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ELPAK NEWSLETTER

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Nairobi County | 2024.09.25 12:55

Top News

New Directions Sub-Saharan Africa
Conference

ELPAK Mentoring and growing
smaller Teacher Associations

Editor's Note

ELPAK is grateful for strides made thus far, and excited about the third issue of the newsletter series as it welcomes more volunteers in its editorial sphere. In this issue, as we celebrate ELPAK's growth, share content from teachers, and acknowledge the support of our partners, we also mark the World Suicide Prevention Day, turning out focus on this awareness in the English language classroom. Teachers are often the first to notice changes in students' behaviour, making them vital in creating safe and supportive learning environments. Incorporating suicide prevention strategies into our teaching practices is important, especially as many students may be struggling with personal challenges that affect their academic and emotional well-being. By fostering open dialogue and ensuring classrooms are trauma-informed, teachers help students navigate difficult moments while strengthening their language and life skills.

This progress would not be possible without the continuous support from our partners, RELO East Africa, US Embassy Nairobi, British Council, and other individual and government bodies, whose contributions have enabled us to provide professional development initiatives for educators. Through these programs, teachers are equipped with tools not only to better serve their students but also to advance in their own careers. The collaboration has fostered growth for both educators and learners alike. Together, we continue building a strong community focused on well-being and professional excellence.



Editor
Rukia Mohamed
ELPAK SECRETARY



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ELPAK MEMBER



Growth and development of chapters: Nairobi chapter session at
the American Corner Moi, with the English Language
Coordinator

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Newsletter Highlight

**RELO East Africa support
in nurturing
ELPAK chapters**

Inside The Issues

- ELPAK's participation in the New Directions Conference
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- ELPAK is proud of her members for their active participation in various Community Of Practice activities
-
- A look at suicide prevention in the English Language Classroom

We are proud of you!



We are proud of Tiberius Baraza, the ELPAK Vice President who was nominated to attend Fulbright Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Program fully sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), with funding provided by the U.S. Government. Honored to be among 21 teachers from 20 countries based at Kent State University, Ohio state

03/25

Chapters in Action



Siaya Chapter during a session on Assessment courtesy of British Council



Coastal chapter, during a session on Assessment courtesy of the British Council



Nakuru chapter, during a session on Assessment courtesy of the British Council



Chapter leaders Orientation



Nairobi chapter RELO TA Development



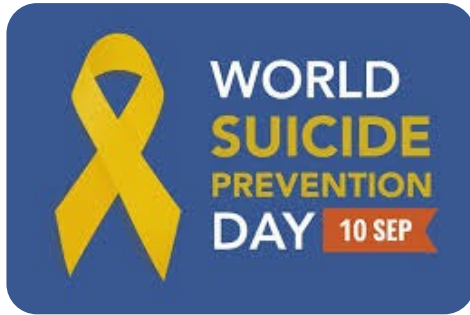
Register here to become a member:
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Scan Me

Starting the Conversation on Suicide and Suicide Prevention

Introduction



Suicide is a huge public health concern worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, 700,000 people die by suicide each year, or one every 40 seconds. Suicidal conduct encompasses a wide range of self-destructive behavior, from transient wishes for death to full suicide. Suicide is the world's 13th largest cause of death, and the fourth highest cause of mortality among people aged 15 to 19. According to the International Association for Suicide Prevention, suicide occurs in all parts of the world, but low- and middle-income nations account for three-quarters (77%) of all suicides. The global suicide rate is roughly twice as high among males as women, and more than half (58%) of all suicide deaths occur before the age of 50.

In recognition of this, the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IAS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) launched World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) in 2003. This is an annual awareness day held on September 10th to draw attention to suicide, decrease stigma, and raise awareness among organizations, governments, and the public, to send a clear message that suicides are preventable.

The 2024-2026 triennial theme for World Suicide Prevention Day is "Changing the Narrative on Suicide" with the call to action "Start the Conversation". According to the World Health Organization, the subject aims to increase awareness about the need of decreasing stigma and encouraging open communication to prevent suicide. Changing the narrative on suicide entails changing our perception of this complex issue and moving away from a culture of secrecy and stigma toward one of support, openness, and understanding.

Who is at Risk?

People of all ethnicities, ages and genders can be at risk for suicide

Causes of suicide

The leading reasons of suicide are mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, bipolar, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, stress, substance abuse, and eating disorders. Other risk factors for suicide include disasters, conflict, abuse, feelings of solitude, and loss. Third, suicide rates are high among vulnerable populations who face discrimination, such as migrants, indigenous people, refugees, members of the LGBT community, and convicts. Finally, a previous suicide attempt is the biggest predictor of death by suicide.

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Warning Signs

Warning indications that someone may be at urgent danger for attempting suicide include talking about feeling stuck or that there are no alternatives, feeling empty or hopeless or having no purpose to live, wishing to die or kill themselves, being a burden to others, withdrawing from relatives and friends, saying goodbye to friends and family, giving away valuable possessions, and frequently discussing or reflecting about mortality.

Challenges to dealing with suicide prevention.

The taboo to openly discuss suicide, social stigma, and a lack of data on suicide continue to be the greatest impediments to quality data for both suicide and suicide attempts. "given the sensitivity of suicide - and the illegality of suicidal behavior in some countries — it is likely that under-reporting and misclassification are greater problems for suicide than for most other causes of death."

The Kenyan Situation

According to WHO data, Kenya's crude suicide rate is 6.1 per 100,000 people, with an age-standardized suicide rate of 11.0 per 100,000 people, resulting in around 4 suicide fatalities each day. There is little information about suicides in low- and middle-income countries, including Kenya. The fragmented structure of suicide mortality reporting systems contributes significantly to this. In Kenya, data on purposeful self-harm are difficult to separate from those involving accidents or homicide. According to the task force report on mental health and wellness (2020), for every adult who has died by suicide, more than 20 have tried suicide, indicating a serious situation within Kenya's boundaries. Kenya ranks 114th among the 175 countries with the highest suicide rates.

Kenya is one of the few low-income countries with a nationwide suicide prevention policy. The Suicide Prevention Strategy 2021-2026 seeks to achieve a 10% decrease in suicide mortality by 2026. The strategic objectives that will be pursued to achieve this goal are establishment and operationalization of suicide prevention programs at the national and county level, strengthening supportive policy, legal, and financing environment for effective implementation of suicide prevention programs, improving access to comprehensive, integrated, and quality services for suicide interventions at all levels of care, increasing awareness on suicide and suicide prevention.

The strides

The continued calls to decriminalize suicide by repealing Section 226 of the Penal Code which stipulates that 'any person attempting to take their own life is guilty of a misdemeanor and is subject to imprisonment of up to two years, a fine, or both, with the minimum age of prosecution set at eight years old' is a great step towards suicide prevention. It is argued that 'individuals engaging in such acts are often grappling with mental illness and thus require medical intervention rather than punitive measures' The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Mathari National Teaching and Referral Hospital Dr. Ogato. Secondly, the launch of the Suicide Prevention Strategy 2021-2026 represents good progress.

Which way then?

We should begin to consider individuals who attempt suicide as sick rather than viewing them as 'abnormal'. Dr. Ogato posits that just as diabetes results from a lack of insulin in the body, mental illness involves an imbalance of chemical transmitters in the brain. Therefore, when someone exhibits these thoughts, they require empathy and much-needed support to access treatment,"

We should consider putting people first, defining them by their lives rather than their manner of death. Just as it is prohibited to say, "they were a heart attack," it is wrong to use suicide to describe a person, e.g., "the suicide was buried." Second, because language is important when discussing suicide, we must be cautious about what we say. For example:

SN	Say this	Not this
1	Suicide attempt	Unsuccessful attempt
2	Died of suicide	Committed suicide
3	Person living with suicidal thoughts or behavior	Suicide ideator or attempter
4	(Describe the behavior)	Manipulative, cry for help, or suicidal gesture
5	Working with	Dealing with suicidal crisis
6	Suicide death	Successful attempt
7	Suicide death	Successful attempt

Third positive messages from committed and resilient advocates in schools, workplaces, the healthcare system, and religious communities will go a long way toward transforming the culture of mental health promotion and suicide prevention.

Lastly, debunking the idea that 'suicide is selfish' can aid us in our efforts to prevent suicide. The mind of a suicidal person is twisted, contrary to popular belief that persons who commit suicide do not worry about the impact their death has on their loved ones. This theory also serves to disprove the notion that suicide is a choice made out of free will.



Lillian Mandilla
A Mental Health Champion
Voi-Kenya.

Lillian has a great passion for championing mental wellness; a role she is currently undertaking at the Voi Girls' Education Centre, Kenya as the Head of Department Guidance and Counseling. Additionally, she is a certified Mental Health Champion. She plans to research and publish extensively in this area.

Suicide Prevention



Suicide is a serious health issue. It is one of the leading causes of death globally, causing many deaths each year. However, suicide is preventable. It is said to be the final decision made after a prolonged period of unresolved depression to end one's life. Some of the common risk factors include, mental health conditions, alcohol and substance abuse, previous history of trauma, rejection from family and friends and crisis such as death of a loved one.

People may show warnings such as: talking about wanting to die, withdrawal from friends, family, changes in mood or behavior, increased substance and drug abuse, engaging in risky or self-destructive behaviors and neglecting self care activities.

There are various suicide prevention measures such as creating mental health awareness, nurturing strong support systems, encouraging people to seek help when in a crisis, and involving people at risk in activities such as sports, word games, solving puzzles and seeking spiritual nourishment. Follow up care for people who attempt to die by suicide is important for it helps in recovery and reduce the risk of future attempts.

Faith is a teacher of English and literature from Nakuru County, Kenya. She is also a member of ELPK and is passionate about educating learners on emerging issues using the English language.

The Worm in the Apple



It is midnight, 12:07 to be precise. My friend had updated his WhatsApp status, but he deleted it within seconds, just as I was about to check what was keeping him awake. Luckily, I use WhatsApp GB, so I see it before it's gone. The message lingers in my mind, and now I'm wide awake too.

I try his phone, but it goes straight to voicemail. I had messaged him on WhatsApp, but I only saw the grey ticks. He's online but not responding. My heart sinks. I want the night to end quickly so I can reach his place and talk to him. I'm hopeful that once we speak, he'll feel better, as if sharing his thoughts could ease the weight he's carrying. But morning is still hours away. I hope he makes it through another sleepless night.

The deleted status replays in my mind: “Sometimes I try his phone, even though I know he’ll never pick up. I just wish he were here.” My friend is grieving his father, who died by suicide. The most painful part is knowing that his father had contemplated it for a long time—six agonizing months—before he finally acted on it.

When morning finally comes, I rush to my friend's house. He's still awake, slumped on the couch, lost in his thoughts. I sit beside him, trying to find the right words but they fail me. I don't know where to begin. After what seems like an eternity, I finally ask how he's doing. His answer is simple: “Bad. Just bad.” And so we start from there.

We're all susceptible to dark thoughts. What's interesting, though, is that not everyone acts on those thoughts. Some of us manage to keep them buried.. We often find ourselves confused when someone we know takes their life, especially when it seems like they had everything going for them. We're left wondering: What pushed them to this? Why suicide? Is it ever worth it?

We grapple with these questions, but even when we find answers, they rarely feel sufficient. Still, we search, trying to make sense of the incomprehensible.

At the core of most suicides lies a profound sense of worthlessness and hopelessness. As social beings, we view ourselves through the eyes of others. When others accept us, we feel validated. But when they reject us, we begin to abandon ourselves. Our sense of worth is tied to how useful and valued we are, and when that sense of worth crumbles, our identity shatters. Losing one's dignity and sense of purpose can be devastating. The urge to die isn't necessarily a desire to end life but rather to escape the pain inside. To kill that pain, some feel they must destroy the body that houses it. It's like trying to rid an apple of a worm—you must slice it to get to it. In the same way, some people feel the only way to kill what's tormenting them is to end their physical existence. It's a tragic irony: the instinct for self-preservation, meant to protect us, sometimes leads us to destruction when we can't bear the pain anymore. In a desperate attempt to escape internal agony, some choose to shut down the external world—which ends both.

Everyone who contemplates suicide knows, deep down, that it's not a real solution. It doesn't fix anything. It's an escape from reality, not a resolution. And yet, some still go through with it, carefully planning their departure. Sometimes we lose them, and other times, if we're lucky, we intervene just in time.

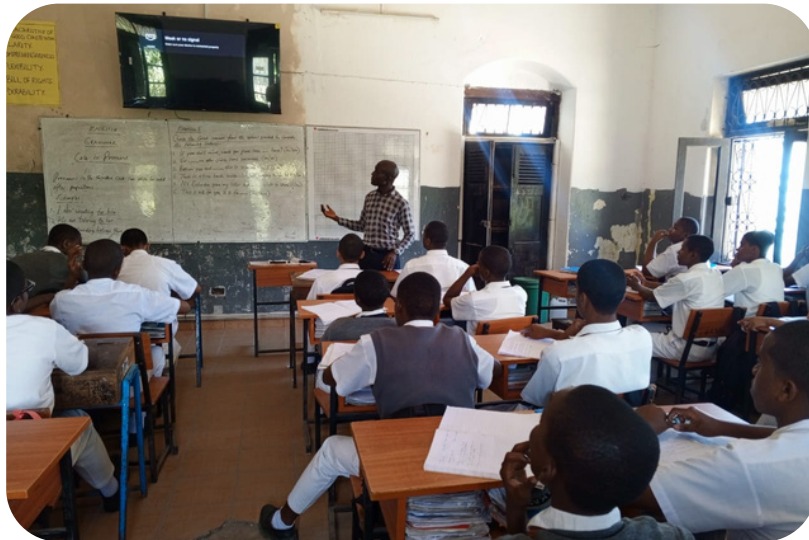
The issue isn't a lack of awareness about suicide or its impact on those left behind. The challenge is turning that awareness into action. If we're serious about preventing suicide, we need to find ways to encourage people to be proactive in seeking help before they reach the point of no return. Ultimately, it comes down to a choice: facing life's challenges or taking the easier, irreversible path of suicide.



Kabwere Musa is a teacher of English and Literature, with a keen interest in mental health. He believes in the use of language as a tool to initiate societal change and transformation.

ENGLISH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

STEM and English Teaching



There is no doubt that most governments, especially in Africa, have seen the need to enhance the study of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in order to meet the economic and employability demands in this fast paced 21st century. The pressure to solve human problems has certainly triggered significant advancements in STEM through further discoveries and amelioration of the existing tools. It would be a lie to deny the impact made by the STEM concept since its inception in 2001. It has improved lives.

However, **the STEM concept can be reinforced by incorporating the arts element.** STEM focuses explicitly on hard skills to realize progress or create new knowledge. **Incorporation of soft skills advanced by the arts in language teaching is necessary to spark curiosity and creativity that are necessary in promoting the STEM.** The 21st century learner is curious and adventurous with an overzealous desire to experiment and solve problems. This generation needs improved communication skills that would enhance their problem solving skills, foster integration of principles or presentation of information as deemed right. Language teaching is thus necessary to give these learners an ideal platform to articulate their issues.

It is agreeable that creativity is a critical skill for learners. The essence of language teaching is to produce creative thinkers. As widely acclaimed, creativity is the mother of all inventions. A creative learner is better placed to improve on STEM concepts by coming up with inventions that would greatly help humankind. As aptly captured by Futurist and Business Technology advisor Bernad Marr writing for Forbes.com , ‘STEAM education is essential to prepare our kids for the fourth industrial revolution. It makes sense to educate our children with the skills and capacity to think outside the box with creative solutions’. The Arts component in STEM provides for language teaching to enhance creativity that leverages a variety of ways that make learning enjoyable. For instance, exploring online teaching resources to teach listening and speaking skills such as pronunciation of words and negotiation skills by use of smart televisions has made learning captivating. The convergence of language use and practical application of knowledge stimulates learners by deepening their understanding of Science, Mathematics and Technology as well as call on their creativity. Thus, a successful learner is both an analytical and creative thinker.

Language teaching promotes critical thinking; that is the objective analysis of issues in order to form a sound decision. It is arguable that rote learning has failed to solve real world problems. Language teaching is thus necessary in promotion of academic innovations through critical thinking that is enhanced through Project Based Learning. Here, learner’s creativity and problem-solving abilities to come up with projects is expressed through language teaching and learning. STEM is thus strengthened through the opportunities to engage with language in all different forms of interactions; abilities to learn new registers that are used in various STEM disciplines.

The STEM concept can also be enhanced through a collaborative approach that is an integral component of language teaching. By doing so, STEM is added a dimension that makes it holistic by improving learners’ emotional intelligence and social skills. Language teaching is aimed at minimizing learning by memorization through repetition. Through collaboration, teachers are able to identify gaps and adapt teaching methodologies that are targeted at the individual learners. Engaging learners in groups reveals their abilities and inabilities through self-expression. This is a sure way of taking the interests of all learners into account bearing in mind that there is no weaker, stronger or average learner but they are all different. Additionally, language teaching also aims at enhancing personal growth within groups through peer teaching and learning. Learners acquire new vocabulary through interactions that improve their understanding of STEM concepts.

Learning of Transnational Modern Languages is becoming a norm in the increasingly globalized world. The need to interact with other people from other regions or parts of the world is

necessary in promoting the STEM concept across regions. Knowledge is not region specific as a problem that affects one region is bound to spread to other regions within a very short period. This underscores the need to teach foreign languages in order to connect with other developments from other parts of the world. Hence, language teaching becomes an important tool as a conveyor of skills that not only promotes exchange of STEM skills but also provides a platform for social interactions that promotes world peace.

STEM and Language Teaching are two concepts that are inseparable. As much effort has been put into popularizing Science, Technology and Mathematics (STEM) for the last two decades across the world, the impact of language teaching in the STEM concept cannot be ignored. It is encouraging that for a decade now, teaching of Arts which involves language teaching has continued to gain recognition as an essential component in teaching and learning of STEM concepts and the two can only yield tremendous development into the future.



Henry Makokha is a member of ELPK and an Access teacher at Allidina Visram High School in Mombasa County, Kenya.

THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL REALITY (VR) IN LANGUAGE LEARNING



The twenty-first century has seen a significant change in the educational scene, mostly due to technological improvements. English instruction, which formerly relied on textbooks and chalkboards, has adopted cutting-edge digital tools that are changing how teachers and students are taught. Virtual reality (VR) is one of the most innovative and interesting technologies in this transition. With the use of virtual reality (VR), students can interact with language learning in previously unthinkable ways. VR has started to transform English teaching by putting students in virtual environments where they may practice English in real-time scenarios.

Through the use of specialized gear like headsets and controllers, people can engage with a lifelike, three-dimensional environment created by computer-generated simulations or virtual reality. With virtual reality (VR), students can experience a variety of situations in an educational setting, such as seeing historical sites or learning about foreign cultures, all without ever having to leave the classroom. Because virtual reality is immersive, it offers the perfect environment for language learning as it lets students practice their language abilities in authentic settings.

The use of virtual reality as an English teaching method has many benefits. It mostly produces immersive experiences that engross pupils in actual settings. Rather than just committing vocabulary words or phrases to memory from a textbook, students can participate in meaningful virtual dialogues. Students' language acquisition is deepened by this contextual learning which also improves their ability to remember information.

Real-time engagement provided by VR is another advantage as it allows students to hone their speaking and listening abilities in a stress-free setting. In virtual reality, students can practice speaking in front of others without worrying about being judged, which helps them gain confidence while speaking in front of others like they could in a regular classroom.

Virtual reality also enhances and engages learners. Students actively engage in their learning process as opposed to simply listening to lectures; examples of this include exploring a virtual city, attending a virtual job interview, and engaging in other scenarios related to language acquisition. Particularly for younger students, this hands-on approach helps sustain student interest and enthusiasm.

Virtual reality has already been effectively incorporated into the English curriculum at a number of schools and institutions, with overwhelmingly good outcomes. The "SpeakNow" virtual reality experience was created by the British Council, a well-known institution for cross-cultural understanding and educational opportunities to improve English speaking abilities. With the help of this virtual reality program, students can experience ordering takeout from a restaurant, going to a business meeting, or exploring a tourist spot. Through real-time feedback on pronunciation and language usage through virtual characters, students can practice conversational English in a safe and engaging setting. Users that interact with the preliminary reports from the British Council report feeling more confident and speaking more fluently after engaging with the "SpeakNow" program.

In order to give students immersive language practice, Arizona State University (ASU) has integrated virtual reality (VR) technology into its English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Students at ASU engage in role-playing and virtual talks through VR simulations that replicate real-world encounters like job interviews, class discussions, and casual social contacts. In contrast to students in conventional ESL programs, individuals enrolled in VR-enhanced learning showed better levels of engagement and noticeable gains in language ability, according to an ASU study. Due to VR's immersive qualities, students were able to practice their English in a real-world setting, which improved language application and retention.

A number of VR resources have been created expressly to support English language instruction. Mondly VR is a widely used platform that provides instruction in multiple languages, including English. It enables students to converse with AI avatars in a variety of settings such as placing an order at a restaurant or going grocery shopping. An additional resource is the VR education platform ENGAGE, which enables educators to design their own immersive courses. Using ENGAGE, educators can take their students to virtual locations that are related to the teachings, such as historical sites, events, or new places. Because of the platform's flexibility, English teachers can develop classes that are specifically targeted to the needs of their pupils.

The use of virtual reality (VR) in English instruction is not without difficulties, despite its many advantages. The price of purchasing VR gear, which consists of headsets, controllers, and PCs with enough computing power to power the simulations, is a significant deterrent. The high initial and continuing maintenance expenditures of this technology may be difficult for certain people, especially in poor nations. Having teachers undergo training presents another difficulty. Although virtual reality (VR) can be a useful tool for language learning, teachers must first learn how to incorporate VR into their teaching. To fully utilize the technology, new teaching techniques must be developed in addition to instruction in its use. Even the most sophisticated VR equipment might not yield the intended outcomes without the right training.

And then there's the accessibility issue. Instructors may find it challenging to assign homework or practice using virtual reality (VR) outside of the classroom because not every student may have access to VR hardware at home.

To guarantee that every student has equal access to learning possibilities, schools must also think about how to balance VR with more conventional teaching techniques.

It's crucial to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy. While VR offers experience learning, traditional schooling offers a disciplined basis in language and writing abilities. In a perfect classroom, both approaches would be used—textbooks for fundamental understanding and virtual reality for real-world use.

The potential of virtual reality (VR) to increase student engagement in English instruction is one of its most important effects because they are actually using the language instead of merely hearing or reading it. Research indicates that immersive education, such as virtual reality, enhances students' recall rates and aids in their comprehension of intricate ideas like grammar and pronunciation in context.

In conclusion, Virtual reality (VR) offers dynamic, immersive learning settings that could transform language learning and increase student engagement and effectiveness.



Emmanuel Kipchirchir is a passionate educator with a Bachelor of Education (Arts) in English Literature from Kenyatta University. Currently, he is a teacher at Clara Academy. Skilled in mentoring, leadership development, swimming, and skating. He is also working on a first book.

MY ALZELC CONFERENCE ADVENTURE IN ETHIOPIA

It was a Wednesday afternoon after class, and I had left my phone in the office to charge. When I went back to the office, I saw I had missed four calls from the ELPAC chairman. My heart raced with curiosity and a bit of worry. I called him back immediately, and he gave me the exciting news: I was selected to present at the ALZELC conference in Ethiopia on Friday. I only had a day to prepare for the journey.



I was thrilled to learn that I would be traveling with a group of other six ELPAC members :Fredrick Odhiambo, Rukia Mohamed, Tiberius Barasa, Constance Okwiya and Ovin Nyakongo. We had a wonderful flight to Addis Ababa and were warmly received upon arrival.

The news filled me with so much excitement! I rushed home in the evening and began getting all the required documents ready. On Thursday afternoon, I received an e-ticket on my WhatsApp, confirming my travel plans. I felt a mix of emotions: excitement to visit Ethiopia and curiosity about their food. I'm so used to our Swahili cuisine, and I couldn't help but wonder how their food would taste.



One of the highlights was meeting Anne Kabongo from Tanzania in person. We had been sharing ideas and opportunities online for so long, and finally, we met face-to-face. The hotel we stayed in was good, and their food was amazing. I mention food because I love food—it's true what they say, the way to a person's heart is through their stomach!

The two-day conference was incredible, with attendees from all over the world. It was a privilege to be part of the Africa Lake Zone English Language Consortium, held on May 18-19, 2024, in Addis Ababa. Sponsored by RELO and the U.S. Embassy, the event brought together 160 professionals, including over 40 presenters. We were honored to have 21 international participants, which enriched our discussions immensely.

The conference emphasized the power of collaboration in advancing English language education in Africa. I was deeply honored to be elected Chairman of the Region, a testament to our collective efforts and growing influence.



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The conference was a fantastic opportunity to network, connect, and make new friends. It was wonderful bonding with the team Tanzania. I am incredibly grateful to ELPAC for this opportunity. The experience was not just professionally enriching but also personally fulfilling, leaving me with memories and connections that I will cherish for a long time.

MY ALZELC CONFERENCE ADVENTURE IN ETHIOPIA



Meeting my mentor, Dr. Aymen Elsheikh, was another highlight. He mentored me in the Africa ELTA female leadership mentorship program, and seeing him in person was truly inspiring.



I also met Susan Marshall, with whom I had been interacting with in the online trauma-informed classroom sessions since last year.

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Khadija Ismael is an enthusiastic teacher of English and Literature at Khadija Secondary School in Mombasa. She is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Educational Technology at Mount Kenya University (MKU) in Thika, as well as a Master's in Educational Leadership and Management at The Aga Khan University - Institute for Educational Development, East Africa (AKU - IED, EA) in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Khadija is also a member of the English language professional association of Kenya (ELPAK) and 1 Million Teachers, actively engaging in collaborative efforts to enhance educational practices and empower educators worldwide. She finds great fulfilment in being part of these impactful initiatives, working towards making a meaningful difference in the field of education and English language teaching.

Conferences and Workshops

The New Directions Sub-Saharan Africa Conference

ELPAK is grateful to the British Council Sub-Saharan Office for sponsoring eleven of its members to attend the first New Directions in Africa, from 24 to 26 September 2024 at JW Marriot in Nairobi. The conference, whose theme was 'Rethinking policy and practice for English in complex linguistic landscapes', brought together teachers of English, and professionals from different parts of the world. It was a privilege hearing from the likes of Prof. Charles Ochieng' Ong'ondo, the CEO at the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), who welcomed partnerships even as ELPAK envisions adapting the great takeaways from the conference to the Kenyan context.

Prof. Leketi Makalela the Director of the Hub for Multilingual Education Literacies at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa emphasized the aspect of **humanizing learners** through the acknowledgement of the nature of multilingual faces in the classroom. It was noted that while learners in urban areas may have fewer challenges grasping and internalizing concepts in the English language, the majority in the rural setup need to be supported better by embracing where they come from and prior knowledge of the world in their familiar languages and cultures. He emphasized the importance of modelling and inducting educators into multilingual pedagogies. The importance of the 'how' of such recommendations and other practices as per local contexts as shared in the conference from all the different strands took the center stage. The latter was echoed by Dr. David Njegere, the CEO and Accounting officer of the Kenya National Examinations Council.



Onlooking are ELPAK members

Conferences and Workshops

Nairobi Chapter ELPK TA Development Session



Members of the Nairobi chapter participated in a one-day workshop at the American corner. Apart from looking at how can use resources shared by ELPK to deal with challenges faced, they were taken through various resources available to them by the English language coordinator.

Pedagogies of Partnerships and Leadership Workshop



Leadership through service and volunteering

"The workshop facilitated by Dr. Kuchah Kuchah was an insightful experience that reshaped my understanding of effective leadership. Dr. Kuchah emphasized the importance of service as a core aspect of leadership—an element often overlooked in today's leadership models. He challenged us to redefine leadership as an act of service, where one volunteers to lead and actively supports the team rather than just giving directives. His message highlighted that true leaders do not shy away from tasks typically considered mundane, such as carrying tables, making photocopies, or running errands. Instead, these actions embody a spirit of humility and a willingness to serve the team wholeheartedly. Furthermore, Dr. Kuchah stressed the importance of being a team player, which involves breaking the mold of the traditional, bossy leader who commands from above. He illustrated how leadership should be rooted in genuine collaboration, with the leader acting as an equal part of the group. Such humility not only fosters a culture of mutual respect but also inspires and motivates team members to contribute their best. The workshop left me with a renewed appreciation for servant leadership, recognizing that impactful leadership is less about exerting power and more about enabling and uplifting others through example and service."

Emmanuel Kipchirchir

Members were taken through effective leadership strategies at a mini workshop by Dr. Harry Kuchah Kuchah.

Leisure Corner

MTWAPA

They say she left
A just boobbed teen
Seventeen and no more
In chase of riches

They say she went south
Of the village she knew
With no one as guide
But her whiff of money
And the vision of plenty

They say a song sung
Praised her endowments
As she danced the pole
Charging fares all night
Then drums ceased beating

They say Mtwapa
reeks of money
respects no beauty
knows no Husbands
knows no Belle
breaks them all

They say Mtwapa
where sin sojourns
sent her home
in a casket to rest
just like the rest.
The Literate Gardener



Ndiang'ui Ndung'u is a teacher of English and literature. Currently the deputy principal of Ngala Memorial secondary school in Kaloleni, Kilifi county. He is a published author of "The Pitfall" and "A Girl's Worst Dream" both novellas. His sort stories have been published internationally and his poetry has been quoted widely.

The Explore TeachingEnglish Course: A Transformative Journey

After what felt like a long journey, I could finally take a sigh of relief as I reflected on the sixteen hours of rigorous yet informative, and empowering session. The Explore TeachingEnglish Course by British Council came at a time when a lot was happening but indeed a blessing in disguise as it created a good foundation, brought insights, and empowerment, thanks to the course moderator and colleagues' experiences from different parts of the world. Glancing at the certificate on my screen with a sense of accomplishment, I knew, only so well that with the end of a task began another, possibly much tougher. Nonetheless, I couldn't help but feel a sense of relief, as the Swahili saying goes; *Baada ya dhiki faraja*.



The course objective was to help participants develop skills to enable them find and use free TeachingEnglish resources for their teaching and professional development. A workbook was provided to help with course reflections. I must say that it was handy in helping me find my ground as I navigated through the vibrant Telegram course community. While I might not have penned down all my reflections on it, I found structure from it. The workbook helped in goal setting through to the last module structured reflections. While I had interacted with the TeachingEnglish resources before, **my goal was to better interact with the resources and be able to support others to achieve the same.** The modules included how to download free resources, accessing resources across the internet, Becoming a member of TeachingEnglish, and Get to know TeachingEnglish Africa, and live discussions. Along with colleagues I was able to navigate, explore, and reflect on the different resources. I can say that I am no longer a stranger to the website and its resources.

Among the many valuable resources that I interacted with is the teaching tips in the TeachingEnglish Africa website. To get to the teaching tips you make your way to the <https://africa.teachingenglish.org.uk/> click on menu, develop teaching skills, teaching tips, scroll through the tips and take your pick. I particularly liked the tip on 'How to motivate others-teachers and learners' by Markos Medhin Merkuria and Blessing Epum.

The Explore TeachingEnglish Course: A transformative journey

Some of the tips included setting clear learning goals to help learners know what's expected of them, providing positive feedback by bringing to the surface your learners' effort and achievements, creating a supportive learning environment to ensure that learners feel a sense of belonging. For example, I imagined that greeting your learners with a smile as they join your session would make them feel at ease and included. Which other ways do you create a sense of belonging in your classroom?

The beginning of my next journey after the course completion started with sharing of knowledge with ELPK chapter leaders and the orientation of teachers at the ELPK Nakuru chapter, on how to use TeachingEnglish resources in their classroom context. As the vehicle of my journey gains momentum, I would like to know if you plan to explore some teaching tips at the TeachingEnglish Africa website. If you do, please share with me at elpakenya@gmail.com

Rukia Mohamed is a facilitator and trainer. She engages learners through English conversation clubs and supports teacher professional development. Rukia advocates for authenticity in the English language classroom through tackling of global and emerging issues, trauma-informed classroom strategies, and social emotional learning.

Resources from partners

Scan the QR Code



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Explore our MOOC course descriptions and full module packets below. Click on the provided links to enroll! Please direct

<https://openenglishcommunity.org/page/massive-open-online-courses-moocs>



Menu



Home > Resource books

Reflective practice for language teachers

This practical step-by-step book is written specifically for language teachers by Thomas S. C. Farrell, a leading expert on reflective practice.



https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/resource-books/reflective-practice-language-teachers?utm_campaign=ce-all-teachingenglish-global-newsletters&utm_medium=email&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8m0d_6QhY32SSxjF-EyzW5fjle-tpOPiaO_vTHopFOX4NzTrjoum0b8zd5Dr_2JqIpX4awF1T_vApzwyIDwB8fKoE1A&_hsmi=96381701&utm_content=96381701&utm_source=hs_email

Celebrating Our Champions

The ELPAC Community Active Participation

In this issue ELPAC wishes to acknowledge the active participation of the community members in the various forums including webinars, and Friday WhatsApp chats among others.

17:24
Virtual ELF Teachers ELP...
Eiton Elijah Turkana ELPAC, Jane M...
Have you registered for the webinar? Have ...

Good afternoon, today we shall have our last session on the series by Tr. Irene please remember to join. Than...

Good afternoon, as we prepare for the session we can be thinking about this,

Feedback in English Language Classroom.

- What is communication?
- Feedback in Communication.
- Types of Feedback.
- Why is feedback important in a classroom.
- Where do we get feedback from?
- Characteristics of effective feedback.

Any other crucial point and questions.

See you then.

15:34



Ms. Irene Joash ELPAC

Feedback refers to the information provided to a learner or an individual regarding their performance, behavior, or understanding.

It can be verbal, written, or non-verbal and is used to reinforce, correct, or improve someone's actions or knowledge.

Feedback plays a vital role in learning and development, offering insights on areas that need improvement and highlighting successes.

17:28

What is communication, how is feed...

In simple words, communication is the process of sending and receiving information.

17:08

Welcome.

As we begin, we cannot talk about feedback without mentioning communication.

17:02

Let's start from here...

What is communication, how is feedback coming in?

17:02

~ Korinda

+254 726 410382

Whatever is said is as important as how it is said for effective communication.

17:31

In the next Issue...

Looking forward to *Mazingira* Day activities with your learners, and more on World Mental Health Day.

Send your articles to elpakenya@gmail.com