

ELTAs step into schools to arouse students' interest in English learning through a variety of scenarios and themes

(Courtesy of Juan, Yu- Chieh at the Division of Junior High and Elementary Education)



To create an English-speaking environment in elementary and junior high schools, the K-12 Education Administration, Ministry of Education, has implemented the Program on Assisting Public National Primary and Secondary Schools in Recruiting Part-time English Language Teaching Assistants (the “ELTA Program”). In the school year of 2021, it launched a pilot program that focuses on recruiting and training international students in Taiwan to serve as part-time English teaching assistants in elementary and junior high schools. They needed to work in schools on a weekly basis or held camps during the winter and summer vacations to increase students' opportunities for using English in the learning environment, thereby motivating them to communicate in English and strengthening their English listening and speaking skills. During the school year of 2021, a total of 131 ELTAs served in schools. These ELTAs come from different countries in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Africa. They can cultivate students' cross-cultural perspective and enable them to experience the fun of learning with English as the world language. Meanwhile, international students can gain experience of working in Taiwan’s schools

and develop their sense of identity with Taiwan. Some ELTAs also stated that this program allowed them to practice how to teach students from different cultural backgrounds, which was valuable experience for them.

According to the K-12 Education Administration, a total of 130 schools from Taoyuan City, Hsinchu City, Hsinchu County, Yunlin County, Chiayi County, and Kaohsiung City participated in this ELTA pilot program. The ELTA Education Resource Centers in northern, central, and southern Taiwan (National Taiwan Normal University, National Chung Cheng University, and National Sun Yat-sen University, respectively, and private Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages is the collaborative university for this pilot program) recruited talents and provided systematic training and a mechanism to assist schools in recruiting such assistants. The ELTAs who completed and passed the training test would proceed to design classroom activities for different learning stages and gave teaching demonstrations with timely feedback to ensure the quality of their teaching.

Integrating their cultural elements and students' learning needs, ELTAs designed classroom activities based on different themes. For example, Putu from Indonesia discussed New Year's activities with students and introduced Bali's New Year, Ghost Festival, and Mid-Autumn Festival, as well as New Year's "Day of Silence", exposing the students to the exotic festive atmosphere. Moreover, Ksenia from Ukraine shared the dumplings from her hometown and designed a worksheet to motivate students to think about the ingredients of the dumplings and learn the English vocabulary of the ingredients; meanwhile, students could learn about students' daily life in another country using Ukrainian students' weekday activity as a case in point. In addition, Sonika from India introduced Indian traditional costumes and food to students, allowing them to learn about Indian culture through painting and the introduction to cooking steps.

The K-12 Education Administration stated that it will launch the ELTA program in various cities and counties in the school year of 2022, continue to develop professional training courses, and

work with the local governments' English resource centers to further implement this program. It will strive to recruit more international students to integrate a variety of elements into English teaching in elementary and junior high schools.