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# From China to Budapest: Experiences in attaining a BA in ELTE TÓK's International Kindergarten Education Programme

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From 2019 to 2022, I was glad to be a part of ELTE's Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education (ELTE TÓK) and study kindergarten education as an international student from China. It is a really lovely and beautiful school and I would like to provide some useful information about my experiences here. I hope this article can help those who are interested in the kindergarten education program offered by ELTE TÓK.

## Introducing the Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education (ELTE TÓK)

The Faculty of Primary and Pre-School Education is located in Kiss János altábornagy Street, in Budapest. It provides training and research activities that meet the social requirements of kindergarten teacher training for learners. Moreover, it offers Bachelor's degree qualifications, as well as the option to proceed to a Master's degree in some professional areas, such as Art and Visual Culture, Children's Culture, and Cultural Mediation.

### Figure 1

*Pictures from Google Maps*





**Figure 2**  
*Map of the ground floor (Yimiao Wang)*



### **Why did I choose ELTE TÓK?**

Because preschool education is not compulsory in China, this area receives less social attention and government investment than primary and secondary education. Compared to Chinese universities, ELTE TÓK has more experience that will be helpful for future educators, especially in the field of preschool education.

Although this is a new English-taught program, ELTE TÓK already has a lot of experience with programs taught in Hungarian. Besides this, the operation mode of early childhood education in Hungary is completely different from that in China, and I wanted to learn something different from my education model. It takes four years to complete a bachelor's degree in

preschool education in China, but only three years to accomplish the same at ELTE TÓK. Considering all these factors, I decided to go to ELTE TÓK and join the kindergarten education program.

### How did I choose my courses?

During the past three years, I attended more than 30 courses in ELTE TÓK, including subjects in psychology, pedagogy, linguistics, music, PE, arts, mathematics, and literature. I would like briefly to share some experiences about some impressive courses.

The theoretical fundamentals needed to be learned in psychology, linguistics, and physiology are basic content for the development of children aged three to six. Through the study of these courses, kindergarten teachers can tell whether children's development is at a normal stage and keep them healthy better on that basis, which is the most important part of the preschool teacher's work.

Children's literature is my favorite class which provides opportunities to learn children's stories, songs, riddles, and tongue twisters as well as movies and cartoons.

#### Figure 3

Poster made by author in children's literature class

**Hot Cross Buns**

**SKILLS TO DEVELOP**  
 Cognitive skills  
 Coordination  
 Listening  
 Singing  
 Fine motor skills

**Game**  
 Hide a ring one child will look for it. It helps to find it to sing louder when the child get closer t the hidden ring and softer when he is far from it.

**Hot cross buns!**  
**Hot cross buns!**  
*One ha' penny, two ha' pu*  
**Hot cross buns!**  
*If you have no daughte*  
*Give them to your sor.*  
*One ha' penny,*  
*Two ha' penny,*  
**Hot Cross Buns!**

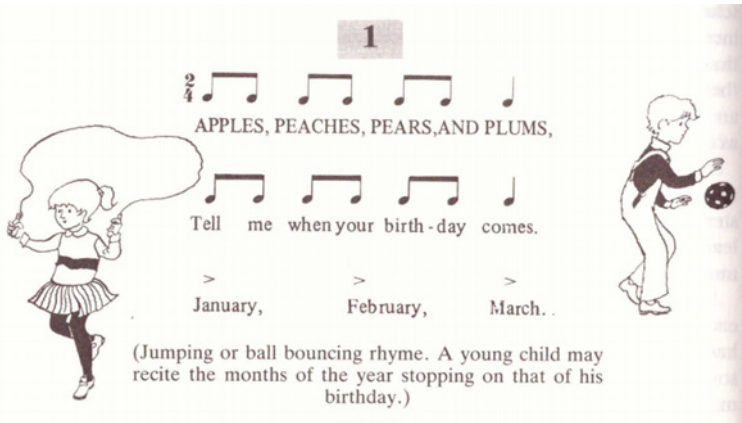
**AGE GROUP**  
**3-4**

**Rhythm Game**

Music is also a vitally important course for a kindergarten educator. The action songs and rhymes that we learned in class will be very useful tools to attract children. Intonation and rhythm are also an indispensable part of the kindergarten education curriculum.

**Figure 4**

*Forrai Katalin, music in preschool*



In PE class, we learned the gymnastic exercises and movement games that are suitable for children and put them together to make up a whole lesson.

In Art lessons, I learned a lot of techniques, tools, and materials that I had never known before. We also made art by ourselves and showed them to other students, thereby exploring how the creativity and various art skills of children can be improved.

**Figure 5**

*Art craft made by author in art class*



The school also offered us the chance to gain practice experiences in bilingual or international kindergartens and preschools. We had one-week practice for the first and second semesters and a two-week practice for the third and fourth semesters. In the last semester, we completed eight weeks of practice, including holding activities in PE, music, arts, science, and storytelling.

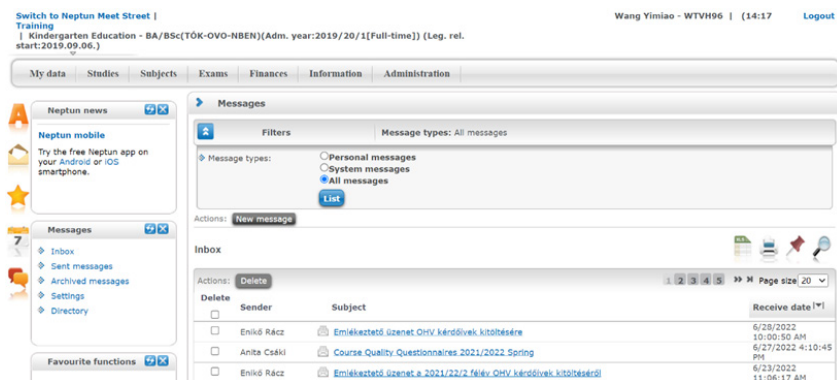
The school also offers students a variety of different electives. As a foreign student, I highly recommend taking the Hungarian course and learning the Hungarian alphabet during the first semester. Although Hungarian is

not needed in this English-language programme, I think it is necessary for foreign students to know the Hungarian alphabet because this will help them pronounce the child's name clearly and correctly in the following practice, which will help the teacher to establish a good relationship with the children.

Neptun is the official school website of ELTE TÓK, which delivers the messages we need from teachers and the school such as some events or changes of the class time or room. Moreover, we register for the courses and exams on this website where we can see the credits and timetable clearly.

**Figure 5**

*Screen shot of Neptun homepage*



## How did I write my BA thesis?

In the last semester, we only have a few classes and internships, and the thesis is the main learning content of this semester, which is also one of the requirements for graduation. After communicating with my advisor, I decided to choose bilingual kindergarten as the title of my thesis.

In recent years, bilingual kindergarten has become increasingly popular all over the world. However, because bilingual education has begun later in China compared to other nations and China is a monolingual country, there are very few suitable teaching methods or operation modes for multi- or bilingual kindergartens throughout the entire country. As my graduation thesis, I combined what I learned from ELTE TÓK with the existing dilemma of bilingual education in China, arranged research in a bilingual kindergarten in my hometown, and finally gave out some solutions.

## What am I doing after graduation?

With the great help of professors and teachers at ELTE TÓK, I graduated from ELTE TÓK with a Bachelor's degree in kindergarten education in 2022. After that, I decided to study for a Master's degree at the Chinese University



of Hong Kong in the field of Early Childhood Education. I chose to continue my studies because I realized that it was important for me to attain some knowledge of the Asian education system if I want to work in Chinese kindergartens. Due to the shortage of preschool teachers in Hungary, it is also very easy to find a job after completing this program. Since this is an English-language programme, it helps make it easier for you to get a job in a bilingual or international kindergarten that can offer a higher salary. All of my classmates have found jobs after graduation, so don't worry about getting a job!

As the first foreign student to graduate from the kindergarten education program in ELTE TÓK, I would highly recommend this kindergarten education programme if you love children and are interested in teaching and education.

