

English Language Centre & Kurus English: Collaborative Online Learning Programme Product Specification Document

The University of Cape Town's English Language Centre (ELC) and Kurus English (KE) have formed a collaboration in offering online courses to its clients. Both institutions are well respected and established in the EFL landscape in South Africa. They are well known for their high-quality teaching and professional learning approach.

1. Objectives

The Collaborative Online Learning (COL) Programme aims to provide a remote learning alternative to students who are unable or unwilling to travel to South Africa to take part in face-to-face English language courses. This may be due to work, family and other personal commitments which make taking part in a face-to-face out-of-country course impractical. The COL Programme allows these students to benefit from ELC's & KE's pedagogy with minimal disruption to their day-to-day lives and without additional big-ticket cost items such as flights and accommodation in South Africa.

Furthermore, the programme can operate as an adjunct to ELC & KE face-to-face courses. Clients who plan to take face-to-face courses may supplement and augment their learning by taking part in the COL Programme ahead of their scheduled start date. In this case, the client may be better prepared and therefore gain greater benefit when they attend face-to-face courses. Equally, clients may choose to extend their learning by taking part in the COL Programme after completing an ELC or KE face-to-face course, building on and extending its benefits.

2. Pedagogy and Teacher Development

The pedagogic approach for the COL Programme will be to emphasise **communicative language teaching, collaborative learning tasks** drawing on principles of task-based learning and **student-centredness**. While this mirrors to some extent the approach in the ELC & KE face-to-face programme, it is important to recognise ways in which the online requires the approach to be adapted. Key to this is the use of off- and on-line collaborative tasks which may take place outside of timetabled 'virtual contact' time. Collaborative (team-based or project-based) tasks are by their nature student-centred, and support a sense of 'togetherness' among the cohort. This is a critical in overcoming the learner isolation inherent to remote course delivery.

On a more granular level, teachers will draw on a range of ELT methodologies according to their lesson aims and the students' language needs and learner styles. Teachers will already be familiar with these methodologies from their experience with face-to-face learning but will need to consider how the collaborative online context influences the selection and adaptation of established methodologies.

Ongoing teacher development will be required to support teachers in adapting to the online context. The main issues impacting the effective delivery of this revolve around addressing teachers' Technological Knowledge, more specifically how to teach language and skills with technology (Technological Content Knowledge) and how to teach EFL online encompassing a communicative, collaborative and student-centred approach (Technological Pedagogical Knowledge).

3. Collaborative Online Learning Platform and Instructional Tools

The COL Programme will be delivered on the Google Classroom Platform on the UCT G-Suite for Education Enterprise license. Google Classroom has the following advantages as a platform for collaborative online learning:

- Access to G-Suite for Education and integration with a wide range of third-party apps
- Existing user familiarity and high levels of brand recognition through widespread use of other Google products (search and email)
- Compatibility with UCT ICT systems and technical support from ICTS
- Opportunity for transferability between face-to-face and COL programme formats

The following instructional tools will be used within Google Classroom for delivery of the COL Programme. The tools are graded for accessibility and ease of use/level of training required.

INSTRUCTIONAL TOOL	FUNCTIONALITY	TRAINING REQUIRED
Google Meet	Video-conferencing	Low
Google Docs	Collaborative word processing	Low
Google Slides	Collaborative presentation	Low
Google Forms	Survey administration	Medium
Google Sheets	Collaborative spreadsheets	Medium
Google Drive	Shared cloud storage	Low
Flipgrid	Video-based social learning	Low
Jamboard	Web-based interactive whiteboard	Low
Quizlet	Flash-card based learning tool	Low
Popplet	Collaborative visualisation tool	Low
Nearpod	Interactive presentation tool	High
Edpuzzle	Video-based comprehension tool	Low

Teachers will initially be limited to using a designated suite of tools. New tools may be added but must be tested for efficacy and approved for use by academic management. Duplication of functionalities should be avoided.

4. Course Materials

The COL Programme will use National Geographic Learning *Life 2nd Edition* as the basis for course curriculum. All students will be provided with a Student Book in eBook format. Teachers will make use of the Classroom Presentation Tool and online resources available from the publisher's website.

Use of a coursebook is desirable from both teacher and student perspective. For the teacher, the coursebook provides a framework for the curriculum and quick access to high-quality instructional material. It is not realistic to require the teachers to develop all their own material. For the student, the coursebook provides a level of security and predictability and operates as a common point of reference between the teacher, the student and their classmates.

Supplementary material will be drawn from a wide range of digital sources. When choosing supplementary material, teachers should be cognisant of the online collaborative format; rather

than replicating face-to-face lessons by using scanned PDF versions of paper based material, material that is appropriate to the platform and instructional tools should be selected. The balance of coursebook to supplementary material should be carefully considered, with the coursebook comprising **no more than 60% of teaching and learning time**. This will be monitored by academic management through the normal channels (lesson plans, work records, observations and student feedback).

5. Format, Timetable and Levels

The COL programme will adopt a ‘flipped learning’ approach to course delivery. In this approach, instructional and ‘passive learning’ tasks are delivered to the student ahead of the lesson to be completed offline at the students’ own pace. (Virtual) ‘in-class’ time is reserved for those aspects of instruction which require teacher input, such as monitored communicative tasks, feedback and correction, and more challenging language work that benefits from teacher-led support.

The COL cycle is therefore be comprised of four stages.

- a) **Individual preparation stage:** Students work through instructional and ‘passive learning’ tasks offline at their own pace. These tasks will be set either in the previous lesson or delivered online to the students.
- b) **Collaborative learning stage:** Students collaborate in team- and project-based tasks online through the Google classroom platform. The teacher gives task instructions and feedback and is available to monitor collaborative work
- c) **Teacher-led stage:** Students and teacher attend via Google Meet for teacher input, feedback and correction, and other teacher-led tasks.
- d) **Post-lesson tutorial stage:** Students can book short one-to-one sessions in a fixed time window to review the lesson content, ask questions, and receive personal feedback. Post-lesson individual tasks will be set for students to complete when not in tutorials, and there is a short final wrap-up and feedback slot at the end of this stage.

The COL timetable is comprised of four 50-minute blocks and is offered in full- and part-time formats. The full time programme takes place five days a week (Monday to Friday) and the part time programme takes place two days a week (it may be scheduled to a day ad hoc depending on demand and availability). Each format is offered in two time banks, with students assigned to a time bank according to their availability.

STAGE	START (SAST)	END (SAST)	DURATION
Individual preparation	Completed offline in student’s own time		1-2 Hours per cycle
FULL TIME BANK A (DAILY)			
Collaborative	10:00	11:40	100 Minutes
Break 1	11:40	12:00	20 Minutes
Teacher-led	12:00	12:50	50 Minutes
Break 2	12:50	13:00	10 Minutes
Post-lesson tutorials	13:00	13:50	50 Minutes
FULL TIME BANK B (DAILY)			
Collaborative	15:00	16:40	100 Minutes
Break 1	16:40	17:00	20 Minutes
Teacher-led	17:00	17:50	50 Minutes
Break 2	17.50	18:00	10 Minutes
Post-lesson tutorials	18:00	18:50	50 Minutes

PART TIME BANK A (TWICE-WEEKLY)			
Collaborative	10:00	11:40	100 Minutes
Break 1	11:50	12:00	20 Minutes
Teacher-led	12:00	12:50	50 Minutes
Break 2	12:50	13:00	10 Minutes
Post-lesson tutorials	13:00	13:50	50 Minutes
PART TIME BANK B (TWICE-WEEKLY)			
Collaborative	15:00	16:40	100 Minutes
Break 1	16:40	17:00	20 Minutes
Teacher-led	17:00	17:50	50 Minutes
Break 2	17:50	18:00	10 Minutes
Post-lesson tutorials	18:00	18:50	50 Minutes

The programme will be offered across **five levels** and as an **IELTS preparation course** and there will be a **maximum of eight students** in a class. The spread of student numbers across the various formats, banks and levels will need to be actively managed by the academic management team to ensure sufficient average student numbers per class.

6. Student Placement and Orientation

The COL programme will be rolling enrolment, with new students able to start on any Monday and study for any number of weeks. Induction will take place in the week before a new student arrives.

- **Monday:** Confirmed new students will be sent an online level test detailed orientation pack, including video tutorials on how to log in to G-suite and an introductory guide to the various instructional tools.
- **Wednesday:** Students attend an academic orientation which includes confirmation of their test result and level. Students are registered on PS as soon as their level is confirmed.
- **Friday:** Students are provided with their UCT G-suite login details and attend a technical orientation on Google Classroom

7. Pricing

The Programme will be priced in student weeks, comprising five COL cycles for the full time programme and two cycles for the part time programme.

PRICE PER WEEK

WEEKS	FULL TIME	PART TIME
1-3 weeks	EUR/USD 200	EUR/USD 80
4-7 weeks	EUR/USD 190	EUR/USD 75
8-11 weeks	EUR/USD 180	EUR/USD 70
12-23 weeks	EUR/USD 160	EUR/USD 65
24+ weeks	EUR/USD 145	EUR/USD 60