

U.S. Embassy Tunis



November 2022

THE TC-TUNISIA PROJECT

Vol 2 Issue 5



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PROJECT UPDATES

- The second cohort of the TC-Tunisia Project completed Module 4 on October 8 and is currently working on their capstone projects, which are due on November 27.
- The TC delegation visited Tunisia from October 24 to November 4 in order to assess the impact of the TC-Tunisia Project and to complement the online training that both cohorts have received.

MODULE 4 RECAP

The fourth module of the second year of the TC-Tunisia Project commenced on September 2, 2022. This module, titled *Teaching as a Science*, built upon the foundation laid by the first three modules. Covering two themes, task-based language teaching (TBLT) and practitioner research, Module 4 aimed to develop participants' understanding that teaching is not only an art and a craft, but also a science. The module also aimed to build participants' ability to engage in evidence-based pedagogical practices.

In addition to twelve synchronous sessions on Zoom, Module 4 required participants to complete weekly reading journals and two projects. The first project was to work in a group to design 2-3 pedagogic tasks for young learners, sequence the tasks, and provide a rationale for the sequencing. A sample project by Cyrine Kortas, Basma Bouziri, Abdelmajid Yahyaoui, and Chahrazad Louhichi can be found [here](#).

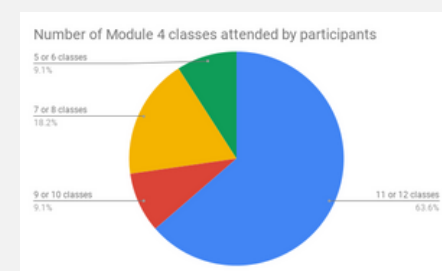
The second project involved developing a research proposal on exploratory research. Participants developed these proposals individually or in pairs and then presented them in class during mid-October. A sample research proposal by Abdelmajid Yahyaoui can be found [here](#).

Though Module 4 concluded on October 8, the second cohort continues to be engaged in the TC-Tunisia Project by working on their capstone projects. The capstone project provides an opportunity for participants to showcase their learning from the year-long program and their evolving capacity for approaching teaching in a principled manner. Participants will submit their capstone projects by November 27.

MODULE 4 ATTENDANCE

As shown in the figure below, during Module 4 the majority of the 2022 cohort attended 11 or 12 out of 12 synchronous class sessions. Further, nearly 75% of the cohort attended at least 9 out of 12 class sessions.

These statistics demonstrate the cohort's ongoing commitment to the TC-Tunisia Project, as well as their endurance and stamina. Way to go, members of the second cohort!



Click the figure to enlarge

THE TC DELEGATION'S FIELD TRIP TO TUNISA



The TC delegation, comprised of Project Director Dr. ZhaoHong Han, Project Instructors Dr. Vivian Lindhardsen and Ms. Donna Brinton, and Project Assistant Ashley Beccia, flew to Tunisia on October 22 to engage in a variety of activities aimed at two goals. First, the delegation assessed the impact of the TC-Tunisia Project by:

- Observing TC-Tunisia participants' instruction of pre-service teachers at institutes of higher education;
- Conducting focus group interviews with TC-Tunisia participants; and
- Hosting academic roundtables for TC-Tunisia participants.



Second, the delegation complemented the online training of the TC-Tunisia Project by providing capstone project coaching to year-two participants and engaging participants from both cohorts in academic roundtables.



In addition to the aforementioned activities, the TC delegation had productive meetings with the U.S. Embassy and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Finally, the field trip concluded with a beautiful reception hosted by the Acting Public Affairs Officer of U.S. Embassy, David Ballard, at the Columbia University Global Centers.

Read more about the highly successful field trip on the following pages.

Site Visits

The TC delegation, accompanied by David Ballard, Saida Jedidi and Ons Ziadia from the U.S. Embassy, traveled to three regions across Tunisia to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the impact that the TC-Tunisia Project has had on EFL education in the country.

Gafsa

The site visit to Gafsa kicked off on October 25 with an observation of an EFL lesson taught by Ms. Tlijani Afef at the primary school at Avenue Bourguiba. The following day, the delegation was welcomed to the Higher Institute of Languages in Gafsa, where pre-service teachers shared their curricular concerns, TC-Tunisia participants engaged in a focus group interview, and first-year participant Mr. Faisal Mabrouk conducted an outstanding lesson using TBLT, which was observed by the TC delegation and TC-Tunisia participants. This site visit concluded with a breath-taking visit to archeological site Snad Jbal.



Sbeitla

The site visit to Sbeitla began on October 27 at the primary school Forrest 2 Kasserine, where an observation of Mrs. Sondes Yousfi Saoudi's EFL lesson was conducted. The following day, the TC delegation met TC-Tunisia participants at the Higher Institute of Applied Studies in Humanities of Sbeitla (ISEAH), where first-year participant Ms. Zeineb Derbali conducted an extraordinary lesson on multiple intelligences with pre-service teachers. Following this class observation, presentations were made by Education and Teaching License graduates from ISEAH, who shared their experiences as new teachers of young EFL learners. The site visit to Sbeitla was topped off with a tour of the stunning archeological site of Sbeitla.

Jendouba

The third and final site visit was to Jendouba on October 31 and took place at the Higher Institute of Human Sciences of Jendouba. To start, pre-service teachers and post-graduates made presentations on their perceptions of the English Education curricula at their institute. Next, TC-Tunisia participants Jihen Fadhlaoui and Zohra Mansouri discussed changes they have made to their own teaching and syllabi due to their participation in the TC-Tunisia Project. Lastly, Ms. Jihen Fadhlaoui conducted an exceptional lesson using a plethora of teaching methods learned through the four modules of the TC-Tunisia Project.



Academic Roundtables

On November 1 and 2, members of both cohorts of the TC-Tunisia Project gathered at the Columbia University Global Centers | Tunis. On each day, there were two academic roundtables, which consisted of 20-minute presentations made by the participants listed below. Between these roundtables, year-two participants had the opportunity to meet with the instructors of the Project to receive coaching on their capstone projects.

Roundtable 1: The Current Curriculums for TEYL and for Preservice Training of Teachers of TEYL in Tunisia

- Basma Bouziri (ISAMT)
- Sana Jabri (ISL Gabes) and Jihen Fadhlou (ISSH Jendouba)

Roundtable 2: The Infrastructure for TEYL in Tunisia

- Yaguta Beji (ISL Gabes)
- Zeineb Derbali (ISEAH Sbeitla)
- Ferid Kouki (ISSH Medenine)

Roundtable 3: TEYL Professional Development in Tunisia

- Yaguta Beji (ISL Gabes)
- Khaled Houch (ISAM Tataouine)
- Noura Houichi (ISSTE Gafsa) and Mohamed Salah (ISEAH Tozeur)

Roundtable 4: Roundtable 4: Evidence-based Practices (School-based Research; Teachers' Exploratory Practice)

- Cyrine Kortas (ISL Gabes)
- Achour Chakhar (ISAM Tataouine)



Special Shout-Outs

On behalf of the TC delegation, a special shout-out goes to the following:

- Noura Houichi (ISSTE Gafsa), Faisal Mabrouk (ISSTE Gafsa), Zeineb Derbali (ISEAH Sbeitla), Jihen Fadhlou (ISSH Jendouba), Sana Jabri (ISL Gabes), Ferid Kouki (ISSH Medenine), and Mohamed Salah (ISEAH Tozeur), who contributed tremendously to the TC delegation's field trip to Tunisia
- The U.S. Embassy in Tunisia, the Columbia University Global Centers | Tunis, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research for their generosity and unwavering support
- All participants of the TC-Tunisia Project who attended events across Tunisia, making the dream of meeting in person come true

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Abdelmajid Yahyaoui

Participant of the 2022 Cohort

Abdelmajid Yahyaoui is from Medenine, a city in south-eastern Tunisia, where he also teaches currently. From a young age, Abdelmajid has taken interest in studying languages. In addition to Arabic, English and French, Abdelmajid also studied German and Italian. Seeing the opportunities available to English majors, he decided to pursue English at university. Indeed, this decision has opened many doors of opportunity for Abdelmajid.

Abdelmajid completed his higher education at the University of Manouba in Tunis, receiving his B.A. in English with a specialization in civilization and culture in 2004. Initially preparing to become a high school teacher, Abdelmajid was recruited by the Ministry of Higher Education and joined the University of Gabes to teach English at the Higher Institute of Human Sciences. After teaching English for specific purpose (ESP) for a few years, Abdelmajid has been teaching culture and civilization for the past twelve years. Classes that he teaches include but are not limited to *Introduction to British Culture*, *Key Issues in American Culture*, and *American History*. The students to whom Abdelmajid teaches these courses are studying to receive their license in teaching.



Coming into the TC-Tunisia Project in January 2022, Abdelmajid only had experience with teaching English to young learners (TEYL) when he was preparing to become a high school teacher back in 2005. Therefore, the TC-Tunisia Project, to which Abdelmajid has been deeply committed, has equipped Abdelmajid with a new skillset and has filled gaps in his understanding of TEYL. In particular, Abdelmajid found the theories of language acquisition covered in Module 2 to be eye-opening. Further, learning how to create conditions for learning, which was covered in Module 3, was highly valuable for Abdelmajid. Finally, Abdelmajid appreciated learning about practitioner's research in Module 4, and looks forward to implementing this type of research in his own practice.

Not only has the TC-Tunisia Project been fruitful for Abdelmajid on a professional level, it has also been useful on a personal level. By working with colleagues in breakout rooms during the synchronous sessions and collaborating on projects outside of class, Abdelmajid has forged relationships with English teaching professionals from across Tunisia. Abdelmajid sees these relationships as invaluable and looks forward to collaborating with them in the future, propagating the positive effects of the TC-Tunisia Project.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE TC-COMMUNITY

As the TC-Tunisia Project wraps up its second year, we would like to invite all members of the community to the following events and opportunities:

- **November 15**, submit expression of interest in contributing to a journal special issue on exploratory practice. [Click here to fill out the form](#). Late responses will not be considered.
- **November 18**, submit expression of interest in presenting at [the TC-Tunisia 2022 Symposium](#) on Teaching English to Young Learners. [Click here to fill out the form](#). Late responses will not be considered.
- **December 6**, 11:00-1:00pm, a virtual public talk by Professor Van den Branden on "How to Teach an Additional Language: To Task or Not to Task?". All are welcome. [Click here to see detailed info on how to register](#).
- **December 7**, Graduation of the 2022 Cohort of the TC-Tunisia Project – mark your calendar!
- **February 2-3, 2023**, The 2023 Teachers College Columbia University Roundtable in Second Language Studies (TCCRISLS): Using Stories to Story Instructed, Usage-based L2 Learning. All are welcome. [Click here to see how to register](#).