic about this project. They were in the process of planning out their project, having already decided on the title and type of project.” | “Students are enthusiastic and are excited about the project as a result of the manner in which the teachers have approached the students.” |
| Yakarawaththa | The teachers said that the course was benefitting them because it was very different from Sri Lankan teacher training. They were learning a lot of new teaching styles and methods, which was making teaching easier for them – e.g. simplifying texts, changing questions, etc. They also feel they are learning more about lesson planning, especially planning for all four skills. They like the integrated skills approach – before, a reading lesson would really just be about reading, but now they can involve other skills too. Finally, they feel a little more aware of the importance of English for employability. | “Students are more interested in what they are teaching now, e.g. they like the integration of skills.” “They enjoyed the portfolio task that had to be done in the classroom. “The students are more motivated – the input on motivation helped the teachers to achieve this. Also, they seem more confident, e.g. when the teacher tells them to use only English during an activity.” |
| Hatton | “Improving (our) English knowledge and teaching. Learning new terminology from TKT course work. Better awareness of employability skills and how (we) can integrate development in lessons. Improving (our) lesson planning, ability to use supplementary materials. | “More active student participation because of new types of activities (we) are using from the course. More interest shown.” |
| Jaffna | “Now (I am) using more pair work, group work, eliciting to promote collaboration.” “Enhancing teacher ability in lesson planning.” | “Students demonstrate more interest. They are becoming more responsive, more confident to use English and correct each other’s mistakes.” |
| Kandy | Teachers said that improving their abilities in developing speaking stood out as important benefit from the course. They were learning a lot of activities revolving around this goal. | “Students are more interested and confident, overcoming fear of speaking, are working in pairs more. They use critical thinking in collaborative and creative games. All get involved when (teachers) get students to give presentations.” |



Kalith Thurjaoon RESC Trincomalee 2012

Trincomalee RESC mentor Chulani goes to the schools in her district for lesson observations. In an observation of one of Kalith's lessons, she felt that Kalith would benefit from a deeper dive into the communicative approach in language teaching, so she told Kalith about the CBB TKT course at the RESC. Kalith was just in his 4th year of teaching and keen on continuing his professional development. He had done a couple of short training courses organized by the Zonal and Provincial offices as well as the RESC, but not a more extensive one like the TKT course. The training course was a rare opportunity, and more importantly, he valued his mentor's advice, so he applied for the course.

Coming for the study group sessions during the working week was a challenge for a lot of teachers on the CBB Training courses, and it was no different for Kalith having to travel 30 kilometres from his school in Kinniya to the RESC in Trincomalee town, then doing another 17 kilometres stretch to reach home from the RESC at times on foot. He welcomed the occasional extra sessions at the weekends as this was more manageable. Kalith did however look forward to the "very friendly [environment] with a lot of sharing with the 6 other teachers, on and off lectures, some microteaching, [looking at teaching] skills and grammar," and he would soon forget the arduous journey to and from the RESC.

His sacrifice didn't end there. Back home, he needed to work on his TKT homework. He recalled feeling a lot of pressure at that time: "During that period...loads of school work...[I] had to study [for my course]...portfolio work -I had to do it after every lesson...and prepare school exams." Kalith needed a lot of determination to cope with the overlapping demands of the training, his job, the travel, and his family life! And determination, he had.

Kalith feels now that he took full advantage of the training. He had his ups and downs but he says "then I could accomplish what I had to do." He added that "the portfolio provided material that could be applied." Kalith felt that he developed a good grounding in theory from the comprehensive syllabus of the TKT course, while at the same time, he was able to apply himself in his classroom straight away. "When teaching tenses, I used to teach the structures alone. After following certain teaching techniques, I knew how to apply real life situations and they were very effective when implementing in the classroom.... Students extremely enjoyed games... FSW [Find someone who], Back to the board... without knowing, they were learning and practising [their English]."

After his TKT course, Kalith followed and completed a Bachelor of Education in English. He recalls a time when he delivered an observed lesson. "I was doing ICQs [instruction checking] and CCQs [concept checking] and games." When it was time for feedback, his mentor said, "Have you followed the TKT course?" Clearly, he proved himself right when he had described the course as ".... a significant course that provides everything that a teacher should bear (in mind) in his or her instructional process."

Kalith is currently pursuing a Masters in TEFL. Over the years, he has also taken on academic leadership in his school as Coordinator of the English faculty. He organizes quality circles for English teachers once or twice a month. Through the discussions and sharing in these collaborative events, the other teachers have vicariously benefited from Kalith's TKT knowledge and experience.

The benefits have naturally trickled down to the students. "[In the past], our students were not very keen to learn English, even in this urban area... but this interest has increased." Out of 67 schools in his region, Kalith's school now garners the leading results in English at O and A levels. Kaleth believes this is thanks to his CBB TKT training. He sets a prime example of how to make the CBB training project sustainable. He surely makes his RESC mentor Chulani proud.

Nurasha Sanjeewani Senanayake

RESC Tangalle 2018

Nurasha is a denizen of the Hambantota district. She initially worked in a rural school there for around 8 years then transferred to an urban school in Tangalle in 2018. No sooner had she settled into her new school life than she found out from the RESC Tangalle about the CBB Training course. It was an opportunity, rare during her earlier teaching years, not to be missed. She joined the course in the same year.

Although the RESC was not far from her school, Nurasha occasionally found it hard to juggle after-school extra classes and attending study group sessions on the weekdays. Coping with the

pace of the course became challenging because of her teaching workload, having to teach grades 6 to 11 with no parallel classes, but she received support from her RESC mentors and peers on the course. When she could, she would come half an hour earlier and stay half an hour after study group sessions and her mentors, Ms Gayathri or Ms Laksna, would be there to help her. She also contacted her mentors and peers on other days when she needed help.

Nurasha felt that the course syllabus was comprehensive and quite lengthy. There were a lot of new approaches to learn, and she found that the model activities and lesson plans provided in the workbook served well to show how these were applied, for example, in teaching reading and speaking, lesson planning, and giving feedback on writing and speaking. She wished there was more time in her course for microteaching but there were a lot of topics to cover in 6 months. The portfolio tasks provided the practice. Nurasha recalls a reading lesson she had planned for her portfolio, which she improved based on her mentor's comments. When she delivered the lesson in class, she saw how her new approach to teaching reading got her learners engaged: "they became active in the lesson," she said.

It was difficult for Nurasha to decide what aspects of the training she liked the most. She initially said "All!" but she managed to narrow this down to the course book, with the glossary booklet, and the way each study session lesson was organized. Asked what the best classroom practices were that she had learnt from the course, Nurasha chose the different ways of planning lessons and error correction techniques using the correction code, use of gestures especially finger correction and use of facial

expressions. “Before the course, I corrected students' books by putting a cross and writing the correct answers but after the course, I used a correction code. Students really like it very much. I explain the code then display it in class. I use it to correct students’ work, and students use it for peer correction. They try to find mistakes.” Students correct their work and return them to each other with the corrections and say, “You check my work.” The boost in students’ confidence, raised interest in using English, and her effective approach to reading lessons have gained encouraging students’ remarks such as, “Teacher, the lesson is nice today”, “Now I can answer the questions given below the text”, and “Teacher, we will do homework.”

Asked what she thought had been the impact of her CBB training on her school, Nurasha proudly replied “I think what I learnt, I was able to apply in the classroom, that’s why my students participated actively in lessons and because of that I was able to improve my students’ results in the O/L examinations by 15%. In 2018, 39% pass, last year 54%, grade 11 had an increase of 15% pass.”

Nurasha continues to refer to the course book and workbook from the training. She regrets that there were only two lesson observations in the course because she found her mentor’s feedback helpful, and she would have liked to have more. Nurasha has shared correction techniques with other subject teachers in her school. The positive feedback from them has prompted her principal to say “[the practice] could be a policy.”

K A S A Kaluarachchi

RESC Kurunegala 2016

Amali presently teaches English to secondary grades and Appreciation of English Literary Text to Grades 10 and 11 at the semi-urban national school in the Kurunegala district. A mother of two young children, she’s in her 13th year of teaching. She found out about the CBB English Teaching Training course during a visit of the RESC mentor to her school. She had a fairly good idea about the TKT then and thought that the prospect of obtaining the international teaching qualification would be a boost to her professional development, so she took the course from 2016 to 2017.

Amali felt that the expectations from her and the 3 other teachers in the course were made crystal clear in the course orientation on the first day. This was a self-study course, and teachers had to come to each study session prepared. They would have to read the TKT course book units for the week, look up new terminology, complete workbook tasks and exercises, attempt test practice at the end of the unit in the TKT course book, and pencil in ideas for the portfolio. Study group sessions were on weekdays after school. The litany of the work involved didn’t faze Amali, and flipping through the pages of the coursebook, workbook and portfolio, she thought the work would be “manageable.” She was in for a surprise because soon enough, she realized that the amount of work was much more than she had imagined. Luckily that didn’t discourage her.

The course was a big bag of new learning and experiences for Amali, and she was quick to take them to her classroom, continuously using her

new collection of strategies and methods whenever possible. For example, she learnt that constantly correcting students in speaking was not good practice. She explains, “I let them speak, I would do on the spot correction for accuracy [tasks] but for fluency, I did not correct [them] and they went on speaking, with lots of mistakes, but they spoke a lot! Students tried to use whatever language they knew, tried to find language they needed [for the] topic.. [they] became more confident and not worried.” As for writing, when she switched from writing corrections on students’ written work herself to using correction codes, she was delighted to see that her students were enjoying correcting their own mistakes.

Amali learnt about instruction checking questions (ICQs) and concept checking questions (CCQs) to check understanding of instructions and meaning of language. When she started using them in her lessons, students stopped asking lots of questions during the activities, enabling more meaningful and successful practice. From the course, Amali also learnt different ways of forming groups and she began using a lot of new activities for freer speaking in groups. She said, “Grade 10 and 11 students liked working and learning with peers. They discussed a lot. They enjoyed pyramid discussions.” Group discussions built good rapport and enabled peer learning among the students. In project work, like making posters, Amali assigned roles and special tasks that matched students’ strengths and abilities, “so everyone was contributing.” In addition, introducing classroom language in her classes resulted in better participation and increased learner autonomy because of less need for teacher support. She also introduced new materials: “students got attracted to them -

videos and songs, warmers, different types of activities.” In reading lessons, she didn’t just ask students to answer comprehension questions, but did running dictation and jigsaw reading.

Amali’s mind was racing when she spoke about the new things she learnt and applied in her classroom and how they benefited her students. In the final question posed to her, “What did you like most about the course?” her answer was very specific. She said she liked the sample lesson plans and portfolio tasks. Demonstration lessons were also very useful. She went on to say that their mentor had demonstrated lessons in a very useful manner. She clearly explained why she used one thing and not the other, and she discussed the lesson further. During their study sessions, her TKT group did some microteaching and their mentor always gave useful and encouraging feedback. She was full of praise for her mentor: “Mithila ma’am was a treasure for us; we are trying to follow the way she’s teaching...”

Vindya Sandeepani Cooray

RESC Matale 2018

Vindya had been teaching for around 3 years when she began the CBB teacher training course in 2018, so writing lesson plans wasn’t new to her. She had been used to writing her plan; all the teachers were expected to prepare a written plan before a lesson at her school, but the teachers would design their own template based on their individual teaching needs. The flexibility seemed sensible. However, Vindya could never quite figure out why, in spite of her lesson plans,

she had difficulty achieving her aims. When asked what was the best practice she had learnt from the CBB course, she was happy to report that it was first and foremost lesson planning.

Lesson planning seemed to be the root of the other changes she made in her teaching that has helped her solve the mystery of unmet lesson expectations. In her TKT course, she saw a different format and learnt about other components in a lesson plan. “I didn’t use to pay attention to personal aims, aims for the students, yes, but not specific, and also stage aims. When I divided a lesson into stages with specific stage aims, [it was] beneficial for the teacher and students, and I was achieving aims better.” Vindya said that the other components of the lesson plan and their importance became clearer, and that attention to detail in her planning has helped her to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in her lessons.

Related to lesson stages was integrating language skills in a lesson. “I was under the impression that when giving lessons, one lesson should be focused on only one skill, so I used to practise skills in separate lessons, but found out that you can integrate skills in one lesson. Lessons became more interesting, with opportunities to speak or listen, practise a song.”

She also learnt about varying interaction patterns. Vindya started forming mixed groups with weak and strong students together. She says, “I assigned responsibilities to students when grouping, gave roles. [This was a] new experience for the students - to present something they have done, students felt proud, [the] weak ones also came up with a sentence or two. It’s the best feeling ever as a teacher to see them, specifically the weaker ones interacting

better in the classroom... it was the biggest problem at school... [they had] no help at home, so definitely something rare.”

The next best practice she learnt from the course was motivation. She says, “The TKT course helped because I learnt that I should be motivating my students more.” Vindya learnt about the use of supplementary materials, which boosted her students’ interest in her lessons. “ [Eventually] they [my students] would bring supplementary material voluntarily and ask for my opinion on them.”

Vindya also realized the importance of adapting materials to students’ needs. “At first I was doing just the course book,” she explains. An extreme example was returning to basics to help two students in her Grade 9 class who were struggling to cope even in other subjects in their mother tongue. With a lot of teacher support during and beyond class time, starting from teaching them the alphabet, they gradually started learning words, then simple sentences. “Xxx [one of the students] was not the type to answer in a lesson or participate, but he began to change. Sometimes he would just listen to others, then would imitate. I saw that he was making an effort,” she said.

The effort didn’t end in the classroom. Changes that Vindya made in her teaching altogether produced students who became more interested in applying themselves outside their English classes. Children began to play a more active role in extra-curricular activities related to English, including English camps and English assemblies. Students put together news bulletins, religious observances, and poetry competitions in English. “Everyone wanted to take part,” she said. At times, the grade 10 and

11 students were asked to help the younger ones. Last year, Vindya and the other English teachers in her school took involvement in their extra-curricular English further by inviting a neighbouring school to join them in a “Who wants to be a millionaire?” competition which was a great success.

This is Vindya’s story of the impact of her TKT training on her teaching and students’ learning. Clearly, the effect of Vindya’s improved lesson planning has gone a long way. “We’ve made a small difference,” she says. Definitely an understatement!

G.D.S. Nilanthi

RESC Matara 2010

I can teach a thousand students, I can control!

Nilanthi took part in the CBB English Teaching Training project from 2010 to 2011 but to this day, she lives TKT! She joined the course with the disposition of an enthusiastic learner who was then eager to learn and try out new things in her teaching. While doing the course, she quickly took her TKT learning to her classroom and then she saw that it brought about positive changes in her students. This reinforced her readiness to make lasting changes in her teaching practice. Soon enough, there was no going back to pre-TKT training course teaching ways. Student expectations gradually changed and she had to deliver to meet these expectations.

Before her CBB Training course, Nilanthi had attended other courses, but she feels that none of them have been as beneficial as the TKT course. The portfolio, enabling application of theory in the TKT course book through designing,

planning and delivering lessons or activities in the classroom, makes the TKT course stand out. “I had to think deeply,” she said. This practical aspect in the training was a novelty for Nilanthi at that time, and she soon got the hang of it. Portfolio work strongly motivated her. She would always try to outdo herself, “I wrote many plans and selected the best one for the portfolio.” The hard work paid off. “I became very dedicated, talented, I got motivated...now I know I can do any lesson. I know what is necessary for the lesson, what students like and don’t like and [how to] do my lessons fully.” Nilanthi also feels that being observed by her RESC mentor at the beginning and end of the course and getting feedback on her strengths and areas to work on was likewise an invaluable element in the training. The course observations use a detailed checklist on teaching skills and lesson planning.

The detailed lesson plan template used in her course provided Nilanthi with a helpful model for effective planning. It raised her awareness of the different things a teacher needs to consider when planning. She said that before the course, she had relied on simply covering the pages of the coursebook. “I just went to class, asked student [to put their] hands up and down, say good morning...tell them the topic, read and did the lesson as shown in the text book, ” she said. She quickly adopted the use of the TKT course template as it helps her to plan more interesting lessons with a variety of activities and practice in skills and language.

She also learnt about learning styles, which makes it easier for her to group students effectively, as well as how to select, adapt and supplement course book material to suit her learners’ interests and preferences for learning.

She says, “I select supplementary materials that use familiar contexts, [relevant] to their surroundings, culture and environment.” In other words, she personalizes the materials. In a Grade 8 lesson on birds in the new course book, she gathered her own pictures of Sri Lankan birds, and adapted their descriptions to suit her students’ level. She said, “They liked my lesson more than the text book’s.” Using a range of materials and activities in her lessons, like storytelling, language games, group work, listening and writing activities, ensured that she was catering to her learners’ different learning styles.

The correction code was one of Nilanthi’s favourite techniques from the course. She would post the code on the walls and ask students to find out what the codes meant. She continues to use these codes with most of the levels that she teaches. For the lower levels, she would start with using 5 codes, and give more for the higher levels. Nilanthi would check their own corrections and give them support if they needed further correction. The use of this correction tool encourages independence in learners.

Nilnathi feels that the most significant take away from these changes in her teaching is the change in students’ attitudes towards using and learning English. Comments like “We can’t do it,” “I can’t understand” have become things of the past. Students are much less concerned about making mistakes. “They don’t care about what others thought,” she says. They are also interested in using the language. “They wanted me to work more periods!” That’s the downside for the teacher, but Nilanthi quite happily indulges her students when she can.



S G H Dananjana Subaveera RESC Bandarawella 2020

Harshi teaches at a small rural school in Uva Province. The school has only 43 students. She teaches grades 5,8, 9,10 and 11 and she loves her job. Although she faced some challenges while doing the course, her overall comments were extremely positive.

The major impact of the course she believed was on her planning and preparing a lesson or sequence of lessons. She felt that prior to the course she was untrained in this despite having a Higher National Diploma in English and using the Teacher’s Guide for the grade. Prior to the course she didn’t really plan and prepare her lessons. It was in this area that she felt she really improved because of the course. She also focused more on developing the language and skills of the students. Earlier, she just wanted to complete the lesson within time and check the correct answers. The course showed her she had to do more. She had to see the students as individuals with different strengths and weaknesses and focus on improving these. Now she says her students love learning English, and they have also started speaking in English outside classroom. She also now goes beyond the Teacher’s Guide and uses other reference and supplementary materials

As she did the course in 2020 she learnt not only about teaching English but also about the topic

of employability skills. Raising awareness of employability skills was integrated into the course that year. She reported that her students found this very interesting. She had them do some research and her students’ choice was to focus on the tea plantations. Students went home and explored the estates, interviewed tea pluckers and brought the information to school. She helped them prepare the questionnaire. She said they enjoyed this and it exposed them to different skills and she felt it will be useful in determining their future goals too.

She also integrated employability skills into her classroom lessons. For example, in the grade 8 textbook the roleplay is based on a situation in the library. She expanded that and asked the students to find out about at least 5 other roles in the school (eg principal, teacher, clerk) and list 5 duties of these roles. Just as in the tea plucker project, the students spent a lot of time on this and enjoyed the independence of working in groups. They asked her ‘Teacher shall we do more activities of this type?’ When the lessons are related to the practical lives, they preferred learning. When the teachers of other subjects were absent and when they found free time, they came in search of her ask for her help in preparing their project. And they told her once ‘Teacher shall we do this type similar tasks in our future lessons too’

Another example was when in grade 10 she did a lesson based on job vacancies in the Sunday Observer. She divided the class into groups, had them select a job that they would like to do, then organised a debate where each group had to argue which job was the best. This she said worked really well.

When asked what she liked about the course she commented that she really appreciated when her mentor came to observe her. This helped her to identify her strength and weaknesses in her teaching and she felt her teaching developed because of this. She gave an example of this. In her first observation she received feedback from the mentor that she didn’t have to repeat all the answers on the board if the students had got them all correct. It was fine to move on. She felt she changed in her teaching approach and now her students feel more comfortable, not stressed and confused, as she gives them more time to do tasks properly. What she disliked about the course was sitting for the final examination for all the three modules on the same day. She would have much preferred sitting for the three modules on three different days. A fair point!

R A Maheshi Nisansala Suranjeewa

RESC Anuradhapura 2015

Maheshi comes across as a very energetic, lively, enthusiastic teacher eager to talk about her experiences and love for teaching. She qualified with a National Diploma of teaching English from Pasdunrata College of Education. She now teaches grades 6 to 10 in a semi urban area in the North Central Province. At the time of doing the training course though she was working in a very rural school in a village area. She wanted to do something for her students as she felt they were neglecting learning the English language. She had heard about a course being run at the RESC and applied to do it.

When asked to reflect on the benefits of the course she said the course both increased her language proficiency and developed her professional skills. Some of the key things she learnt included how to give and check instructions, how to use gestures and mime when teaching vocabulary, how to divide the board up into sections for example vocabulary in one part, pictures in another and mindmaps and brainstorming in another, and how to use different interaction patterns (like onion rings and iron circle) to maximise student speaking. She said that because of the course she learnt various methods of planning lessons, using visual aids and the importance of setting the scene at the beginning of the lesson.

She made a big impact on her students. Before the course her focus was on delivering the coursebook materials within the time limit. However after the course she started to use various ways of setting the context at the beginning of a lesson. She would use different methods of eliciting and miming vocabulary and use a lot of language games. She explains, “I used some simple games to develop their interest and enhance their vocabulary. Once, a student said “teacher, can we learn English whole day” as they love those interesting games so much.”

She made a big impact on her small rural school. Because of the knowledge that she gained on the course, she organised some projects to improve her students’ language learning. She was behind the day for “language games” which was an extra curricular activity for students on Saturdays. The students came to the school and they practised their English through songs and language games. The principal loved it. Later the school won an international award because of it.

One of the most important things that she learnt about was lesson planning. She felt that this had the most important impact on student learning in her English classroom. She learnt how to manage the time in a way that was conducive to learning and also practice the content, how to do effective classroom management and how to handle various types of students. She also learnt how to reflect on her practice and now keeps a daily record for just this purpose.

The course opened a lot of doors for Maheshi. She went on to do the 120 hour National Development Bank funded English for Teaching Project which both increased her language proficiency and developed her teaching skills. She is now increasingly involved in Zonal Education Office activities like making presentations, writing scripts, judging, and conducting seminars. She saw the TKT course as a bridge to allow her to move from the rural school to a more urban school where she has continued to develop professionally and is now competent with technology. She sees the RESC as her second home and remains in contact with her mentors Shamila and Niluka today.

J J Kingsley

RESC Ampara 2016

Kingsley is a teacher in an urban national school in Kalmunai in the Eastern Province. He did the course in 2016 and his career really took off after it. He is now the co-ordinator for English Language in his school of 3800 students. He coordinates eleven English teachers both primary and secondary. He assigns timetables, holds meetings, solves queries, and cascades seminars for the Provincial Department of

Education in Trincomalee. He was also involved in the Improving Teacher Educators in Sri Lanka Project and attended the 10 day Teacher Educator Course in Yakarawatha last year. He was also a trainer for the National Development Bank 21st century skills project.

He became a volunteer teacher after he graduated and he has now been teaching for 25 years. He loves teaching. He really enjoyed the materials and the study sessions on the course. It was the first time he had come across ways to teach grammar in interesting ways. Because of the materials on lesson planning and designing activities he found it much easier to go into his classroom. The study sessions were a revelation. He experienced microteaching for the first time where the mentor would take on the role of teacher and the TKT group would become students. The mentors demoed activities in this way and he found it interesting to experience how a student felt. The portfolio work he also found valuable. It allowed him to design activities, deliver them in the classroom and then reflect on their success or failure. He learnt a lot from this process.

When asked what he liked and disliked about the training he praised the resource persons. He said the mentors were very friendly and helpful. He also appreciated the support of the other participants on the course. They had a wide range of experience and he found sharing experiences with the group very beneficial. Even now he says he actively seeks help from less experienced or newly appointed teachers. What he didn’t like was the fact that the RESC was 20 kilometres away from his school which made attending study sessions after school hours rather challenging.

The best classroom practices he learnt from the course were lesson planning and classroom management (using different interaction patterns). Before the course he used more conventional methods like lecturing and was reluctant to allow the students to make noise. Post course he felt he could really manage the teaching and learning process more effectively and he would take the students outside of the classroom very often to do activities. His classes of 30 to 40 students could then speak loudly outside without bothering the neighbouring classes. His students have responded positively to the different interaction patterns he now uses which he says keeps them interested and motivated in their lessons. They love his games like Bingo and commonly ask, “Sir, shall we do a lesson with a game tomorrow too?” His attitude to error correction also changed post course. Before the course he would give lots of short tests and then spend hours marking them at home. Now he has taught them how to use correction codes and they do self and peer correction. This they find much more interesting and motivating as they are learning from their mistakes and he can spend more leisure time at home.

He is popular with his fellow teachers. He loves sharing his learning with his colleagues at school. They get together and prepare new activities and tasks for language and skill development. His colleagues call him to do model classes with their classes and there is now a strong community of teachers and yes, he does use the TKT materials. He feels very lucky to have obtained the TKT qualification.

He has a son in grade 12 at his school. He taught him in the O level grade 11 class. His son loved his father’s language lessons and told him he was

teaching very well. Now his son teaches his mother. He says, “Come here, sit here... I’ll tell you ideas I learnt from dad...”



K M Wathsala Ruwanmali Kuruppu RESC Hanwella 2020

Wathsala teaches grades 6,9, 10, 11 at an urban school in the Western Province. She has been teaching for 13 years and she has large classes of typically 45 students. The course has been very helpful to her with such large classes. She learnt the value of effective classroom management, the need for simple clear instructions, the need for practice of functional language and the positive impact of varied interaction patterns. She now has students who are much more confident in speaking in English.

As she did the course in 2020 she learnt not only about teaching English but also about the topic of employability skills. Raising awareness of employability skills was integrated into the course that year. She reported that she started the employability project in the third term with her grade 9 class. She grouped the students and they worked together, researched background knowledge on typical jobs in different parts of the country. They used the internet and the library to find information and they spoke to their parents about jobs in different generations. She felt that the integration of employability skills made a big impact on students’ ideas and future planning. She reported that it made students

aware of thinking about their goals and the importance of starting to think about them. She felt that because they had done lots of research into different jobs they now knew how to achieve these jobs. As they said, “Now we have many ideas about jobs.” She said it expanded their career horizons. She also felt that the development of critical thinking skills, another inclusion under employability skills, was very important. Here she got them to take on different job roles – for example, asking them to take on the role of characters (eg gem miner and gem merchant) and the students had to argue for which job is more important and/or difficult. This really made them think.

When asked what she liked and disliked about the training she explained that she liked the portfolio work but she expected the past papers a little earlier. One of the best classroom practices she learnt from the course was identifying and selecting aims. Before the course she only focused on the main and subsidiary aims. She didn’t phrase them in terms of what the students would be able to do by the end of the class. She felt this shift to a student perspective was important as they are the reason for teaching. She also learnt about having personal aims when planning lessons so she was continually learning. She learnt lots of techniques like asking questions, correcting learner language using error correction codes, giving examples for language practice, doing demos, using different interaction patterns and learning how to reflect on lessons and self evaluate.

Her students have responded positively to her techniques post course. Before the course she did not use a correction code, but now she has prepared a code. She says that the students like the correction code and follow it. They like the

happy faces on their work and they like to self correct and peer correct. They find it motivating. She says this has made the class work flexible and time saving. Here are some quotes from her students, “We like the extra activities given after reading lessons,” “We enjoy the listening activities like ‘Telephone’ “, “We like activities which are done at the beginning of the class” [ie Warmers] .

The most important impact of the course on student learning in her English classroom is the change in the students’ attitude to learning English. She gives one example of this. She took on a grade 11 class who had got lost in grade 10. They didn’t want to learn English and had a negative attitude to it. But she insisted it was very useful and she managed to make them work with the language in interesting and motivating ways. And she says it was not because she forced them to do it. It was because they learnt the value of learning. The result:5 students with B passes and most with credits. In addition they are now looking for ways to learn English on their own.



W M Sanjeewani Wijesooriya RESC Hangaranketha 2018

Sanjeewani has a National Diploma in Teaching and has been teaching for 5 years. She teaches grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 13, a very heavy load, in a rural school in Central Province. Typical class size is 20.

When asked to reflect on the benefits of the training course, she immediately responded with phonology! Both in the distance teacher training course materials and in the study sessions, phonology is explored. Both theory and practice are covered, and she was introduced to lots of practical activities that she could use with her students. Her increased knowledge and her exposure to a variety of activities to teach and practice phonology with her students, impressed her students so much that they now want to watch videos and listen to the sound of the language. Not just that, they also want to speak like the people on the videos.

Another benefit was that she learnt how to plan her lessons creatively. Now she says she is writing lesson plans which motivate her learners. Before she said that at the college everything had to be corrected and it was all very theoretical. The lessons were simple and in teaching practice she never really received useful feedback. She said anybody could teach her lessons because they were so simple. Now she says her lesson plans are more complex as she says they make the students be more “creative - not just sitting in the class and listening to the teachers like robots.”

She now makes full use of a variety of interaction patterns in her lessons. She does a lot of groupwork and includes very creative tasks. For example in one lesson the coursebook input was parts of a tree. She adapted the coursebook and pasted all the parts of the tree around the classroom. The students had to run and label the parts correctly. She said the students really enjoyed running around the class labelling the lexical items. Then she took them out to a real tree and elicited the parts again. She has discovered that these kinds of activities make the

students much more attentive. She also finds that when she asks concept checking questions now, her students have definitely grasped the concept of the new target language well. The fact that one of her Grade 6 students won first place in a Ministry of Education English day competition recently she attributes to her phonology lessons producing better speakers.

She realized the importance of the portfolio in the course – this was the practical side of what she learned. Teachers had to complete portfolio tasks on each unit of learning. So, for example if she was doing a unit on teaching reading, she would then develop a reading activity, try it out in her classroom and then reflect on its success. She enjoyed doing those lessons with students because they found them very motivating. She saw it as a great way of putting theory into practice.

One of the challenges she faced was when the Cambridge TKT exams were delayed due to the Easter Sunday bombings in April. That was the only obstacle. This caused curfews so she could not attend the study sessions for a while. However, the RESC mentors could be contacted by phoned and the mentors encouraged them to study on their own until the situation changed. The exams were quickly rescheduled at a later time.

Asked if she would recommend the course to others, she eagerly stated that she would tell people how methodical the course was and tell them to learn well to get optimum output. She argues that she got both theory and practice on the course and then when she was assessed on her learning not only did she get a Cambridge certificate she also received a strong pass (the top mark) for her portfolio of work over the

course. Thus she felt both theory and practice were assessed within the course. Is she going to continue to professionally develop her skills? She now has the confidence to do certification work. She wants to go on and do a drama course and learn how to use theatre and literature to improve English language.



G Vinothini
RESC Hatton 2019

Vinothini lives and works in Hatton. What's more, the RESC is right in her school compound, so she didn't have to travel long distances to be at the TKT study sessions on weekdays at the end of her school day. She would get there on time, if not early. Her peers mostly worked a long distance from the RESC. Unlike them, Vinothini would walk in to the RESC at any other times whenever she needed support or had questions about her coursework, and one of her RESC mentors always willingly obliged.

This convenient access to the RESC helped Vinothini cope with the workload of her TKT course, considering she was teaching English on a full timetable to 9 different grades in her school. However, the real driving force behind her motivation in the course was firstly, her keen desire to get the most out of the training, and secondly, its successful completion prepared her for the TKT test that led to an internationally recognized teaching qualification: "I feel really proud about my participation."

Vinothini joined the CBB English Teaching training in 2019. Asked if she found the integration of employability skills development in that batch's course useful, her answer was a resounding 'Yes,' but with a hint of regret, "I'm worried about my students (Grades 10 and 11)." She explained that during these two years in her students' education, English teaching is strongly test-oriented and the students "write and write, always writing and writing" in class; there is hardly room in their required schoolwork to develop their speaking and communication skills. Meantime, applying methods she had learnt from the portfolio tasks with her younger secondary classes in Grades 6, 7 and 8, Vinothini pointed out the contrast, "students tried to talk even if (their) English was wrong." One example of such a task was a group work activity where she gave students in her Grade 7 class a situation "related to real life" and asked the students to create the script for a role play and then to act the scripts out in the class. Clearly, students were building their skills in collaboration, creativity and communication in an enjoyable task where they freely practised their English.

The use of group work in class is what Vinothini considers to be the best classroom practice that she has taken away from her course. It was the springboard to developing her skills in adapting materials in the students' course book and designing more communicative activities for her students. Before the TKT course, "I would've (just) taught whatever was in the book." Vinothini feels that she is now better able to exploit materials in the students' course book. In her reading lessons, she asks 'What if questions' to go beyond comprehension questions that are otherwise "boring for them." She uses miming games to explain verbs. She does different

grammar activities, gives quizzes and sets up competitions in her lessons. "Students participate enthusiastically. The students ask "Shall we do this game again, Teacher?"" Vinothini firmly said: "Before, it [my teaching] was teacher-centred and later it became learner-centred."

Asked what she thought the impact of her training had been on her school, Vinothini answered: "There was a change in English term test marks of weaker learners. The students who got less than 40 reached 40." In each of Vinothini's English classes, there would be 3 to 5 students who couldn't speak English, but they started to participate, and with the help of stronger students, "they also try...increased their interest in English, got more motivated and achieved better results." There remain a few very shy students who Vinothini helps individually.

Vinothini shares her new ideas with other English teachers in her school, particularly during their regular English Week Programme. In this monthly event, all English teachers in school organize student activities for English immersion of students through interactive activities and games.

Finally, asked what else, post-TKT course, she would like to improve, develop or try out in the future, Vinothini answered: "Grade 10 and 11 communication skills." Vinothini continues to work on her professional development. She is currently following a Master's degree course on Teaching Literature in a Second Language at the Open University.

Vishna Ediriweera

RESC Yakarawatta 2017

Vishna had just been teaching for 3 years when she did the CBB teacher training course in 2017. She joined the course to update her knowledge of language and to learn new teaching techniques. When she received the materials, she was quite surprised by the depth of coverage of the TKT syllabus, and this increased her enthusiasm for the training.

Vishna welcomed the workload. She enjoyed preparing for the study group sessions, which entailed a fair amount of self-study and homework. She enjoyed the lesson demonstrations of her mentor in the study group sessions and found them to be excellent models of good practice. She recounts an impressive phonology lesson demonstrated by her mentor, Enoka, that she took to her own classroom. She hadn't covered phonology in her lessons before. It was student-centred with a lot of drilling and her students enjoyed the lesson. Vishna also enjoyed doing the portfolio. "It was extremely useful to show the practical aspects of what I learnt in the lessons." But she did point out a flaw in the portfolio booklet. She needed more pages! She said, "There were specific questions to answer but the space was limited." Vishna had to paste an extra 5 to 6 full pages to be able to explain what was really done in the classroom.

Having a lot to write about reflected the range of learning Visha applied in her teaching that she wanted to show her mentors. "Every day, I was able to update my knowledge in language as well as in teaching in a very productive manner," she said. On the top of her list of best practice were:

using less teacher talking time and promoting more student talking time, using instruction checking questions and concept checking questions, error correction techniques and providing more controlled and freer practice activities. The benefits for her learners of applying these practices in her teaching were plenty and interrelated. The new techniques in error correction promoted learner autonomy, increased motivation and encouraged more speaking in class, thus increasing student talking time. Checking understanding of instructions for activities saved time and facilitated efficient practice. Asking concept checking questions helped with understanding of meaning leading to the learners' ability to apply language successfully in practice. This in turn led to students enjoying using the language, which then motivated them to practice more. The result was a virtuous cycle for enjoying learning English.

She explained the change in detail : "Earlier I used a lot of teacher talking time during the lesson but now I give more chances to the students to use the language and express their ideas which give them the chance to use English in the class. I used to explain the instructions but later I learnt that using ICQs was a better way to make students understand instructions. I practised using CCQs after the course which saved much time and effort spent to explain certain concepts."

Vishna put together different techniques learnt from the course into a lesson for Grade 9. The task was for the students to work in groups to create a story using a given set of words. It was a competition for the most creative story. "Every student had to participate in the group with at least one or two sentences." She had taught them the elements of building stories. She

organized groups according to abilities. She also gave vocabulary support to groups that needed it. Peer help and self-correction took place. "The final result, I got so many creative stories from the group," she said. Not much correction was needed in the end. Vishna felt that the lesson was particularly successful given that the students did not like doing writing tasks. Her aim was for students to be creative, and she achieved this. Motivation was high.

Her students have taken this motivation outside of their classrooms. Participation in extra-curricular activities in English has increased. Regular sectional meetings with the students, which used to be conducted in Sinhala, are now mostly conducted in English. In these regular 30-minute meetings among different levels, students take turns to showcase their language abilities in poetry, quizzes, drama skits, and songs.

Vishna concludes that the course has been "extremely effective" as it included all the aspects related to teaching English: "It helps us to update and modify our knowledge in ELT. It provides clear guidance on key aspects like language, lesson planning and managing the teaching learning process. This TKT course is as important to a teacher as tools are important to a carpenter."



Seevaratnam Sureshkumar

RESC Jaffna

Sureshkumar had 10 years of English teaching experience when he participated in the training course. He believes that continuous professional development is important, and teachers need constant self-reflection and continued learning to develop. At that point in his teaching career, he felt that his traditional ways of teaching, using both L1 and L2, weren't really working with his students. "They were not responding," he explained. He had done a lot of reading and refreshed his knowledge of theory, but he feels that it was in the TKT course where he learnt how to apply theory effectively in his practice.

Throughout the course, he learnt different strategies and new techniques in the different aspects of teaching, from planning to execution of his lesson plans. From lead-ins and warm up activities to instructions, classroom management to error correction, from staging lessons and different practice activities to different ways of giving feedback. He related his new learning to his current practice to better understand the pitfalls of the old and benefits of the new. For example, before the course, his reading lessons did not include the three key stages of pre, while and post reading. When teaching grammar, he would focus only on the mechanical process of sentence production and correcting written work. When he applied the PPP model for

teaching language (presentation-practice-production), he did not include practice of the language in speaking and listening. He saw ways of adapting coursebook material and using simple resources like pictures to generate speaking activities and he saw how to adapt the use of reading materials to provide listening practice.

Sureshkumar also learnt a lot from feedback on his two observed lessons during the course. In his first observed lesson, his mentor gave him “plusses and minuses,” as they do, and gave him alternative ways for managing his learners and different ways of giving controlled and freer practice. On his second observation, he learnt that he needed to give shorter, more efficient instructions, reduce teacher talking time, and use more group work. Getting detailed feedback helped him focus on areas he needed to improve.

He enjoyed applying the new methods and techniques in his lessons because he saw how they made an impact on his learners. He said, “Students who hated English lessons started having interest to learn English.” He experimented on methods he wanted to do differently, and he asked his peers a lot of questions when he needed help. When he faced drawbacks in his lessons, he would note these down and reflected on why they did not go well. He would act on improving in these areas. His students began to love learning English. “They brought me sweets, which embarrassed me a lot because they didn’t earn a lot, but they would bring me something,” he said.

Sureshkumar followed this learning process throughout his training – reflect, learn, apply, improve. He explains : “The exercise book, expansive reading material, portfolio, and self-

learning kit altogether gave a real teaching experience to understand and succeed in the process of learning. I had to spend a lot of time. [Ultimately], it is really reflection of my own teaching that helped me to improve myself professionally.” This is Sureshkumar’s message to teachers on how to make the most out of training.

Sureshkumar has moved to teacher training in his current role as Resource Person at the Jaffna RESC, although he continues to conduct workshops for GCE O level students on English language and literature. Sureshkumar’s philosophy on professional development continues to reflect on his approach in training teachers in quality circles. After teachers observe his model lessons, he gets them to reflect on the techniques he used that are relevant to the areas teachers want to improve on. As opposed to him telling teachers what they should do, he encourages teachers to do their own reflection to discover how other methods work better.

Bhakthi Poornima Sandunwala

RESC Bolawalana 2016

Bhakthi participated in the CBB teacher training course from 2016 to 2017. After hearing about the course from the RESC mentors, she did further research about the TKT then decided to follow the course. This decision came with her full commitment to making the most of the training. Her biggest challenge then was time. She was just on her second year of teaching with

a full teaching load in her rural school; at the same time, she was studying for her degree in English and English literature. But with good time management and continued support from her mentors, she managed the workload well, hardly missing a study group session. She completed her portfolio on time and achieved a Band 3 in all the modules of the TKT exams.

The TKT syllabus was mostly familiar to Bhakthi, but she learnt a lot of new technical terminology, like ICQs(instruction checking questions), CCQs (concept checking questions), scaffolding, to name but a few. “I loved the content of the book,” but she found the module on classroom management with its practical topics to be the most useful for her. She learnt the importance of proper instructions, managing materials and classroom resources, using different correction techniques, setting up group work, using varied interaction patterns and the different roles of the teacher.

Learning new strategies and a closer look at different methodologies in her course strengthened not only her teaching skills and ability to motivate and deal with problems in the classroom, but they also strengthened her enjoyment of teaching. She saw positive changes in her students, who had generally resisted to learn English. She had laid the groundwork for motivating them by constantly telling them why English was relevant to their lives and future, “you have to learn English ... if you’re selling fish...how can you tell them how much... many hotels around the school, you can get jobs there if you learnt English.” Then she used games and simple activities to make them feel that learning it was easy. She had to go back to basics, from teaching the alphabet to her Grade 11 learners to working on spelling. With

the help of a volunteer teacher from the UK in her school, she transformed one room into an English activity room. With Bhakthi’s resourcefulness and her stronger teaching skills, students became steadily enthusiastic about learning English. Motivating her students became easier. “Even the weakest student would try to write something to get a sticker,” she says. As soon as the bell rang for her period, her students would come running to sit in the classroom.

A souvenir from her assignment in her former school is a note written in Sinhala by one of her Grade 11 students, which reads “Bhakthi teacher, I never understood what was taught for English until I met you.” Another significant memory is the fact that the O/L results of her students gradually increased from 6% to 35% during the three years she worked there. “So, I think TKT was quite beneficial for us, me and my students,” she says modestly.

In her current school, Bhakthi must feel a sense of déjà vu. The school, although located in Negombo, is quite isolated and the use of English in the community is extremely limited. She explains “English is more like a foreign language to them, there is no exposure to the language available in the area. Therefore, I want to create more opportunities in the school which will expose my students to English language. That’s my objective for the upcoming year.” The school will soon realize that they couldn’t have picked a better teacher for this mission. Bhakthi is presently doing her MA in English Literature.



**W.B.M Swarna
Weerasekara**
RESC Chilaw 2019

Swarna was in for a surprise when she came for her first study group session of her CBB TKT training course. There were no lengthy lectures (as she was expecting)! Although lectures were Swarna's preferred instructional approach, the group discussions model in the sessions proved more effective in achieving her goal in joining the course, which was to get updated on new trends in the field of English teaching. In the discussions, problematic topics in the TKT syllabus were clarified and portfolio tasks were discussed. They were also the forum for exchange of ideas for the tasks, feedback on the workbook exercises, and sample exam tasks in the TKT course book.

The portfolio was the element in the training that put theory into practice. Swarna found that it promoted creativity. She said, "the portfolio opened up possibilities for experimenting on new ways of teaching." Swarna gave a good example of this. Teachers are expected to cover all the activities in the coursebooks in their lessons and teachers are monitored accordingly. The TKT training showed that when teaching language, it is necessary to integrate the four skills in the classroom in order to create authentic communication. However, activities in the coursebooks generally segregate skills practice so teachers often need to adapt course book

materials in order for all the language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing to be present in the tasks.

Project work lends itself to integrated skills development. This is one of the ways that Swarna promoted the development of employability skills in her students. She first raised their awareness to the fact that when students work on projects together, they are developing other important skills like collaboration, creativity, self-management, communication, critical thinking and problem-solving. Her Grade 9 class did a project on different types of houses, some they hadn't seen before, so her students did their research and in groups put together a poster. Swarna has received praise from her ISA on how she effectively promoted communication in her use of the integrated skills approach in her lesson, thus addressing her students' needs in their language development.

Another key learning that Swarna took away from the TKT course involved lesson planning. For example, in reading lessons, she learnt about the rationale and benefits of staging a lesson following the pre, while and post reading stages. Coursebook lessons on reading rarely cover all these stages. Swarna now adapts materials to go beyond traditional comprehension questions for reading texts normally found in the coursebooks. She has also learnt the importance of planning a variety of interaction patterns in any given lesson, a component of a lesson plan which she hadn't paid much attention to before her TKT course. Varied interaction patterns can help vary the pace of a lesson, maximize participation and help achieve the learning aims of a lesson.

Her students have responded positively to these changes in Swarna's teaching. The changes additionally enable Swarna to cater to the different learning styles of her students through the variety in her activities. "Some students didn't like writing, but can speak...some wrote... some selected pictures... even the weaker students got the idea, learning by listening... and were also contributing, they got inspired to write a few sentences...." The most important thing, Swarna pointed out was they had been happily engaged. Students who did not used to appreciate English and had been reluctant to use the language have become more involved in extracurricular activities in English like competitions in the school magazine.

Swarna is the only English teacher in her school, so it's fair to give her full credit for raising interest and achievement in English in her school. Out of 142 schools in Chilaw, her school has made it to the first 25 schools in the Zone with the overall pass rate of English in the state exams.



**A.Sanath
Sathischandra**
RESC Baddegama

Sanath was a teacher in a rural school in the Southern Province when he did the CBB TKT training course in 2012. It was RESC Mentor, Mr Ranjan Rathnapala, who told him about the course.

He got through the course swimmingly. The self-study was manageable, travel to the RESC was convenient, the study group sessions were quite long, running up to 6 hours, but he says "very well-conducted as expected." He felt that the portfolio was interesting, well-guided, and directly related to his daily lessons. The preparation for the exams was collaborative, much like all the other activities except the self-study, and this helped to make the amount of work manageable, enjoyable and effective.

Sanath described his pre-TKT course teaching as more traditional, with instruction delivery through lectures and translations. When he was introduced to the new methods in the course and saw how they generated more student involvement in the lessons, Sanath was quick to embrace them. He said, "In lecturing, students had nothing to do, just listening" whereas in the "new methods," there was group work, more interaction, task-based and collaborative learning. He also saw how adapting course book material could promote creativity in his learners, and this made them more motivated and engaged: "I think the TKT has done some wonders to me regarding this issue." He highlighted the importance of planning, emphasizing that it was up to the teacher to exploit the coursebook by adapting and supplementing materials in a such a way as to give maximum practice for the students. He said, "Teachers should only talk for 5 to 10 minutes out of the 40 minutes."

In a reading lesson on the topic of plants and trees, his pre-reading task was to get students to go out to the garden and draw and name 5 of the plants, bushes and trees they saw. "They came running with nice drawings," he reports, and back

in class, he taught new vocabulary from the reading, then got his students to label their drawings using the vocabulary and present them to the class. The energy, enthusiasm and learning in the classroom are easy to imagine. He explains, “Motivation matters the most.. keep it simple, get them to draw, sing, give them togetherness.” Sanath ticked all these boxes as he concluded the lesson with the class singing along to a nature song.

Sanath loves music and he strongly believes that teachers can and should use songs as part of their classroom teaching. They contain authentic language and can provide valuable language, speaking and listening practice, and they are fun for the students. He had learners in Grades 6, 7 and 11 who couldn’t read, and through songs, they could interact with the language in English.

Since Sanath shifted from traditional methods to the ‘TKT’ methods of teaching, his students became more interested in his lessons: “some requested me to do tuition classes as well,” he says. According to Sanath, the key is planning, including time management and allocating the stages within the 40 minutes. Sanath attributed his strength in this aspect of teaching to his mentor, Mr Ranjan Rathnapala, referring to him as “my father in teaching.”

Sanath now works as an In Service Advisor (ISA) of English at the Ambalangoda Zonal Office. When he left his school in 2015, he had Grade 6 students who, in 2019, moved up to Grade 11, the batch that achieved a 73-75% pass in the O level exams; this compares to about 20-30% in the pre-TKT era of their English lessons. In his capacity as ISA, Sanath passes on his valuable learning from the TKT course to the teachers he supervises. “I utilize my TKT knowledge when I

advise my teachers,” he says. Language analysis, grammar checklists, self-correction, use of technology, group work, supplementing and adapting materials, all encapsulated in his teaching mantra “1 planning, 2 planning, 3 planning.” Could he be passing that on in a tune?



**G. R. Nilushi
Senadeera**
RESC Kegalle 2019

Nilushi has been an English teacher for 4 years. She teaches English to grades 6 to 10 at a junior school in Sabaragamuwa Province. There are typically 10 students in her class.

She learnt lots of new techniques on the course. For example she was introduced to pair and group work, and how to check meaning through the use of concept checking questions. In her original school before she moved recently the English levels were very low as it was a rural school and because they had not had an English teacher for about 8 years. After she joined the school another 2 English teachers came. She motivated her students to learn English through language games and videos. Earlier students didn’t come to class because they were afraid of the English language. Now she says they understand the importance of English. The TKT course gave her lots of idea. For example, she learned how to select materials, she learned language games, and she learned how to present grammar in a student friendly way. Students she explained hated the word grammar so she

avoided using it and instead used timelines and arrows to show structures.

Raising awareness of employability skills was integrated into her course. Her students really enjoyed the employability skills work because they liked to do the group work activities. Through the employability skills integrated into the CBB TKT course, the students learnt skills and gained knowledge that will help them in their future. Students found out about different jobs like a teacher, a beautician, a music band player. One student said he would have to learn English so he could play in a band. She went overboard on employability skills. She organised a number of different projects to get the students to use them.

She ran a project on food festivals and students took roles of cooks wearing chef hats and aprons. She invited village people to come and asked the students to talk in English to their customers. She pre-taught phrases like “What do you need? Do you need this? These are cheap.” They were quite shy but it was a valuable experience. She also made them aware that they were using employability skills in this project like teamworking, collaboration, communication and creativity. Also at the festival to develop entrepreneurial skills she sold things, collected Rs13,000 and invested this in creating an English activity room for them.

In her rural area, there wasn’t a single word in English in the village. Nilushi decided to create an English atmosphere in the village homes and gardens. The students had to search for words in English in newspapers. She invited the principals and two other teachers to visit the students’ homes. In class she taught them vocabulary and at home they had to paste words in their homes.

One girl pasted the words “house”, “door” and she met parents who had never come to school. They were very emotional when they were visited as nobody had ever visited them before. This project has been expanded to other areas now.

She also initiated food making in the school. She introduced food items into her classroom and recipes and things like fruit salad, club sandwiches and pizza. She asked them to make a club sandwich and watallapan. She took this into her English language lessons. She taught ingredients and procedure through the use of videos. She made food at home and brought it to school. Eventually parents were also doing this. They would buy bread and make sandwiches. The principals and the other teachers supported these projects. This was a good example of employability skills being utilised in the school.

She now has moved school because the original school took 7 hours travel every day and after three and a half year it was enough. When she left the parents cried. She still keeps in touch with the students by sending them activities for reading and comprehension through IMO, WhatsApp or Viber and they send her exercises.



Amali Madushika Madanayaka

RESC Kalutara 2017

Amali has been an English teacher for 8 years. She teaches grades 9, 10, 11 and 12 at a national school in the Western Province. She typically has 30 students in her classes.

She really enjoyed the CBB teacher training course. She said that she had very informative discussions with her fellow teachers and the trainers. She said the study sessions were not like lectures. Rather they involved discussing problems they had had when they were studying. She worked in a very small group so the interaction was good, everyone participated and they always found a solution to issues raised. She loved the portfolio aspect of the course as it was very practical. It allowed her to put theory into practice in her classroom. It also gave her a chance to reflect on her teaching which she had never really done before.

The course introduced her to new ways of doing things: different ways of grouping students; different ways of doing demonstrations and giving models; and effective ways of correcting learners. She said that different ways of grouping students made happy and active learners so they didn't always work with the same people. For grouping, she would distribute cards among students and asked them to get paired with those who got their synonyms. She used to underline or circle the errors in students' writing without specifying the error. After the course she used

the symbols from the error correction code to notify them of their errors and she found this to be very effective. She also saw that using an error correction code made students more interactive and independent as they could learn from self and peer correction and they could help each other. It also meant that she could give more general feedback to the class in delayed error correction

She also mentioned a number of other skills, knowledge and techniques she learnt from the course. These include phonology, lesson planning, staging lesson plans, setting aims, using subsidiary and main aims and personal aims, and using the blackboard correctly. She loved integrated skills lessons and complained that her coursebooks did not do this but she now always tries to adapt and exploit her coursebook and it works better at keeping students motivated. She also now uses technology in her classroom.

Asked about the impact of her learning on her school she reported that most of the English teachers participated in this course after her. She explains that because they saw the new things she had acquired from the course, they too wanted to get updated, refreshed and build up more knowledge. She said that although she doesn't officially cascade her training, she does work closely with the English teachers in her school and they often discuss the teaching learning process and its progress so unofficially she does help her colleagues. She said she would advise others to do the course because it's so practical. She says, "You get theoretical knowledge and you can implement it too."

For her, the most important impact of the course has been that it has helped the learners to study a second language happily and easily. She tells a

story to illustrate this. In her grade 6 class she used to group her students only in the order of their seating they would turn round or back and they would always be in the same group. After her first RESC mentor observation she was told not to use the same groups all the time as the students will get bored. Her mentor introduced her to techniques of grouping like matching and games which helped. Her students then began to ask her to group them in different ways and they became more enthusiastic meeting and working with different students every day. She really learnt a lot from the course.



D. Sumithra Fernando

**RESC
Nuwera Eliya 2007**

Sumithra has been teaching English for over 30 years. She teaches grades 3 to 13 but she much prefers the primary classes. She teaches currently at an urban school in Central Province but previously she taught in rural schools. She took the CBB TKT course in 2007 so was part of one of the earliest batches on the project.

She remembers well doing the course all those years ago. She was in the first batch at her RESC. In order to apply the teachers had to write an essay about their teaching career. She was clearly successful. From that she remembers the British Council selected the teachers. The course was pretty similar to what it is now. Weekday study sessions were held after school once or twice a week. They discussed problems, portfolio

completion, the workbooks and she remembers that Lesley (from British Council) once observed a study session. She also thinks the final comments on her portfolio were written by Lesley. Her mentors were Nadira and Kamala and sometimes she had to attend the zonal office and sometimes the RESC. She said the place was small but her batch learnt many things and developed immensely.

Prior to the course she had some doubts about grammar but after participating in the TKT course she felt that she could confidently handle her grammar lessons. The course really brushed up her grammar knowledge. Also in lexical teaching she felt it helped a lot. She was exposed to different materials that could help like cue cards which could be used in matching exercises either as word and meaning or collocations. She also learnt about different lesson types like guided discovery, the 5E method, and presentation practice production. She also developed in her teaching of the writing skills. She had typically more than 40 students who were very poor in writing. After the course she felt she could support them more in not only writing but integrated skills work. She explained that they were frightened of making mistakes but she gave them parallel writing tasks which helped with this fear. She also uses model texts which build up their confidence.

She recalls one class with a grade 8 group where her TKT learning directly impacted on the group. She had given a few topics for the class to prepare beforehand a presentation for the class. For those who were not confident in speaking she helped them to build mini-dialogues and then had them act them out in the class (eg at the supermarket, at the airport.) She said even the quietest students took part.

Nowadays she is still using techniques she learnt on the course. She uses realia and visual aids to motivate the students. She also motivates them by giving them lots of praise and small rewards. Her daughter also took the CBB TKT course in 2012. She said that her daughter is much more creative than her and she is now supporting O level students a lot in rural areas

Sumithra was very appreciative of the course and the impact her learning has had on her rural school students. She has taught so many now to their O levels. She also has developed as a teacher in skills and confidence and she attributes this to the course. The experience and knowledge she learnt on the course she has long passed on to her students. She has a request: to give opportunities to other young teachers.



M. N. Mufliya
RESC
Eheliyagoda 2018

Mufliya has been teaching for 32 years. She is currently the Deputy Principal and English teacher grade 10 and 12 at an urban school in the heart of Ratnapura.

Asked about the best classroom practice she learnt from the course she responded with a number of different areas. She loved the lessons on phonology and she uses these activities in her classes, mostly as warmers. She learnt a lot about vocabulary activities, lesson planning, using personal aims and stage aims, discovery activities, and follow up activities. All of these

were new concepts to her and hadn't been part of the curriculum when she was first taught in her training college in 1990.

Before TKT she didn't do things like critical thinking with her students but after she found that her learners participated actively. Prior to the course she would just cover the coursebook. She didn't write lesson plans in detail. Post course she did. She included stage aims and detailed staging in her lesson plans. She had never considered grouping students before. On the course she learnt various ways of grouping students. She used these methods a lot: she used numbers, handouts, colour coding, names of flowers, names of vegetables, all for grouping, and the students loved it. She found students become much more motivated by this. She also found the error correction code to be a big hit with students. Earlier she said the students were reluctant to show her their answer but with the introduction of the error correction code she found that they came forward to her voluntarily to get her help in correction. They also became used to self and peer correction. Again this they found motivating.

She could also pass on her learning to her peers in the school. She could share her ideas with other teachers while they were doing the classroom observations. She would observe them and then give them some suggestions for improvement then observe them again after two weeks. She found that they quickly adopted the new methods and techniques. She could guide them in areas of language and skills development. She said that generally, the teachers apply what she tells them whether it is in the area of classroom management, time management or correcting errors.

She felt that this project is a very useful one for all teachers. "After the course, teachers will have an idea of how to teach the four skills effectively: the methods of teaching them, and what tasks or activities are suitable to teach these. The students responses are very welcoming. They love learning, she says.

Asked to recall a significant moment in the classroom inspired by the course, she recalls a grade 10 class. She had prepared 7 activities on suffixes: she had a mix of matching activities; gap fills and comprehension. She remembered that the students reacted actively to these activities: they were so responsive and they kept asking her for more activities.

Asked to recall a significant moment in mentoring, she recalled a time when she was mentoring 5 English teachers and other subject teachers. She uses the lesson planning methods that is from the TKT with them. She checked their workbooks and delivery and gave them feedback.

Asked for any final comments she wanted to thank CBB for giving her and her teachers the opportunity to develop these skills. She says the ultimate impact is that the grades of the students have improved over time and the students now love learning English.



Thilani
Sumudika
Bandara
RESC Badulla 2018

Thilani was teaching at a school in Mahakundura in Uva Province when she did the CBB teacher training course. This year she transferred to Ella, her hometown. She has been teaching for 8 years. There are only 3 English teachers in her school. She teaches English to grades 1 to 11 and science to grades 8 to 11.

In the course she found the portfolio work particularly useful. She could apply the learning from the course in her classroom. It gave her a guideline to complete the tasks. She felt she could prepare well in the teaching practices as the criteria was clearly mentioned in the portfolio. All the structures were mentioned clearly to teach with a great lesson plan. She could follow the steps clearly. For example she prepared an error correction code as there was a task in portfolio on this. She found this really useful to correct the answer sheet of her students.

When asked what classroom practices she found most useful on the course she mentioned three areas. Firstly the selection and use of teaching aids. She particularly liked using puppets, picture cards, word cards and realia for different levels. Secondly she mentioned lesson planning. She said that before the course she did not have a clear idea of stage aims for each and every step, of concept checking questions and instruction

checking questions, time management and activities and interaction patterns. She started using all these strategies during the course and she is still doing so now. The third area was assessment types and tasks. She gave an example of pre course she used to always just check skills for language proficiency by giving reading paragraphs and asking comprehension questions. On the course she learnt a variety of other task types that can be used to check reading comprehension (eg multiple choice, true/false, gap fill.) Similarly with writing, pre course she would tell them just to write paragraphs. However after the course she could provide guided writing activities with model paragraphs. She would analyse the vocabulary and structures and then ask the students to build their own paragraphs. She did the course at the same time as she was studying for her Bachelor of Education degree and the course helped her in her degree as well.

She gave an example of a lesson to grade 7. The lesson was about the comparative and superlative form of adjectives. Here she made use of authentic materials in the classroom. First she grouped the students and asked them to find three leaves from three different trees. Then she explained the comparative and superlative forms of the adjective “small”. She wrote the trees on the board and posted their leaves on them then taught the structures. She explained that the students learnt authentically. Then she used picture cards and word cards in the other stages of the lesson. Later she used some puppets to practice the comparatives and superlatives of the adjectives. She had 3 puppets with difference sizes of facial features. Her mother (who was also a primary teacher) had helped her to make them. The use of authentic materials and realia has made her lessons more impactful.

Asked how she thought the course had impacted on her school, she said that all the students wanted to do extra classes after school with some games and group work they had experienced in her lessons – especially grades 6 and 7. With the help of other teachers they prepared some sessions and they organized a one day English camp for grades 6 to 11 and another camp for grades 1 to 5. The RESC coordinators, Mr Chandana and Mr Subasinghe helped them a lot. She has also shared her learning with other teachers. Three teachers in her school teach grades 9 to 11. They didn’t have separate classrooms as the school is in a rural area so when she was teaching her class the students of the other classes were watching her lessons. They too wanted to learn English using various techniques and interesting learning materials rather than just chalk and board. So she shared her learning with the other teachers and they started to plan their lessons together.

When she was leaving the school, she spoke with the principal and other teachers to encourage the continuation of some of the initiatives. They were very helpful as were the parents. When she was conducting after school classes, some parents would visit and provide food and refreshments for the children from grades 6 to 11. This continued twice a month when she was at the school and she hopes it still continues today. When she left the students wanted to conduct their morning assembly in English and their marks for the English language paper were much higher than earlier. She certainly had an impact on her school!



Bimalka Chathumalee Liyanage

RESC Kandy 2020

Bimalka has been teaching for six years and currently teaches at a rural school in Kothmale in Central Province. She teaches English for Grades one to nine, French for Grade 13 and Greek and Roman Civilization for Grade 12.

She found the portfolio work and the exam preparation work the most challenging. The portfolio because she had to take care with everything she wrote and all the lesson plans had to be written according to a certain procedure. She also had to make it attractive. The exam preparation because the mentor made them do practice tests within the time limit of the actual exam which was short. But she valued this preparation as when she came to do the exam there was nothing new in it.

She was in the 2020 batch so raising awareness of employability skills was integrated into her course. She felt that this added variety to her normal school work and that it was valuable for the students. She really took the employability project to heart in terms of content and skills. She discussed it with the principal of her school and with the approval started taking students on employment visits. They visited a hotel where the students interviewed the chef who told them about how his first job was cleaning onions and he told them it was good to start at the ground level and work up. They also received training on

how to use cutlery. In addition they visited a tea factory and interviewed a tour guide, a factory worker. And they visited Gregory Lake and spoke to a boat owner with the result that a number of the students wanted to become entrepreneurs. After the visits the students had to put together a presentation to talk about what they had learned about the jobs.

She integrated employability skills into all the lessons that she does. It has now become regular practice for her. For example she explains how with grade 6 and 7 group work, the whole idea of working with others, exchanging information and problems, communicating and cooperating, all of these are central to employment. Her students were resistant at first to working in different groups as they wanted to stay with their regular friends but she persisted and gave them the chance to mingle freely through games. After a while they started wanting to do this kind of activity. Similarly with activity based learning. They quickly adopted this helped along often by a sense of competition. She explains that when she gave them activities it led them to think more deeply. For example instead of what was normal practice of just giving the answers to the students, she would give them a riddle, give them clues and they would work things out in groups. They needed to use their critical thinking skill.

She extended her own learning to that of the students. She thoroughly enjoyed putting together her portfolio although she did find it challenging. However in her classes she encouraged group work and she observed a growing enthusiasm and an interest in them. She wanted her grade 4 to maintain a portfolio so she asked them to buy a scrapbook and she got them to make a portfolio on their family. They could

paste pictures and draw and write stories about their family. She expanded this to all her primary classes. She found that even the students who were reluctant to learn English and write a single letter in English wanted to make their own portfolio and demonstrate their creativity. Since the portfolio task became very successful, word soon got around the school. All the other teachers admired this work and wanted to do the same in other subjects like environmental studies and mathematics. Now she is considered a trend setter in her school!

K M Chandana Senadeera

RESC Monaragala 2013

Chandana has been teaching English for 9 years. He now works at Monaragala Royal College which is a prestigious national school in Uva Province and he teaches English to grades 6,8,9,10, and also citizenship education in the English medium. However when he did the course in 2013 he was teaching English at Siyambalanduwa Secondary College.

Asked what he thought were the best classroom practices that he learnt from the course he replied that planning lessons and using language appropriately were the two areas where he felt that he learnt the most. Before the course he said he didn't pay much attention to instructing, eliciting and preparing for lessons. After the course he said that he felt that lesson planning made him much more confident as a teacher. He learnt how to stage lessons appropriately. Before the course he did not use stages and did not really use any kind of systematic preparation

before entering a classroom. He learnt much about how to use language appropriately. Before the course if there were unfamiliar words in the coursebook content he would ask the students to explain or just translate. However his RESC mentor Leela showed him how to get across the meaning of new words by using explanations, eliciting, using synonyms and antonyms and how to check that the students had understood by using concept checking questions.

What was the impact of his learning on his students and school? He states that as a result of the course he was able to increase the O/L results in his original school from 23% to over 60% which is quite remarkable. He said that most of the students when he was doing the course didn't like English and they used to skip English periods. He explained that it was a rural area and there were only a few English teachers in the school so they had to use subject teachers to teach English and they were not very effective. During the TKT course he started using both different techniques and materials. And he transferred this learning to the classroom. When he started using different materials like video games, videos, pictures, speaking tasks and songs, interest picked up.

He realizes the importance of motivating students and treating them as individuals. He gave an example. In Grade 6, most of the students were not able to write in English and did not know the sounds of English. He said very often in lessons he had to forget about the textbook and go back to the basics: the alphabet, the sounds of the letters, the use of the verb "to be", and how to use nouns, verbs and adjectives. He would do some extra classes after school and early in the morning for these weaker students and they eventually caught up with the syllabus.

By paying attention to each and every student in the class, by checking their individual performance he was motivating his students. He attributes this learning on his part to the unit on motivation on the TKT course.

When he joined the O level Grade 11 students, their results were very low, He was able to increase it step by step and when he left the school in 2017, it was 62 % pass rate, whereas in 2010, it had only been 11 % pass. He firmly believed that his TKT training helped achieve this. The Director of English in the Provincial Department of English must have agreed as he appointed him as Head of English in his school in 2015. After this he consistently shared his TKT knowledge with the other teachers. Once a week, every Monday, they would have a teachers meeting for both English teachers and subject teachers who taught English and held discussions about teaching. He also introduced other teachers from his school and neighbouring schools to the RESC to do the course also.

He realises the importance of developing teachers as only in that way can the learning be passed onto students. He said that when he did his O levels in 2001, there were no English teachers in his school; he failed his O level English first time round. This experience made him realize how important quality English teachers are and since then he has been an advocate of training for English teachers. He always advises them to do the CBB TKT course. Now more than 5 teachers from his previous school have completed TKT and the language teaching in the school is much improved – as clearly evidenced in their O level pass rates. He was so popular that when he left this school his students were angry at him.

Sanjeeva MLS Bandara

RESC Mahiyangana 2017

Sanjeeva is currently the teacher in charge of English at a rural school in Uva Province. He teaches grades 8,9,10 and 11. He has been teaching for 6 years. His class size is typically 35 students.

He enjoyed doing the teacher training course. His mentors Nishanti and Yapa worked very hard to motivate their teachers and provide them with interesting activities and lots of clear explanations as well as clarifying any of their doubts. Despite the distance he had to travel to reach the RESC (25 kilometres) from his home, he managed the course and didn't miss any sessions.

He found the methods, techniques and knowledge on the course very practical. He began to use warmers and creative activities in his classes and the learners became much more interested in his lessons. He discovered that one of the problems of his learners was that they had fossilized errors and had been mis-taught certain language. He started to use dictionaries with them and showed them how to use them. He also realized that parents and students thought that by completing the textbook that meant they were learning so he had to work hard to change that attitude. He started using a variety of materials, new activities, story telling and took students outside of the classroom and exposed them to different language so they better understood the language in context. Taking them out of the classroom where they could use language in a free manner, where they didn't think about the grammar or vocabulary too much, they would

then try to use more and more English. Changing the physical environment and taking them outside the class was much more relaxing and helped them to become more comfortable using English.

He also had to manage with limited resources. Students could use a small activity centre which had videos and he showed those who had internet resources ways of using websites for language development. The activity room had posters, books and realia and he aimed to make it an English environment. Also he organized an English club for his grade 6 to 11 students after class or whenever he was free. He says, “whatever I learned from the RESC I applied in the classroom.” The TKT course motivated him to initiate these activities; the inspiration came from his training.

In the zone, he became a resource person for the RESC and since 2016 he has managed English camps. He also had a chance to train other teachers. There is an annual camp for students on the subject of language and he helped to train teachers to deliver the camps at different schools in the zone. So not only does he impact on his school students he also impacts on his fellow teachers throughout the zone.

He believes that because of his experience, he realized that the students had different ideas and attitudes about language learning. He felt that if he could motivate them, then they could learn. His CBB TKT course helped him to do this and provided him with the motivation, learning and skill to motivate his students. His students were motivated by doing new activities, new techniques, group work, presentations. The students who were better in English would work

with the ones who needed help and slowly everyone’s participation eventually increased.

Exam results have been impacted on. The O level in 2014 for his first appointment pre -TKT was 16%. After 1 year of CBB TKT training it increased to 39%. Since 2016 it has been about 45-50%. He was the only teacher handling Grade 11 O level. He called it “the golden era of [his] life’. In December 2018 the students sat for the exam. 6 students got A passes for English - a record in the school.



**K A Deepika
Ranmalee**
**RESC
Gampaha 2016**

Deepika has been teaching for 10 years. She teaches at a school in Gampaha in the Western Province. She is the teacher in charge of English in the primary section. Her classes typically have 40 students in them.

She found the portfolio work very useful in the course. It helped her understand the practical aspects of the theories and apply them in her classroom. She said unlike other courses she had done, this course was very practical. For example with lesson planning it was very detailed with specific objectives for lessons and specific stages for each part. It helped her to be more focused in putting together lessons that covered input, practice and assessment.

One positive on the course was that her mentor guided her batch very well with a lot of extra

classes. She provided so many past papers, guided them in their portfolio, marking strictly but fairly. She said during the course “TKT became our life during that period because they wanted us to show results.” And she was successful! She got band 3 in all the modules in her TKT exam and got a strong pass for her portfolio. Another positive was the encouragement of reflection. This reflection helped her understand better ways of doing things after the TKT sessions. It also taught her instruction checking questions which benefitted her lessons.

Asked what she liked and disliked about the course she said, “I liked and enjoyed every bit of it!” She explained that she appreciated the lesson observations as she really wanted her mentors to observe to check how they were applying what they learnt during the course. She said that the Zonal office also would observe them but that the RESC mentors gave more thorough feedback, and were a better guide. They gave comments on the materials, the planning of the lesson and the delivery. She said that the observations made her aware for the first time about some techniques she could be using (eg the way to plan the boardwork).

Asked what specific classroom practices she got from the course, she replied that prior to the course she had problems with the instructions she was using to set up group work. They were jumbled. But on the course she learnt to write them in her lesson plans and also ICQs to check them. She would write the steps in her plan and this really helped her to set up her group work more effectively. She also learnt about assessment types and tasks. Prior to the course she was only aware of a few options for

assessment. However during the course she learnt about different assessment tasks for testing reading and listening skills like true/false, gap fills, multiple choice, ordering paragraphs and for writing different tasks like filling in forms, story writing, sentence completion and picture descriptions. She said this was very beneficial for her learners and the variety made the lessons much more interesting. Another area she learnt about was different methods of correcting learners: delayed feedback. Here learners do a task, the teacher monitors and notes down any language errors and then later on or in the next lesson the teacher will do an error correction slot with them. That way the teacher is not identifying who has made the error but rather focusing on generic errors but those specific to the group. She said that by doing this the number of mistakes the students made gradually reduced. She noted that in the primary classes students were not afraid to make mistakes. She would hold mini session assemblies in class where the students took it in turn to talk to the class about different topics. She would then do some delayed feedback on this. The impact of all this on their learning was that the end of term tests showed marked improvement.

She said that 3 more teachers were selected for the next TKT course from her school and this was a real benefit to the school. They have 25 English teachers and she is the teacher in charge of the primary section. She now observes her teachers in the same way her mentors observed her. She feels fortunate to be able to share her experiences with her teachers and guide them as well as encourage them to follow the TKT course. Since her school is a government approved private school they conduct various programmes to upgrade the English skills of the students so

this course helped her a lot in organising those programmes with her teachers. She organises programmes like mini assemblies, English day (public speaking), a grade 5 three month programme to stimulate interest in literature. She attributes her confidence in conducting these programmes to the TKT course. By planning and organising the programmes well and conducting them effectively she will help to improve further and sustain the learner outcomes.

Jeyamani Theivendran

RESC Vavuniya 2014

Jeyamani has been teaching for 25 years. She teaches English in an urban school in the Northern Province. While she was doing the CBB teacher training course in 2014 she was an English teacher. Since last year she has been the coordinator for English for the school and teaches English Language to grades 7, 8, 11, 12 and 13 and English Literature to grades 10 and 11.

She was surprised at the depth in the course and to be involved in portfolio work. This she had not experienced before in her training college. Reflecting on her learning and teaching became an important part of her professional development from the start of the course. The cycle she experienced in the study sessions was also developmental and immensely helpful: planning, discussing, improving, delivering, reflecting and then repeating it. She called the portfolio a “a self-preparation and a self-actualization for a teacher to do her work perfectly. I must say it’s a teaching diary for a

teacher, she can revise it whenever she has a doubt.” Because she was putting theory into practice in the classroom and evaluating the impact of it, she explained, it really helped her to realize her strengths and weaknesses.

Asked what she liked about the course she mentions learning about grammar, lexis, phonology, lesson planning and the techniques of presentation and practice activities. She had heard of these before but it was only on the course that she could go into these in any depth. What she didn’t like was all the homework : the extra exam practice; the portfolio writing up; the self study homework. But she said it was worth it. Asked about what she felt were the best classroom practices she learnt from the course she mentioned eliciting, using varied warmers, using different ways of presenting vocabulary, doing concept checking, selecting activities from controlled to freer for language and skill development, delivering useful games and using different methods of correcting learners.

She described one change that she had made in her lessons because of the course. Pre course she would use one aim for a lesson and focus on only one thing (grammar point or skill) but during the course she learnt that you could have main aims, subsidiary aims, stage aims and personal aims and you could teach a mix of skills and language. She also learned that she could evaluate herself after a lesson and then build on that learning. She found that it was very useful to break the lesson into stages and she enjoyed ticking off the stage aims as they were achieved.

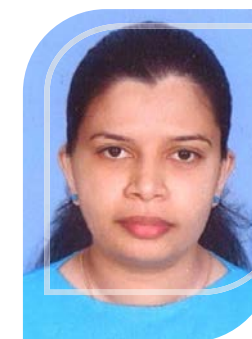
The students have responded well to the changes in their teacher’s classroom practice. They have become much more interested in learning. Now when she elicits information or

language everyone is keen to respond. She finds that the concept checking questions help the learners’ motivation. If she is teaching them present continuous for now’ and she wants to check their understanding of the structure she might show them a picture and ask them what they are doing, then check “Is It happening now or did it happen yesterday?” This she finds motivates both strong and weak students alike as they feel they are learning something. The use of warmers also helps the students to talk and respond. The use of varied interaction patterns develops the learners’ confidence. The students like the increase in group activities where they practice speaking. They also enjoy using the error correction code for self and peer correction. One of her A level students told her, “You are teaching in an interesting way. Now it’s easy for us to learn English happily.”

The course also has a legacy. Once a term, the school has a quality circle for English Language and the TKT teachers come together to share their learning with the other English teachers. This is especially for classes with O level students. She gives advice on how to deliver lessons, prepares additional task sheets for the learners, shares teaching materials, and sometimes gives them lesson plans using the CBB TKT course template.

For the school the impact is seen in the exam results. The O and A level English results are gradually increasing: in 2018, 64% Pass for O level, in 2019, 82% Pass for O level. She says that now most of the teachers in the school have completed the course so it has definitely impacted on the exam results. She also points out the importance of observation of teachers. As a coordinator she observes and mentors her

teaches. She advocates for a competition for teachers to demonstrate best practice. In the zone they held a small one and she got second place for classroom management in 2018. This she wants to expand.



A Janakie Weerasinghe

RESC Kahawatta 2019

Janakie has been teaching English for 7 years. She teaches grades 6 to 11 in an urban school in the Sabaragamuwa Province with a typical class size of 40. She has a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language and a National Diploma in Teaching. She came onto the course expecting to learn some techniques for getting her students to speak. She learnt this and much more.

Raising awareness of employability skills was integrated in the course in 2019. She said that this motivated her students and encouraged them to speak English. She set up a debate in grade 10 which developed their creativity and their thinking skills. The debate encouraged them to use English. In Grades 3 and 4 she got the class to make a booklet as a project. They had to find out from their family about what jobs everyone did and display this in a story book to share with the rest of the class. This became a competition and they were very eager to win it. Collaboration was key here.

Asked what were the classroom practices that she learnt from the course she mentioned being exposed to lots of different kinds of materials for teaching purposes, for example, the use of realia, picture cards, and videos. She said that the students responded well to the use of a variety of materials in the classroom. She also said that she learnt a lot about lesson planning. Prior to the course she didn't know how to make a lesson plan. But during the course she learnt how to plan step by step. Before the course she would just put the date, the lesson objectives, and the materials used. But after the course she would plan every stage with aims and procedural detail. As she pointed out this made it easy for another teacher who could just lift the lesson plan and go and deliver the lesson. She also quickly adopted the use of the correction codes with her students. This she felt helped them to become more independent because they could use it to do self and peer correction. Another aspect she learnt was time management and how to allocate time appropriately to activities in her lesson.

The students have responded well to the change in their teacher's classroom practice. They now grasp ideas more easily. For example in a class to teach comparative adjectives she used different pencils to get across the meaning of the comparative adjectives and she also brought into class a red rose to get across the form of adjective plus noun. This the students found so memorable that the next day the students were wanting her to bring more pencils and red roses.

Asked about the impact the course has had on the school she said that it has provoked a change in attitude of her students to learning English. Prior to doing the course her students didn't like

learning English. Now they try to use English and they like the English subject. At the start of a class they are seated and ready for the lesson so she feels encouraged because they students are now actively interested in the subject.

She also explains that it has impacted on both classroom activities and the school assembly. In the morning assembly all grades 6 to 11 are gathered. They now do the assembly in English. She encourages her classes to make a short speech, tell a story, recite a poem or act out a small drama. They can practise this in class and then feel confident before the assembly. This she feels has enhanced their creativity and confidence in English. Also she shares her experiences and learning from the course with the other teachers in her school. She has shown them how to motivate students by using a variety of materials like videos and realia.



**M A Shirani
Wickrama**
RESC
Balapitiya 2012

“The CBB teacher training course made me neglect my household work!!” A bona fide, actual, veritable statement from Shirani on the challenges she faced when she was doing the course in 2012. It wasn't about what she liked about the training. But it may well have been her husband's answer to that question if it had been posed to him because Shirani said that her husband had given her the support she needed then, and quite happily, “He liked my studies.”

Shirani gave that answer not to complain, but to say that the course had been demanding in terms of time and amount of work. The training took place during term time, and it required daily self-study hours, attending weekday study sessions after school, completing homework, (“We did a lot of home work based on the points discussed during the sessions”) and the portfolio tasks. She explains : “I had to drowsily work when I was doing portfolio, I selected portfolio [ideas]... I let my children sleep.. I stayed the night and worked calmly but the next day, I had to bear up with my drowsiness.” Time for all of these had to naturally come from what normally would have been her time for family. Fortunately, Shirani's husband was happy to share looking after the children, who were at that time in their early secondary and late primary years.

The sacrifices were worth it. Shirani attained Band 4 and 3 results in her TKT exams and her Portfolio was assessed as a Strong Pass - an affirmation of her hard work and learning from the course. “I learnt a lot from course. I got refreshed, sometimes the content of modules was familiar, some were new things like group activities, we didn't used to do a lot of groupwork, but in the TKT course, they emphasised group work and shared learning,” she explains.

“Before I followed the course, my lessons were too ambitious. After the course, I limited them to one or two objectives, I tried to reduce TTT and encourage student talking time, I encouraged groupwork and peer correction whenever possible.” One day, Shirani's supervisor came to her class to observe her teaching. It was a speaking lesson and the students were asked to develop their own dialogues for a role play. She

describes what happened: “First I gave them a model, then gave them language and situations to [be able to] use the same language. The students built up very good dialogues and acted them out to the class.” With gusto, one can conclude. Shirani's supervisor was quite impressed with the students' performance and wanted to video one of her lessons, presumably to use as a model lesson for training. “I was very happy that day.” She got a pat on the back with the supervisor saying that she was a very good teacher.

Scaffolding learning and integrating group work were areas in her teaching practice that Shirani feels she developed from the course and have benefitted her learners. She recounted a lesson with her Grade 8 class when her students proved that these strategies were effective in promoting shared learning. She explains. “I formed mixed ability groups with the best students and low achievers ... when they get used to group work, their participation improved and they tried to speak with whatever language they had... their [stronger] colleagues helped them and they were better than they were earlier.”

In 2018, Shirani was appointed to another school in her district to take on the role of Key Teacher of English heading the English department for all primary and secondary grades. Needless to say, the teachers she supervises continue to gain from their Key Teacher's extensive experience and knowledge. She stressed the important placed in the TKT course on developing speaking skills: “In the TKT programme, they asked us to encourage speaking in English.” She added that in the TKT course, they had been instructed to create a conducive English learning environment in the classroom by displaying language, by using

varied materials and resources, including language games, to facilitate acquisition. Shirani feels that “they [their students] have already reached a certain level of this...TKT was the seed to improve speaking of the students.”

As part of the General Education Modernization (GEM) Project of the Government of Sri Lanka in partnership with the World Bank to improve and strengthen education in Sri Lanka, Shirani’s school has been selected to be one of the schools to implement an English immersion programme, which entails promoting student exposure to the language through English displays on the premises, holding of dialogues and English programmes, teacher use of classroom language in English, and use of English in teaching other subjects. Shirani plays a pivotal role in this effort. Hearing about how she has made the most of her training from the TKT course and using her successes as learning points for her teachers, her school’s already got a gem!

Thangesh Kumar

RESC Batticaloa 2019

Thangesh was in the 2019-2020 batch of the project. His post-CBB teacher training journey took a different turn from the typical path as right after his CBB course, he stopped teaching to take on a new job at his RESC in Batticaloa. Although his title is Teacher-in-charge at the RESC, his role is that of a teacher trainer. Most of his work entails conducting lesson observations and mentoring of around 40 teachers in 20 schools in his Zone, but he is also involved in

various teacher training programmes and projects organized by the National Institute of Education and the Ministry of Education, as well as in education projects organized by other organizations.

Although he didn’t return to the classroom as a teacher after his TKT training, Thangesh’s learning from the course is far from wasted. On the contrary, it can be said that it can be multiplied to some degree by the number of teachers he trains! This is because Thangesh feels that the CBB training course has made a positive and significant impact on some of his key beliefs about effective teaching language and he passes this on in his training and mentoring. For example, he learnt how the PPP (presentation practice production) lesson structure can give the teacher a lot of flexibility in the amount and variety of practice, how it can better achieve integrated skills development, how it affords inclusion, and how this helps with learner assessment. He learnt how to plan receptive skills lessons more effectively by following the 3 stage structure (pre while post), how to use questions for concept checking, and why it is important to check understanding of meaning before teaching the form of new language. He learnt how the use of visual aids and body language can replace long teacher explanations in presenting language (so, less yawning in the classroom!), and how more STT (student talking time) and self and peer correction can create a more positive learning environment during lessons (so, less work for the teacher and less demoralized students!)

The list of passed on knowledge goes on including ways of giving feedback. But the really good news is that the multiplier for the cascade of learning from the TKT course continues to

increase. Thangesh officially starts his new post as Assistant Director of Education for his district in the near future.

And what about the students? Asked what evidence Thangesh had in order to show that these changes in teaching practice have benefited the learners, he said, “more student engagement and more involvement in the teaching process.” “Students stopped saying ‘I can’t read. I can’t understand.’” “Students feel more comfortable in class, and they willingly learn English.” And if more concrete evidence is needed here is what one student said: “Sir, can we come to [the] language unit for the free period?” He also explained that there was “an increase in the percentage of O level passes in our zone this year compared to the previous year.” These were good answers. Hopefully Thangesh can continue to impact on the pupils in his zone through his work with the teachers as Assistant Director of Education.



Malsha

Wimalagunasekare

RESC

Hambantota 2018

Malsha had been teaching for 6 years when she followed the CBB TKT training course. To stay up to date with developments in teaching and learning English has been and continues to be of vital importance to Malsha to stay motivated in her teaching. This was the reason she joined the CBB training course in 2018.

Malsha said that through the course, she learnt

new teaching methods as well as ways of using familiar methods differently and more effectively. “And that’s why I feel that the TKT course made a great impact on me. The training course made me more confident in what I was doing.”

Different ways of grouping students, different methods of correcting learners, and different types of assessment activities are the classroom practices Malsha considers to be the best among the new teaching practices she learnt. “I used to group the students according to their seating arrangement,” then she switched to counting numbers, mingling activities and mini games. “I used to correct [students’] mistakes orally by myself most of the time,” then she started using techniques that encouraged self-correction like finger correction, gestures and echo-correcting. To assess her students’ learning, she used traditional methods of asking questions about the text they had read, or giving simple transformation exercises like converting active sentences to passive, but from the course, she learnt new tools like “proof reading, re-ordering, multiple choice and gap-fill activities.” Her new strategies create opportunities for non-threatening, formative checkpoints in her instruction, which can be done more frequently and less formally.

How did her students respond to these changes? “Students are enthusiastic working in groups and getting help from each other.” Some students are hesitant to ask the teacher, so they are happy to be able to work with their peers. “When I say, ‘You’re working in groups,’ students holler ‘Yeeeyyy!’” As to correcting errors, Malsha’s new techniques trained learners to take responsibility for their learning, and this makes them confident in communicating in English even if they know

that they are making mistakes. “During presentations, when they commit ‘slips,’ their peers correct them,” and they prefer this to the teacher correcting them. So does the teacher! This makes the teacher smile, and this approving signal motivates the students even more. As to assessments, her non-traditional repertoire keeps students engaged in their learning, “even my slower learners find them interesting and engaging.”

Seeing the positive changes in her students’ learning of English in her classroom motivated Malshi to go beyond the confines of her classroom walls. She wanted to make the entire school “their English learning arena.” This means exposing students to English in the common areas in the school premises, for example by displaying useful English words and phrases on the walls and boards around the school, using an English pricelist of items at the canteen and putting up English instructions in the computer lab and in the library, and encouraging students to at least use English vocabulary when talking with their friends outside class. In her new school after a recent appointment, Malsha led in organizing regular level assemblies to give students a forum to give presentations on school news to a bigger audience. Students take turns to share information to their entire level in these gatherings. Malsha notes that because the students already know about these developments in their school, getting them to listen to their peers talking about these events, in English, gives students meaningful and authentic listening practice. In these rural areas, “students otherwise do not get exposure to English in their homes,” she says.

Students make the effort when Malsha speaks with them informally outside class. But Malsha says that the best proof yet of their increased motivation in their English learning is “when I’m delayed, they come and collect me and tell me it’s time to come to class.”



**P. Eranga
Yasamali
Senarathna**
RESC
Polonnaruwa 2012

Eranga did the CBB training course in 2012. Eight years later, it is evident that the impact of the course on her teaching practice and therefore, on student learning in her classes, has remained unchanged.

“The special thing is the connection with our mentors.” Teachers were observed in their delivery twice during the course; this was standard in all the CBB courses throughout the years. Eranga valued mentor feedback in these observations. She feels privileged that the same mentors have continued to come to observe her lessons over the years following her CBB training as part of the periodic inspections initiated by the Zonal Education Office. A regular observer of her lessons has been her TKT mentor, Mr. Gajanayake, whom she described as “a real facilitator and a friendly person, very resourceful. We can discuss any problems with him, [he’s] always [been] ready to help and give us advice.”

Eranga also feels that the strong practical element in the CBB training course was what made the training different from all the other training she has done. “It [the portfolio] was really useful. It was a guide that led us to do activities at every stage of a lesson in order to create better teaching learning process in the classroom.” The step to step guidance has immensely helped Eranga in her lesson planning. Changing from the “normal” method in which she prepared her lessons before her TKT course training to planning lessons with clear stage aims after learning this from her course, her lesson planning life was positively transformed. She found her lessons a lot easier to conduct; she was able to include a wider variety and number of purposeful activities. “It [setting stage aims] was the magic trick.”

From the course, she learnt new techniques and a host of motivating teaching resources, which she has regularly used in her teaching. All of them have improved student engagement and enjoyment in learning English. For example, she used to correct students’ errors on their written work herself. In general, students paid little attention to these, and on the rare occasions that they did, what they read in red ink would be easily forgotten. However, when Eranga started using correction codes for writing, student response reversed. The students became involved, analysed their mistakes, checked with peers, and “they enjoyed error correcting themselves.” She remarked that the improvement in accuracy in student writing was noteworthy: “Even normal students started to write complete sentences because they could identify their own errors.” Eranga noted that students also learn a lot from each other’s writing. She recalled a writing lesson she had

planned for her TKT portfolio. Her focus was on the development of the sub skills of spelling and punctuating correctly and proofreading. After self-correcting, students put up their writings on the walls for the others to read and compared them with their own. “Some students said they realized their [other] mistakes and what they should include in their work.”

That was a specific story about error correction, but it epitomizes the common theme in teachers’ post training success stories - teachers using what they learnt from the course to deliver lessons where students engage more, enjoy their lessons, learn from each other and take responsibility for their own learning of English. One of Eranga’s students puts this process into his own words: “Teacher, now I can understand... I got all correct. I’m happy.”



Shane Martenstyn

British Council teacher, Singapore and ex Assistant Project Manager at British Council, Colombo

Introduction to the RESC Messages

The Regional English Support Centres, better known as RESCs, have helped shape English Language Teaching over the years and continue to do so. I had the opportunity to work with RESCs and trainers from 2012 to 2016, and I felt it was a very rewarding experience. To be fair, they make 9 to 5 great!

My first experience of seeing a RESC was when I visited the Jaffna RESC in 2012 to deliver TKT exams to 12 teachers from Jaffna and Vavuniya as part of the Council for Business with Britain English Teacher Training Project. As the invigilator for the day I had to ensure that everything was in place for the exam: clock placed in front of the candidates, exam instructions posted on the wall and instructions to start the test.

Thirty minutes later I realise the building next door was badly damaged due to the thirty year civil war that ended in 2009. A few minutes later I hear banging and I look out the window and see construction workers demolishing the remaining parts of the building. They are unaware that these 12 teachers are doing an important exam which would enable pupils to gain better access to quality education. I plead with the workers to stop, tell them that there is an exam going on, that the teachers are unable to focus but alas, they continue.

Mohan, Jaffna RESC trainer and CBB mentor at the time, has a message from the workers. They say that I must be “silly” to ask them to stop when these teachers a few years ago had to teach pupils at the height of the war. He goes on to tell me that the noise that they are making now cannot be compared to the shelling that took place outside the same classroom. The desks previously used as shields are now being used for what they should be used for! I apologise for the disturbance. A few months later there is a sigh of relief when their results are released - the majority have obtained

excellent grades. This is just one of the stories that I have been part of, and I am sure there are many more.

Sri Lanka is a value proposition for education in Asia and it is important that teacher educators such as RESC trainers are given the support they need for that to be cascaded to classroom teaching.

These are some of their stories.

RESC Messages

RESC Ampara

Sherine Adihetti

Former co-ordinator RESC Ampara

A little help for our teachers

We used to call the teachers to come to the RESC every Monday from 2. 30-4. 30 p.m., as the teachers found it difficult to complete the work entrusted to them. Whenever they had problems, we, the mentors, would help them. They were so happy doing the work together and always said that this was the best way to help them, through meeting with them every week.

Also, the mentoring done by the British Council, whenever we made a request to discuss any difficulties regarding the course content, was highly appreciated. Throughout the academic years, your visits were very helpful for the teachers.

One suggestion is to extend the time duration for the course to make it more appropriate for the teachers. We're happy to say that they have improved in their classroom teaching. We have noticed the improvement based on our first and second classroom observations of the teachers' lessons.

RESC Anuradhapura

Shamila Dharmasena

A memorable TKT moment

It was 2018. We reached the A/ Madawachchiya Kiri Galwewa Maha Vidyalaya for the TKT Lesson Observation which is about 30 kilometres away from Anuradhapura city. The TKT-trained teacher took the class of grade 7 and we observed her lesson.

The lesson was well planned and delivered with relevant teaching aids. The teacher did not use her mother tongue at all during her lesson. She handled the lesson very well and the students were using the target language. The students in that class showed higher language standards which we wouldn't expect from the students of that type of a remote school.

Later, it was revealed that those students had been supported by the teachers of English, after school and on weekends over a continuous period of time. As a result, the students had gained a higher language competency in English. This incident reminds me of how hard work pays off. The day we spent at that school marks a memorable day in my life.

RESC Bandarawela

P G Amarasiri

How I became a TKT Trainer

Soon after I joined RESC Bandarawela in 2009 I was selected for a 25 day teacher training programme for non-English graduates in the Uva Province which was conducted by the British Council. Soon after that, I was given a chance to sit for the TKT exam by Mr Seamus who was in charge of that course with Dr Lesley Dick. It was just a month prior to the TKT exam in January in 2010 but I accepted the challenge and did all the three modules, portfolio and teaching practice within that short period of time and got through the exam with one band four and two band 3 passes.

Soon after the results were out I was given an opportunity, together with Himali Wanigasekara, to prepare the teachers for TKT exams which was another challenge as a new trainer to the RESC. But I believe I was able to deliver sessions successfully over the last 9 years and I have contributed to training more than sixty teachers from Bandarawela and Welimada Education Zones plus conducting practice tests for three years. I also joined in moderating visits every year.

Through all these tasks, I believe I was able to become a confident trainer, and I must thank the British Council for providing opportunities for the teachers to become efficient and confident teachers in the country, especially from the rural areas such as Bandarawela where the teacher education opportunities are very rare.

I also hope The British Council will restart helping the RESCs and teachers with more teacher training opportunities.

RESC Chilaw

P Rasika D Fernando

Memorable moment during TKT

Though the journey of TKT was a short one for both the mentors of RESC Chilaw, we cherish a number of remarkable memories. It is a great pleasure for us to share the remarkable transformation of teachers who readily applied the outcome of TKT to make the teaching learning process a success. As a result, the learners of rural, less advantaged schools were highly benefitted.

Visiting P/Pottuwilluwa Government, a very rural school close to Puttalam, 70 kilometres away from the RESC and without a proper transport system to reach it, became a significant experience. The innocent students who were struggling to fulfil their daily needs, yet enjoying learning English, touched our hearts. With the enthusiastic teacher, three schools were connected and English training became a novel experience for 6 teachers and 120 learners along with their principal.

Every year on Orientation day RESC Chilaw welcomes the new batch of teachers innovatively

A teacher created this illustration last year to portray their welcome.



RESC Gampaha

Nilani D Karunaarachchi

Mentor

A treasure of a course

TKT is a treasured course for teachers of English in Sri Lanka. It is a very good opportunity for them to refresh their knowledge with new methods and techniques to make the teaching learning process a success. Language games, warmers, the writing process, the correction code, pronunciation practice and the lesson plans which are introduced in the course, are highly used by the teachers in classrooms.

RESC Hanguranketha

Valuable course

TKT is a valuable course for our teachers since Hanguranketha is a developing area. Every year, a number of teachers ask for TKT applications. We continue to have a long waiting list.

Teachers have benefitted and learn to work confidently and creatively and are motivated to also do higher studies successfully along with the international recognition.



I have been working as a mentor from 2006. I can recollect some interesting as well as difficult moments of study sessions. It was really interesting to observe teacher's arguments to clear their doubts in the course, especially with the portfolio.

We had to stay long hours though a session was supposed to last just two hours. Sometimes we had to go beyond the schedule and conduct extra sessions.

Finally, we extend our heartiest gratitude to the British Council and the Council for Business with Britain officers for letting the teachers take international exams with no charges. Other teachers will miss the opportunity to do the CBB TKT course but we hope that the British Council will help them with a new project.

RESC Hanwella

CBB TKT annual visit to Rajasinghe Central College Hanwella.

26th February 2018 was a remarkable day for both RESC Hanwella and the TKT followers of 2017 and the students in Rajasinghe Central College Hanwella. It was the day of the CBB TKT annual visit to a school. A group of representatives from CBB participated in the session.

TKT participants gave a PowerPoint presentation on a particular topic from the TKT course book, highlighting the importance of the TKT course in their teaching context and how the teachers benefited as it was a fully-sponsored course.

The next presentation was on the content of the TKT course book. A comprehensive idea about

the content of the TKT course book was nicely presented by a participant. Motivation was one of the major areas that was included in the course book and one of the participants conducted a PowerPoint presentation based on that.

The next presentation was on incorporating visual ideas in the teaching and learning process. Along with that, a group of students from the school came out with another PowerPoint presentation on historical places in Sri Lanka.



After the presentations, group discussions were set up. Students got an opportunity to talk about how they had benefited from their teachers who followed the TKT course. All the representatives gave positive feedback and they admired the talents of the students in a school which was located in Colombo suburbs.



RESC Hatton

S Thenmoli

A day in the life of the mentors in the TKT 10th BATCH 2010



As usual we, the mentors of RESC –Hatton started to do our pre-TKT course observations. That time we had six mentees to observe. One of the mentees was from a school which was very far from the town. To reach his school we would have to walk for miles because there was no bus service. But there was a short cut. As the school is situated near the Castlereigh reservoir we could reach the school using canoes. After so many discussions and arguments, as we were really afraid of travelling in a canoe, we decided to brave it and go to the school. One fine Tuesday morning we (myself and other mentor Thalawitiya) started our journey to the school. To reach the canoe, we had to travel by bus and we reached the place. As it was the first time for us, we asked the passersby about the canoe stop and he showed us a place near the reservoir. He asked us to wait for some time and told us that the person who would take us in the canoe would see us from the other side of the island and bring the canoe. We waited patiently and prayed to all the gods silently to help us reach the school safely. It was a hot season and the water level

was very low. Finally, the canoe person came with his canoe and he made us put on lifejackets and sit equally apart to maintain the balance. The reservoir is used by seaplanes to bring tourists from Nuwara Eliya to a bungalow near the reservoir. “If the sea plane lands during our journey, big waves would come and make the canoe sink into the water,” the canoe man said. It made us more frightened so we prayed to the Gods more seriously. Fortunately, it didn’t happen and we got ashore safely. After finishing our observation successfully, we came back safely by the god’s grace. It was an unforgettable experience.

RESC Jaffna

C Thayaharan

TKT experience



Our TKT journey was full of adventure, challenges and fun. We the mentors and teachers are blessed abundantly. This causeway leads to the Island zone. I used to go this way for a TKT follow-up visit. On my way I enjoyed scenic beauty and occasionally the migrating birds. Though I had to travel many miles I enjoyed guiding the teacher and students.



This school is found in a small hamlet, which was affected by the war and the tsunami. During my school visits I used to take my Bluetooth speaker to teach songs and introduce vocabulary.

They learnt with immense pleasure. I guided the teacher to plan lessons, prepare materials and use different techniques to make the class interesting. Within a short time, the children were motivated and the teacher became confident. It's interesting to see how TKT helps children who are deprived of basic facilities.

No doubt the CBB TKT course has helped 100s of teachers and children who had once been forgotten and isolated. We reached them and helped them with the TKT knowledge.

The Happy Chaperone

Whenever the teachers came to Colombo for the TKT exam, I had to chaperone them. I had some interesting duties: early booking of train tickets; booking rooms for teachers to stay in Colombo; hiring a taxi to the centre; finally handing them over to their loved ones at Jaffna station. I usually invited them for the TKT course with this agreement. Here you can see some of our teachers having a nice time with new friends. This is the final show at the Ministry after the awarding ceremony.



All our pains fly away when teachers receive the long awaited TKT certificates. How much happiness the teachers get when meeting new faces from other parts of the country! No doubt, the CBB TKT course has brought many blessings and that will reflect on our teachers and students in the future.

RESC Kahawatte

Lankesh Rohan Kitulgodage

On top of the world

It was my second teaching practice observation for CBB TKT 2020. I had to visit R/Gavaranhena Vidyalaya close to Balangoda. The school is situated on the top of a mountain with a great scenic beauty. After completing the observation,



although the school wanted to provide me transport, I decided to do the return journey on foot just to experience the environment. I didn't think it would be very hard. While returning I had to face a few showers. Anyway, it was great to help the teacher and her students and also enjoy nature.

RESC Kalutara

Champa Liyanagoda

A way to paradise

This happened in 2017. I went to observe a learning teaching process conducted by a teacher who followed the TKT course conducted by our Regional English Support Centre, Kalutara. The principal knew that I was coming. The principal was informed again about the central purpose of my journey and I expected his consent to start my duty. Happily, he gave the consent and required me to observe more and more teachers. Again, he mentioned that there was a particular teacher that he wanted me to observe and expected my feedback regarding her teaching. Immediately I informed the teacher that I wish to observe a classroom learning teaching process done by her.

I visited her on the 4th period and stood in front of her class, and requested her permission to observe the lesson done by her in a few minutes time. She agreed and I stepped in wearing a very pleasant smile. I greeted the students when their teacher introduced me to them and settled at the rear end of the classroom.

The teacher started the lesson in a shrill voice, asked the students to open their books and refer to the page. All the students started to talk, some

were laughing and muttering to themselves. The teacher used a very big cane to silence the students. Every five seconds she hit their tables to silence them, but nobody cared. Almost all were laughing. It seemed to be their habit. Though the teacher tried her level best to teach them, the students tried their level best to trouble her. After some time, some students started to eat while their teacher was teaching. The teacher asked them to stop but they didn't. It was a real mess. She genuinely wanted to teach her students but it didn't work. Some fought over a piece of meat. I wondered what was wrong with her but I didn't say anything. After the lesson I thanked them and came out.

The teacher came behind me and she was crying. "Madam, please don't tell the principal," I was told. "Why? You wanted to help your students. Don't worry I'll help you," was my reply. How? Oh! She expected an answer. "I'll give you an application to join the next TKT batch." "Will they select me?," she asked. "Most probably," I told her. She smiled with tears. Luckily she got selected for the next batch. Her problem was created by several deaths in her family within a very short period of time.

We helped her kindly and patiently. The knowledge she gained through the TKT course made her a fine-tuned teacher. Sometimes she didn't know that she was being supported. The glory she had had in the past came back to her. Now she steps into classes with confidence brimming over and definitely without a cane in her hand. Students love her and the school principal assigns her many responsibilities in the school. When she was being asked to write a quote for the TKT course that she followed, she wrote, "TKT made the teaching-learning process a pleasurable paradise by giving necessary

knowledge, attitudes and skills." She read it, when it appeared on the screen at the TKT award ceremony.

RESC Moneragala

Leela Gamage

TKT memories - All out for the TKT

Since the introductory TKT session in 2009, Moneragala RESC has smoothly conducted all sessions to date. The memory of TKT still lingers in our minds. We, the mentors (Leela & Tenna) had to travel to Kandy Trinity College every Saturday for six months to follow the TKT course ourselves in 2008 when the fear of bomb explosions reached a culmination. Unattended parcels in jammed packed busses made us cautious. We had pain-stricken faces, yet we made a bee way to the course. We missed only one session as our bus had an accident.

We followed, we delivered, teachers & students gained.

HATS OFF TO THE BRITISH COUNCIL...!



RESC Polonnaruwa

G M D Gajanayake

A close call

I had been a mentor of TKT for more than 10 years. I have so many experiences from the TKT. I can still remember something that happened to me when I was going to observe one teacher in a school which was more than 30 kilometres away from the RESC. I was riding (a bike) with one of my staff mates. Our route was along ZD canal. Suddenly I saw a curb across the road. The bike went over it. And my friend nearly fell. He hung on my shoulders. However, we luckily escaped.

RESC Tangalle

Gayathri Andrahennadi

Achievement

The most exciting happening of TKT for us was one of our mentees getting the top results for the Cambridge TKT exam last year (2018). We look forward to attending the last TKT awarding ceremony.

RESC Vavuniya

Jayanthini Pathmarajan

Believe it or not!!

The History of TKT in Vavuniya RESC started in 2011. I started this journey as a very successful TKT teacher and later became a well experienced and confident mentor. So far, about 50 teachers have benefitted from this course through our

RESC. You won't believe the story I'm now going to tell. Yes! It's incredible and inexplicable even by the laws of nature.

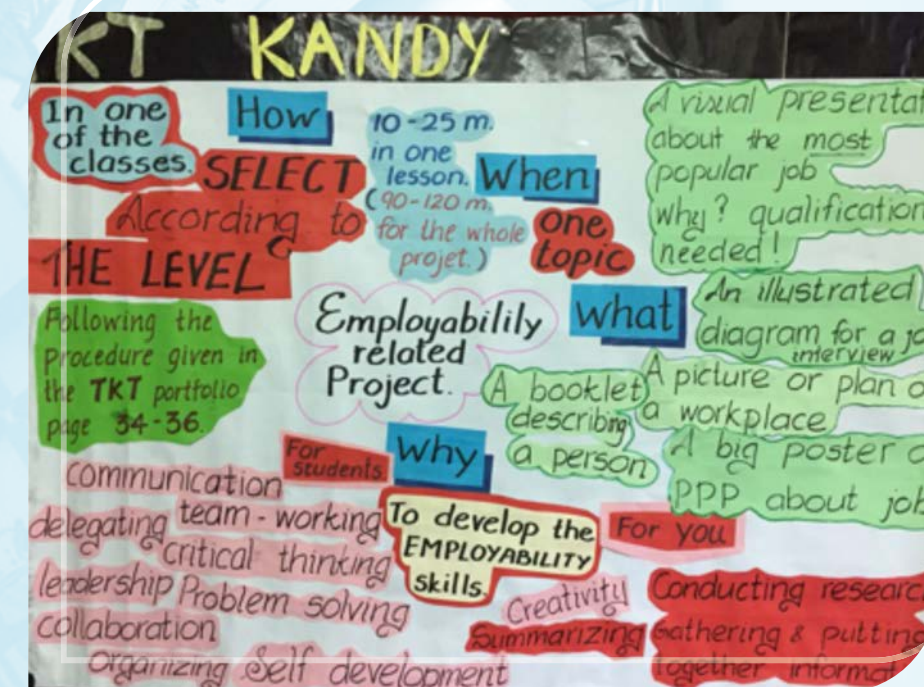
Each year one teacher would perform two roles in our TKT batch! Being a TKT teacher and a TKT mother! She would attend the TKT classes regularly, prepare for the exam studiously and pass the exam successfully. Every year one teacher got this exceptional opportunity to perform these two roles and share the knowledge with her baby in her womb. The TKT baby got a chance to acquire the language knowledge and absorb the language skills easily.

Therefore Vavuniya RESC is eagerly awaiting to encounter those gifted children in the forthcoming years.



Employability Projects: A Selection

In line with promoting the development of employability skills in pupils in the CBB teacher training course in 2019-2020, a class project competition for students on the theme of jobs and careers was added to the programme. The teachers selected one of their classes to produce a visual presentation on the theme. Putting together their entries was in itself a model for developing the employability skills of collaboration, creativity, communication, resourcefulness, critical thinking and problem solving. Classes of teachers from 26 RESCs participated in the competition.



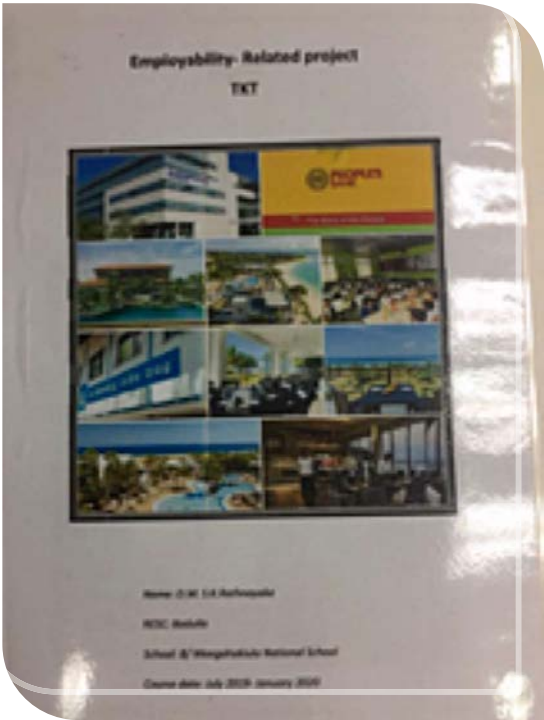
RESC Kandy mentors created this huge poster to introduce the project to their teachers in the course.

After a series of shortlisting by the RESCs and the British Council, the CBB Executive Committee judges, Mr. M. Prothero, Ms C. Rodrigo and Ms. A M Ziauddin, unanimously voted for the winners for the two age categories.

Grades 6-9 Category

RESC Badulla: Employability – Related Project
A Poster about Jobs that are done

Grade 9, B/ Meegahakiula National School



Grades 10-12 Category

RESC Bolawalana: A Poster about Jobs that are done in different parts of Sri Lanka

Grade 10, St Sebastian MV Sea Street



Employability Projects: A Selection

A/Bastian Silva College, Anuradhapura - Grade 10 (2019)



G/Wanduramba Central College, Galle - Grade 7 (2019)



B/Meegahakiula National School, Badulla - Grade 9 (2019)

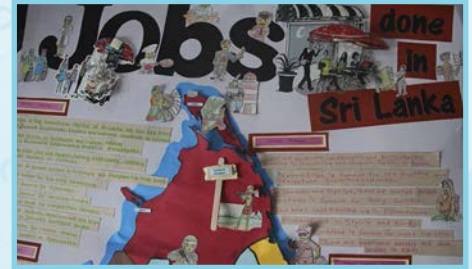


Congratulations to the winners!

The Grade 9 class is receiving a class set of Oxford Elementary dictionaries and the Grade 10 class a class set of Cambridge Intermediate Learner dictionaries.

A big thank you to all the students, teachers, and RESC mentors for their valuable contribution to the project. Refer to the case studies for some amazing stories about the students' enthusiastic involvement in the project and creative ways some teachers built on the theme of jobs and engaged parents and other members of their community.

St. Sebastian's Maha Vidyalaya, Bolawalana - Grade 10 (2019)



PL/Palugasdamana MV, Polonnaruwa - Grade 7 (2019)



J/St James Girls School, Jaffna - Grade 12 (2019)

