

Hornby Educational Trust

Cooperative Development Practices in TAs as a Means of Supporting Teachers and Developing Resilience for Ukrainian EFL Teachers

Ukraine

2022-2023 Alumni Project Report

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Hornby Alumni Projects

Project Overview

| Title | Cooperative development practices in TA as a means of supporting teachers and developing resilience for Ukrainian EFL lecturers. |
|------------------|--|
| Country | Ukraine |
| Dates of project | 2022-2023 |

1.Background and rationale

What are the main issues in your English teaching and learning context? How did these issues influence your choice of project? Were there also other important contextual factors to consider?

This project aims to provide support for a virtual group of a formal teacher's association in higher education domain in Ukraine. It helps to build a trusted non-evaluated space for professional development and peer's support within the TA through practising cooperative development framework. Sharing the practices of coping the challenges of teaching English in the wartime will enhance trust and collegiality between teachers of one department and provide the local HE domain with possible solutions.

With the recent war of Russia against Ukraine, Kharkiv universities switched to online teaching whereas the lecturers forced to leave their hometown for the safer location continue to work. Most EFL lecturers in the department of foreign languages of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics teach students online, using asynchronous or synchronous mode, depending on their and students' circumstances. In such conditions peer's support, mutual cooperation and teacher's resilience become crucial in order to sustain a capacity to carry on professional duties, cope with the challenges, and find the solutions for them.

The framework of Cooperative development is a well-known model within which a certain style of speaking and listening to colleagues can be practised. Roles of Understander and Speaker within this framework ensure a safe non-judgemental space for articulating any thoughts and



professional concerns what differs greatly from traditional institutional teacher's discourse which as we know contains some elements of arguing, agreeing/disagreeing, suggesting, and criticising.

The project provides a chance for the lecturers who belong to the formal teacher association at the department to meet on-line on a monthly basis as an informal community to share their experience, ask for advice, and support each other. Being located geographically in different parts of Europe such meetings enhance a feeling of mutual trust and support from colleagues and emotional connection across the physical space. Sharing professional concerns and/or knowledge unites teachers as one team of professionals and educators what helps build a community of practice where each member is appreciated, and any concern can be spoken up and discussed.

Using techniques of cooperative development (CD) and coaching strategies will equip the participants with important skills of active listening, scaffolding, coaching, giving feedback. without threatening a speaker but providing them with resources for resilience. CD focuses on professional development as a self-development, and we apply some elements of CD during the on-line meetings with hope that this non-evaluative discourse will be more commonly and naturally practised between colleagues in future.

We offer to conduct analysis of transcribed sessions to identify interactional moves made by Speaker and Understander and discuss contribution of these moves and techniques of active listening into the process of developing trust and collegiality. Such analysis aims to give evidence to the analyst (one of the participants) about how collaborative teacher's discourse - free of evaluating, suggesting, and criticising – supports and builds up a feeling of trust and develops resilience. Group discussion of analysis can help members of community to recognize these strategies and reveal trends and perspectives for further development. The analysis of the typescripts is to be conducted by one of the participants and the results of such analysis will be discussed in the group. This discussion aims to contribute to teacher awareness about the nature of cooperative techniques when listening/advising/supporting and their role in creating safe and trusted space within a community of practice. Micro-research followed by analysis of data and discussing the findings will serve raising critical awareness about teacher's discourse out of the classroom and collegiality as a means to provide support and develop resilience.

The project is not focused on the particular problem or area, thus working through the topics discussed by the participants, concerns and problems can help define the problematic areas of ELT at the institutional and national level.



2.Project objectives

- 1. To build a community of practice between teachers who work in the department of foreign languages on the basis of cooperative development and coaching strategies.
- 2. To conduct the analysis of meetings, roles assigned within the community when practising cooperative development strategies.
- 3. To prepare for publishing the collection of stories of success developed/selected because of the analysis.



Evaluation

1. Project objectives

To what extent do you feel your objectives were met? If they were not met, or only partially met, can you explain why?

- 1. To evaluate the performance of the group which was built and its capacity as a CoP I refer to:
- participation and engagement
- frequency and quality of knowledge exchange
- the success of collaborative initiatives
- influence on individual learning and professional development

Participation and engagement.

Average level of attendance is 65%. It means that out of 11 project members there were usually 6-8 members at each meeting. The participants often travelled (across the country and abroad), but attendance never dropped significantly and everyone did their best to attend the online meeting. The engagement in the activities planned by the project is 100%.

Frequency and quality of knowledge exchange.

During CD sessions we could observe regular examples of knowledge exchange at the different levels. Thus, the managers of TA inform their colleagues about the current situations at the department and recent updates (Suknov and Krynska), the teachers from other university/educational company (Gubarieva, Herasimchuk, Barabash) share their experience on solving some problems with LSM - Google Classroom and Moodle and videoconferencing software, the regulations and policy of the universities are often discussed, the participants who attended more CD sessions explain CD techniques to those who were absent. All the participants check the shared drive with resources, links and video recordings of the meetings.

Collaborative initiatives

We collaborated with each other when conducting micro research and preparing Powerpoint presentations of the findings. After the first joint presentation (Barabash-Syzonova), Syzonova worked as a mentor to Rozdolianska and Vergun. In October 2023, Herasimchuk and Gubarieva worked together to create their analysis. The lecturers held 3 extra meetings with a group of 3 for CD sessions when they wanted to get more experience with this approach (October, November, December).

Influence on individual learning and professional development.

We have clear evidence how the project helped develop the communication skills and contributed to professional development. Evaluation form for the impact of the project shows that 100% agreed that the project improved their communication skills and will influence professional communication. The CD framework is often named as "an effective tool for understanding", "a skill that every teacher needs", "technique that changed my teaching style".

During the meetings such topics were named by the teachers as the direction for their further professional development:

- Al Tools in Teaching
- Academic Integrity



- Teacher Beliefs and Ideologies
- Lexical Approach to Teaching
- Internet Safety for Students and Teachers in Online Learning
- Use of the Internet EFL resources in Online Learning
- Ways to Cope with Uncertainty and War Consequences during the Lessons.

Beyond the project 4 lecturers took initiative to explore some of these topics what resulted in: 1 blog publication (Valiiova - Lexical approach - <u>https://www.paelt-ukraine.com/en/post/per-grammar-translation-method-ad-lexical-approach</u>), 1 article (Rozdolianska, Krynska - Ways to teach in the war), 1 webinar for colleagues (Barabash - Al Tolls in Teaching English, 19.12.2023 ESOL tutors Catch-up, Coventry city council).

Three lecturers got training and mentoring on the skills to present online with the tools of Powerpoint (Rozdolianska), AI Gamma (Krynska), Canva (Barabash). There was an example of cascade learning: Barabash-Syzonova (July), Syzonova-Rozdolianska (September). Thus I can say that the community of practice proved to be an effective tool for engagement in discussion, sharing, collaboration and learning.

On the other hand, the frequency of exchanges in a chat group and teacher's contribution into this chat was minimal and covered only attendance issues and schedule of meetings. It shows us how online and public engagement in CoP may differ from offline and more personal engagement.

- Analysis of CD sessions was conducted according to the plan. 7 people volunteered to conduct micro-research and presented findings as an online presentation - 5 presentations The link on Google drive with the materials of the project (video recordings, transcripts, ppt files of presentation, other resources and links) : <u>English Teachers' Association CD project</u>.
- 3. The preparation of publishing the collection of proceedings on the project is in an ongoing process at the moment. All the participants became active contributors. We expect around 10 articles based on the analysis of the sessions or experience of using CD for TA and a final version of this collection to be done by March.

Overall, we largely met our objectives, seeing consistent interest and engagement, teacher satisfaction and recognition of benefits of the project, personal and professional development. Despite challenges, the project activities have brought real outcomes like active CoP within TA, presentations and publications as a result of research, ongoing learning, collaborating, and professional development.

2. Project impact

What was the impact of your project on:

- a) you
- b) your Association(s) / Institution(s)?
- c) the people involved in your project?
- d) the wider community?

The impact of the project on me has two dimensions: 1) a role of a teacher educator and 2) as an EFL lecturer.

1) The role of teacher group manager provided me with valuable leadership opportunities. Through this role, I learned how to delegate tasks, prioritise the topics, accept challenges, and coordinate teamwork among group members. I felt responsible for the teacher group's progress and it made me feel more accountable and dedicated.



This role empowered me with leadership experience and helped me understand the responsibilities and challenges of being a manager better.

As evidence of my growth as a teacher educator I will mention:

a webinar on Cooperative development (organised with Ika Jinanitsu and Umida Khakimova in April 2023),

a Telegram public group for recent news from ELT world which I have been facilitating since April 2023 (<u>https://t.me/+3W3ZpN_qyjQyZmQy</u>).

I gained organisational and managerial skills, which I have never had the opportunity to practise before. I worked as a facilitator of all 13 on-line meetings, as a host of a webinar and a final meeting with 3 guests, as a project manager and as a manager of a public channel.I became a more effective communicator, learnt to plan my time and resources to run the project.

2) As a Ukrainian EFL lecturer being under prolonged effect of the war I improved my understanding of the way to build resilience and cope with stress. In collaboration with other members I researched the ways Ukrainian lecturers used to cope with the stress and uncertainty of the war.

My proposal for the talk at the IATEFL conference based on the analysis of the technique of CD and its use in TA was selected to be presented in Brighton 2024.

I learnt a lot about my own strengths and weaknesses, I developed such resilience skills as a focus on positive things, consistency with small but regular activities, and personal connection with my professional community.

b) The impact on TA of Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics is highly positive. We addressed the challenges of wartime: feelings of despair and isolation of the professional community, lack of psychological support, changing requirements to the ways of teaching. The project equipped the lecturers with the technique of active and empathetic listening which enhanced the capacity to support each other and find solutions to the problems. The project created opportunities for connection and developments and in this way was a tool for building resilience and promoting collective well-being.

The screenshot of the CD session on 13.05.2023:

Yuliia Barabash, Tetiana Vergun, Olena Rozdolianska, Svitlana Syzonova, Michael Suknov, Nataliia Krynska.





The screenshot of the meeting on 15.07.2023:

Yuliia Barabash and Svitlana Syzonova presenting the findings of the analysis, Tetiana Vergun, Olena Rozdolianska, Tetiana Valiiova, Tetiana Herasimchuk, Michael Suknov, Nataliia Krynska.

| напрак Studio Ределарована Просела Всанила Анатринента Странии СВ — Х | CLASSFLOW | - 0 X | |
|---|--|-----------------------|-----------------|
| a) A fully completed story | sult of the session? | E Rite Ceirnese Ce | Икайло Суннов |
| b) Kentections and ideas or the speake next meeting c) Discussion of the topic where both p d) Exchange of feelings about the situ | | | |
| grasp this information, or it's not the right time now robaby next time or not week. Add another thing Ves, of this empathy. Of course I wasn't I think, or I c Anna Kurnetsous: So that I need more developmen So I want to be even more empathetic and in order t And notice what other people feel. | I see that their faces and understand that they're not ready to probably, we have to dicuts this and proceed with that book. I named is that I think I have to improve in being more empathetic onside myself to be empathetic. Cim that, o do that, I have to I have to be more observant. | | Arma Kuzzetkova |
| Anna Kuznetsova: This is, I guess this is one of the n | ost difficult moments. | Tatyona Verg | |

The photo of off-line meeting with the participants of the project, Kharkiv, August 2023:

Tetiana Valiiova, Nataliia Krynska, Mykhaylo Akulshyn, Svitlana Syzonova, Olena Rozdolianska



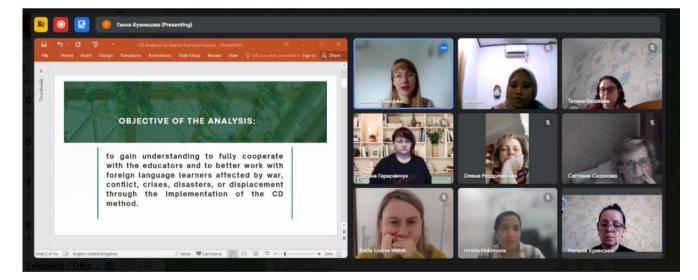


Lunch: Nataliia Krynska, Olga Gubarieva, Tetiana Herasimchuk, Svitlana Syzonova, Olena Rozdolianska, Tetiana Valiiova





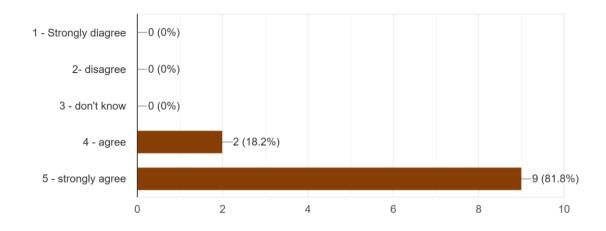
The screenshot of the final meeting on 24.02.2024: Hanna Kuztesova presents her findings of analysis, the guests Katie Webb, Ika Jinanitsu, Umida Hakimova, participants: Tetiana Valiiova, Olena Rozdolianska, Svitlana Syzonova, Tetiana Herasimchuk, Nataliia Krynska.



e) The people involved in the project positively assessed the impact on their communication skills and professional development.

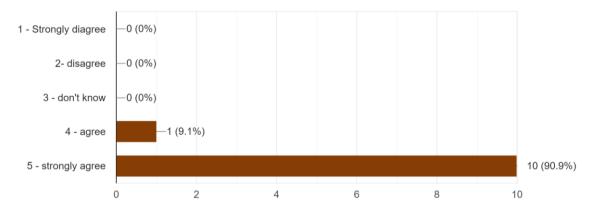


The practices on Cooperative development have positively impacted me and the teacher's community where we practiced CD.



The Cooperative development practices have provided me with the tool to support others and build resilience for myself.

11 responses



7 lecturers engaged in the analysis, 3 teachers in preparing the proceeding of the project as a publication. The project inspired publications and presentations:

1 blog article, 1 paper for scholarship and 1 presentation,1 abstracts for conference. Feedback on the project shows the impact extended beyond the analysis of CD practice: "The most important benefit of this project is that we do not feel alone and lost in the situation

we are all in. We feel each other's support, which helps us to survive and continue working in spite of difficulties".

"This project unites us as teachers, gives us opportunity to meet and share our views, give support to our colleagues and get support as well."



"I'd like to meet more EL teachers from other countries to share their experience and personal stories of implementing CD method in their practices".

"We discussed different problems connected with teaching, learning, teacher's psychological and emotional states especially at war time, we had an opportunity to think about the problems we hadn't thought about before and in this way we had very positive and friendly communication, exchange of experience and support."

"To my mind, all professional meetings have influenced on all the members of the association highly developing necessary professional competence and qualities, communication skills and providing psychological support in both the stressful working environment and continuous professional developing and learning. Practical issues on everything studied during the meetings will be applied in the future scientific researches in the psycholinguistics field."

f) I didn't evaluate the impact of the project on a wider audience, but as I shared the updates and outcomes of the project with the community of Ukrainian EFL teachers I saw the interest in our further projects.

Applications from four Kharkiv universities for our next project I see as a recognition of project benefits and a proof of interest from a professional EFL community of Kharkiv.

3. Sharing with a wider audience

Who did you share information about the project with? Why, when, and how did you do this? What reactions did you get? Do you have any further plans for sharing more widely?

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/nataliia-krynska_i-am-thrilled-to-share-the-success-of-aremarkable-activity-7108859794685321216-

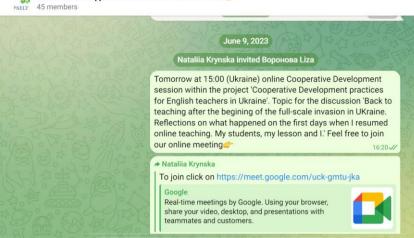
trl1?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop

I updated the information about the project in the Telegram group for EFL lecturers, on Instagram, Linkedin and Facebook.

Following the discussion during on-line meetings we created a public chat PAELT where we posted information about the recent events in ELT world on the topics relevant to us. The audience of this chat grew from 10 project participants to 45 subscribers as we invited our colleagues to join and more posts and news appeared in the chat. We posted news about the project, CD techniques, and coming on-line meetings.



📩 Спілка викладачів англійської мови PAELT 📻



After such announcements we may have some guests on our meetings where project participants would explain the aim of the project and introduce CD technique. In June Olga Gubarieva and Tetiana Herasimchuck joined the project to substitute two other lecturers whose circumstances didn't allow them to continue. In August Tetiana Valiiova joined the meeting and participated in an extra CD session in October.

We used the website of PAELT to write in its blog about CD framework and shared this link in a chat: <u>https://www.paelt-ukraine.com/post/%D1%89%D0%BE-</u>%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BA%D0%B5-cooperative-development-in-elt

The growth from 10 to 44 subscribers of the public chat indicates that the topics being discussed are relevant and valuable to the subscribers. Each post usually gives good statistics of reactions. This public group created more opportunities for networking and collaboration among members and I hope that with growing to a larger group it can facilitate connections between EFL lecturers with similar interests or goals.



4. Overall reflections

As a result of planning, implementing, and disseminating the project, what did you learn about:

- a) organising / managing a project?
- b) the strengths / weaknesses and future needs of your TA(s) /Institution(s) and / or working context?

Would you do anything differently next time? Would you like to suggest anything to another alumni planning to undertake a similar project?

My lessons learnt about organising / managing a project are:

- management of resources, including budget, time, and people in the project is on-going process which never ends, never goes by plan and always requires adaptability and flexibility from me. I learnt to accept the initiative from other members (off-line meeting, conference by the results of the project, Telegram public group), develop the plan to implement these initiatives, manage them as a micro project.
- keeping records about the project, e.g. creating a virtual space, where all the recordings and materials on the project are kept, is essential for tracking the progress, evaluating the impact, and writing a final report.
- engaging with people who are not in the project but represent management of TA ensures that our project addresses not only the needs of one TA, but the needs of the HE domain of Ukraine as well.
- I still need to develop my managerial skills in engaging other members in the activities and delegating some tasks to others. Next time I would ask someone from the project to be in charge of posting and updating news about the project on social networks and someone to keep the records of the project.
- I could have had more frequent contacts with other TAs and would present the project at the level of regional or national conferences. In the future I would feel more confident to talk to the TA managers, offering them collaboration and presenting the project wider.

We have seen a great level of adaptability built within the TA and I think it is one of the strengths of our project. Regular meetings enabled us to move toward the things we wanted to do: practise CD, research it, and present the findings and our thoughts about CD. We started engaging with the world of uncertainty in a new way. Instead of focusing on the tasks that seem unachievable and suspending all the activities till the better time, we learnt to cope with the challenges: if a presenter could not attend a meeting they would delegate this task to their colleague, so presentation would be delivered anyway. Many times those who missed the meeting caught up by watching the video recordings and during the next initiated the discussion of what they missed. The lecturers now feel free to ask for help in any area of their job and actively cooperate with each other. After a year of the project I see that the TA members do not expect any assistance from outside and feel capable to work as a TA next year.

The future needs of TA extend beyond the needs of the department of Foreign languages. We will need people who can act as project managers and teacher educators. While there is a war



in the country we still need to continue with the basic skills of building and re-building resilience: stay connected, have achievable purposes and move towards them, accept changes and celebrate each success.

The main weakness of TA is that most members don't self-assign for managerial tasks even if they initiate something. TA members are eager to engage in sharing and discussion but never volunteer to run the project. With all the ideas, experience and initiatives TA members can offer they don't have confidence to take a lead in the initiative they offer. I think it would help to run this and other projects if all TA members had specific roles within it and knew the plans for the future.

I would strongly recommend to other alumni to take our experience and start building the CoP within TA from building empathy and trust between members of TA. The technique of CD opens up more opportunities for further professional self development while talking about teacher's concerns and areas of unknown are explored together in non-judgemental discourse of colleagues.

5. Next steps

How do you plan to continue and / or build on what has been achieved through this project? Why? How might you begin?



I plan to continue with our meetings on a regular basis - for this purpose our last meeting of the project hosts Katie Webb, a lecturer from Warwick University who shares her experience of such regular meetings between PhD students of the department of Applied Linguistics (2020-2022). After the successful launch of public chat I would like to continue regular posts in the public Telegram group, add more topics to it and allow not only reactions to the posts, but comments. For the website of PAELT I plan to engage more writers for the blog.

With support of CoP of CD practice and information support of public chat I want to continue with building a sustainable TA. With the successful experience of the project in this year, I have ambitions to develop the Professional association of English language teachers - a small public organisation founded by me and my colleague into a TA where members can take a lead in the projects which are relevant to their interests. We will continue to explore the areas for further development through CD practice which proved to be effective with our community and build a task force with the capacity to launch and manage the projects for the local informal TAs I am looking for the support of Hornby trust because with its engagement the projects for TA gets credibility and recognition among the EFL community of UKraine. Such cooperation with a well-known and internationally recognised educational organisation means a lot for Ukrainian lecturers, it boosts their confidence in initiating and planning activities for themselves within TA, it allows them to stay on the track with CPD and keep it on, it adds important experience to their academic records.



Permissions

This report is primarily for the Hornby Trustees and British Council internal review and records. However, we do want to promote your hard work and would like to share what you have done with other Hornby awardees and publicly via the Internet.

- X Can you please tick here if you give your permission to share your report?
- X□ Please tick here if you would like your project to be considered for presentation at the 2025 IATEFL conference (the Hornby Trust will select from reports submitted and will support one team member from each of these projects to attend the conference).

Please indicate who would give the presentation if selected:

To be indicated later. (Name of presenter)

Name

Nataliia Krynska

Date

27.02.2024



Appendices

Appendix 1: Expenditure

Were there any **significant differences** from your planned budget? By significant we mean you spent far more than planned, or you were given a donation from a partner that was not expected, for example.

Note any costs below that exceeded the original budget by £200 (below this amount does not need including). Please also tell us what caused these changes in the *Reflection* section below the two tables.

a. local funding

| Description | Breakdown | Total cost | Final cost |
|---|--|------------|------------|
| A virtual environment for on-line meetings (Premium Google Meet/Zoom | During the project when needed A year subscription | Free | free |
| Publishing the journal as a collection of the articles | Publishing services | Free | free |
| Totals: | | Free | free |

b. Hornby funding

| Description | Breakdown | Total cost | Final cost |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|-------------------------------------|
| Analysis of data | 12 hours by a | £600 | 1. Svitlana Syzonova |
| | research assistant | | 2. Yuliia Barabash |
| | @10 GBP per hour | | 3. Tetiana Vergun |
| | | | 4. Olena Rozdolianska |
| | £120 per a month | | 5. Tetiana Herasimchuk |
| | (5 months) | | Hanna Kuznetsova |
| | | | 6x120= 720 |
| | | | £720 |
| Composing and editing | 12 hours by an | £600 | Mykhailo Suknov |
| the journal | editor/editor | | 2. Nataliia Krynska |
| | assistant @10 | | 3. Olga Gubarieva |
| | GBP per hour | | 3x120=360 |
| | £120 per a month | | £360 |
| | (5 months) | | |
| Lunch after offline | | | £60 |
| meeting in Kharkiv | | | |



| 'Thank you' payment to the trainers on CD techniques and contributors to the proceedings | 30 per person | | £60 1. Ika Jinanitsu 2. Umida Hakimova 2x30=60 |
|--|---------------|------|---|
| Totals | - | 1200 | 1200 |

Reflections:

There weren't any significant differences from our planned budget. We didn't exceed the original budget. The changes were made in allocation of the funds: 6 lecturers (instead of planned 5) got paid as research assistants, 3 lecturers (instead of 5) - as editors. In August 2024 Mykhailo Akulshyn informed us that he could not participate any longer in the project. So the amount of 120 pounds intended for him we used:

- 1) to cover the cost of the lunch in Kharkiv for 6 participants after an off-line meeting on 28th August 2023 £60
- to thank the trainers on CD who kindly agreed to hold a webinar on CD in April and contributed their articles on CD to the proceedings on the project. £30- Ika Jinanitsu and £30 Umida Hakimova - total £60.

Please share your thoughts here:

The opportunity to get engaged in research resonated with all the participants. Usually taken as a mundane and time-consuming activity, a micro-research in this project was taken by lecturers seriously and enthusiastically. It gave a feeling of purpose to the project because the analysis conducted by 7 lecturers resulted in public presentations in the group. United by one topic - analysis of the sessions on CD - a micro-research proved to be an interesting and engaging activity for the lecturers, it motivated them to explore the topics connected to their focus of analysis, brought a feeling of achievement and success, and made the outcome of the project visible. For 5 of the lecturers in the project it was their first experience of research and presentation and they appreciated this opportunity very much.

Appendix 2: Planned activity

Review your planned activity below and then reflect on any changes that were needed and explain why these were necessary.

| Dates | Description of activities | Duration |
|------------------|---|------------|
| December 2022 | A call for participants for the project: information letter sent to 40 members of the department of foreign languages | 1 month |
| | (Kharkiv National University of Radio Electronics, Ukraine) | |
| January | Collecting responses from the prospective participants, | 3 meetings |
| 2022 | | |



| | informal online meetings with the groups of participants to discuss the details of the project (language of meetings, time, schedule, procedures) | |
|----------------|---|-------------------|
| January 2022 | Online webinar and workshop on Cooperative development as a kind of teaching reflective practices | 2 hours |
| February 2023 | On-line sessions of Cooperative development (teamwork) | 1 hour |
| - June-2023 | | (once a month) |
| February 2023 | Micro-research followed by analysis of typescripts from | 12 hours |
| - June-2023 | CD session (roles and interactional moves of Speaker and | (followed by |
| | Understander), preparing a report of findings (no more | the on-line |
| | than one lecturer in one month) discussing the findings during the next on-line meeting | meeting) |
| July 2023 - | On-line sessions to finalise the project: discussing the | 1 hour |
| October 2023 | results, developing the solutions, celebrating the | (once a |
| | success(teamwork) | month) |
| January 2024 - | Composing the collection of teacher's stories as a journal, | 12 hours |
| February 2024 | writing the articles if needed, editing the articles and/or the | once a |
| | journal (no more than one lecturer in one month) | month |
| | | |

Reflections:

From the beginning of the project I faced the fact that it is extremely hard to make an appointment for the online meeting when all the EFL lecturers could attend. Due to the situation in the country (cut-offs of electricity followed by a cut-off of the Internet, different time zones for those who are in the UK, Europe and Ukraine, academic timetable that often extends on Saturdays or afternoon time) I could arrange one meeting a month to talk about the project, therefore our first on-line meeting took place in March. At this meeting we agreed to plan far in advance to be able to join our online meeting on the third Saturday every month.

The rest of the planned activities have been delayed accordingly - the webinar was held in April, the CD sessions started in May. From May till November we regularly held one-two CD sessions and held the presentation and discussion of micro research findings.

Trust and empathy in the group was built step by step: CD sessions enhanced non-judgemental talk while post-discussion fostered a sense of belonging to the teacher's job and to the community of the project.

During the project we developed our solutions to cope with some of the challenges within the project and beyond it, e.g.:

During CD sessions:

- 1) Understanders could use a set of questions as scaffolding;
- if it happened that a Speaker struggled to find one topic "worth sharing and exploring" out of all existing concerns we would hold a talk without focusing on a specific topic until something would resonate and sharing would start;
- 3) planned as a meeting with two parts (CD session and analysis of previous session)- its time was never spread equally. We learnt to be flexible with the duration of the



presentation and its discussion, so sometimes the CD session would last only 15 minutes or was held as extra session.

During the project:

- composing the collection of the reflections was delayed until the last two months of the project (January-February). It was because most participants would rather go into research than compose and edit the articles. As a result, those participants with the previous experience in publishing were asked to complete this task;
- reflecting on the results and benefits of the projects started much earlier before the planned finalisation stage. From the second online meeting and afterwards participants regularly recognised the benefits of such projects and CD techniques in any teachers community.

A positive response on the CD technique and creation of a professional community of practice can be seen in the growing capacity of this group: the participants are willing to continue with CD practice and eagerly plan the on-line conference to present on CD practices and its impact on the TA. The conference would welcome the EFL lecturers from the departments of Foreign /English language across Kharkiv and Ukraine.

Enhanced resilience amongst the participants as a final goal of the project can be seen through improved connections and support within the group, regular engagement in professional discussions, effective problem-solving skills to overcome challenges, greater optimism and aspirations for further projects.