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THE TC-TUNISIA PROJECT

Vol 2 Issue 3

Newsletter



Inside the Issue

GOODBYE TO MODULE 2

View participants' final e-posters, read Najah Ghazlani's reflection, and read about the second community event.
pp. 02-03

HELLO TO MODULE 3

Learn about the third module, its instructor Dr. ZhaoHong Han, and participants' incredible engagement in the module.
p. 04

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Get to know Salma Ghaoui, a dedicated teacher advisor in Ariana, Tunisia.
p. 05

PROJECT UPDATES

- The 2022 cohort of the TC-Tunisia Project completed Module 2 in mid-May.
- During the last session of Module 2, participants gave presentations of e-posters addressing the pedagogy of young EFL learners.
- The Project Assistant and Class Representatives co-facilitated the second community event in mid-May.
- In late May, the cohort began Module 3, which will continue through the end of June.

GOODBYE MODULE 2 ...

MODULE 2 RECAP

Pedagogical Training, the second module of the TC-Tunisia Project, kicked off on April 1. Instructed by Drs. Donna Brinton and Sarah Creider, the module was designed to cultivate participants' understanding of communicative language teaching in the context of teaching English as foreign language (EFL) to young learners. To this end, participants learned about a variety of teaching practices, including lesson design and delivery, effective for young language learners.

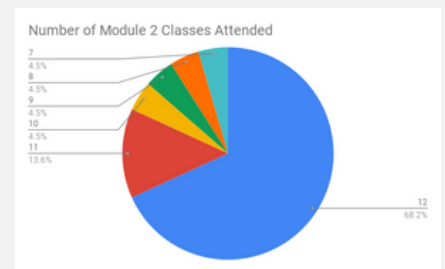
Toward the end of the module, participants were afforded an opportunity to work in small groups to investigate an issue pertaining to teaching EFL to young learners. On May 14, the final class session of the module, the groups shared their research with the rest of the cohort by presenting a conference-style e-poster. To view the groups' e-posters, please visit the following links.

- [Games to Enhance Language Learning](#)
Najeh Sdiri, Abdelmajid Yahyaoui, Salma Ghaoui
- [Pair and Group Work in a Learner-Centered Classroom](#)
Yagouta Beji, Amel Falah, Shehida Trad
- [Theme-Based Instruction](#)
Najah Ghozlani, Ahmed Jouini, Hajer Ben Al Agha, Amel Tlili
- [Multiple Intelligences](#)
Kawthar Ben Slema, Amel Moutakel, Tarak Hasni, Manoubia Saad
- [Implementing Flipped Reading in the EFL Primary Classroom in Tunisia](#)
Basma Bouziri, Cyrine Kortas, Hichem Abidi, Ismail Rzigui
- [Implementing Learner-Centered Pedagogy in Teaching Grammar to Young Learners](#)
Gouta Chater, Abir Mnafeq, Olfa Hammami, Shehrazad Louhichi

MODULE 2 ATTENDANCE

The superb attendance rates of the 2022 cohort demonstrate the participants' persistence and commitment to the TC-Tunisia Project. The majority of participants (68%) attended all 12 class sessions. An additional 18% of participants attended 11 sessions, and the remaining 14% attended 7, 8, or 9 sessions.

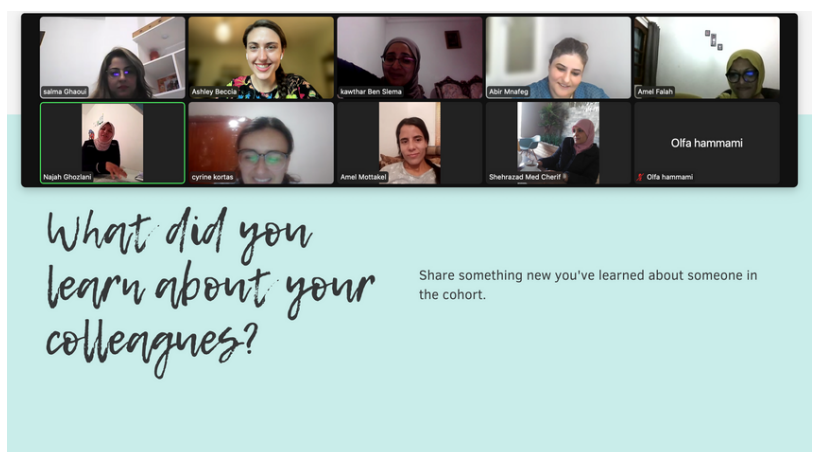
For a visual of Module 2 attendance, please see the pie chart below.



Click the figure to enlarge

COMMUNITY EVENT: TEAM BONDING

Project Assistant Ashley Beccia and Class Representatives Ahmed Jouini, Amel Moutakel and Shehrazad Louhichi co-facilitated *Team Bonding*, the third community event of the year, on Sunday, May 15. An additional thirteen participants joined over Zoom, and the group engaged in three team-bonding activities: (1) watch and discuss an inspirational video; (2) play online Pictionary; and (3) in breakout rooms, share something that makes you proud and something you hope to accomplish in the future. To view a clip from the event, please visit [*this link*](#).



REFLECTING ON MODULE 2

A Committed Community

by Najah Ghozlani

On the occasion of finishing Module 2 *Pedagogical Training*, I would like to express my gratitude to my teachers--the two reputable EFL experts, Dr. Donna M. Brinton and Dr. Sarah Creider for their invaluable support and guidance throughout the whole course. I would also like to thank my colleagues for their sense of community and constructive feedback. I, as well, want to seize this opportunity to share with you my major takeaways from this module in the hope that you will appreciate my humble contribution to this newsletter.



Najah Ghozlani

My first major takeaway from Module 2 concerns the reading reflections rubric. In fact, our beloved teachers offered us the opportunity to read course-related articles and reflect on them by posting an answer to one of three questions in each session. Not only that, for they also showed their interest in our reading reactions by selecting and sharing them with all the cohort members at the start of every synchronous session. This very fact is a clear evidence that we - as learners - could really serve as learning resources for each other while making us feel honoured and valued as authors, especially with the positive feedback we received from our teachers and colleagues.

Another important takeaway from Module 2 is related to the end-of-module e-poster presentations. Weeks of rich input, fruitful discussions and collaboration culminated in a variety of eye-catching and enriching e-posters. In fact, each poster was the incarnation of the unwavering commitment of the group members to make the best of their collaborative efforts. Certainly, in the last session, all of us had experienced mixed feelings of enthusiasm, fear and anxiety. I remember how I felt when I was trying to beat the clock to leave enough time for my co-presenters to present their parts, and how sorry I was when some of my colleagues couldn't make it to the end due to Internet issues or time limits.

All that is enough proof that we are truly a community whose members are committed to one another, caring for one another and supporting each other in every single situation. This sense of community is made even deeper thanks to Ashley's efforts in team building and team bonding events.

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting in progress. On the left, a large e-poster titled "Implementing Theme-based Instruction in Tunisian EFL Classrooms: 6th grade curriculum" is displayed. The poster includes an abstract, introduction, a table of themes, a sample lesson plan, and a conclusion. On the right, a grid of 18 video thumbnails shows participants in the meeting, including names like cyrine kortas, Sarah Creider, Basma Bouziri, Donna Brinton, shehida trad, salma Ghaoui, Najah Ghozlani, Amel Falah, Abir Mnafeq, Majid YAHYAOUJI, Hager, Yagouta Beji, Tarek, ismail rzigul, Gouta Chater, Amel Mottakel, Amel Tlili, and Ahmed Jouini.

Najah's group presents their e-poster in the final session of Module 2

... HELLO MODULE 3!

MODULE 3 OVERVIEW

Teaching in the 21st Century, the third module, extends participants' understanding of the assessment and pedagogy of young EFL learners. To do so, participants learn and discuss topics such as language acquisition, optimizing conditions for language learning in the classroom, and conducting 'dynamic assessment.'

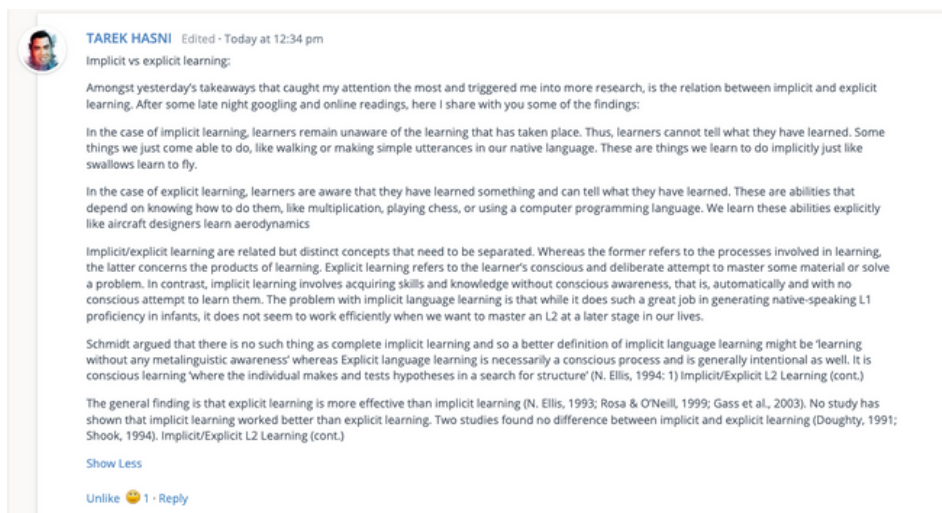
In addition to synchronous class sessions on Zoom, participants engage in synchronous discussions on Schoology and work on out-of-class projects. Projects include evaluating textbooks used for teaching EFL to young learners in Tunisia and analyzing learner language, i.e., samples of student writing or speaking. The last session of the module is a class symposium during which participants will make presentations addressing the question: *are the conditions provided by instructional materials or in the classroom conducive to young learners' learning?*

To view the syllabus for Module 2, please visit the following link: [Module 2 Syllabus](#).

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT

To date, the 2022 cohort of the TC-Tunisia Project has shown incredible engagement in Module 3. This is evidenced not only by in-class participation but also by the work participants put into their professional development outside of class sessions.

Tarek Hasni, a teacher advisor in Beja, took the time, immediately after a synchronous session ended at 8pm, to search for more information on explicit and implicit knowledge, which were among the topics discussed in the synchronous session. Tarek's post attests to the hard work set forth by participants in the project, as well as the participants' commitment to EFL education.



TAREK HASNI Edited · Today at 12:34 pm
Implicit vs explicit learning:

Amongst yesterday's takeaways that caught my attention the most and triggered me into more research, is the relation between implicit and explicit learning. After some late night googling and online readings, here I share with you some of the findings:

In the case of implicit learning, learners remain unaware of the learning that has taken place. Thus, learners cannot tell what they have learned. Some things we just come able to do, like walking or making simple utterances in our native language. These are things we learn to do implicitly just like swallows learn to fly.

In the case of explicit learning, learners are aware that they have learned something and can tell what they have learned. These are abilities that depend on knowing how to do them, like multiplication, playing chess, or using a computer programming language. We learn these abilities explicitly like aircraft designers learn aerodynamics

Implicit/explicit learning are related but distinct concepts that need to be separated. Whereas the former refers to the processes involved in learning, the latter concerns the products of learning. Explicit learning refers to the learner's conscious and deliberate attempt to master some material or solve a problem. In contrast, implicit learning involves acquiring skills and knowledge without conscious awareness, that is, automatically and with no conscious attempt to learn them. The problem with implicit language learning is that while it does such a great job in generating native-speaking L1 proficiency in infants, it does not seem to work efficiently when we want to master an L2 at a later stage in our lives.

Schmidt argued that there is no such thing as complete implicit learning and so a better definition of implicit language learning might be 'learning without any metalinguistic awareness' whereas Explicit language learning is necessarily a conscious process and is generally intentional as well. It is conscious learning 'where the individual makes and tests hypotheses in a search for structure' (N. Ellis, 1994: 1) Implicit/Explicit L2 Learning (cont.)

The general finding is that explicit learning is more effective than implicit learning (N. Ellis, 1993; Rosa & O'Neill, 1999; Gass et al., 2003). No study has shown that implicit learning worked better than explicit learning. Two studies found no difference between implicit and explicit learning (Doughty, 1991; Shook, 1994). Implicit/Explicit L2 Learning (cont.)

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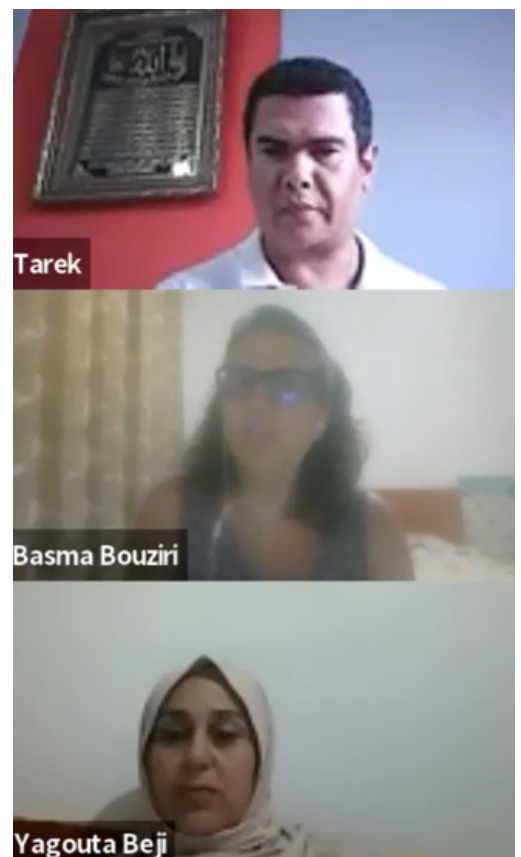
Click to enlarge Tarek's post

MEET THE INSTRUCTOR

Module 3 of the TC-Tunisia Project is taught by Dr. ZhaoHong Han, Professor of Applied Linguistics at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Director of the TC-Tunisia Project. Dr. Han is a prolific second language acquisition (SLA) researcher. For a list of her principal publications, visit [this link](#).



Dr. ZhaoHong Han



Tarek Hasni and colleagues during the sixth session of Module 3

PARTICIPANT SPOTLIGHT

Salma Ghaoui

Participant of the 2022 Cohort

Salma Ghaoui is from Beja, a town in the north of Tunisia, and has lived in Ariana, also in northern Tunisia, for over 20 years. She resides with her husband, daughter (14), and son (11). Holding a master's degree in Business English, Salma is currently finishing her second master's degree in Educational Technology. Her hobbies include painting and cooking.



After teaching for 15 years, Salma became a teacher advisor in the subject of English. She supports around 187 teachers in over 45 schools. To manage this, Salma facilitates various trainings for groups of teachers. During these trainings, the teachers learn about new EFL teaching methods, as well as ways to be creative in the English language classroom.

Additionally, Salma visits the teachers in their classrooms. She assists them as they teach English lessons, and afterwards, she provides feedback and suggestions for improvement. She also provides them with materials such as lesson plans. To this end, Selma started a group called *Ariana English Time Team*. Using Padlet and Facebook, Salma and the teachers in the group share experiences, documents, presentations, etc.

Salma has faced a number of challenges in her role as a teacher advisor. One challenge is that the classroom teachers are not specialized in teaching EFL. Instead, they teach multiple subjects, including French and Arabic, on a daily basis. Another challenge is supporting teachers who have very large class sizes. Developing teachers' management skills is therefore an important part of supporting their EFL instruction.

Despite these challenges, Salma continues to find ways to support multilingual teachers and students in Tunisia. Recently, Salma was involved in three competitions. In the **first competition**, young learners in Ariana took a dictation test and the top three finalists in all Ariana schools went on to the next round. In the second round, young learners from across Tunisia met in Sfax to compete in dictation. Excitingly, a student from Ariana came in third place. In the **second competition**, young learners prepared for taking the entrance exam to pioneer schools, which are considered prestigious and competitive. The young learners took tests with questions in both English and French, going through multiple rounds of testing -- from inter-class to inter-school to inter-sector -- until the top learner emerged and was deemed "brilliant in both languages." In the **third competition**, young learners performed sketches, songs, and dances. Salma oversaw 18 participants who practiced and showed off their EFL skills in this fun competition.

In Selma's view, multilingualism is an important and valuable asset for young learners in Tunisia. She hopes that, moving forward, young learners across Tunisia are offered more opportunities to develop their multilingualism, and in particular, more instructional hours for learning EFL.



 www.mondialschool.tn  [mondial school](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)  info.mandelaschool@gmail.com

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Salma Ghaoui at a language competition for young learners in Tunisia