

【資料】

In support of a nascent Kosovo English teachers' network

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Context

Kosovo has a rich history that reaches back into pre-Christian times. More recently, though, Kosovo has become synonymous with ethnic cleansing, repression, and war. The impact of the events of the 1990's on the educational system has been a lasting one. In 1991, Albanian Kosovars, then about 82% of the population (OSCE, 1999), were expelled from the public sector, including schools and universities. Students were not permitted to attend classes, and teachers were relieved of all teaching duties. Suddenly barred from established school facilities, Albanian Kosovars set up classrooms in cellars, living rooms, mosques, and any place where space was available. Classes continued, but students had no access to laboratories, music rooms, art facilities, gymnasiums, or libraries. These adhoc classrooms were severely overcrowded, and books and materials were scarce. Teachers went unpaid, had no opportunities for professional development, and were constantly under threat of police harassment. The quality of education under this forced parallel system suffered enormously (Sommers & Buckland, 2004; see also Pichl, 1999).

The decade culminated in the armed conflict between the Serbian police and the Kosovo Liberation Army which began in early 1998. In March 1999 the UN intervened with a bombing campaign and brought the conflict to an end in June. It is estimated that at least 90% of the Albanian population was displaced either internally or into neighboring countries during the war (OSCE, 1999). At the end of the conflict, approximately 95% of elementary schools needed repair and about 43% were destroyed or seriously damaged (Kosovo schools, 1999). However, by November 1999 about 75% of children had resumed attending school in Kosovo (UNICEF/DFID, 2000).

While education in general deteriorated under the parallel system, English education was particularly affected by the onset of the United Nations' administration of Kosovo and the influx of international organizations into the country. Anecdotally, many English teachers left the profession for higher paying jobs with incoming non-governmental organizations (NGO's), foreign governments, and news organizations. A teacher with requisite language skills, who had not been paid for teaching during the decade prior, could earn upwards of USD\$1500 per month working as a translator (Sommers & Buckland, 2004). For reference, in 2011 teachers made roughly € 230/USD\$330/ ¥26,500 per month (Brajshori, 2011).

Although English was, and continues to be, seen as instrumental for post-war economic development within Kosovo, the flood of English teachers leaving the profession created an unmet need for qualified language teachers. In 2003, the University of Pristina

established a branch campus containing a Faculty of Education in the southern town of Prizren. This faculty included a four-year program for training English teachers that started granting bachelor's degrees in 2007 (CIED, 2007).

Now that Kosovo's post-conflict emergency period has ended and Kosovo is transitioning into a functioning independent country, many international organizations have left and English teachers are returning to the profession. It has been my experience that professional development opportunities for English teachers in Kosovo tend to be shorter term projects funded by international groups such as the British Council, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), or the United States Department of State. By way of example, the British Council has a library in Pristina and offers Chevening scholarships, for which in-service teachers can apply; USAID has funded projects directed at English teachers such as *Train the Trainer*; and the US Department of State supports a position at the University of Pristina's Faculty of Education.

While the aforementioned organizations do provide support for English teachers, the need for ongoing professional development opportunities far outstrips what outside groups can provide. The low wages teachers receive coupled with the difficulty of obtaining visas and the expense of travel make it difficult for teachers to travel outside of Kosovo for workshops, conferences, or trainings without additional support.

A strong English teachers' association could provide professional support to in-service teachers. Since 1999, no fewer than six English teachers' associations have been attempted, but none have taken hold. Prior to the beginnings of the Kosovo English Teachers' Network (KETNET) in early 2011, the last known organization was the Kosovo English Teachers' Association, which petered out around 2008.

Conference Introduction

I attended the first annual Kosovo English Teachers' Network English Teachers' Conference in Pristina, Kosovo in April 2011. The first of its kind to be held in Kosovo, the main purpose of this conference was to provide a day of professional development for Kosovar teachers of English from all contexts and to allow teachers from across the country an opportunity to network. Speakers and presenters came from Kosovo, Albania, Germany, Macedonia, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and Japan. The conference was sponsored, in part, by USAID, World Learning, and the British Council. The University of Pristina hosted the conference at the Faculty of Philology.

Local English teachers were encouraged to attend and give workshops. Many attendees were first time conference participants, and most of the Kosovar presenters had never before given a presentation or run a workshop for their peers. Fifteen of the twenty-two presenters were from Kosovo, and seven Kosovar teachers participated in poster sessions.

While considering the needs of a newly established English teachers' association, keeping in mind established resources, and thinking of what teachers in the Kosovo

context might find useful, I decided to research how an online platform could be used as a focal point for the KETNET organization. In my session, *Determining content: What to include on the KETNET website?* I used a cardsort methodology to collect information from participants in order to determine what information users would like the KETNET website to contain.

Session Abstract

The Kosovo English Teachers' Network (KETNET) is a nascent professional group for English teachers in Kosovo. A website for this group has been newly established (<http://ketnet.weebly.com>) and is being utilized (as of April 2011) as a call for participation in the upcoming KETNET conference. The website is in the beginning stages of formation and is a platform that is promising and holds the potential to become the online focal point for KETNET.

This presentation hopes to grab the interest of participants who want to participate in the development and maintenance of the KETNET website. The purpose of this session is to help determine what form the emerging KETNET website should take. (It is anticipated that the current platform will be retained.) Attendees will be guided through a card sorting exercise from which a future path for the website should emerge.

It is the hope of the presenter that a handful of participants will be identified to work as a group to kick-start and seed the KETNET website and to keep the site maintained.

Session Summary

In this conference session, I collected data using a card sort methodology adapted from Spencer, 2009. The purpose of this research was to determine what information potential users of the KETNET online platform would like to have access to. Prior to the workshop, I created 10 sets of 46 cards. Each card contained a website content term that had been either taken directly or adapted from one of the following websites: www.tesol.org, www.iatefl.org, www.eltam.org.mk, or www.eltaal.org (see Appendix A).

Workshop attendees were put into groups of three. Each group was given a set of the 46 cards and asked to sort the cards into categories as determined by group members. After the cards were categorized, participants titled each category and indicated the two most important cards in each group. Finally, participants marked the category they felt was the most important. At this point, the 45 minutes allotted for the workshop were up. Unfortunately, time was neither available for a chance for the participants to see how other groups sorted and labeled the cards nor for post-activity discussion. Twenty-four participants attended this conference session.

Following the workshop, analysis of the data showed that of the items given, some trends emerged. Participants were interested in having more online access to information about events related to English teaching; participants would like to have access to

classroom tips and techniques; and participants wanted to be able to connect with other members of their field both within Kosovo and internationally. While these trends should not constitute the entirety of the form that a KETNET online platform takes, these trends could serve as a starting point for platform content development.

I had anticipated that I would be able to identify teachers who might be interested in contributing to, developing, and/or maintaining the KETNET online platform; however, no clearly interested parties emerged. Additionally, the data collected is limited in that none of the terms sorted came directly from the teachers who would use the online platform. If more time had been available, I would have liked to have preceded the card sort with a free listing exercise (see Sinha, 2003). Despite the limitations of the results, potential starting points for a KETNET online presence were uncovered.

Conclusion

Despite Kosovo's more recent history of war and repression, the country is moving forward, including in the area of English education. The Kosovo English Teachers Network is still in the early stages of formation. As of this writing, a working team is deciding on what structure KETNET should have, what its mission and objectives should be, and what its leadership functions should focus on. Once these issues have been decided, KETNET can move forward with the processes of registering with the Ministry of Public Affairs and aligning itself with one of the major international English teaching associations such as TESOL or IATEFL. When the time comes for the organization to focus on its online platform, the results of this research can be used as a starting point for platform development.

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Appendix A

Sort Terms

American Corner	beginning a career
British Council	calendar of events
career development	children with special needs
classified ads	classroom layout
classroom management	conferences
contests	doctorate
doing research	downloads
extracurricular activities	games
grants	international experts
issues in EFL	jobs
Kosovo Education Center	lesson plans
masters degree	motivation
newsletter	online education
opportunities abroad for teachers	parents
pecha kucha	professional development
publications	recent events
resume help	scholarships
skills (reading, writing, etc)	special guests in the classroom
study abroad for students	teacher associations
teaching resources	teaching tasks
training courses	upcoming events
warm up activities	websites
workshops	writing and publishing articles