

TÍTULO: ENSEÑANZA COLABORATIVA DE INGLÉS ACADÉMICO EN LA UCLV.

TITLE: COLLABORATIVELY TEACHING ACADEMIC ENGLISH AT CUBAN UCLV.

Autoras:

- Dianaleis Maza Amores damores@uclv.edu.cu

BEd and ELT Specialist from Villa Clara in Cuba. Master in ELT Theory and Practice. Associate Teacher at the English Language Department from Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas since 2003. Member of Cuban ALC-GELI and Pedagogues’ Association.

- Elisaliz Oramas Torres elizaliz@uclv.edu.cu

BA from Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas. Master in Communicative and Intercultural ELT. Lecturer in Translation and Interpreting at Universidad Central “Marta Abreu” de Las Villas. Member of Cuban GELFRA.

Abstract

Collaboration among professionals from the same field of expertise seems to be a popular practice this twenty first century more than ever before. Today, we find it very frequently used within the artistic world where the terms ‘feature in’ has come to define it. Why not introducing it within the teaching learning processes?

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language is gaining momentum and experiencing revolutionary changes at Cuban universities, therefore, it is useful and peremptory to reinforce and update such process, using the state-of-the art theories in the field useful to the XXI century learner.

This paper will explore the notion of collaborative teaching applied to EAP and will also illustrate it with the authors’ recollection of experiences at UCLV English studies.

Key words: collaborative teaching; academic English; guest lecturing.

Introduction

The UNESCO Declaration for Education 2030 adopted by the teaching profession, youth and the private Sector, which sets out a new vision for education for the following years calls all implied to *‘Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’*. Based on that quality education and improving learning outcomes turns into a major concern in this field of work, and more than that, into a commitment. According to the petitioners, this requires strengthening inputs, processes and evaluation of outcomes and mechanisms to measure progress. They also state that quality education fosters creativity and knowledge, and ensures the acquisition of the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy as well as analytical, problem solving and other high-level cognitive, interpersonal and social skills. It also develops the skills, values and attitudes that enable citizens to lead healthy and fulfilled lives, make informed decisions, and respond to local and global challenges through education for sustainable development (ESD) and global citizenship education (GCED).

In line with such commitment, and also motivated to meet the challenge of teaching lifelong learning knowledge and skills to 21st century millennials, the authors of this paper visit an untrodden path, which could meet both challenges: collaborative teaching.

Collaboration among professionals from the same field of expertise seems to be a popular practice this twenty first century more than ever before. Today, we find it very frequently used within the

artistic world where the term 'feature in' has come to define it. Why not introducing it within the teaching learning processes?

According to its primary meaning collaboration implies 'to work together, especially in a joint intellectual effort' (American Heritage Dictionary). To [topeducationdegrees](#) collaborative teaching, is sometimes called cooperative teaching or team teaching, and involves educators working in tandem to lead, instruct and mentor groups of students. To Judie Haynes (2007) "Co-teaching involves two credentialed professionals who are partners in the instruction of the lesson". Another author Marisa Kaplan (2010) sees collaborative teaching as "collaborative team teaching" and refers to the idea of a co-teaching partnership, also to "creative thinkers thinking," or "cool teachers teaching."

In the case of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), according to Gillet (2011) refers to the language and associated practices that people need in order to undertake study or work in English medium higher education. The objective of an EAP course, then, is to help these people learn some of the linguistic and cultural – mainly institutional and disciplinary - practices involved in studying or working through the medium of English.

A central role of the EAP lecturer or course designer, then, is to find out what the learners need, what they have to do in their academic work or courses, and help them to do this better in the time available.

The English Studies at Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas in Cuba (UCLV) train professionals to work as translators and interpreters, and also to contribute to the communication between Spanish and non-Spanish speakers using the foreign language. These studies also form professionals who could also teach the foreign language to prepare our Cuban society to use it as vehicle to reach cultural and professional development.

The curriculum of the Cuban English studies, applies the principles of the previously mentioned EAP courses and includes basic (English and French), content specific (British/US Literature; British/US History; English Stylistics; English Lexicology; Phonology, among others) and professional development disciplines (Didactics; Translation; Interpreting).

The teaching and learning of English as a foreign language is gaining momentum and experiencing revolutionary changes at Cuban universities, therefore, it is useful and peremptory to reinforce and update such process, using the state-of-the art theories in the field suitable to the XXI century learner.

This paper explores the notion of collaborative teaching applied to EAP and will also illustrate it with these authors' recollection of experiences at UCLV English studies.

Rationale

In order to pursuit the stated goals of the present paper, first of all there was a search and thorough study of basic theories behind the notion of collaborative teaching. Then, there was an exploration of previous experiences, other teachers' experiences in order to compare them to those of this author and seize the desired idea of collaborative teaching of EAP. Finally, the authors would seek a balance between the presented findings and the accumulated experiences to ultimately reach the nearest point to the pedagogic praxis motivating this exposition.

Collaborative teachers need to bring their best strengths and practices to the team while remaining flexible to adapt to new methodologies. That would work as a leading principle to this practice. Based on that, the experience collected to this point proves feasible and successfully convenient.

The most commonly known experiences in co-teaching are:

- **Lead, Observe, Assist** – One teacher presents new content while the co-leader observes students and assists any who may be off-task or struggling with concepts.
- **Teach and Reteach** – The lead teacher presents new material and activities while the co-instructor reviews previous information and skills for retention purposes.

- **Simultaneous/ Parallel Teaching** – The class is divided into two smaller groups and both teachers present the same material at the same time.
- **Instructional Stations** – Students rotate between several stations to receive new instruction or work on activities monitored by teachers.
- **Supplemental/ Alternative Teaching** – While one teacher instructs the majority of learners, the other takes a small group aside to work on different instructional goals related to readiness or literacy skills.
- **Co-teaching/ Team Teaching Rotation** – Both teachers present new information rotating between presentation and support roles during the lesson.
- **Teach and write.** One teacher teaches the lesson while the other records the important points on an overhead or chalkboard. ELLs benefit from this because information is being presented to them through different modalities. Station teaching. Students rotate through predetermined stations or activities. Each teacher works with all the students as they come through the station.

And some of the best recommendations to successful co-teaching, according to different sources are:

- ✧ thoughtful consideration on the part of educators;
- ✧ time set aside for developing lessons and deciding on appropriate learning approaches to use with specific students or groups;
- ✧ present a united front so that students perceive each as being of equal importance in knowledge and authority thus leading to more respectful learning environments;
- ✧ say this mantra: "All students are *our* students."

However, none of the previous definitions meet these author's ideas and experiences, the ones this paper refers to. As it appears, there is another relatively unexplored collaborative teaching experience, the one we could refer to as 'guest lecturers'.

Guest Lecturers

Guest lecturers at a college are usually up-and-comers, experts or well-known in their field. They are invited to the campus by a professor, student organization or department. Colleges ask guest speakers to the campus for a variety of reasons.

A guest lecturer may be present during a class or at a special time outside class. Guest lecturers need not be limited to campus-based courses. College professors from distance learning and online courses may also incorporate guest speakers into the curriculum. For example, online professors at Penn State may invite a guest speaker to hold a weeklong ongoing chat with students. Although the students do not get the opportunity to hear them speak in person, they still benefit from the interaction.

Listening to a guest speaker and participating in ensuing discussions can be an invaluable part of your college education. This distinctive opportunity provides a chance to make a difference in the lives of students. David Cook (University of Alberta, professor of pharmacology) insists that just one bright light can change a student's feelings concerning a subject, sparking new attitudes about a discipline. That bright light can be YOU, the guest lecturer!

A guest lecture is part of a whole course. Successful guest lecturers provide students with a context for their presentations. Limit the content and organize it in a way that highlights the place of your material in the continuum of the course.

To prevent information overload, limit the content and emphasize the key points, which will increase the likelihood that students will remember the most important concepts.

Careful preparation is essential. Effective organization enhances retention. If you categorize information in logical groups of no more than six, you can help students retain information in a useful form.

Introduce yourself to the students and be sure to give them your contact information. Be enthusiastic and engage their enthusiasm during the presentation. Close to the end of your time period, summarize the key points of the lecture, placing them within context of the course. Finally, link your lecture to the next one, even if it will be presented by another guest speaker rather than you.

The UCLV proposal for Collaborative EAP

These authors' quest for guest lecturing in Cuban universities only showed sporadic more than systematic practices of it. It also showed the preference of foreign guest lecturers over national/local ones.

In the case of English Studies at UCLV, basic content courses teachers usually invite either specialists in specific areas or specialists with important experiences or research works related to specific topics to expand the horizons of the given content course and allow the students some exposure to first hand learning opportunities.

Collaborative teaching can also be applied to English language teaching in Cuba at all levels and in many different ways. It only takes creativity and/or interest from the teachers in charge. English as a foreign language has been a compulsory subject matter in the Cuban curricula from Elementary to Tertiary levels since the beginning of the Revolutionary period. Therefore, it is very possible to find a relatively great number of Cuban professionals with good command of this foreign language who could possibly act as co-teachers of English.

The experiences collected by these authors during more than fifteen years teaching academic basic specific courses to English majors at UCLV, include and suggest guest lectures as follows:

- With the course on English Stylistics: guest lectures from Journalism and Social Communication university studies to lecture about the newspaper style and the language of media and advertisement correspondingly; also outstanding researchers to lecture or workshop about scientific prose, all aided by a student-interpreter or more to enhance with their general comprehensive preparation.
- With the course on Interpreting: simulation practices with university specialists in different areas of knowledge like future cement, communication theories, international laws, science, bad science and pseudoscience: some remarks on the importance of the scientific method, all lecturing in English to have undergraduates interpret as in a Conference or Congress.
- With the course on English Lexicology: guest lectures from Arts and Letters university studies to deliver lectures on Latin, Greek and German contributions/influences/effects upon the English language.
- With the course on Literary Appreciation: guest specialists with experience and published books as literary translators, to lecture on that topic and how to connect literature to the rest of the curricular courses and to the professional profile.

Concluding thoughts

A thorough study of basic theories behind the notion of collaborative teaching, EAP and guest lecturing only reinforced the original idea motivating this paper. These are indeed, untrodden paths, and likewise relevant. It seems that, as the general comprehensive teaching-learning process for

foreign languages in Cuba represents more important goals in Cuban education, the focus on tertiary education and more than that, on specialization needs much more attention.

Exploring previous experiences, as well as other teachers' experiences in order to compare them to those of these authors and seize the desired intention of linking collaborative teaching to EAP to meet all requirements, commitments and ultimate goals in Education only led to expand the idea to the notion of guest lecturing. Guest lecturing has not been sufficiently used in university education and it opens worlds of opportunities for lifelong learning. The presented experiences seek only to motivate all colleagues from the same field of work and invite them into this whole new world of possibilities.

Finally, the authors presented here balance between their findings and the accumulated experiences to ultimately reach the nearest point to the pedagogic praxis motivating this exposition, that of linking all suggested notions (collaborative teaching-guest lecturing-EAP) to work the wonder of **quality** education as stated or required by UNESCO Education 2030 Framework for Action.

List of references

- American Heritage Dictionary.
- Cook, D. 2005. *When You are a Guest Lecturer*. Teaching and Learning Exchange, 12, no. 2 (winter 2005): 9. University of Alberta.
- Gillett A. J. 2011. *What is EAP?* Retrieved from <http://www.uefap.com/bgnd/>
- Gillett A. J. 2011. *What is EAP?* Retrieved from <http://www.uefap.com/bgnd/> [March, 2018]
- A guide to guest lecturing. University of New Zealand.
- Haynes J. 2007. *Collaborative Teaching: Are Two Teachers Better Than One?* Essential Teacher, Volume 4, Issue 3, September, Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
- Kaplan M. 2017. *Collaborative Team Teaching: Challenges and Rewards* <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/collaborative-team-teaching-challenges-rewards-marisa-kaplan> [march, 2018]
- Nunan, D. 1992. *Collaborative language learning and teaching* (Cambridge Language Teaching Library) from Brand: Cambridge University Press pdf.
- UNESCO. 2015. Incheon Declaration and SDG4 – Education 2030 Framework for Action.
- What Are Guest Lecturers? Retrieved from <https://www.campusexplorer.com/college-advice-tips/A41868CD/What-Are-Guest-Lecturers/> 2017.