Cuban ELT Community and British Council: Bridges for Professional Development

Presenter: Isora Justina Enriquez O’Farrill. Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas Enrique J. Varona, Cuba

isora.garbey@ucpejv.edu.cu / ijustinaeo@gmail.com
Outline

• Context and background
• Most relevant ELT projects
• ELT events
• Liaison with teachers’ associations
• Lessons learned
• New opportunities to explore
Background and context
More than 20 years of fruitful professional collaboration

Michael White  William (Eddie) Edmundson  Jenny White  Office in Havana

Frank Fitzpatrick  Julian Baker  Laura Pérez  Minerva Rodríguez
Most relevant ELT Projects

CBI (1999)
National, regional & local workshops to support ELT reforms from K-12

Setting up **Self-Access Centers** in universities

Train the trainers

**Outcomes:**
- Integrating language & k-12 contents of priority subjects
- How to set up SACs and design materials for autonomous teaching & learning
- Methods for continuous professional development
More than 160 teachers certified with TKT by Cambridge ESOL Examinations

2008-2011

More than 1280 teachers trained by local trainers

Outcome: Update on communicative language teaching theory and practice
Professional Award in Teacher Development: 2013-2017

An in-service programme of combined training and assessment for teacher training skills.

Guided by Maggie Milnie

Outcome: Update and develop teacher training skills
Practice on designing and delivering teacher training workshops

More than 85 teachers in 12 provinces from different ministries and institutions

7 trainers
2 quality assurers
ELT CONFERENCES

A biannual British Council conference that brings together teachers from different teaching backgrounds

Outcome: Sharing good practice and cascading lessons learned from CPD workshops
Interacting with international speakers
ELT ROADSHOWS

A biannual British Council event with the Ministry of Higher Education that takes teacher development to all provinces in Cuba, convened by 4 universities: Universidad of Oriente, Universidad Central de las Villas, Universidad de La Habana, Universidad de Ciencias Pedagogicas Enrique J Varona.

Outcome: Training on communicative methodology and the application of CEFR for teaching and assessment.
Classroom in Action 2017-2019

• Started as teacher training workshops for ELT teacher trainees. Then, it progressed to include workshops for teacher trainers in Faculties of Education

• **Main focus:** Practical teaching and training skills for teaching the 4 basic skills

• Conveners: Universidad E.J. Varona, Universidad Central de Las Villas, Universidad de Oriente, Universidad de Granma

Outcome: **347 trainees** from 6 provinces

A better understanding of a "theory-to-practice" methodology for effective teacher training

Practice training on communicative lessons for novice teachers
Developed from Classroom in action, in August 2019, 14 recently graduates from 6 Cuban provinces took a two-week course, with a cultural and social programme, at St Giles International’s Brighton centre to build upon the areas covered earlier.
Outcome: A robust, organic and sustainable project to provide in-service training courses for trainees, newly-graduated and experienced teachers throughout Cuba.
Policy workshops

• Started in October 2018, sponsored by BC, in association with Ministry of Higher Education convened by University of Havana

• Trainer: Alan Pulverness from TransformELT

• Main focus: To help Cuban policy group for higher education develop an approach to ELT curriculum renewal in Cuban universities, with a view to achieving exit levels of B1 for graduating students.

Outcome: Re-design of the ELT strategy for curriculum renewal and the implementation of the new ELT policy
ESP TRAINING

• Academic Writing teacher training workshop, with Tania Pattison, convened by University of Havana

• Academic writing for 124 professionals from different fields throughout the country, convened by University of Computer Sciences (UCI).

• ICT in distance education, convened by UCI

Outcome:
124 professionals from different fields throughout the country
TEACHER TRAINING FOR K-12 TEACHERS

- Teacher training workshops for advisors and teachers
- Materials writing workshops with K-12 authors

Outcome:
Practice training on communicative language teaching
Cascading MIA lessons learned on practical classroom activities
Improved tasks in K-12 materials
Teachers & trainees, students from all educational levels have been involved actively in important celebrations for Cuba & UK under the titles:
- All we need is love.
- We are the children.
- Martí, Shakespeare and Cervantes live in a Diverse World
- Our peoples, our histories.
- Learning to live together
- Two cultures hand in hand.
- Memories of challenging times and resilience
LIAISON WITH TEACHERS’ ASSOCIATIONS

APC-ELI NATIONAL ONLINE CONFERENCE 2020

48 school teachers from remote areas have improved language

PRELIM Award 2021
LIAISON WITH TEACHERS´ ASSOCIATIONS

- Innovative Project Learning English is Fun (LEIF) to enhance English in early ages. With the help of GELI, teachers and parents, a repository of home videos filmed by children has been created, and other initiatives.

- ALC-GELI Hornby Award 2021. To provide a set of online training workshops for K-12 Young teachers in remote areas from different provinces.
ELT COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID -19

Televised lessons

- Summer lessons for adults
- Lessons for K-12 students & teacher training schools

Complemented in schools by study guides, WhatsApp and other collaborative groups and initiatives
COVID-19 CHALLENGES

• Online CPD has been provided through *WhatsApp*, *Telegram*, *Google Meet*, *Moodle*, and emailing, on topics such as:
  - Creativity in ELED & Teacher Education
  - Teaching English to Young learners
  - Catering for inclusion and diversity in ELED
  - Applying neuroscience in ELED
ELT COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Through community and social work
SPONSORING GUEST SPEAKERS
Supporting Cuban Teachers to IATEFL Conference
Most important outcomes

• Firmly rooted in the Cuban sociocultural context, the new approaches to align English language education to current international standards and views have been built upon the existing Cuban developmental pedagogy.

• There has been a clearer understanding of CEFR so as to align curriculum renewal, assessment and materials development to it.

• Increased participation of a diversity of trainees, from undergraduates to experienced teachers and university lecturers.
Lessons learned

• Involving more than one team delivering parallel workshops generally reaches more trainees and favors more training hours.

• The need of strengthening a cascading model for dissemination of teacher training led by the hundreds of teachers trained by BC throughout the years.

• The need of integrating actions from all stakeholders for a more coherent ELT-BC program and a more productive use of funds.
Opportunities to explore

• Alternatives for language enhancement training workshops
• Identify the level of interest in, and scope of opportunities for, new partnerships between Cuban and UK education institutions.
• Develop trilateral or multilateral partnerships between Cuba, the UK and third countries elsewhere in Latin America and the Caribbean (particularly where both the UK and Cuba have strong prior connections in education)
• Identify UK partners to promote students´ and teachers´ mobility.
Inspiring words for the Cuban ELT community

• "Cuba tiene que hacerlo con recursos muy limitados, y aún así su enseñanza es fantástica, el nivel de inglés de la mayoría de los profesores es impresionante..." J. Harmer, Cuba, 2017

• “.... the inventiveness and professional determination of the Cuban ELT community persists, and it has been an enormous pleasure to be able to make a small contribution to their current enterprise." A. Pulverness, HLT Jun, 2020

• “Do no ask much, just go to Cuba and help", K. Wilson, IATEFL 2016,

• "It’s always a pleasure to help Cubans. You have shown commitment and motivation." Chaz Pugliese, APCELI webinar, 2020
THANKS SO MUCH!
MUCHAS GRACIAS!