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Lessons learned from 410 years of Ceibal en Inglés

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Abbreviations used in this report

| ANEP | — The National Authority for Education and Teacher Training |
|------|---|
| CEI | — Ceibal en Inglés – Ceibal's English teaching programme |
| CEFR | — The Common European Framework of Reference for language learning |
| CREA | — The principal digital platform for students and teachers |
| СТ | — Classroom Teacher – a generalist primary school teacher |
| CTE | — A Classroom Teacher of English – a secondary level specialist |
| F2F | Face-to-Face teaching (as opposed to remote teaching) |
| LB | Little Bridge – the curriculum and materials used in CEI |
| NEAT | — The National English Adaptive Test of CEI measuring CEFR level |
| QM | — Quality Management – system to ensure good teaching |
| RT | Remote Teacher – an English specialist teaching the class via |
| | videoconference |
| RTC | — Remote Teaching Centre – hub from which RTs work |
| TP | — Teaching Point (where a RT teaches from) |
| | |





Executive summary

Ceibal is a Uruguayan government agency dedicated to integrating technology into education with the aim of increasing inclusion. It implemented the national onelaptop-per-child programme from 2006, and continues to provide laptops to all public school students in Uruguay, a highincome country of 3.5 million people. The Ceibal en Inglés (CEI) programme began in 2012 as a solution to Uruguay's shortage of English teachers, which was hampering the government objective of providing English lessons to all public primary school students.

CEI involves Remote Teachers (RTs, provided through supplier contracts by 13 language-teaching institutes) delivering weekly lessons (Lesson A) to groups of primary school students in their school via videoconference from a Teaching Point (TP) equipped with videoconferencing equipment in a remote location. This may be in the same city as the school, but is often in a different country and housed in Remote Teaching Centres (RTCs). Most lessons are delivered into Uruguay from Argentina, though RTs have been based in various

countries around the world including the Philippines. Continuous coordination between the RT and Classroom Teacher (CT) is a vital part of the programme. The CT is present to facilitate learning during Lesson A, and is expected to organise two more weekly lessons (B and C). Classroom teachers at primary grades 4 to 6 are not expected to know English, although some do. CEI currently reaches over 60% of children in Uruguayan public primary schools, some 75,000 children each year. There is an annual adaptive test of English proficiency for students (NEAT).

This core of RT, CT and technology requires a complex management infrastructure. There is a three-year curriculum with lesson plans, student materials, and an online LMS for students and teachers. A quality management team ensures institutes (each with their own management structure) and their RTs comply with programme requirements through a team of mentors which support CTs; a team of pedagogical and test coordinators; and an operational management team. There is also a teacher development function.



Results

To what extent is there evidence that primary pupils have increased their English as a result of taking part in the programme?

The 9 to 12 year-old students on the CEI programme clearly learn English. 90% of RTs and 77% of CTs rated student learning outcomes and experience as positive. The latest (2022) NEAT test of students finishing primary grade 6 showed that 73% achieved A1 or above with 58% doing so in reading and 30% listening. Of these 34% achieved A2 or above in vocabulary and grammar with 24% doing so in reading and 16% in listening.

There is also evidence of a decreased gap between the most and the least socio-economically advantaged students, with the gap in learning outcomes also reduced over the years.

What benefits have remote teachers gained as a result of the teacher development programme run by the British Council?

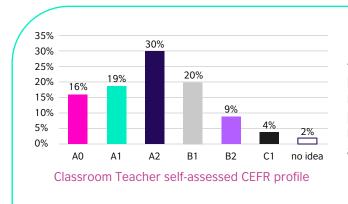
Over 200 RTs are active in the programme (90% female), and 86% of the British Council RTs are satisfied with their jobs. 94% of surveyed RTs were positive about the development offered by the British Council, they were particularly positive about initial training and orientation. 94% of CTs rated RTs as excellent or very good. Issues for RTs are a substantial workload for full-timers, and the increasing demand for home-based teaching, and how that is being integrated into the programme. An important feature of CEI is the need for coordination between the RT and CT, and both RTs and CTs appreciate the quality of coordination.





What benefits did the local classroom teachers achieve in terms of English proficiency and improving classroom practice?

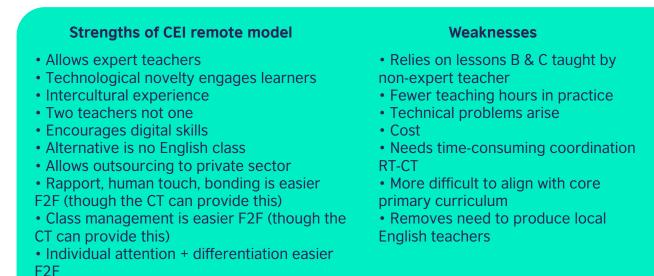
CTs spend a small proportion of their working time on CEI. They are employed by the school authority ANEP, and not subject to supervision by Ceibal, although supported by the CEI mentor team. An initial aim of the programme was to improve the English of CTs so that they could take more responsibility for English teaching. However, the appetite of CTs to work to improve their English was overestimated. Free English lessons have always been available for CTs though the take-up and attitudes to learning English is varied. The English levels of CTs are also varied, but generally low: 72% say their English has improved a little or a lot during the programme, leaving almost 30% who say it has not improved significantly.



43% of surveyed CTs said that participation in CEI had led them to make changes in their classroom practice. 84% rated the support they received positively, both from RTs and mentors.

What is the perceived difference in learning outcomes and experience between learning face-to-face and via remote teaching?

The CEI remote teaching model has clearly been effective. Teachers say that CEI students have benefitted; the annual NEAT results show learning taking place, and similar learning outcome achievement between the CEI programme and the ANEP face-to-face modality. However, there is still a preference for face-to-face teaching, especially amongst CTs, while RTs, who are immersed in the world of remote teaching are more ambivalent.





What has been the effect of the quality management system put into place for CEI?

There is a rigorous quality management system to ensure that the institutes and their RTs deliver good teaching and management. Every RT is observed by the CEI quality management team at least once a year. A sophisticated observation instrument measures RT teaching in 12 areas of competence, assigning a level: undeveloped, emerging, developed, or advanced to each area of competence for each RT. There are protocols for action in case of unsatisfactory teaching.

• RTs rated the quality management system positively as it gives them clarity in what is expected in complying with the contract between their institute and Ceibal. • The RT observations build up to an annual institute evaluation which also takes account of good administration and contract compliance of the institute.

• CEI quality managers are aware of the characteristics of each of the 13 institutes delivering remote teaching.

Ceibal en Inglés relies on collaborative expertise between the private and public education sector, and on (mostly) private sector English language teachers working in the public school system in Uruguay. What challenges and/or difficulties exist when it comes to facilitating / enabling this cooperation?

The Uruguayan public sector, through Ceibal, has supplier contracts to deliver remote teaching with 13 private sector organisations. This innovative approach to dealing with a shortage of English teachers allows a number of benefits including:

• The ability to introduce English teachers into the public system on different contracts, with no upset to the status quo in schools and limited interest from unions.

• The arm's length relationship with the RTs through contracts with institutes absolves the public sector of direct responsibility,

while allowing a level of rigorous quality management of teaching that is generally not practicable in the public sector.

• The CEI programme's rapid growth would not have been possible without the recruitment of teachers from the private sector, and it would not have been possible to deliver English to all primary school students.

• The benefit to the private sector institutes goes beyond increased business and income.



• The institutes have learned a lot over the years about remote and online teaching via the CEI programme.

• CEI uses institute premises during school hours when there is low demand for private sector classes.

• CEI business was especially valuable for institutes during the COVID pandemic, and those institutes involved in CEI were able to adapt to different forms of online teaching more rapidly.

What long-term, sustainable, positive impacts can be determined on the education system in Uruguay, and to what extent are they due to the longevity of the project and / or partnership?

• After four years of CEI almost all primary school children were receiving lessons (from CEI or ANEP). From that point it can be considered to have been institutionalised.

• The shortage of English teachers at primary levels has been solved by using remote teaching, which works as well as the face-to-face solution in this context. • Some stakeholders bemoan the continuing lack of local English teachers. However, there has been no significant attempt to increase the numbers, and therefore there is no possibility of rapid moves to the faceto-face teaching that many Uruguayans say they prefer.





• There remains a shortage of qualified English teachers elsewhere, including at secondary level.

• The aim for a plurilingual country with a wide knowledge of English, is contradicted by the lack of action to develop English ability amongst teachers, who are a model for young people.

• The 12-year timescale to date has allowed for volume growth and learning in the early

phases, leading to a period of continual improvement including the curriculum and materials, the annual test, the quality management system, the mentoring of CTs, and the continuing professional development of RTs.

It has also allowed the Ceibal team time to develop practical professional knowledge to operate the programme independently, and this new skill-set has helped Ceibal in other areas.

What is the value that the British Council brings as a long-term partner for the Ceibal en Inglés programme?

Main areas of contribution are: curriculum methodology and materials; test development; the recruitment and management of RTs; teacher development and quality management; English improvement for CTs; programme evaluation; and international exposure of the programme. All this has required the development of specific management processes.

The involvement of the British Council can be seen in three stages:

1. Helping to design and pilot the programme

2. establishing remote teaching centres in Argentina and Uruguay, subcontracting and managing others (Philippines) while developing the elements listed above (2013-19). Enabling Ceibal to gradually take over operational responsibility.

3. becoming a supplier institute from the Buenos Aires Remote Teaching Centre, with additional responsibility for teacher development across the programme (2020-23).

Ceibal management speaks positively of the British Council contribution, how

the Ceibal team were able to learn from the experience in running English programmes, and how the British Council has been generous in passing on the benefits of that experience.

Uruguayan survey respondents who knew about the British Council were overwhelmingly positive. The main factors in leading Ceibal to look to the British Council for this support were:

- track record of success in English programmes globally,
- not-for-profit nature of the Council
- accountability of the organisation
- importance it gives to its own reputation



Overview of strengths and challenges

The core aim of the programme was to ensure that all primary school students received English lessons, whether from CEI or ANEP face-to-face teaching. This has been achieved.

It is clear that the teaching has been of good quality, as evidenced by the quality management system, and that children have learned English, as evidenced by the annual NEAT results. 90% of the RTs and 82% of the CTs surveyed considered the programme a success.

The challenges to the programme are largely about integration with the wider education system.

Strengths:

- Clarity of aims Reach, outcomes, inclusion
- Demonstrated learning outcomes
- Strong sustained leadership
- Rigorous management processes
- Quality remote teaching
- Can-do culture for continuous improvement
- Adaptive test development
- Technology-pedagogy innovation

Challenges:

- Ceibal's historic separation from the education authority ANEP and schools.
- Lack of action on ITT to solve teacher shortage
- Slow acknowledgement of effect on secondary ELT
- Lack of integration with primary curriculum
- Variation in degrees in which CTs engage

CEI has contributed to the British Council's wider strategic aims by:

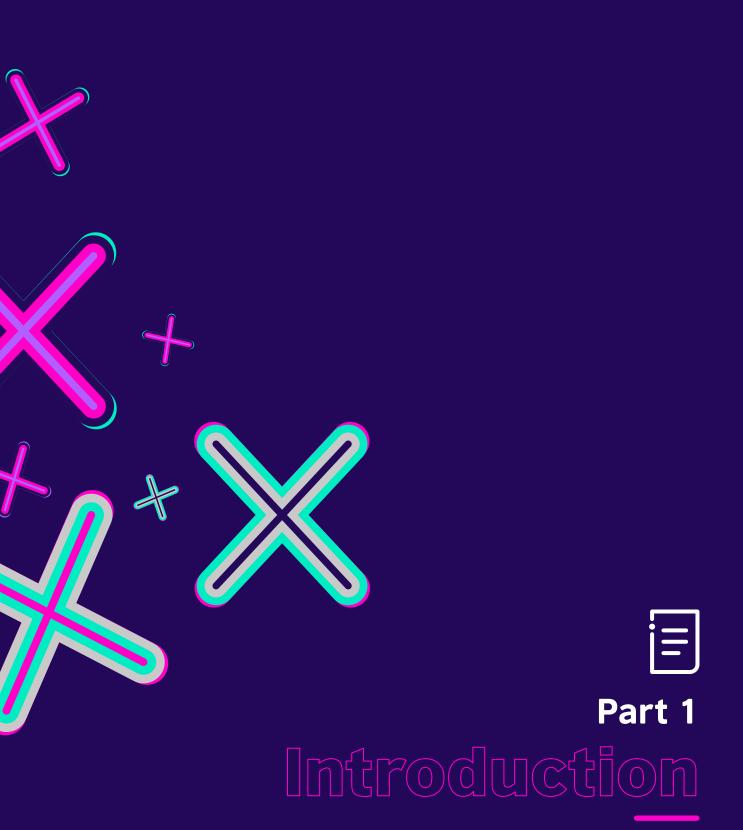
- Developing systems to improve quality and standards in Uruguayan education
- Providing insight and knowledge to that system to help achieve objectives
- Building long-term relationships and influence with Uruguayan influencers
- Contributing to raising the quality of education; and supporting action to reduce inequalities
- Supporting inclusive, quality teaching, learning and assessment of English involving no British Council financial input.





Against 20 principles of good practice, CEI performed excellently against the majority, with particular strengths in: strong continuous leadership, protection against political changes to allow longevity, and ensuring that all elements are addressed (teachers, curriculum, learning assessment, and quality assurance). Integration of the programme with other elements of the system which are not under Ceibal's control have been more challenging. The CEI remote teaching model clearly has applicability to many other contexts, and others can learn from the CEI experience while applying new technologies that were not widely available in 2012. Recent experience indicates that it might be easier to apply the model at a smaller local education authority level, rather than at a national scale, especially in larger countries.









In August 2023, the British Council commissioned TransformELT, an international organisation based in the United Kingdom which specialises in research, consultancy, evaluation, and training in the area of English language teaching and English language learning, to conduct a wide-ranging review of the Ceibal en Inglés (CEI) programme in primary schools in Uruguay.

CEI is a large-scale innovative programme which teaches English to Uruguayan public school children using video-conferencing technology. It is run by Ceibal, which is the Uruguayan government funded agency that launched this English-teaching programme in 2012 in collaboration with the British Council. The British Council, the United Kingdom's agency for international cultural relations, has a long history of expertise in the teaching of English around the world. CEI is one of the British Council's longest running collaborations with an overseas education authority.

Aims

The aim of this review is to compile in a single narrative structure the highlights, successes, and lessons learned from CEI in a portfolio of credible evidence of the achievements of the programme. We focus on the British Council's work and contribution to the programme to highlight the factors involved in effecting transformational change within an educational system, and also the benefits in working in partnership with international experts over an extended period. We explore the contextual factors surrounding decisions and actions taken which have led to positive outcomes and to learning points in the programme. We also look at what we can learn from CEI in terms of insights, implications and applications to the design and implementation of other programmes in different circumstances, situations, and contexts.

Audience

Our principle audience is individuals in educational authorities, universities and institutions around the world who are involved in, or interested in, the design of educational change programmes. Colleagues in both Ceibal in Uruguay and the British Council may also be interested in this external view of the programme. CEI is concerned with the teaching of English. However, we believe that this evaluation and the principles that we apply will be of relevance to a far wider range of educational change programmes.



Organisation

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the methodology that has been used. The next two chapters describe CEI. Chapter 3 gives an overview of the national background and historical context within which the programme exists. Chapter 4 describes the previous formal evaluations of CEI with a summary of their findings.

Chapters 5 to 12 address the eight evaluation questions that the British Council posed at the beginning of this review. These eight chapters focus in turn on the Characteristics of Remote Teaching, Learners and Learning Outcomes, Remote Teachers, Classroom Teachers, Quality Management, Publicprivate Partnerships, the British Council, and the Programme Longevity. Chapter 13 is a brief overview of strengths and weaknesses of the programme, while Chapter 14 is about the contributions of the programme to the British Council's outcomes and outputs, and is intended only for an internal audience. Chapter 15 looks at how the programme measures against a number of principles of good practice for large-scale educational change programmes.

The report is written in a style that aims to be accessible by non-experts. It is not an academic paper designed for publication. Sources are often given within the text, but it is not over-referenced. Numbers are usually rounded to make them easier for the reader to assimilate. There is a curated reading list in Appendix A for those who wish to delve deeper into the many elements of the CEI programme.







The research questions for this evaluation were:

1. To what extent is there evidence that primary pupils have increased their English as a result of taking part in the programme?

2. What benefits have remote teachers gained as a result of the teacher development programme run by the British Council (i.e. methodology for teaching remotely, use of learning technologies, classroom management at a distance, etc)?

3. What benefits did the local classroom teachers achieve in terms of English proficiency and improving classroom practice (e.g. methodology for practising English, classroom management, and professional awareness, etc.)?

4. What is the perceived difference in learning outcomes and experience

between learning face-to-face and via remote teaching?

5. What has been the effect of the quality management system put into place for CEI?

6. Ceibal en Inglés relies on collaborative expertise between the private and public education sector, and on (mostly) private sector English language teachers working in the public school system in Uruguay. What challenges and/or difficulties exist when it comes to facilitating / enabling this cooperation?

7. What long-term, sustainable, positive impacts can be determined on the education system in Uruguay, and to what extent are they due to the longevity of the project and / or partnership?

8. What is the value of that the British Council brings as a long-term partner for the Ceibal en Inglés programme?



In order to reach the findings in this report we followed the following process:

• reviewed a range of documents related to the programme including publicly available documents from Ceibal, internal British Council management documents and other sources available online

• conducted interviews on Zoom (mostly individual though with a few small groups) with a variety of stakeholders: Ceibal managers, British Council managers and teachers, academics and officials with knowledge of the programme

designed and implemented three online surveys: 1. Remote Teachers who have worked with The British Council (n=99); 2. Classroom Teachers who work with British Council Remote Teachers (n=338);
other stakeholders in Uruguay including ex-students, families of students and other teachers (n=242)



• visited Ceibal in Montevideo and the British Council Remote Teaching Centre in Buenos Aires in October 2023 for confirmatory meetings and interviews. These were either digitally recorded and transcribed or noted by hand.

• Informed interviewees and survey respondents about the purpose of the research, and assured them that their identities would be kept confidential, and that remarks attributable to individuals would only be shared after specific permission was given. • gave interviewees questions and notes in advance. Interviews followed the notes, which were individually tailored in accordance with the characteristics of the interviewee, the information and perceptions that were required at different stages of the research.

• analysed the various sources of information and matched the findings against the aims of the programme; the evaluation questions, the British Council's internal monitoring & evaluation framework, and set of principles of good practice in large-scale ELT reform projects.

Limitations of the research

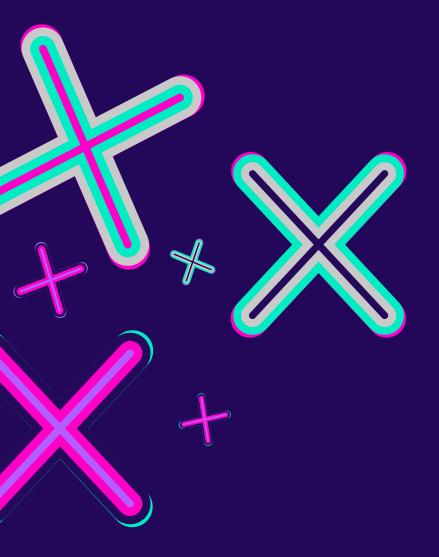
The following are possible limitations to the research:

- There was limited access to Ceibal management information
- The samples of RTs and CTs are limited to teachers connected to the British Council
- The samples for the three surveys are self-selecting survey completion was optional
- It was not possible to directly access learner perceptions
- There was limited access to top-level stakeholders above the operational level

• Researchers had previous knowledge of the programme, though none had been centrally involved in managing it

- There was a time limitation with research needing to be completed in four months
- The scope of the research is limited to the primary programme. We do not address the CEI programme in secondary schools in which The British Council was not centrally involved
- Descriptive statistics are used. No claim is made to statistical significance applicable to populations

This study is not intended to provide a complete history or comprehensive description of this large and long-standing programme. We concentrate on those elements where we believe there are lessons to be learned for others engaged in this programme or similar programmes in the future.



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Part 3 Ceibal en Inglés and its context

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It is important to understand the CEI programme within the specific social and educational background of Uruguay. Many projects that are not successful fail precisely because they are imported from theory or practice elsewhere without taking sufficient account of the local context. In describing the Uruguayan political, economic, social, and organisational context, we mention only those aspects which have a clear relationship with the CEI programme.

<u>Uruguay</u>

Uruguay is a generally flat country, measuring 500 km diagonally, with a small population of around 3.5 million. With an area of 176,000 km2, a little more than the area of England and Wales, or twice the size of Portugal, this gives a low populationdensity of 20 people per square kilometre, compared to 73 for Ireland, 150 for Wales, and 434 for England.

Despite its low population density, Uruguay has a very small rural population. According to the <u>World Population Review data</u>, Uruguay is one of the most urbanised states in the world (96% urbanised). The only states of a similar or larger size, with a higher level of urbanisation are Belgium (97%), Qatar (99%), and the city-states of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Kuwait (all 100%). For comparison, the United Kingdom is 84% urbanised, and India 36%.

This means that the Uruguayan education system has to deal with around 4% of its population in very remote rural areas. Regarding the cities, population is concentrated in the capital Montevideo: around 1.5 million people, with all other capitals of the 19 national departments (regional geo-political divisions) being small cities of between 100,000 and 20,000 people.

Uruguay is a high-income country with per-capita income similar to Serbia or Poland. Main economic contributions come from a strong banking system, software and consultancy, tourism and the traditional exports of beef and wool. <u>The Human Development Index of UNDP</u> ranks Uruguay as very high – similar to Romania and Thailand. The World Bank <u>Worldwide Governance Indicators</u> rank Uruguay highly for control of corruption (92nd percentile), political stability (88th), voice and accountability (91st), rule of law (76th) government effectiveness (77th), regulatory quality (76th). All dimensions have improved over the last ten years. The Corruptions Perceptions Index of Transparency International ranks Uruguay at 14th, equal with Canada and above Japan, the UK, and the USA.

School education in Uruguay is described by <u>the educational observatory of ANEP</u> (The National Authority for Education and Teacher Training). There are around 301,000 children in six years of primary education (primaria) and 348,000 in secondary education (media), as well as 107,000 in pre-school. While primary school attendance is almost universal, many students repeat grades, leading to higher numbers enrolled than there are children in the 6-to-12 age range.

Nationally, 17% of children go to private primary schools, while 11% attend private secondary schools. Thus the public sector teaches 83% of primary children nationally. However, these national figures hide large regional differences. In Montevideo, 28% of children attend private primary schools and 72% public schools. In the rest of Uruguay 10% attend private primary and 90% public primary. In poorer departments, the proportion attending public schools is very high. For example, in the Treinta-y-tres department, only 4% (just 162 students) attend private primary while 96% attend public primary. Those proportions are similar in the Rivera department.

Public primary schools are divided into a number of different categories, including: urbana comun; aprender; tiempo completo; practica y habilitada a practica; tiempo extendido; and rural comun. Across this variety of public primary school types, the number of children registered in each year from primary 4 to 6 (the CEI primary years) is around 40,000. This gives us a good indication of the overall coverage of CEI primary, which has reached some 75,000 children a year for the last few years, from a total population of just under 120,000 children in public primary schools grades 4 to 6 or around 62.5%.

The teaching of children is a challenging job in most situations, and good teachers need a demanding combination of skills, knowledge, energy and resilience, but is Uruguay a challenging context? Challenging contexts might be seen as having three dimensions. Firstly, there might be a challenging linguistic background where teachers and students do not have a shared language. Secondly there might be a scarcity of facilities, aids and materials for teachers and students to use, or classes might be very large.

Thirdly the learning and teaching might be taking place against a problematic social background, such as war or other conflict or poverty including hunger. In the most challenging contexts, all three of these conditions can apply. As such, in Uruguay, none of these conditions apply to any significant extent. Spanish is generally a common language. Schools are well resourced, and hunger is not a widespread problem. Teachers in Uruguay face similar problems to teachers in other countries with similar socio-economic profiles.





English and ELT in Uruguay

Spanish is the language of school education in Uruguay and is universally understood and spoken in its different varieties, including those influenced by Portuguese in Brazil on the norther border. English, as an international language, plays a role in the country's educational, cultural, and economic spheres.

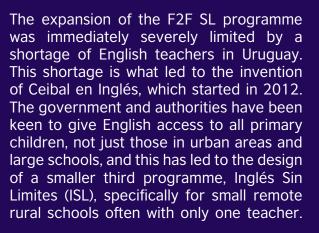
Until the first experiments in the 2000s, English teaching and learning was only available in private primary schools and in language institutes, restricting access to English skills and the social and economic opportunities to the children of higher income families. As in other countries in the region there has been a demand over the last two decades to make this opportunity available in public primary schools. Readers can discover more about this and see comparisons between different countries in Shelagh Rixon's 2013 <u>"British Council Survey of Policy and Practice in Primary English Language Teaching Worldwide".</u>

English has been taught as a subject in public secondary schools in Uruguay for

many years, although there is a shortage of teachers. Secondary school English teachers have typically been trained at the Instituto del Profesorado Artigas. The approach taken has traditionally involved the explicit teaching of grammar and vocabulary, with limited emphasis on the communicative aspects of language, particularly in the development of oral skills. There is debate around the extent to which this has changed over the years. While authorities talk of an aim of reaching B1 or even B2 CEFR under a policy named Uruguay Plurilingüe 2030, there is no national assessment to discover the English level of secondary school leavers (unlike the test for primary school leavers, see chapter 7 below).

Attempts in the early 2000s to implement English learning in a CLIL-type model in a small number of public primary schools was discontinued after a few years because of the difficulties in finding sufficient qualified English teachers. one of the factors that led to the implementation of CEI.

In 2008, the Department of Second Languages (Departamento de Segundas Lenguas) was created within the primary section of ANEP to organise the teaching of English and other languages in primary schools. The aims of the Department are to democratise access to quality language teaching which, at primary level, was restricted to private schools. Teaching in primary schools started with specialist English teachers assigned to schools. This F2F Segundas Lenguas (SL) programme continues, and reaches around one-third of eligible primary school children. The programme starts in pre-school and runs through to Primary 6 – the final year of primary with the stated aim of learners reaching CEFR A2. Students should receive two or three English classes a week depending on grade.



These three programmes work together to ensure all children in Uruguay have access to English language learning opportunities. In addition to mainstream schools in the public and private sectors there is also a thriving sector of private language institutes offering after-school English teaching both F2F and online. Some children from both private schools and higher quintile public schools attend these, though numbers are not published and are viewed by providers as commercially confidential.

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Ceibal

To understand how Ceibal en Inglés operates within the Uruguayan system, it is necessary to understand what Ceibal is. Ceibal (formerly "Plan Ceibal") is a semiindependent agency in the Uruguayan public sector with several hundred employees. Its annual budget is around 3 billion UYU (60 million GBP). <u>Ceibal describes itself on its</u> <u>website</u> as: Uruguay's digital technology center for education innovation at the service of public education policies. Ceibal promotes the integration of technology to improve learning and foster innovation, inclusion and personal growth.



We are the only country in the world where all students in public schools nationwide receive a computer with free internet access that, after initial delivery, is replaced twice during their educational journey.

Many of Ceibal's staff are technology experts. When it was established, Ceibal reported directly to the office of the President of the Republic, although more recently its reporting line has moved to the Ministry of Education, alongside ANEP. The working culture within Ceibal is generally acknowledged to be quite different from that generally found in the public sector, with reduced bureaucracy and hierarchy and more freedom for teams to take actions. This has been addressed in the media in Uruguay, particularly in <u>Andrés</u> <u>Danza's column, in the Shadow of Ceibal</u> (<u>A la sombra del Ceibal</u>). A British Council manager, talking about the success factors of the CEI programme in an interview for this project put it like this:

...the last thing has to do with the Ceibal culture. They are very bold and not afraid to try new things. That made a big difference in terms of the program growing. New things are being implemented all the time. Perhaps we see with other programs that the changes take much longer to happen or that there is a lot of red tape before changes getting approved. In Ceibal, they are not afraid to just pull the rug from under your feet. Ceibal works like a Formula One car where they change the wheels with the car in motion. And so they keep learning from experience and making changes, whether it was a new special project, a new type of school, new materials, sometimes these changes happened overnight and shook everybody.



Ceibal primarily deals with technology, education, and inclusion. A primary objective of the Ceibal program has been to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to technology for all students, regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds. This approach is deeply rooted in Uruguay's commitment to educational equity.

Ceibal is realistic about the role of technology in education and states: technology is not the answer to improving education, but at the same time it is impossible to imagine a future without technology in education.

Since its establishment Ceibal has moved through different stages (See Figure 1), which it describes as follows:

- stage one includes device deployment and connectivity;
- stage two is about platforms, educational resources and training,
- stage three covers the use of technologies for deep learning
- stage four describes aspects of blended teaching, guidance to the teaching community, data and systemic approaches

History



2007 - 2007 Equity:

installation of internet commotivity in schools and definery of devices



2010 - 2012 Platforms and teacher support.

The Massimo Se Apoyo Celbe' (MAC) position was prested and servinal platforms, i.e. the Digital Extrany, PMM, CHkA, and the Online Assessment System were mult



2012 - 2019 Technology as a piller in learning processes.

Different initiatives to promote the indusion of schoology in teaching practices La, Global Learning Network Computational Thinking, Cighal Citizenship were implemented.



2020 – 2025 Work focused on the community of seachers, a combined education approach and interinstitutional work.

Proposals are designed according to teachard needs. Consolidation of technological infractructure for the different types of combined education and creation of the inter-Agency Data Board (Ceital, ANER, MEC and INEEJ).

Figure 1: The stages of Ceibal's development, illustrated on its website, as it moves from devices and connectivity to a more integrated educational approach

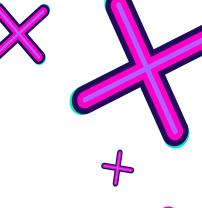


This has involved working with various partners. Ensuring broad-band connectivity to all schools in Uruguay, announced in 2023, has been possible with the collaboration of local telecommunications companies.

We are not aware of semi-independent agencies like Ceibal, focussing on the integration of technology into school education, existing in other countries. Yet it is the existence of this organisation that is one of the key factors of the success of Ceibal en Inglés. Without the Ceibal organisation, it is difficult to see how the English programme could have been launched and sustained.

So Ceibal, the organisation, is not to be confused with "Ceibal en Inglés" (CEI) – one of its programmes, which now uses around 7% of its budget. Ceibal, at its launch, was not populated with experts in education or pedagogy. The English programme was Ceibal's first significant venture into pedagogy, and for that reason it sought a partner with educational expertise. It decided to work with the British Council in 2012 following initial discussions in 2011 and a competitive tender for suppliers of educational services. Ceibal now sits alongside ANEP within the Ministry of Education (See Figure 2).





The birth and development of Ceibal en Inglés

By 2011, Uruguay was committed to providing English lessons for all primary school students, but without the necessary number of qualified English teachers to service that demand. This might be broken down into two problems.

1. How to provide English lessons to children.

2. How to deal with the problem of shortage of teachers.

The Uruguayan authorities decided to concentrate on the first problem. New use of technology was one obvious possible solution and so Ceibal was a natural source of that solution. Discussions took place, including with the British Council on how this could be operationalized. It led firstly to the concept of Remote Teaching, that is teaching groups of primary school students by qualified English teachers based outside Uruguay via videoconference. The next step was a document in 2011 inviting international organisations to supply services to Ceibal to deliver lessons by recruiting and training teachers, along with a curriculum, materials, evaluation and assessment systems. Ceibal chose the British Council in this exercise. This partnership was governed by a commercial contract to supply educational services.



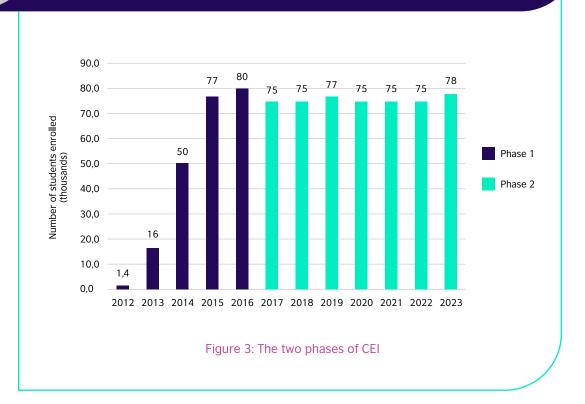


A successful "proof of concept" programme in 2012 was followed by a plan to increase the volume of lessons year by year until all primary students in Uruguay were covered. As the Segundas Lenguas F2F ELT programme was also expanding, the aim became to cover all schools and students between the two programmes.

The programme can be seen as two phases (See Figure 3), the first: 2012 to 2015, focuses on rapid volume growth, while in the second: 2016 to 2023, numbers become stable, and the focus shifts to improvement of quality and differentiation of target students.

It would not be honest if we said we are not facing strong challenges or even the fear for this project to fail due to the need to expand fast to reach all children in public urban schools in the next three years. However, if we did not have this goal, our efforts would not be interesting or important. Uruguay has a lot of successful experiences of English language teaching at small scales, for one school or for a few schools. Thus, learning English was always the privilege of a small group of people. This has represented a strong inequality in our society, since English is perceived by most families as a highly valued part of education that provides opportunities for future development in professional and social domains.

Claudia Brovetto, CEI Coordinator quoted in Woods (2013)





The number of groups taught over the period 2018-23 has been stable at around 3,300 groups per year. This gives an average class size of 22.5 students in each class, though there are significant variations between groups.

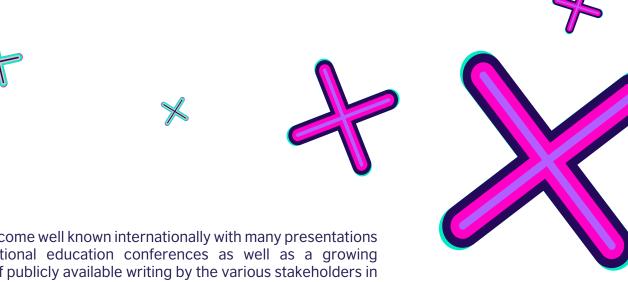
The focus for CEI was on urban schools, although more rural schools were added as broadband connections to all rural schools was established. More recently classes are being provided to children in special educational needs schools, and extra support is given to schools which have not performed so well on the annual test, called Making it Happen schools. The technology remained quite stable across the period, with Cisco as the main provider of videoconferencing hardware, while there were regular new issues of updated laptops for students.

The British Council role has changed over the years as Ceibal's expertise in English teaching has grown. In the early years British Council was responsible for provision of the great majority of Remote Teachers, sometimes through subcontracting of other organisations. In 2017, Ceibal took over the quality control element of the programme (see chapter 10).

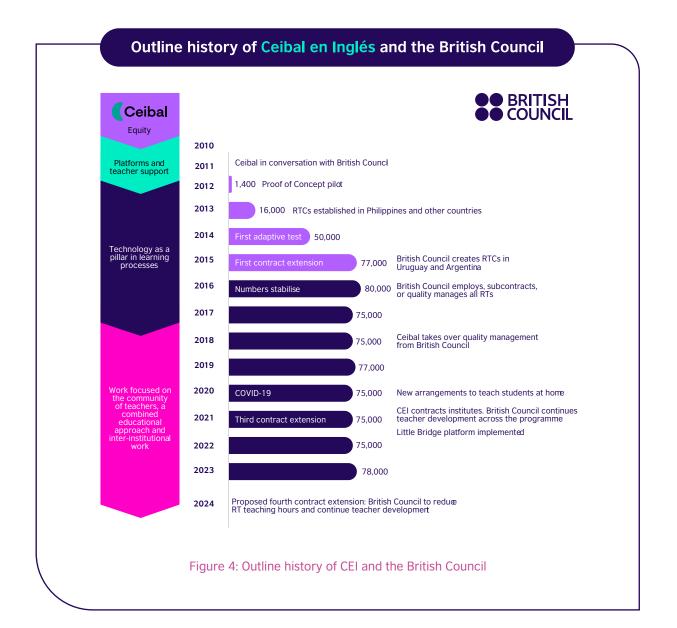
Ceibal then contracted Little Bridge as the main provider of curriculum and materials, though the Little Bridge platform only became fully operational in the programme after the 2020 pandemic. In 2023 the British Council delivers over a third of the lessons in CEI and has responsibility for teacher development of all Remote Teachers across the programme. Other international partners also became involved. CRELLA, the ELT testing unit from the University of Bedfordshire became involved in the design and validation of the annual test. The Fulbright Commission has also become involved through both visiting scholars and study visits to USA for CEI staff and Classroom Teachers.







CEI has become well known internationally with many presentations at international education conferences as well as a growing portfolio of publicly available writing by the various stakeholders in the programme, including published academic papers.





Elements of Ceibal en Inglés

To understand how the CEI model works, we need to understand the different elements within it, which are as follows. Each of these elements are developed in greater depth in later chapters.

The students are all at primary school level 4 to 6, which usually means children from 9 to 12 years old. They study in a number of different public school types in Uruguay, most commonly in morning or afternoon

schools attending four hours per day. Some schools have longer hours. Most school are in urban areas, but some much smaller schools are rural. The average size of class is around 23, but some urban schools have groups of more than 30. Schools are classified into five socio-economic quintiles by neighbourhood, with quintile 1 being the most disadvantaged. There were around 75,000 students in 650 schools in CEI in 2023 (there is some variation in numbers in different source documents).

The technology has three parts. Firstly, the hardware consists of dedicated videoconferencing equipment in school classrooms and remote teaching points, along with laptops, which all students in Uruguay receive. Secondly, the Learning Management Systems which include CREA. Used across the Uruguayan education system, this is an adaptation of Schoology. There is also the Little Bridge platform which is the principle source of student materials in CEI.

The third component is connectivity. Uruguay, through Ceibal, has managed to connect 99% of its schools including remote rural schools via fibre optic cable. Without this connectivity, the hardware and the digital platforms would not be useful. All the technology is designed to be easily operated by non-experts.

The Remote Teachers (RTs) are specialist English language teachers who are employed by the different institutes contracted by CEI. They may be physically located in Uruguay or in other countries. RTs typically teach in the premises of teaching centres or language schools that have been specifically conditioned for the purposes of remote teaching. They have access to a computer and a large screen where they can see their remote students in their classroom. RTs provide the main language input and interact with the students via videoconferencing. Most RTs are based in Argentina but there are large numbers in Uruguay and small numbers in other countries. In the early years of CEI many RTs were based in the Philippines. There are over 200 RTs in CEI in 2023. The Classroom Teachers (CTs) are qualified generalist primary school employed teachers by the national education authority ANEP and with overall responsibility for delivering the curriculum to the children. CTs report to the school head and owe no formal allegiance to Ceibal. CTs do not usually know English at an independent level but have access to English lessons if they wish. CTs are supported by a team of mentors within CEI. There are around 3,200 CTs in CEI in 2023.

The curriculum and materials are accessed by RTs and CTs through CREA which holds weekly lesson plans - this is the core of the curriculum. Students have access to the Little Bridge materials on a linked platform via their laptops. Little Bridge has been fully operational as the main source of student material since after the pandemic. Increasingly CEI have integrated "special projects" into the curriculum, including a Shakespeare Festival.

Methodology: Lessons A, B, C and team teaching. Students should receive three 45-minute lessons a week. Lesson A focuses on new language and is presented by the RT with the CT in the classroom as facilitator and classroom manager. The RT is not present during lessons B and C, but does make recommendations to the CT who organises these, focusing on practice, using Little Bridge or other material. The dyad formed by the CT and RT is at the centre of the model implemented by CEI, with each member bringing to bear their

background, knowledge and experience. Successful coordination of the RT and CT team is crucial for the classes to develop successfully and for the children to learn. RTs are evaluated on their coordination with the CTs, and CTs are given compensation for the coordination time. The profiles and roles of the RT and CT are different and complementary. The methodology promoted is communicative in that students are taught language skills rather than knowledge about the language.

Testing and assessment, from the initial stages of CEI, was viewed as an essential component of the programme. The main tool for measuring learning is an annual national Adaptive English Test that has been under constant development from 2014 to the present, and which most CEI students take. CEI publishes the results most years, and that acts as the main evidence of student achievement. There is also formative assessment of learning in the classroom built into the curriculum.





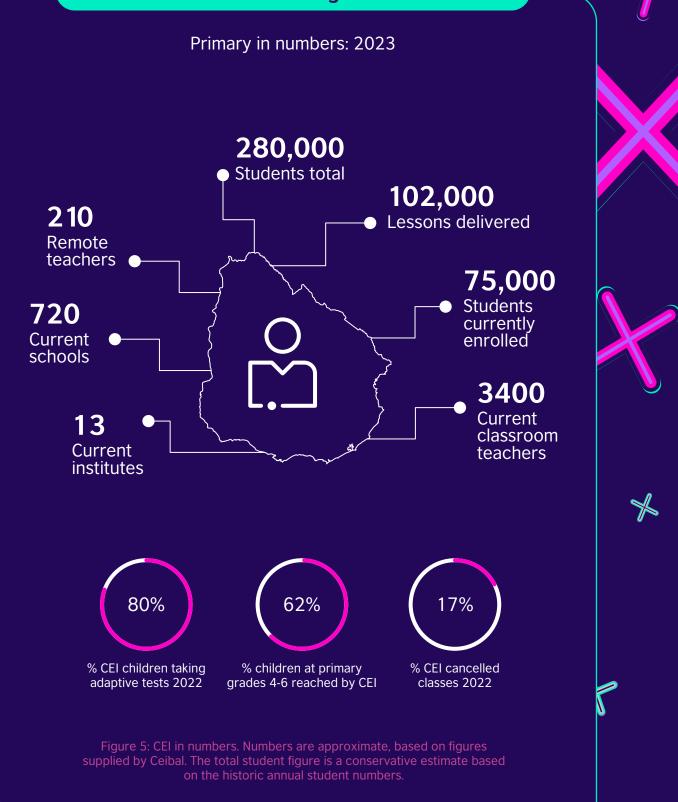
The Institutes are usually private sector or third sector organisations teaching English to the public which agree a contract to supply remote teaching to CEI and are paid by CEI according to the number of classes (Lessons A) taught. RTs are employed by institutes under a variety of contracts. Institutes may employ a small number of RTs or many dozens. Institutes are equipped with specifically designed Teaching Points (TPs) with a computer, a large screen, a camera and microphone. This equipment allows RTs to zoom in on specific students or parts of the classroom where the students are, for example to view clusters of students engaged in group work. There are 13 Institutes serving CEI in 2023, which are quality assured by the CEI team. The British Council Remote Teaching Centre in Buenos Aires the largest.

Teacher development has always been a key part of CEI. As well as recruiting gualified RTs, Institutes give them formal pre-service induction and continuing professional development (CPD). There is a CEI Teacher Development Manager employed by the British Council who provides a portfolio of CPD initiatives to RTs across the Institutes. Teacher development for CTs is more complex to arrange as CTs do not report to Ceibal. However, CEI employs a team of 22 mentors who visit CTs in their school to give advice and support. There are some courses for CTs, including Fulbright Commission funded visits to USA, and CEI provides funding for English courses taught by an Institute.

The Quality Assurance team evaluates the quality of remote teaching and the management processes of Institutes which provide remote teaching. Every RT is observed by a CEI Quality Manager at least once a year. **Management** of CEI, for the 12 years of its existence has been based in the Ceibal building in Montevideo Uruguay and has been strong and consistent. Claudia Brovetto and Gabriela Kaplan have been at the operational head of the programme since the beginning. A number of coordinators and teams report to them, including pedagogical, quality, mentoring, and administrative teams. In addition to this, Institutes have their own management teams, sometimes, as in the British Council Argentina, mirroring the CEI structure.

Well-developed management protocols and processes are in place. At the core of these is the annually updated CEI Handbook, which sets out the responsibilities of Institutes to the programme.

Ceibal en Inglés



Iffication Part 4 Evaluating Ceibal en Inglés principles and history





Principles of evaluation

This study takes into account the initial and emerging aims and objectives of the programme by Ceibal and the British Council. It also assesses the extent to which the programme is aligned with a set of general principles which TransformELT sees as being indicative of good practice in the design and management of large-scale ELT and education reform programmes worldwide. This list of principles has been developed by the authors on the basis of experience with a wide range of large-scale English reform programmes, taking into account principles of wider educational and social change programmes, and supported by the relevant literature.

We have codified these principles into 20 statements which are addressed in chapter 15. Where projects fail or do not live up to initial expectations, the reasons for failure can often be traced to issues relating to these principles.

The principles for good practice and success we take into account in this study are:

- The aims and scope of the programme are clear to all
- The local contexts, realities, and baselines are understood and taken into account
- Issues of equality, inclusion, and differences within the target audience are addressed
- Improvement objectives are realistic and practical
- The time-scales are appropriate to the aims
- Sources of funds and budget across the length of the project are clear
- Clear and strong programme leadership is established and sustained
- The programme is protected against changes in authority
- Strong project management systems are established to drive and monitor progress and address changes
- All stakeholders are considered, consulted, involved, and informed appropriately in design and implementation
- All elements of the system that lead to learning are considered, e.g. infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, materials, methodology, assessment, quality assurance

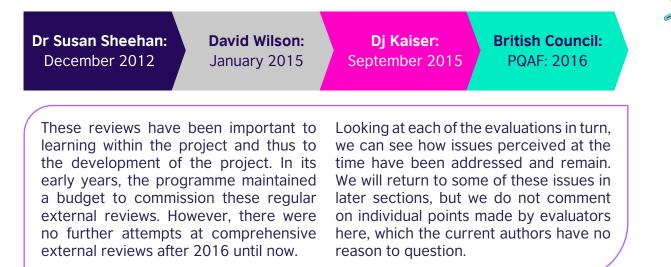
- Teachers are a key part of ELT reform programmes – initial and continuing training and development are integral
- Measurement or assessment of learning outcomes is consistent and regular
- Impact on all levels of the system is considered (i.e. pre-primary to post-HE)
- Pilot programmes test and reduce risk
- De-centralisation of decisions takes account
 of local contexts
- The role of external advisers is clear
- Commercial interests of suppliers and partners is not be allowed to drive the programme
- Monitoring and evaluation systems are established from the outset and measure amongst other things the difference between policy (what should be happening) and practice (what is actually happening)
- The programme is externally communicated appropriately



History of CEI evaluations

Since its pilot in 2012, CEI has experienced a number of external evaluations by people who were not directly involved in the running of CEI, although commissioned by those running CEI. We refer to evaluations over and above the ongoing monitoring and evaluation carried out by CEI itself, or by the British Council, Uruguay, or the region. Each evaluation came with its own terms of reference and aims, and all contain some recommendations for next steps or for change in the programme.

This section looks at what those evaluations tell us. The evaluations identified are as follows in chronological order. Only the <u>DJ</u> <u>Kaiser report</u> was made public.



Dr Susan Sheehan: December 2012

Susan Sheehan, a British Council ELT expert, was asked by Michael Carrier, Head English Innovations at the British Council to carry out an evaluation of the pedagogical elements of the 2012 pilot phase of CEI. She produced a 19-page report. The report concluded:

The project can be considered a success in terms of the central activity of teaching and learning. The school children, CTs and RTs all expressed satisfaction about the English learnt. All types of lesson (A, B and C) were well received and were interesting and motivating. The children's readiness to use English demonstrates that in a relatively short period of time a considerable amount of English language learning has taken place. Another significant indicator of success was the willingness of CTs and school heads to continue with the project in the next academic year. Such an ambitious project has had a number of problems and issues associated with it. Paper-based materials and their distribution was one highlighted by many project stakeholders. Problems with technology were also raised. It would seem that solutions can be found to these problems and none were so serious as to jeopardize the future of the project. (page 4)

In addition to the specific comments made (see text box below, Key findings from the Sheehan report), the evaluator raised the issue of whether the project is creating shortages of teachers in other countries and suggested that the problem of teacher shortage in one place cannot be solved by creating shortages elsewhere. This suggests that at some point wider issues of teacher development and education in Uruguay need to addressed to ensure that English language teaching in primary schools is a viable proposition in the long term. There were no immediate plans for CTs to become English teachers - it was felt that the priority was to start the children learning English. It was noted that teacher education in Uruguay is a long-term project requiring primary school teachers to study English as part of their training, which would represent a significant commitment of both time and resources.

Key findings from the Sheehan report

High levels of enthusiasm and dedication to the project amongst classroom teachers.

The English course for teachers Learn English Pathways was generally wellreceived by the teachers.

CTs felt that neither they nor the remote teachers were able to influence the lesson planning process.

CTs were very happy with the RTs. Working relationships were positive.

Some lessons were missed due to technological problems. Sound problems were also reported.

The English proficiency gap between CTs and children could widen and create future problems.

Greater guidance is needed for teachers on materials for B and C lessons.

Children were enthusiastic about the project - keen to show language skills and happy to talk in English.

Children were generally more positive about lessons with the RT than with their CT.

Shorten the lessons; Investigate ways of using technology to find links with schools

across the world such as electronic penpals; Provide direction for the children to find and exploit English content outside of the classroom; Greater emphasis on completion of homework and greater use of laptops for lessons and homework.

RTs reported that their initial scepticism gave way to enthusiasm.

RTs stressed the importance of mentoring (to CTs) for coherence between A, B and C lessons.

RTs felt confident about delivering the lessons and could adapt the materials as and when necessary.

There was confusion and some disagreement about the pacing of lessons. Clearer guidance on the pacing of lessons e.g. should all the country proceed in lockstep or should the CT and RT decide together on the pacing.

Maintain high quality levels with qualified RTs who can deliver interesting lessons and effective mentoring – The RTs performed very well during the project and were generally excellent in their approach to teaching and mentoring. It is a role which requires both qualifications and experience.

The voluntary nature of the project is vital for its success.

David Wilson: January 2014

David Wilson was commissioned by the British Council to give an overall evaluation of the progress of the project since the pilot phase and how successful it had been in achieving its objectives. He produced a 14-page report based on a visit in October 2013, the first full year of the CEI programme. He points out that the focus is on British Council inputs rather than those of the Plan Ceibal team.

Wilson's overall summary strikes a similar tone to the Sheehan evaluation one year earlier.

The project has in all major respects been very successful this year, building on the success of the pilot. Ceibal en Inglés remains an exceptional Englishlanguage teaching project, unique in the world – and there are a number of good reasons for this:

1. The scope and ambition of the project: to reach all 4th-6th grade public primary school students.

2. The innovative nature of the project

– bringing new technology into the classroom, with remote teaching and the new pedagogic methods this requires.

3. It offers a solution to a complex situation, addressing a big challenge with big ideas.

4. It brings new learning opportunities to students who may be under-privileged in their access to educational resources. This gives the project a sociological and ideological dimension. (page 5)

Wilson mentions the English language learning of the CTs to be an important element, but does not have access to data to show effectiveness or achievements. In addressing difficulties, the evaluator is clear in the priority, and suggests that the solution lies in training teachers to use only the relevant parts of the complex CREA system.

He highlights the challenges to CTs of having to improve their English, of having to teach a subject or skill which they do not themselves have, and of coming to terms with the new technology. He points out that CTs are supported with a 2-day orientation course, the British Council LEP English course, a team of mentors, and online access to support. He makes some suggestions for improvements around these areas, especially in terms of expanding the training for CTs. He does however make the points that all this makes demands on the time of CTs. He also addresses the materials (lesson plans), and agrees with the plan to establish a strengthened quality review system for teacher and student materials.

Wilson makes a number of recommendations in the areas of: the CREA platform; CT orientation; support and CPD for CTs; materials; evaluation and feedback; and online links with schools in countries outside Uruguay. The evaluation states that there are plans to replace CREA for CEI. It also mentions that British Council undertook an end-of-year evaluation of lesson plans and considerably shortened them. Overall this evaluation focuses on the CTs within the programme. There was little mention of the RTs, except for a need for more feedback from RTs to the British Council.







Key findings from the Wilson report

People working on the project, both within the project team and outside it, demonstrate an impressive amount of enthusiasm and commitment. I was most struck by this, coming from the outside.

Students and their parents and often Directors of Schools seem to be excited about the project and proud of their involvement in it. And it is of course impressive that at the core of the project, the CTs decision to join the project is voluntary and some aspects of their training and work are done in their own free time. The single biggest problem I received comments on from CTs and others involved in the project was in using CREA. It is clear that lesson plans are much too long for a busy teacher to prepare for and use during 3 x 45 minute classes. Yet at the same time, teachers I spoke to value the richness of ideas for activities and resources offered.

....as a result of the rapid expansion of the project and the desire to include Yr 6 students from the start is that there has been no material specifically designed to appeal to the interests of these older students. This is now being addressed by the development, in stages, of more suitable materials, though it will take time to create.

Dr D.J Kaiser: September 2015

Dr Kaiser, from Webster University, visited during the third full year of CEI as part of a Fullbright Foundation programme. He called CEI an "innovative and incredible project" and aimed to provide suggestions "in the spirit of strengthening an already well-designed English language program". (Page 1)

Kaiser remarks on the rapid expansion of CEI since 2012, (including into secondary school conversation classes). However, he recommends slowing introduction into secondary (and secondary technical) until there is fuller coverage at levels 4-6 of primary. He voices some concern over the curriculum. He also raises the big issue of how the success of CEI will impact on the secondary level curriculum. The alignment with secondary level and beyond remains an issue looking at English in Uruguayan schools in 2023.

Challenges around the technology in CEI are raised.

Kaiser addresses the role of the RTs and the challenges in the area. He criticises the use of English native speakers who are not qualified teachers in the secondary programme.

Like Wilson, he discusses the vital role and challenges of the CT in the programme including lessons B and C including the issue of the extent to which those lessons actually happen.





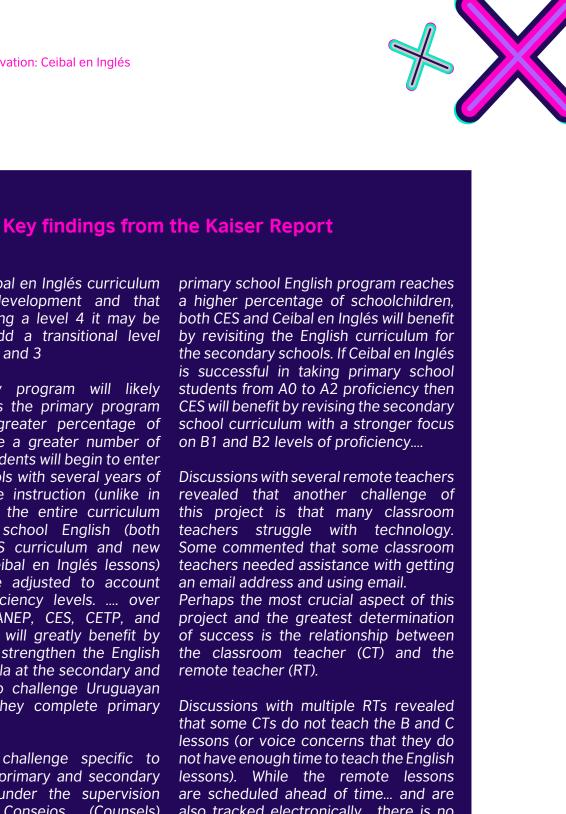
The evaluation finishes with five recommendations that can be summarised as:

- · Slow down expansion of CEI into new levels
- Write a methodology statement for secondary CEI
- Add materials for learners with special needs and train CTs
- Focus more on academic language in lesson plans and materials
- Create a coherent curriculum for all school grades through collaboration

His overall summary is:

Ceibal en Inglés is an original and innovative project that seeks to address a problem faced by many nations around the world: how do you provide quality English instruction to the next generation of learners with a shortage of qualified English instructors? Uruguay has leveraged one of its newest and greatest assets—a strong telecommunication infrastructure connecting public school students and teachers to each other and the world through sponsor-provided laptops and technology services... Any limitations or issues cited with Ceibal en Inglés must be placed into the bigger picture that this project is truly visionary and extremely complex. Perfection is simply impossible and the observations show that Ceibal en Inglés is extremely successful in meeting its primary goal of strengthening and delivering English language instruction in public schools across an entire nation. Most importantly, the program is supported by groups of intelligent, passionate, visionary, and diligent workers.



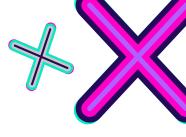


Some of the Ceibal en Inglés curriculum may need re-development and that in place of adding a level 4 it may be necessary to add a transitional level between levels 2 and 3

...the secondary program will likely need revision as the primary program expands to a greater percentage of schools. Because a greater number of public school students will begin to enter secondary schools with several years of English language instruction (unlike in previous years), the entire curriculum for secondary school English (both the existing CES curriculum and new supplemental Ceibal en Inglés lessons) will need to be adjusted to account for higher proficiency levels. over the long-term ANEP, CES, CETP, and Ceibal en Inglés will greatly benefit by collaboration to strengthen the English language curricula at the secondary and tertiary levels to challenge Uruguayan students after they complete primary school.

One particular challenge specific to Uruguay is that primary and secondary education are under the supervision Consejos (Counsels) of different under ANEP. This requires stronger coordination so that Ceibal en Inglés meets the curricular needs of both CEIP and CES while seeking to provide consistent English language instruction as students progress through their obligatory years of study into optional cycles beyond Ciclo Básico. As the

also tracked electronically... there is no similar mechanism for lessons B and C. In discussions with several people from Ceibal en Inglés and the British Council there is an identified issue that has surfaced with the addition of level 3 to the curriculum. Many commented that the jump from level 2 to level 3 may be too far of a jump.



British Council Project Quality Assurance Framework: July 2016

This internal British Council evaluation was part of global British Council policy to ensure that projects worldwide follow standardised and appropriate quality standards, especially in the area of project management, and so focussed on areas of CEI under the control of the British Council, including the remote teaching centres in Uruguay and Argentina. This use the Project Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) with its related monitoring instruments. It was carried out by Anna Searle, Global Director of English, and John Knagg (author of this report), Senior Adviser English for Education Systems in the British Council.

Key Findings from the British Council PQAF Report

The evaluators gave an overview as follows:

We were hugely impressed by the innovative nature and scale of this project and by the dedication, professionalism and cutting-edge expertise of our colleagues... we came away from Uruguay and Argentina with very positive impressions.

... the most innovative of our large-scale EES projects worldwide. It is natural to doubt the ability of remote video teaching to match face-to-face teaching but we became convinced that with the right equipment and training a remote teacher can provide great added value.

The following points of excellence were noted:

• The project has pioneered a completely new ELT delivery approach and proved it can work in school systems at scale. The innovation is based on a combination of remote high-quality video based teaching, a flexible team teaching approach with RT and CT, and a curriculum based on carefully designed lesson plans within the ability of RTs and CTs to deliver.

• Excellent high-profile academic leadership from Project Manager giving credibility for all stakeholders.

• The Quality Management system is coherent and comprehensive and the largest teacher observation, development, and evaluation system that British Council has in its network, currently covering 200-300 teachers.

• An in-house research strand built into the project.

• A flexible and organic relationship with the client Plan Ceibal.



The evaluators referred to tensions between English taking up three 45-minute lessons and the need for other subjects to be dealt with in what is effectively a 20-hour school week. They noted that the lessons and materials for the earlier years generated greater satisfaction than the stage 3 (primary 6) materials.

It also highlighted the critical nature of the RT-CT relationship and the challenges of both roles:

We were struck though not really surprised by the variability of the nature of the teamteaching relationship which ranged from a RT doing everything with the CT barely visible at the back, to the CT largely taking over the lesson from the RT. While the CT is ultimately in control (to the point of cancelling the lesson if necessary), one difficult job of the RT is to build up to 25 different relationships with CTs to work together in class.

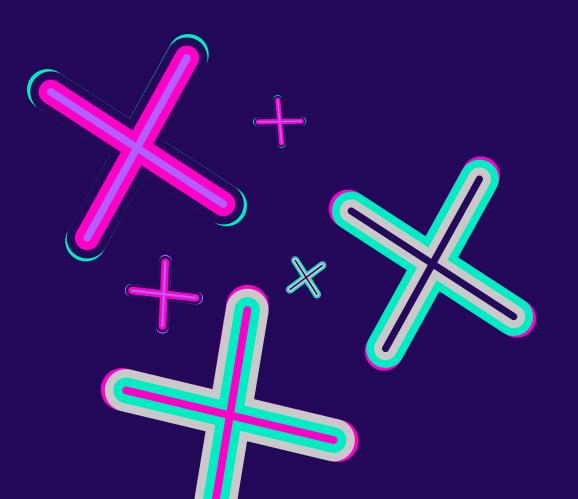
At times, the report addressed wider issues than its primary target of British Council management:

The sustainability of the project is unclear if it depends on the continued provision to children of remote lessons without consistent development of Uruguayan teachers ...sustainability is essentially a matter for the national authorities ...asked about our views of the long-term future of the project we felt obliged to focus on the advisability of moving towards a future where more primary Uruguayan teachers were able to integrate English into their classes without relying on a remote specialist teacher.



Fart 5 Overview of successes and lessons learned





The main aims of CEI when the programme began were:

• To provide English lessons to all primary school grade 4 to 6 pupils (along with the ANEP F2F programme)

• To do this using an innovative high-quality remote teaching model

• To achieve measurable learning outcomes for learners, which were initially set at an ambitious CEFR level A2, although an outcome of level A1.1 or A1+ soon came to be seen as satisfactory.

These initial aims have been met to a large extent:

 According to the preliminary report for the 2022 annual national test of English 96% of relevant students are covered by one of the three English programmes. CEI delivers to 64% of the students receiving English lessons.

• The initial innovative design of the programme using the RTs, CTs, videoconferencing, and the Lesson

The exact target CEFR level envisaged for a graduate of the CEI programme has never been completely clear. Focus has been on coverage rather than level reached, although annual test results have reported against CEFR levels for each component of the test. An ambition of learners achieving A2 level appears in some documents.

Claudia Brovetto stated at a British Council Regional Policy Dialogue in 2018 "As part of the national policies for language teaching, the programme aims at guiding students to reach the A2 level of the CEFR". In chapter 7 below we question what it means to "reach A2 level". Annual test reports include in the A2 category those students who have clearly made some progress towards A2 level competence, i.e. those who have achieved level A2.1. It seems to have been be generally accepted from the early years that achievement of a full A2 level is an A, B, C format has been sustained. It is backed up by a quality assurance system monitoring the recruitment and deployment of qualified RTs as well as a system of support to CTs.

• A developing system of measuring learning outcomes has been established since 2013 with annual report for most years. These show that learning of English is taking place. More information on this in Chapter 7 below on Learners.

over-ambitious target for most students. The programme can and should celebrate individual students who reach any level of achievement on the CEFR scale, whether A1, A2.1 or A.2 at Primary grade 6. If we wanted to form a judgement of how successful CEI as a programme has been in reaching certain CEFR levels compared to its objectives, we would need to know what percentage of students would be expected to reach certain levels for the programme to be judged a success in these terms. Such overall percentage targets were never established, and we believe that this is sensible as the prime objective was to provide quality ELT for learners who would otherwise have had none. Experience in other countries has been that the underachievement of overambitious CEFR targets can distract from the wider achievements of programmes designed to bring English lessons to wider groups.



And in that regard, the CEI programme has been successful. The programme has reached over 280,000 students since 2012, based on our estimates.

The British Council has been the main educational supplier to CEI since 2012, currently directly teaching some 37% of the children, and providing teacher Development to all RTs. In earlier years the British Council managed the quality management processes, the contracting of institutes providing RTs, and control of the curriculum, before gradually passing the expertise and responsibility for these tasks to Ceibal.While the British Council has focussed on delivering the services requested by Ceibal, it has also fulfilled may of its own high level strategic aims in contributing to *inclusive*, *quality teaching*, *learning and assessment* of English. It has developed systems to improve quality and standards in Uruguayan primary schools, and transferredinsightandknowledgeUruguayan educators. Long-term relationships and influence have been built, and actions have been taken to reduce inequalities. Many teachers, predominantly women, have been given increased confidence to engage in their profession.

Overview of strengths and challenges

Looking across the history and the different element of the programme, and taking into account all we have learned from this research exercise, and especially from our interviews with managers of Ceibal and the British Council, we see the key strengths and challenges for the programme as follows:

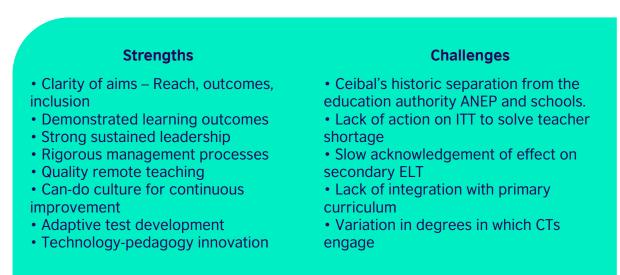


Figure 6: Overview of CEI strengths and challenges

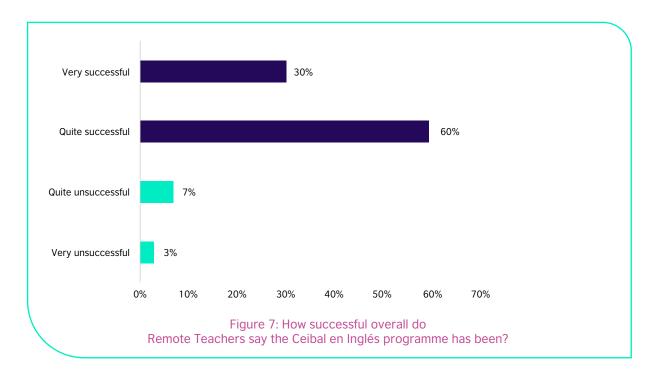
These issues are examined in more detail in the following chapters. We can immediately see that some factors, such as the independent status of Ceibal both act as a positive in creating the space for strong leadership and decision-making, and as a potential weakness in being distanced from the other elements of the educational system, including the management of the teaching body, and the initial teacher training system. Shortcomings of the programme as an integral part of the education system derive from the structure of the education system and political will in each part, and not from any deficiency of CEI programme management.



Perspectives on the programme from teachers and wider public in Uruguay

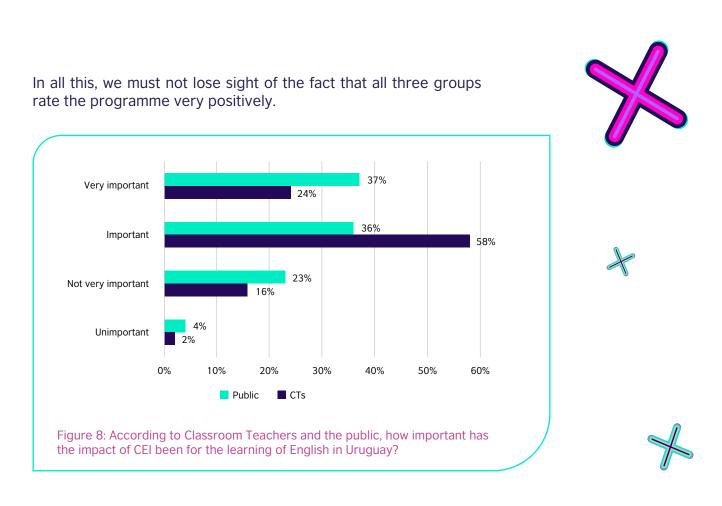
We can see the programme through a different lens by analysing responses from Remote Teachers and Classroom Teachers in our surveys, viewing the programme from a classroom level. We also have views from a wider Uruguayan audience including non-CEI teachers, officials, current as well as current and ex-students and their families.

Remote Teachers were positive about how successful CEI has been and about the impact of CEI on the learning of English in the country (see Figure 7). 90% of RTs are positive, including 30% saying CEI has been very successful, while 60% say it has been quite successful.



The picture is a little different when we look at stakeholder perceptions in Uruguay. In Figure 8 we can see that 82% of our public survey respondents rated CEI positively. 73% of our classroom teachers rated it positively, which is still a very positive result, but leaves over a quarter of CTs rating the programme negatively. We will look at the comments each group makes below, but we should perhaps not be surprised that there is this body of negativity from the CT cadre. CEI came into the life of CTs as a disruptive influence, taking over a significant proportion of their working week. While the point is often made that participation in CEI is voluntary, this opting-in applies at school level and not at teacher level. In 2023, after 12 years of CEI, 36% of our CTs rate their English as A0 or A1. The variability in Classroom Teacher commitment and engagement occurs regularly in the study.

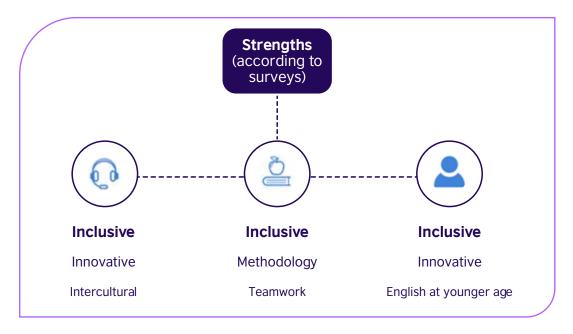




Strengths

The three surveyed groups were invited to comment on the strong points, and areas for improvement of the programme.

Results for main strengths are given in order of importance according to the frequency of mentions by Remote Teachers, Classroom Teachers and the public:





What is immediately striking here is that all groups give the inclusive nature of the programme as its main strength. This relates to the original aims of the programme which were to expand the access to English teaching beyond those in the private school sector. The Classroom Teachers and general public in particular are explicit in their comments that it gives access to those who cannot pay for private classes. This refers to after-school classes in language institutes, which are naturally only available to families with higher incomes. Both the Classroom Teachers and the general public make explicit mention of the importance of English and its role in enhancing life opportunities. Remote Teachers, as English specialists, rarely mention it, probably because they take it for granted.

The Remote Teachers, and the general public, see the innovative nature of the programme as an important strength. Comments show that they are usually referring to the use of technology and remote teaching, which is a new approach for specialist English teachers, although becoming rapidly more widespread in recent years.

Classroom Teachers refer to both methodology and teamwork as a strength. In connection with methodology, they regularly cite games and playing as a part of the approach, and we can assume that there is more of this learningthrough-games approach in CEI than in most of the primary curriculum. The methodology of CEI is clearly based on a communicative and dialogic approach rather than the more teacher-centred approach that some CTs may be used to. By teamwork, they are referring to the coordination that is necessary between the CT and the RT to make this approach a success.

It is noticeable that a number of Remote Teachers who are in a different country from the CTs and students, mention intercultural awareness as a strength. This has always been seen by Ceibal and the British Council as a benefit of the programme. Interestingly, CTs rarely mention this, although it may be implicit in their views regarding the importance of knowing English.

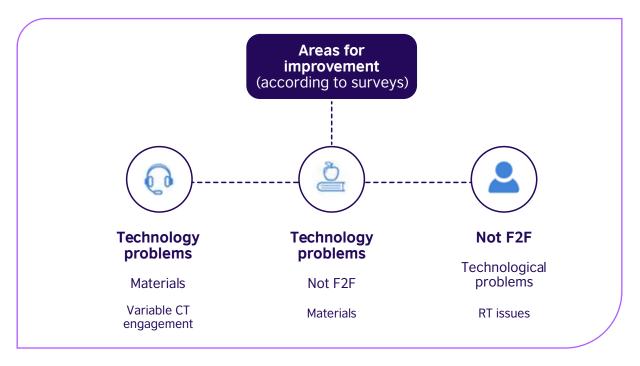
CTs regularly mentioned the excellent teaching of RTs in this section, although elsewhere there were comments about less satisfactory experiences, showing that variability exists across the programme.





Areas for improvement

When asked about their perceptions of the more negative aspects of CEI, the following arose:



The prominence of "technology problems" stands out, and deserves some analysis. The technology used in CEI is innovative and large scale. Broad-band connectivity to every school in Uruguay was announced only in 2023 after many years of effort. Laptops are provided to students, but laptops break (probably more often in the hands of children and adolescents than adults). Equipment in schools sometimes wears out and breaks down. This programme would not have been possible without complex technology, and any programme using technology has to accept the risks of occasional but inevitable failure. Ceibal keeps records of incidents and has systems of replacements.

The technological issues mentioned include unreliable connectivity, lack of connectivity at students' homes, and broken or forgotten laptops. We see that some of the problems can be human or economic as much as technological. Another issue within this category is the school infrastructure. Sometimes the room provided for videoconference in the school has architectural issues leading to problems of hearing and discomfort in seeing the screen clearly for students and CTs, or difficulty for the RT manipulating the camera to see students. We emphasise that such problems seem to occur in a minority of cases.

In regard to programmed lessons that do not take place, Ceibal reports that apart from the pandemic there have not been large variations in the percentage year-on-year, which are around 17.5% of programmed classes. Typically, a third of non-completed classes are at the request of the CT as a result of absence from school or other activities taking place. A sixth is for technical issues, a sixth for industrial action, another sixth due to the RT, which could be absence or technical issues on that side. The rest (about 15%) are for unknown reasons. When the CEI team detects a repeated problem they take action to try to correct it.



Respondents in Uruguay also regularly mentioned that F2F teaching would be better. This issue is addressed in more detail in the next chapter, but is a useful reminder that the CEI programme was designed precisely to solve the problem of shortage of English teachers in the classroom. It is not surprising that some respondents in Uruguay see the preference for F2F teaching more clearly than the Remote Teachers, for whom the remote modality is part of their professional identity. The fact that the lack of F2F teaching is commonly mentioned as one weakness does not mean that respondents do not appreciate the value of remote teaching, as we can see in the next chapter. The point is that it is one of the negative aspects mentioned when respondents are asked to comment on negative aspects.

Respondents in Uruguay also sometimes mention RT issues as a possible weak point. This relates to two issues. The first is related to the difficulty of teaching remotely in terms of classroom management, establishing rapport with students, and dealing with learners at different levels, for example by setting differential tasks which are more difficult from the other side of a video conferencing screen than they might be F2F. All these issues are addressed in the CEI quality management system. The second issue is around turnover of RTs, referring especially to the undesirability of changing RT for a group during the year. Where Classroom and Remote Teachers mention curriculum and materials as a negative aspect, they often refer to the high difficulty levels of some materials. Classroom Teachers sometimes have concerns about the ability of some learners to keep up with the lessons and ask for a more generous use of Spanish by the RTs to be allowed to deal with this. The lack of time for the recycling of previously presented material is also mentioned. Remote teachers sometimes suggest a lack of flexibility within the curriculum which means that they (and the CT as the pedagogical pair) are limited in their ability to adapt lessons to take account of the needs of particular groups of learners.

This issue was well summarised by an institute manager who said:

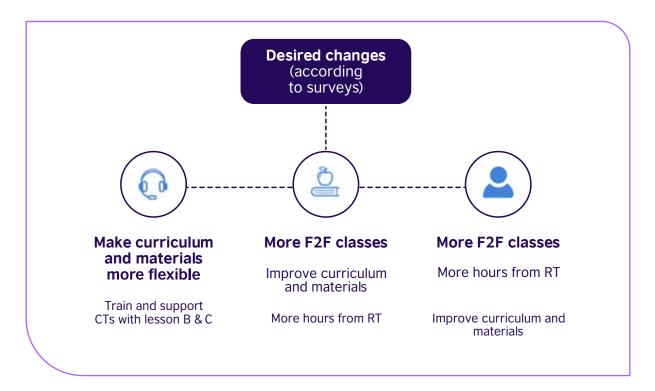
The commitment of CEI to cover certain levels of the CEFR - sometimes it's a bit unfeasible. I feel that we're teaching maybe 45 min lessons once a week and the program would benefit from more recycling, more revision. You can't teach a new grammar structure each week and just imagine that children will take it in and be able to use it communicatively in authentic situations independently when they've only practiced this new structure one week of their life.

Some RTs mentioned the variability of CT active engagement in the programme as an issue of concern. While we will see later that the overall perception of CTs by RTs is positive, this is another area where we see some variability.



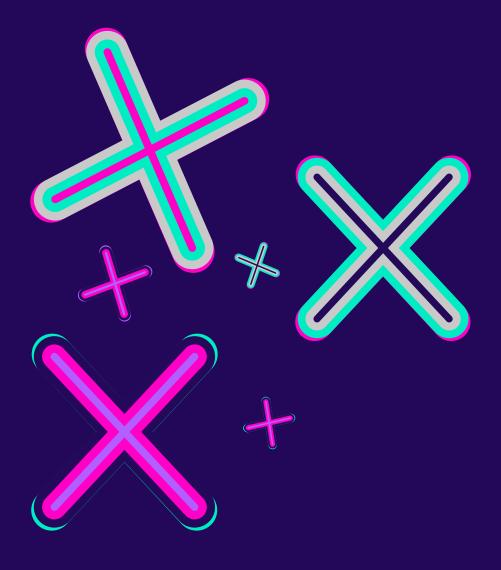
Desired changes

A third question asked of the three groups was what change they would make to the programme. The main points arising from this were as follows:



Here we see a common thread of improvement of curriculum and materials. Both RTs and CTs suggest more flexibility of choice and the scope for more teacher agency to be applied. CTs in particular ask for options for slower progress including more recycling of language to allow more students to keep up.

They ask for the contents and contexts shown in the materials to be relevant to the Uruguayan students' lives. They also ask for physical books in addition to digital materials. In the area of methodology and material there are requests for more songs and games. There are also requests to allow more use of Spanish by the RT in lessons in order to maintain the engagement of more students. The requests from respondents in Uruguay of either F2F classes or more hours of RT input are a reassurance of the importance they see of the learning of English. However, both these requests would clearly require a large increase in resource and are outside the remit of CEI managers. The request from some RTs for more support for CTs in delivering lessons B and C takes us back to the origins of CEI when there were more explicit ambitions to improve the English proficiency and pedagogical skills of CTs, and to give CTs greater ownership of the programme. In all the above commentary on the results of surveys, certain contradictions can be discerned which is a natural outcome of collecting the diverse opinions of over 600 individuals.





A

Part 6 Remote and Face-to-face (F2F) teaching



What is the perceived difference in learning outcomes and experience between learning F2F and via remote teaching?

Perceptions of remote teaching

CEI le ha dado una significativa oportunidad a los niños y adolescentes de la educacion pública para poder tener una educación más completa y poder abrirse en campos en donde sin inglés no podrían... los que tienen CEI participan de actividades como concursos, olimpiadas, desafíos en plataformas digitales, teatro en Inglés, y muchos otros proyectos que los motivan y ayudan a ser más completos.... y ellos aman el programa y ansían trabajar con su profe remoto y sus actividades cada semana, CEI ha sido maravilloso para la educación pública uruguaya...les dio igualdad social. CEI marcó un hermoso y poderoso antes y después a la hora de hablar de igualdad y justicia social.... el equipo de CEI trabaja sin descanso para mejorar cada día experiencia. Bravo CEI Team.

CEI has given a significant opportunity to children and adolescents in public education to have a more complete education and to participate in fields where they couldn't without English... those who have CEI participate in activities such as contests, olympiads, challenges on digital platforms, theatre in English, and many other projects that motivate and help them to be more complete... and they love the program and look forward to working with their remote teacher and their activities every week, CEI has been wonderful for Uruguayan public education... it gave them social equality. CEI marked a beautiful and powerful before and after when talking about equality and social justice... the CEI team works tirelessly to improve the experience every day. Bravo CEI Team.

Public survey response







There are two main points to make in comparing remote and F2F teaching. Firstly, remote teaching has clearly worked in the twelve years to date of Ceibal en Inglés, and secondly that it was never an expectation that quality remote teaching would produce better learning outcomes than quality F2F teaching.

On the first point, we see from various sources that remote teaching in CEI has been successful.

- All stakeholder groups that we consulted rated it positively.
- Teachers say that the students have benefitted.
- The annual test results show that learning is taking place, and
- the preliminary 2022 results as well as previous years' results state that there is

no significant difference between learning outcomes in the CEI remote teaching model and the parallel SL F2F model.

• Officials in ANEP praise CEI as being the main channel by which English classes have become possible for people who wouldn't have the resources to access ELT otherwise.

On the second point, the remote teaching model was designed because there was (and still is) a lack of qualified English teachers in Uruguay. If there had been sufficient English teachers in Uruguay, the remote teaching model as it now stands would not have been designed and implemented. Remote teaching was the best, and perhaps the only way that could be envisaged to implement the government's strategy of providing English teaching to all primary school pupils.

La oportunidad que se les brinda a los niños a tener conocimientos en otro idioma ya que nuestra institución no cuenta con profesor presencial de inglés.

The opportunity that is offered to children to have knowledge in another language since our school does not have a face-to-face English teacher.

Classroom Teacher survey response

However, comparing remote and F2F teaching is fraught with difficulties. The general opinion of all stakeholder groups is that if everything else is equal, then having a teacher in the classroom is better than having a teacher via a videoconference screen. The problem is that everything else is very rarely equal in the real world.

In CEI remote teaching is clearly a better option because the alternative was no English classes. In other contexts, there are many variables to take into account.

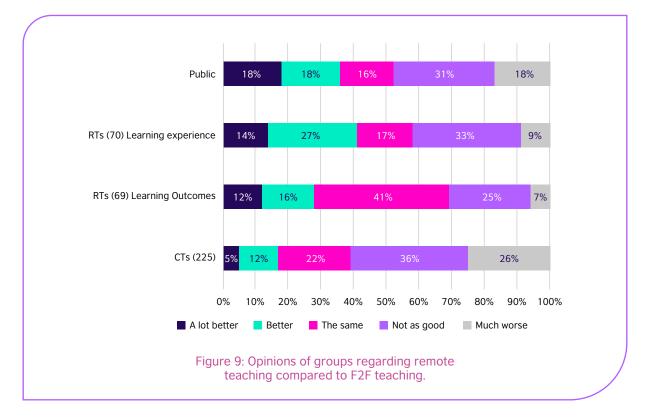
Perhaps the most obvious variable is the quality of teaching. It is accepted that teaching quality is a major factor in learning outcomes.



In CEI, RTs are carefully recruited as qualified specialist English language teachers, they are trained and monitored to ensure that they are good models of English use, and follow modern communicative methods of teaching language as a skill. These factors do not apply in many ELT contexts in schools around the world. There are still many contexts in which English teachers have quite low levels of English themselves, are not able to give learners exposure to appropriate English models, focus on teaching about the English language rather than developing learners' communicative skills, and do not have the pedagogical skills to develop learners' abilities. While the general preference is for F2F teaching, most stakeholders in Uruguay would prefer high-quality remote teaching to low-quality F2F teaching.

Other factors need to be taken into account when thinking of comparisons with other projects and systems around the world. In comparing two contexts, the students might be different, in terms of their age, previous experiences, emotional and physical condition. Learning environments vary, from outdoor classes with no resources in poorer contexts to highly resources classrooms with electricity, connectivity, heating or air-conditioning or technological equipment. Learning materials to support the teachers and learner also vary, from the non-existent, through the acceptable, to high-quality materials relevant to the local context, and these affect the quality of teaching and learning.

Taking these points into account, we can look at what stakeholders say about remote and F2F teaching. A significant proportion of each group surveyed answered "I don't know" when asked how remote teaching compared to F2F, with up to a quarter of teachers not wanting to express an opinion, perhaps because they did not know enough about the F2F programme that they were being asked to compare. Leaving aside the "Don't knows" We get the following perceptions from surveys (figure 9):





From Figure 9 we see that RTs unsurprisingly rate remote teaching more highly than CTs – remote teaching is tied up in their professional identity. Yet they still do not rate it highly enough that as a group they think remote teaching is better than F2F. RTs tend towards "the same" when looking at learning outcomes. This may be influenced by having been told that the CEI remote teaching modality in Uruguay scores at a similar level to the Segundas Lenguas F2F programme over a number of years. Classroom Teachers in Uruguay are perhaps less likely to have been made aware of this. Classroom Teachers are clear with 62% rating F2F better compared to 17% rating remote teaching more positively.

We should also accept that there is room for differing interpretations of the questions among the respondents. Some might be thinking of the difference between the two modalities in the abstract while others might be considering the precise Uruguayan context, that is the CEI model of remote teaching and perhaps also with some awareness of the parallel SL F2F programme. We must imagine that many CTs will know primary teachers in other schools which operate the SL F2F programme.

Comparing the CEI remote teaching model compared to a standard traditional F2F model of teaching, we can summarise strengths and weaknesses as follows:

Strengths of CEI remote model

- Allows expert teachers
- Technological novelty engages learners
- Intercultural experience
- Two teachers not one
- Encourages digital skills
- Alternative is no English class
- Allows outsourcing to private sector

Weaknesses

- Rapport, human touch, bonding is easier F2F (though the CT can provide this)
- Class management is easier F2F (though the CT can provide this)
- Individual attention + differentiation easier F2F
- Relies on lessons B & C by non-expert teacher
- Fewer teaching hours in practice
- Technical problems arise
- Cost
- Needs time-consuming coordination RT-CT
- More difficult to align with core primary curriculum
- Removes need to produce local English teachers

Figure 10: strengths and weaknesses of remote teaching model vs F2F



The remote model in CEI allows the deployment of expert teachers from a wider pool. It also offers these students access to teachers who often come from another country: a rare direct international experience for children. While they are used to working with laptops, the once-a-week videoconference style is a welcome variation in the children's week, and accustoms them to the technology-mediated interaction that is becoming increasingly common. The CEI model also allows two teachers to interact with the learners in class.

Students are not only exposed to English as a second language and learn it, they're also exposed to technological tools that they also learn to use as part of their learning English.

CEI Manager

On the other side, the main reason given for the preference for F2F is that individual attention to the needs of each child, the building of rapport, and the management of situations that arise in classes of generally 9 to 12-year-old learners are more easily and successfully dealt with by a teacher who is physically present in the class. We find it difficult to argue with these sentiments, although the CEI model does require the CT to be present in class to lead or support on these issues.

Ideally, a primary school curriculum needs to have all elements connected. We heard some criticism from authorities that the CEI English programme stands apart from the rest of the weekly timetable, and is not integrated with other subjects in terms of content to be covered. It can be argued that a specialist English teacher in a school would have more access to the Classroom Teachers to ensure that the content of English lesson input aligns with the wider curriculum. What seems to us even more evident is that if a primary school class teacher is able to deliver English lessons as well as maths, science and the first language, then that would be the ideal way to ensure an integrated curriculum. Critics of the programme have likened it to going to a private language institute during school hours and have suggested finding ways of integrating the curriculum contents more closely with the weekly work of the CT. The increasing emphasis in recent years on "special projects" such as the Shakespeare Festival and the Mystery of Cape Cold seem to offer a route to this integration. A British Council manager commented on this while also commenting on the programme in special needs schools as one aspect of progress:

We have had a number of special projects. Also from a pedagogical perspective, we have included drama in the lessons. We have had changes in terms of gamification and special projects, for example, with Minecraft. We have had special projects for special schools - and special educational needs schools were not even a part of the program until a couple of years ago.



Where we refer to the CEI model having fewer hours, there are two issues. Firstly, the parallel SL F2F English programme which reaches around one-third of primary students, takes place from the last year of pre-school to Primary 6. So there are seven academic years of exposure as opposed to three years in CEI. This SL F2F modality offers 2 lessons per week until Primary 3 and then 3 lessons a week from Primary 4 to 6. Secondly, the CEI programme relies on lessons B and C being delivered, and some evaluations (See DJ Kaiser, chapter 4) have cast doubt on the frequency of this happening. Having said that, we do not have data on how fully implemented the SL F2F lessons are in schools.

Cost is also a consideration. The very considerable infrastructure cost of setting up the equipment, including laptops and VC equipment may be overlooked as having been dealt with by Ceibal as part of a wider technologyin-education programme. Then there is the cost of hiring RTs through supplier contracts with language teaching institutes and associated overheads. which our informal estimate amounts to in the region of 60 GBP per learner per year (60 million GBP Ceibal annual costs, 7% allocated to CEI, divided by 75000 students). It could be argued that the deployment of specialist English F2F teachers into schools would afford a similar expenditure.





The CEI remote teaching model and the universe of distance education

Authorities elsewhere thinking of adopting a model based to some extent on the CEI model will benefit from an understanding of how this model compares to other models that have moved away from the traditional mode of teacher and learners together in a classroom.

We see the CEI remote teaching model as being a particular instance of distance education. Distance education is generally seen as taking place when the students are not in the same place as the teachers. The three core dimensions that we should take into account are location, time, and technology. Note that in this description we are concentrating on Lesson A given by the RT. Lessons B and C are expected to be given in a traditional F2F manner, and students are expected to do some homework, often using their laptops.

Location

Unlike in many distance education scenarios, the CEI students are in their schools, although they typically need to move to a classroom which has been fitted with a large screen. This can be the library, lunch room or another multi-purpose room in the school, so scheduling the use of the room is a key aspect of the timetabling needs of the programme. The group of learners – the class – stays together. The teacher is in a different place, often another country although sometimes in Uruguay. The teacher is usually in a remote teaching centre, at a Teaching Point which is equipped with a large screen to see the class, a laptop for the projection of material onto the classroom screen, a camera and microphone. Strict standards are set down for the dimensions and characteristics in the contracts between Ceibal and the institutes providing remote teaching. A small number of RTs now teach from home rather than from the institute.

Timing

Lesson A is taught at a specific time by a timetabled RT to a group of students in their videoconferencing room. It is therefore synchronous, as opposed to much distance learning, which is asynchronous, accessed by the learner at a different time from its delivery by the teacher, and usually at the learner's convenience. This affects the pace of delivery and learning, as the synchronous nature of lesson A means that students progress in lockstep, unless differentiated tasks are prescribed by the teacher. It is a collaborative learning approach with teacher-student interaction rather than independent study. During the 2020 pandemic when students were unable to attend school, such synchronous teaching became unpractical and shorter lessons were recorded by RTs for students to access asynchronously at their convenience. After the pandemic when children returned to school, the synchronous method was resumed.



Technology

This type of video-conferencing uses dedicated equipment with direct links established between teaching point and classrooms, as opposed to webbased, desktop-based or cloud-based videoconferencing that uses software such as Zoom or Teams. This has required great efforts to physically connect schools across the country with fibre optic cabling. This process dictated the pace of the implementation at the very beginning and has continued to be central to the expansion of CEI to more remote areas. It should be remembered that when the programme started in 2012 options for desktopbased videoconferencing were not as advanced and not in such common

use. The technology was designed to minimise the need for technological expertise or training for the CT, aiming for a "turn-on turn-off solution. We can expect the technology used to develop as new opportunities arise and as RT working-from-home becomes more common. While videoconferencing is the key technology element in CEI, it is not the only technology used. There are also the student laptops and the learning platforms of CREA and Little Bridge. However as these would be expected to also be used in any F2F mode, they are not an essential part of the remote teaching concept, although they remain an essential part of the programme.

I suppose the main thing if you compare CEI with other programs that do remote teaching at large scale is the technology. I think it's well set up in terms of connectivity, in terms of devices. The video conferencing equipment itself is quite advanced. If you if you look at other programs that have lower tech solutions, technology is an issue. I think Ceibal technology is really an enabler.

British Council Manager

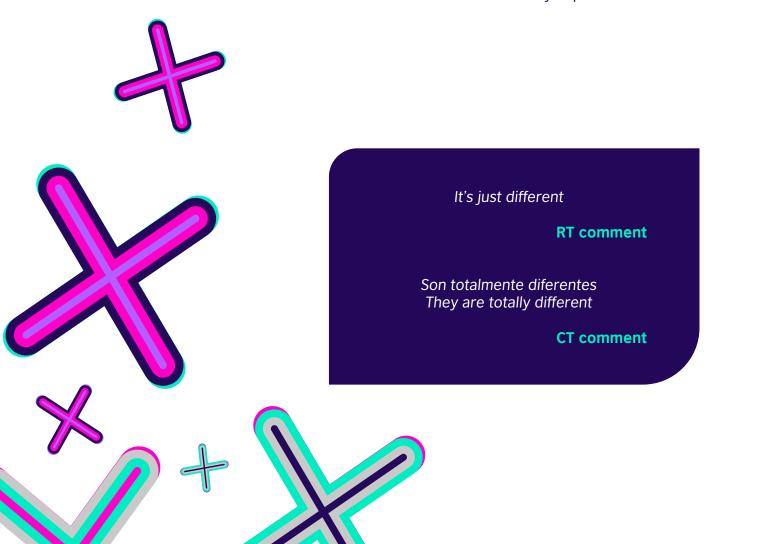


Further points and conclusion

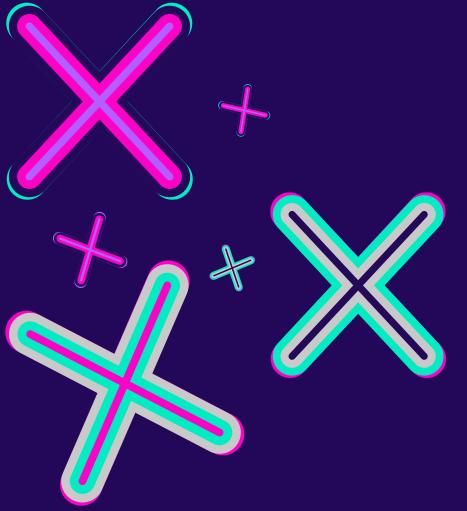
While the remote teaching model in CEI primary is described here, there are clearly other possible modes of remote teaching. CEI itself uses a different model in some secondary schools in Uruguay. In this model, the remote teacher is used a supplement to the already existing F2F model (all secondary schools in Uruguay have English on the timetable, although lack of teachers sometimes limits the implementation). In this secondary model the focus is to give the student access to an intercultural experience, often with a native speaker as teacher. We do not look into this model in depth in this research.

Another element which we will return to is the different demands in the area of child protection and safeguarding in remote teaching, as a form of distance education. This is an area where the British Council has developed new protocols to ensure that children stay as safe as possible in the remote or online environment.

In summary and conclusion, both remote teaching and F2F teaching will work, given the right conditions. Consideration of all relevant factors in each context will lead to the most appropriate choice. In the case of CEI in Uruguay remote teaching was developed precisely because the shortage of local teachers made F2F impossible. It was simply the only way to get English classes to a large dispersed population in a limited time span. It has been more successful than many expected.







Å



To what extent is there evidence that primary pupils have increased their English as a result of taking part in the programme?

Most students have certainly learned more English. This is clearly evidenced in national test results. However, reach and inclusion for this population is more important than level of English reached. The whole point of CEI is access. Our expectation is that no person in Uruguay feels fear when he or she finds an article written in English, or feels that that is not for them.

The Researchers

Gabriela Kaplan – Head of CEI

Who are the learners?

The learners in CEI are children in primary grades 4 to 6, generally between 9 and 12 years old. They are participating in CEI as part of their school day, which for most students consists of a 4-hour day between 08:00 to 12:00 or from 13:00 to 17:00, though some attend schools which extend to around six hours per day including a lunch break. For Lesson A they must go, as a group, to a room where the videoconference equipment is set up. CTs decide when Lessons B and C will take place during the week. The only classes that are scheduled are the classes that involve extra teachers, generally English, art and physical education. All students have been issued with their own laptop (called a Ceibalita) which has access to the national CREA platform as well as the CEI specific

Little Bridge materials and is meant to be used in Lessons B and C. Not all children have the laptop with them, as it may not be functioning (there is a nationwide network of Ceibal repair points) or they simply may have left it at home.

Ceibal generally, and CEI specifically, aim for inclusion in education. The main dimension of inclusion is socio-economic quintiles. Every school is assigned to one of five quintiles, based on the neighbourhood in which it is based and the average economic level of the people living there. Quintile 1 is the most disadvantaged, and quintile 5 the most prosperous. CEI compares performance across quintiles and continually looks for strategies to







bridge the gap between the quintiles. Teachers and others report noticeable differences quintiles. between with laptops, phones, and attendance at afterschool English lessons in private institutes be more prevalent in the richer quintiles, while lack of laptops and evidence of difficult backgrounds more prevalent in the poorer quintiles where daily school attendance may be lower and families are less likely to send their children to after class private lessons. In this respect we saw no particular difference between Uruguay and many other countries, though we applaud Uruguay's efforts to monitor take action on socio-economic divides. We must remember that this division into quintiles applies to the 85% of children who attend public schools. The other 15% attend private schools, many of which prioritise English more than public schools, and these children naturally tend to come from the more privileged backgrounds. Another related division is between urban and rural schools, with many rural schools being small and multigrade with one or two teachers for the school. One aim of Ceibal has been to provide connectivity and technology to all schools, and this was finally announced in 2023.

CEI Permite tener una menor brecha con aquellos que concurren a instituciones privadas.CEI leads to a smaller gap with those who attend private schools.

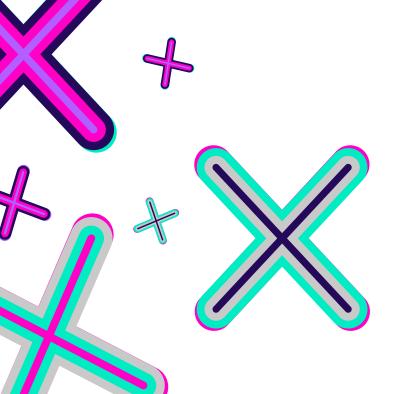
Public survey response

Some kids are immersed in a social, economical, and familiar situation that affects directly their education and when they are at school they can't concentrate, they get the attention of adults with disruptive behaviour, or lack of motivation.

RT survey response

Like most countries, the groups of children are generally half boys and half girls. Ceibal does not disaggregate data by gender for CEI, though it does for its STEM programmes where girls are seen to be underrepresented.

Our interviewees spoke of English in primary school having been almost universal since 2015, when CEI reached its plateau of around 75000 students. However, since then we know that many small rural school have added one of the English programmes. CEI covers around 62.5% of groups receiving English.

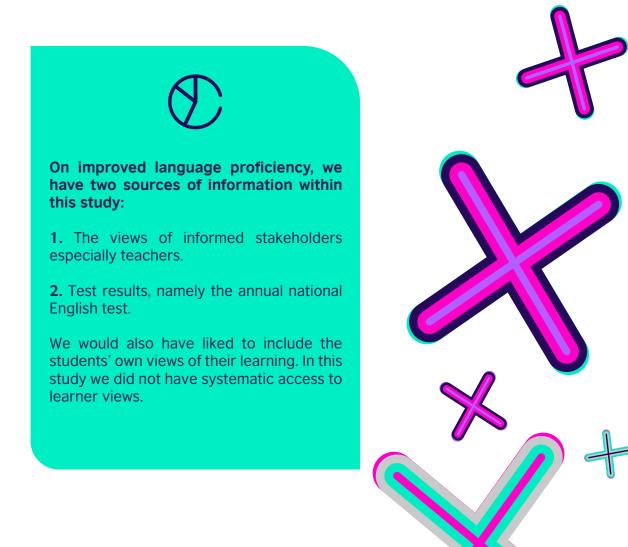


How can we measure success?

Before addressing the issue of improved English proficiency, we again highlight that while Ceibal takes the improvement of English seriously, it is not the prime aim of the programme, and not the top priority of the authorities.

That top priority is giving access to quality English teaching to all Uruguayan primary school children. While there is indeed an aim of reaching a CEFR level of A2 or close to A2, the fact that some, or most do not achieve this level (depending on which figures we look at) is not seen as a sign of failure and is not a cause for criticism amongst stakeholders. In a later chapter we argue that increasing engagement and enjoyment of English classes for these children may be as important or more important than aiming for higher CEFR levels.

English lessons are not just about improving English proficiency. They are about understanding that other languages and cultures exist; gaining elementary intercultural awareness; removing fear of being confronted with a text in English; coming to understand that the opportunities that English offers are not just for an elite. Of course the programme is about learning a language, but it is more than that. It is about social equity and inclusion.





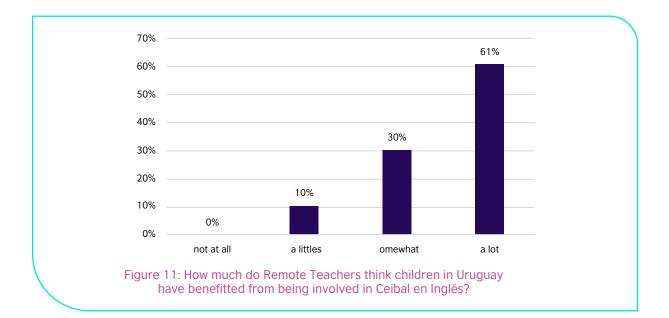
Stakeholder views

It is crucial to emphasize that this project goes beyond language education; it fosters a profound sense of belonging and equality among students. It offers an invaluable opportunity, especially to those in underserved communities, to gain access to one of the most vital skills for success in today's diverse and interconnected working environments—English proficiency. By breaking down barriers and providing equitable learning experiences, this initiative not only equips students with language skills but also empowers them to navigate an increasingly globalized world with confidence and competence.

Virginia Berella, RemoteTeacher

We asked RTs how much children in Uruguay had benefitted from participating in the CEI programme (Figure 11). 90% thought they had benefitted a lot (60%) or somewhat (30%), while 10% thought they had benefitted only a little. It is interesting that when RTs commented on this benefit, improved English proficiency was not the benefit they mentioned most. That was the inclusivity and having chances that they would not otherwise have had. Improved English was certainly mentioned, but was closely followed by the benefits of intercultural exposure, the use of technology, and the enthusiasm and engagement of the children.

It's such a rewarding, heart-warming experience, to get to see how much children can learn and progress at all levels: academically, emotionally, socially and personally.



RT survey response

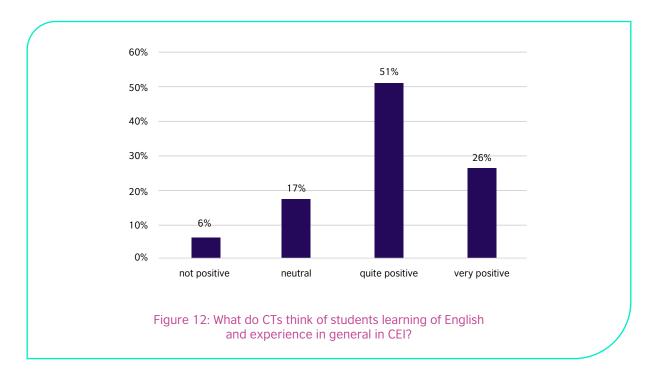


RTs often mentioned the variability in student engagement in classes:

Even though not all of them get really involved in the classes, I strongly believe that even participating passively in the classes can be beneficial for them too, because they are listening and that is part of learning. Some ss may not even have that opportunity! And there are a bunch of ss who really love the language and take advantage of every single class!

I think that some students are learning a lot and I can see that they are actively involve but some others I think that they are not interested at all.

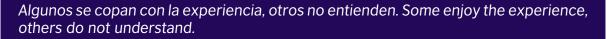
These nine to twelve years-old children are too young to decide their own school curriculum. However, their parents and wider society clearly believe that English should be part of the curriculum. At the same time, we should realise that the children have limited need or in some cases limited opportunity to use the English they learn, especially when they are at beginner or elementary level, so English is being taught for a wider set of purposes and so that these young learners can use English at a later stage when it becomes important in their lives. When CTs were asked their opinion on CEI student learning and general experience (Figure 12), they were a little less positive than RTs, with 77% being very (26%) or quite (51%) positive. While many RTs mentioned student engagement, often related to an excellent RT, many also mentioned that some students did not engage, so it became a class for only one engaged part of the group. Many mentioned a preference for F2F teaching modality. While a few mentioned the learning of words, there were almost no specific examples of language learning mentioned. Nobody in either the RTs or CTs made any mention of a CEFR level.





In summary, teachers refer to inclusion and engagement when talking about progress, and very often refer to the difference between engaged and bored students. While the learning of vocabulary is mentioned sometimes, overall language levels as in the CEFR scale are never mentioned, leading us to conclude that teachers do not see the achievement of specific CEFR levels as a major priority.

Here are some representative comments:



Nuestros niños son de contexto social critico y les cuesta sostener la atención. De todas maneras se ha logrado muy buen trabajo. Están aprendiendo. Our children are from a critical social context and it's difficult to keep their attention. Nevertheless, a good job has been done. They are learning.

Some students are learning a lot and I can see that they are actively involved but some others I think that they are not interested at all.

Esta modalidad funciona para algunos alumnos. No para todos. This way of teaching works for some students. Not for all of them.

I have seen how students learn different topics each week and then use that target language in new weeks. Also, when they comment in the forums on CREA, the mistakes they make at this point of the year are not the same mistakes they used to make at the beginning of the year, which shows that they have incorporated the vocabulary and grammar of the target language with the passing of classes.

Es muy positiva, debido a que el carisma y entusiasmo que les brinda la docente, hace que los niños se sientan muy motivados.

In summary both teachers and managers in Ceibal and the British Council are positive about the benefits students gain from CEI. However, these benefits are rarely expressed in terms of linguistic progress but rather in terms of educational opportunity. The key benefit is in having access to a prestigious and potentially valuable service that was previously only available to higher socio-economic classes.





The annual test

The Uruguayan annual test of English is well-summarised in the CEI handbook – the audience for this description is RTs:

The English adaptive test is a computerassisted English test that measures the linguistic ability of individual students in the areas of vocabulary and grammar, reading and listening, according to the standards defined by the CEFR. The test is administered to students 5 asynchronously through the online SEA platform (Sistema de Evaluación de ANEP). During the test, students answer multiple choice questions that vary in level of difficulty from one student to the other. It is a computer algorithm that selects the difficulty of the multiple choice questions for each student according to his/her linguistic performance. The results obtained by the students are shown on the SEA platform once the administration of the English test in the group has been completed.

Measuring the English level of students is key to gain understanding of the effectiveness of the teaching and learning of English policies at a national level. The data collected is valuable to inform course and syllabus design to enhance learning and to monitor the progress of English learning across primary and secondary/vocational schools. For this reason, it is important for CEI that all students in the programme take the English adaptive test.

The adaptive English test is available to all the students in 4th, 5th and 6th year in Primary and 7th, 8th and 9th year in Middle Schools and Vocational Schools from across the country. It is administered by CTs and CTEs during the month of November and until the end of the academic year. Remote Teachers are expected to support their pedagogic partner during the adaptive test. It is key that RTs explain the importance of this assessment instance to the CT/CTE and encourage her/him to administer the test. RTs may allow the time of a class to be used for the administration of the test and remind the CT/CTE to reach out to their CEI mentors for support, when necessary. While CTs/CTEs have access to their students' test results, RTs should also give feedback to the CT/CTE and students about the results obtained in the English Adaptive Test.









The "Prueba Nacional Adaptativa de Inglés", the National English Adaptive Test (NEAT) has its origins in 2014, which was the first year to implement a computer-based and marked adaptive test following a small scale non-adaptive pilot test in 2013. 2014 was also the year when the <u>CEFR scale</u> of language competence was adopted as the programme and the test's measure of language proficiency.

| The objectives of the exercise were to: | feedback to the CEI and be of subsequent use to the student. |
|--|--|
| • establish a framework by means of | |
| which learning could be measured | The achievements of the 2014 exercise were summarised in the published |
| • assess the levels of English of 4th, 5th and 6th grade students at year end | report as: |
| | • the value of an external point of |
| • determine expected end of 6th grade primary levels that would inform language policies to link English language provision for secondary school students | reference, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) |
| | • the implementation of an adaptive |
| compare progress in English of CEI | form of evaluation, a first in Uruguay, |
| students with that achieved on other | that presents greater possibilities |
| Uruguayan national programmes | for measurement of progress and longitudinal continuity |
| • provide students finishing the CEI | |
| programme with an exit attainment certificate that could provide useful | good results in the children's learning of English. |

In these early years of developing the test, support was sourced from the British Council's Assessment Research Group, a team of technical experts specializing in language testing, one of the most technically complex fields in ELT. It is difficult to design and implement a valid and reliable largescale English test without expert input. Andrés Peri of ANEP has led on this initiative since the beginning and remains one of the authors of the annual test report. In 2017 Ceibal identified the CRELLA language testing unit of the University of Bedfordshire in the UK as a new international partner, and CRELLA remains a supplier of international expertise into the project.

The test has measured different skills and knowledge over the years. In 2014 there was a Vocabulary, Reading and Grammar (VRG) adaptive component, and a writing component that was not computer-marked. In 2015 a Listening component was added. After 2018, the writing component was dropped. In 2020 the VRG component was split into two - Vocabulary and Grammar (VG) on the one hand and Reading on the other. Difficulties with ensuring the validity and reliability of the listening component caused it to be paused in 2020, and reinstated in 2022. When we look in the next section at results, we will concentrate on the 2022 NEAT, which consisted of three components - Vocabulary and Grammar, Reading, and Listening.

The CEI approach focusses especially on aiming to develop the skills of speaking and listening. These skills are more difficult to test than reading. The team has been committed to developing a reliable listening test, and this search for the most valid and reliable test continues. Speaking is even more difficult, and there have been efforts to design a good computer-based speaking test for some years. A first national speaking test was piloted in 2022, and the aim is to roll this out to all students as soon as the team are confident that they have a valid and reliable speaking test on which they can build and improve. However, no data on speaking competences of learners have been published so far.

The test is designed to be administered to any English students in primary or secondary schools, regardless of their mode of English study. Thus the test items are not based on the curriculum and materials used in the CEI or SL programmes, but on the elements detailed in the CEFR documentation of the Council of Europe.

Thus it is a proficiency test rather than an achievement test, which would test the specific competencies, grammar or vocabulary that has been taught in the curriculum. This feature of the test makes it flexible. It has increasingly been used to test secondary school students in the first three years, although coverage is much lower, with only 5% of secondary school English learners tested in 2022. This study does not consider this testing of secondary school students. Early hopes of measuring the English proficiency of teachers proved impracticable.

The aim has been to administer the test as many of the primary 4-6 English students as possible. In the period 2015 to 2018, the test reached between 54% to 63% of CEI students. The 2022 results, published in 2023 as this study comes to an end, showed an increase with 80% of CEI students tested. Overall, 70% of primary grade 4-6 students were tested, because a smaller percentage of SL F2F students were reached by the test. The aim is to continue to increase coverage.

Test results have been published annually from 2014 (with no reports in 2019 and 2021) and <u>can be consulted on the CEI</u> <u>website</u>. It is clearly possible to see the increase in coverage from these reports. It is more difficult to make clear year-on-year comparisons due to both the changes in components described above, changes in the samples test, and changes in reporting format. In the early growth years, many students did not receive the full three years of teaching. Nevertheless, relevant evidence of learning can be seen in each annual report. In the next section we concentrate on data from the latest and most developed report, 2022 while highlighting any clear similarities and differences between years. As the computerized test system allows for immediate results for mediation by the teacher, individual students can compare their results from previous years.



students took the national adaptive test, 2022

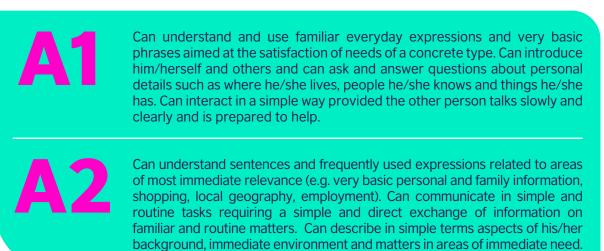




Uruguay has made a bold policy choice in deciding to create a national test of English. It is interesting that this decision has clearly been driven by the extension of English teaching to primary schools. From the first test in 2014, it is clear that the initiative involves all organisational stakeholders and various different departments within them, specifically representatives of both the CEI and the SL F2F programme have been involved as well as evaluation and data experts from Ceibal and ANEP, the education authority. There is an impressive continuity in the Uruguayan experts involved in the continuing development of this project. There has been international expertise involved throughout to give assurance of the alignment of the test with the CEFR, firstly from the British Council and later from CRELLA at the University of Bedfordshire UK. This test offers further possibilities, including most obviously the chance to test English levels of schoolleavers, or even for use at tertiary level, with appropriate adaptations.

In addition to the NEAT, there are other initiatives to measure progress in CEI, including a start-of-year "starting line" and other in-year initiatives. We conclude with some considerations of the technicalities of the test which are relevant to an evaluation, however, it is important to note that analysis of the construction of the test was beyond the remit of this study.

There are three CEFR levels: A is basic user: B is independent user: C is proficient user. Each of these three levels is broken down into two sub-levels. In CEI we are interested in the A (basic user) scale. ANEP second language department states explicitly that the aim is a for a student to reach level A2 at the end of primary grade 6. CEI is less explicit about the target level, with an initial target of A2 being implicitly adapted to something approaching A2. The British Council's target for individual student achievement as expressed in its monitoring and evaluation framework is more explicit. That states that the aim is A1+ (which is expressed as A1.2 in the test results) or A2. The original agreement between Ceibal and the British Council mentioned A1/A2. Both the A1 and the A2 sub-levels of the CEFR basic user scale represent learning achievements. See the overall descriptors in the box. An A1 learner of English has learned some skills and is able to use some English. An English learner who has not yet reached the level of A1 is often described as pre-A1 or A0.





The CEI programme sub-divides A1 and A2 into sub-levels, A1.1, A1.2, A2.1 and A2.2 in order to achieve the level of granularity needed to measure progress with the test. A learner achieving a A1.2 result in the test would be expected to comply with the CEFR A1 description in the box. An A2.2 result would comply with the A2 description. A results of A1.1 would mean that they have made some progress to the A1 descriptor but do not yet comply. A result of A2.1 would mean that they already comply with the A1 descriptor and have made some progress towards complying with the A2 descriptor but do not yet comply completely with the A2 descriptor.

There is often confusion about the way these levels are referred to and much depends on context. In the context of a proficiency test like NEAT, we are looking at achievement, so we will describe a result of A1.2 as A1 and a result of A2.2 as A2. A result of A1.1 has not yet achieved a A1 CEFR level, and a result of A2.1 has not yet achieved a A2 CEFR level. The terms are often used differently when a test is used as a placement test to decide what class to place a student in (more usually in special language teaching institutes and tertiary or adult level courses where learners are grouped by level than in school courses where earners are typically grouped by age not level). In that case, a learner might have a pre-A1 or A0 result and therefore be placed in an A1 group meaning a group of learners aiming to achieve a A1 level of competency. In this context, the learner in this group will often be described informally as an A1 learner, because they are in the group of beginners aiming to achieve level A1.

We note that in aggregating percentages of students to be labelled as A2, the annual report authors include those students who score at level A2.1. Those students have not complied with the full competencies of A2 (i.e. not achieved a level of A2.2 in the test).





Results from the annual test

In looking at test results we concentrate on more recent results and on results at the end of primary school. We look at the effect of socio-cultural context, and the difference between the two main programmes. We do examine the changing numbers at each level between years and year as this information is of limited use. In the early years of the CEI programme, results were distorted by rapid changes in volumes with students being exposed to varying years of exposure to English. In the years 2017 to 2020 there were significant changes to the design and scoring of the test especially arising from the involvement of the technical expertise of CRELLA, which continues into 2023.

The CEI team use results from the annual test to inform other aspects of the programme. For example, concern with listening results has led to increased focus on developing the listening skills. The concern to narrow the socio-economic gap has led to extra resources to help disadvantaged schools though the Making it Happen initiative.

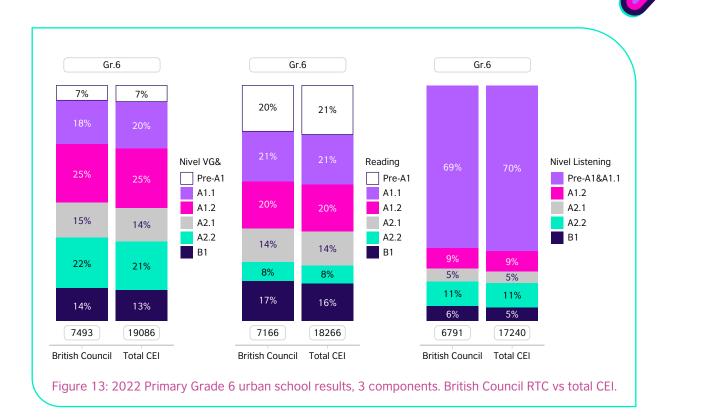
Overall results at primary grade 6

The results from the latest 2022 NEAT at the time of writing are now available on the CEI website. As in previous years they show clear evidence of learning by the 57,000 CEI learners who took part, as well as the learners from the SL F2F programme. Results are disaggregated by mode of study (CEI or SL F2F), by urban vs rural schools, by socio-economic class, and by school year (primary grade 4, 5 or 6). The complexity of this disaggregation means that not every possible combination is reported on. There is no disaggregation by gender, as it is not an issue that the Uruguayan authorities see as being a potential area for action in English (although it is in other subjects such as science and technology). Results are shown in CEFR level terms from the

three separate components of Vocabulary & Grammar, Reading, and Listening. There is no attempt to aggregate the results from the three components into a single result or CEFR level.

The best evidence of levels reached and learning achieved in the various results given comes when we look at the results of primary grade 6 students in each of the three components. We can see (Figure 13) the results of all CEI students alongside students taught by British Council RTs. These figures are for urban schools only. There is not a great difference in performance overall between urban and rural schools and 95% of students learning English are classed as urban.





Headline learning achievements from these figures include, for primary grade 6 urban students include (Figure 14).





Progress through the three years

The results (Figure 15) clearly show that learners improve year by year from primary grades 4 to 6. The figure below shows all test-taking students of the V&G component from urban schools, not just CEI (solely CEI figures are not published), thus the primary 6 results are slightly different from the figures above.

Figure 16 shows the improvement year on year in graph format based on the same data. We can see a satisfying reduction in the proportion of students below A1 level, showing that some 74% of students have an achievement on the CEFR scale as a result of learning English. This only addresses the V&G component, but the published results show comparable improvements for the reading and listening components between year groups.

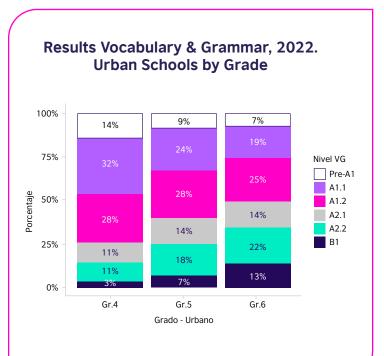
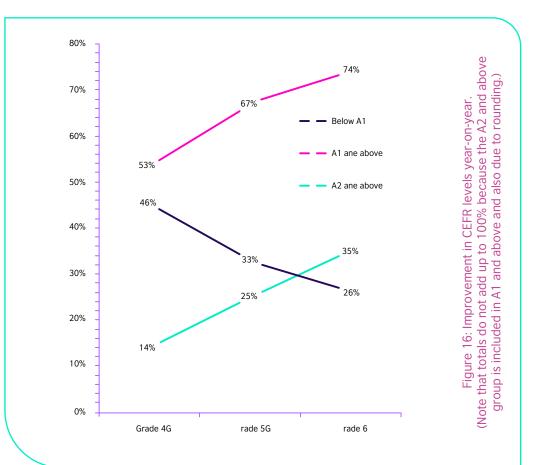


Figure 15: 2022 results for Primary grade 4, 5, 6 for VG component showing year on year improvement







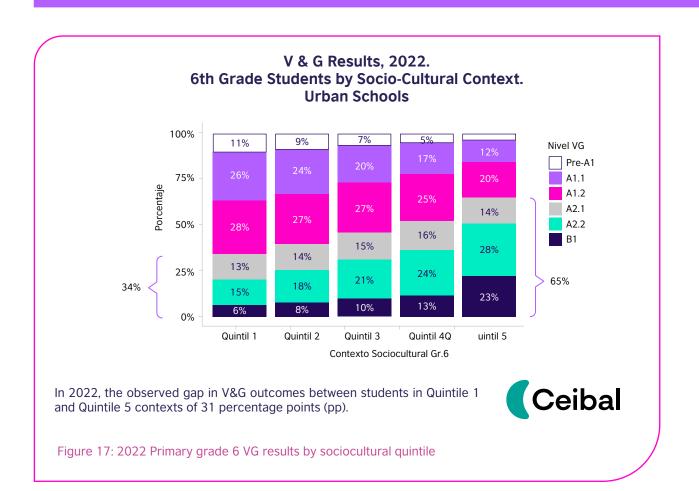
The number of variables involved, combined with the lack of reliable information published internationally means it is difficult to compare results fairly to other comparable contexts. The British Council English Impact <u>report</u> for Bogota Colombia states that 73% of Bogotá students achieved at A1, 21% achieved at A2, 4% at B1, 1% at B2 level, using Aptis. While this shows the Uruguay learners in a favourable light, different tests were used, with different components, albeit all tied to the CEFR. A factor in favour of Uruguay here is that the average age of Bogota students tested was 15.9 years, compared to the Uruguay students whose ages are not published but whom we would expect to be 12 years of age on average at the end of primary 6 level. Comparisons can be made with other studies in the <u>English</u> Impact series.

Socioeconomic context and results

The annual analysis and reporting of the test includes a breakdown of results by socioeconomic quintile. Quintile 1 is the most critical and quintile 5 the most advantaged.

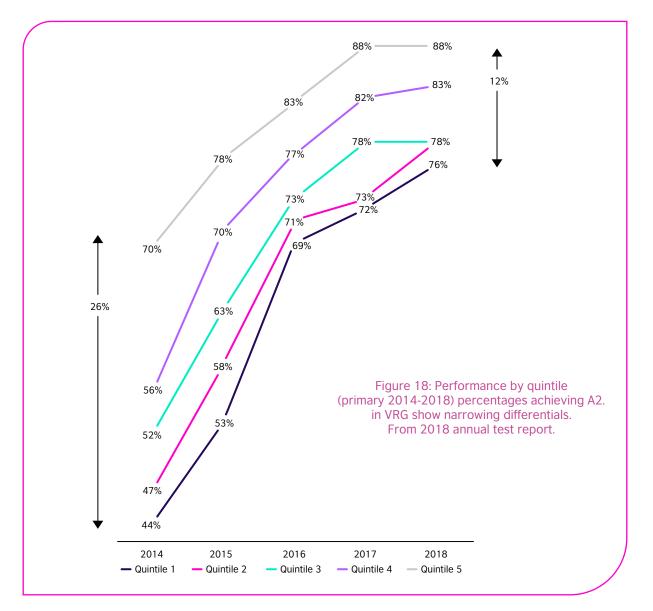
The breakdown (Figure 17) for the 2022 V&G component for primary grade 6

students shows a pattern that is typical for all years and components, with the most advantaged quintile having more results in A2.1 to B1 and the least advantaged quintile with more results in levels pre-A1 to A1.2. This demonstrates the impact of family background on learning outcomes.





One of the aims of CEI is to narrow the gap between the quintiles. The 2018 test report addressed this directly, showing that while the less critical levels have consistently performed better, over the period of 2014 – 2018, the gap between the most and least vulnerable has narrowed (Figure 18). The percentages apply to the students in each quintile who achieved level A2.1 or above in the VRG component of the test. As the test components were being re-calibrated in the period 2018-2020 with the support of CRELLA, it is not valuable to compare the quintile results of 2014-18 with those of 2022. We believe that the work done over recent years to validate the test makes the 2022 results the most valid to date. Nevertheless, work needs to continue on enduring that the test gives results as close to the actual level of test-takers as possible. No language test is 100% valid and reliable, and Ceibal managers have recently attended British Council New Directions conferences to ensure the Ceibal team are aware of issues in this area and are connected with a range of international experts. Attendance at the conferences has given the Ceibal team the opportunity to bring the assessment of programme to the attention of a wider international audience.





Comparisons between CEI and SL F2F modalities

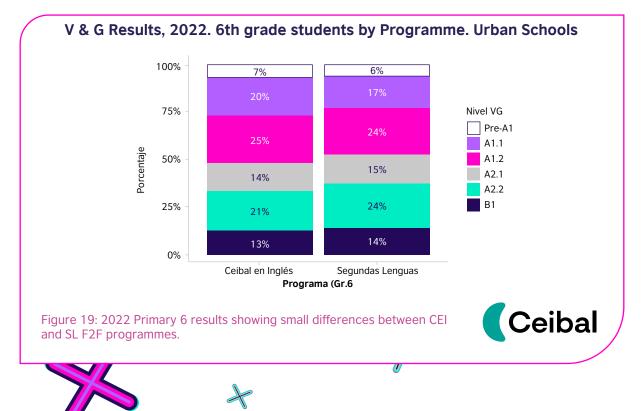
A nivel de Primaria, los resultados obtenidos por alumnos del Programa de Segundas Lenguas y de Ceibal en Inglés no muestran diferencias significativas.

At primary level, results obtained by students of Segundas Lenguas and of CEI do not show significant differences.

National English Adaptive Test report 2022

We discussed above the differences between the CEI model and the Segundas Lenguas (SL) F2F model, and we noted a general preference for F2F teaching over remote teaching, other things equal. The SL model has a specialist English teacher replacing the CT for 2 lessons a week from the final year of pre-school to primary grade 3 and then for 3 lessons a week from primary grades 4 to 6. Thus the number of hours of English teaching for a student finishing primary grade 6 by a SL F2F specialist teacher is much higher than a similar student after 3 years of CEI. We know that CEI lessons A tend to not take place around 17.5% of the time, but do not have data on "failure rates" of SL F2F lessons, which may also be affected by a shortage of teachers in some schools in some grades.

As part of the NEAT, the team investigates the comparative results of SL F2F and CEI. Results for the 2022 exercise show the comparative results for primary 6 grade urban school students (Figure 19). As can be seen the results are similar between the two programmes, with the SL F2F programme having 38% of students at A2 or above, compared to 34% for the CEI programme. (We are not counting students scoring A2.1 as having achieved an A2 level).





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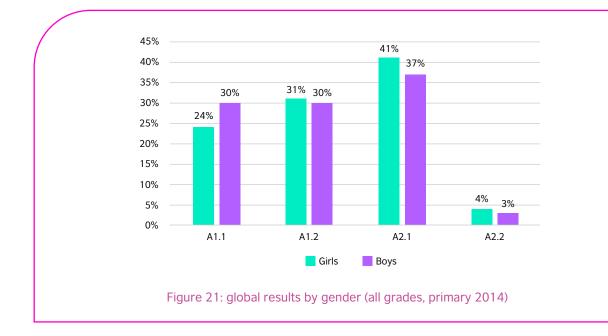
Annual reports for the test have generally included a comparative comment on the two programmes and over the years, there is little difference:

o 2015 The students participating in both English teaching programs (Ceibal in English and Second Languages) show similar 2016 O performances in all skills. ...the results obtained by the students taking the Ceibal English and The Second Languages Programme were very similar in each of the three test o 2017 components. The previous results that there are no differences in learning between students who have class by videoconference and those who learn by F2F mode in both the adaptive components and in the **2018** 아 written production test. The results achieved by students who participate in both teaching modalities (Ceibal in English and Second Languages) are very similar in the two adaptive components (VRG and Listening). o 2020 If the results obtained by the two English programs are compared, better results are evident in the students who participate in Ceibal in English in relation to 2022 Othe Segundas Lenguas students. This difference is evident in all At primary level, results obtained sociocultural contexts. by students of Ceibal en Inglés and Segundas Lenguas show no significant differences.

Figure 20: NEAT report comments on difference between CEI and SL F2F programmes.

Gender

As mentioned before gender is not seen by Ceibal as a priority issue in this English programme. The 2014 report included a global breakdown of results by gender (Figure 21), showing that girls tended to outperform boys.This was the only year that gender has been addressed.



Reflections on further research on the test

There is a strong cross-departmental and international team working on how to continually improve the test and real progress has been made in the ten years of the test's operation. Issues occurring to the researchers that would merit further reflection and research include:

1. Why are listening results currently much inferior to the other two components?

2. What is the pre-primary 4 starting point for students?

3. How do we explain the similar results between the SL F2F programme which has a

specialist teacher for seven years teaching for 2 or 3 lessons a week, compared to the CEI programme which has a specialist teacher for only three years teaching 1 lesson per week, assisted by a CT who usually has little English for the other two lessons ? Other things equal we would expect a better result from the SL F2F students.

4. What proportion of students attend afterschool English lessons, by quintile? What effect does this have on results?

5. Is gender an issue in ELT in Uruguay?



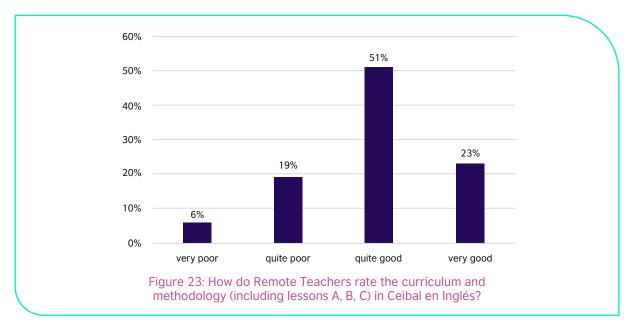
Learner Issues

Issues that impact the learner and are potential areas of learning for both stakeholders in the current project, and authorities elsewhere include: the curriculum, materials and methodology; dealing with disengaged students and the use of L1; the transition to secondary school; and keeping children safe in remote teaching.



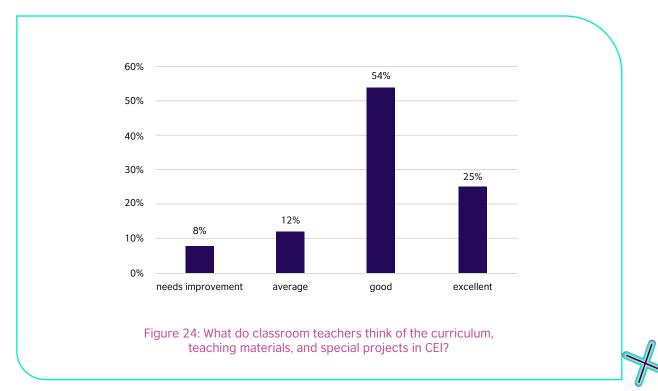
The curriculum, materials and methodology

We can see that the curriculum, materials and methodology used in CEI is viewed positively by RTs and CTs, though not overwhelmingly so. While around three-quarters of RTs surveyed rated these elements positively, most of those were "quite good" rather than "very good", and that means that a quarter of RTs rated negatively (Figure 23).





We asked CTs a similar question, though included materials alongside curriculum and special projects. The responses are similar to RTs with 79% rating these elements positively (though mostly "good" rather than "excellent"), leaving a substantial minority of 21% rating them negatively (Figure 24).



Both RTs and CTs gave written explanations of their reasons for their ratings. The positive explanations tended to be of a general nature with teachers expressing their liking of the approach and materials, with some CTs especially finding them motivating and creative. The negative comments, while in a minority, are the areas where improvements might be found so we will spend some time looking at these.

Firstly, there is a feeling amongst RTs especially, but also echoed by some CTs that the curriculum lacks flexibility for the RT and CT to adapt the approach, content and pace of the lesson. The focus on completing the weekly lesson plans and the perceived rigid use of the Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) approach is seen by some at least to reduce the space for teacher agency, for the teachers (as a pedagogical pair in the best instance) to apply their professional

judgement to the needs of each group at different moments in time.

There is no doubt that CEI promotes a communicative, learner-centred approach to language learning. Claudia Brovetto in the <u>Eighth ANEP Language Forum (2015)</u>, (p. 14) refers to the program as framed in the communicative approach to teaching foreign languages, whose pillars are: communicative and meaningful intention, student-centered proposal, maximization of student participation, integration of the four linguistic skills, presentation of grammar in context, centrality of tasks and communicative activities in class.

While the PPP approach to lessons is often associated with the communicative approach, there are other approaches, notably task-based approaches, which offer wider opportunity for the development of communicative abilities amongst learners.



Glimpses of special projects

For more special projects see Ten Years of Ceibal en Inglés in the CEI website

Shakespeare Festival



https://Inglés.ceibal.edu.uy/articulo/shakespeare-festival-2019-2022

As part of its initiative to promote the study of foreign languages, Ceibal en Inglés invites students and their teachers to learn English through theater, creativity and art. At the festival, students from Ceibal en Inglés schools performed Shakespeare's plays, such as Hamlet, Macbeth, Much Ado About Nothing, and Romeo and Juliet. Promoting the value of learning a foreign language from a communicative, cultural and intercultural approach, as well as learning about and enjoying the work done by other students are the main objectives of this initiative.

Rural Schools Spring Festival

Along the same lines as the Shakespeare Festival, Ceibal en Inglés, through the Rural Schools Spring Festival, presents a different approach to foreign language learning, generating new strategies that integrate other arts, such as drama. Some of the traditional stories played have been adapted to video format to be presented at the festival, among them, Hansel and Gretel, Pocahontas, Beauty and the Beast and The Wizard of Oz.



https://Inglés.ceibal.edu.uy/articulo/rural-schoolsspring-2020-2022



Virginia Frade (2017) researching interaction in the CEI classroom noted:

From the analysis of the corpus it is clear that, in the majority of the groups studied, grammar and its explicit approach have a central place, moving communicative functions to the background. The latter may be due to the fact that not all teachers (both remote and classroom teachers) find the way or strategies to work in a coordinated manner and from a more dialogic approach, as Ceibal en Inglés suggests. (p. 162)

In the second half of the life-span to date of CEI, a task-based approach has been increasingly integrated through the use of "special projects". These started out as individual initiatives invented by individual teachers, as in the case of the "Shakespeare Festival", and have been added to over the years.

The special projects also offer the opportunity to integrate English learning into the wider primary curriculum, responding to

comments from an official in the educational authority that CEI lessons were unfortunately divorced from the primary curriculum and had the feel of going to a private English language lessons while still at school. Frade (2017, p. 163) also says that 'In the observed classes I could not identify the topics of the classes with the contents of the fifth and sixth year programs of Primary Education.'

As always there is diversity of opinion.

The diversity of views around curriculum and learning materials

The fact that the plans are standardized, and that they are not designed based on the needs of each group, can become a factor that works against the program, especially if the PRs do not have the possibility or the flexibility to adapt the plans. according to each group. compliance with the class plan seems to be central, and not the needs of each particular group. When teachers plan a class, we do so based on the knowledge we have of our group Interview with Uruguayan university teacher trainer.

CT survey response

La clase está previamente estructurada y cada minuto se encuentra destinado a algo. Esto potencia el buen uso del tiempo pero no respeta los tiempos de los niños para aprender.

The class is structured in advance and every minute is dedicated to something. This leads to a good use of time, but does not respect the time that the children need to learn. CT survey response



Learning English is fundamental but the content should be revisited. You should focus on meaningful lessons, content, topics. PPP is not the only approach. Communicative aspect is important. And here I've noticed it is so much guided and sometimes boring for me and the students.

CT survey response

No se relacionan con el programa de primaria. It just doesn't relate to the primary curriculum.

RT survey response

Es una enseñanza con una única planificación para todos, no hay adaptaciones, es cerrada. Todo lo contrario a lo que hacemos en clase las y los docentes cuando pensamos en adecuar propuestas y en generar diversidad de propuestas abiertas para llegar a que cada uno avance según sus posibilidades.

It's a teaching approach with one plan for all, there are no adaptations, it's closed. Exactly the opposite to what teachers do in class when we think of matching approaches and in generating a diversity of approaches so that everyone can progress according to their capabilities.

Los proyectos especiales me encantan, son muy motivadores. Ahora estamos en el proyecto de las Reading Cards y nos han permitido muchos avances. En años anteriores participé de los concursos de videos como News from a distant future o Apollo CEI y las dos experiencias fueron muy positivas.

I love the special projects, they are very motivating. Now we are in the Reading Cards project and it has led to a lot of progress. In previous years I took part in the video competitions such as News From a Distant Future and Apollo CEI, and both experiences were very positive.

CT survey response

| | | IME Revised March 2025 | ~ | | | |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|--|--|--|
| Unit | Lesson | Learning Outcomes | Vocabulary | Grammar | CREA Task | |
| | Week 17: Getting nearly | To say why journe doing pomething, or what for | Mischoff) adgit topost(a Intel arms hopp pointly toel Intel collected attracts toel Intellected attracts the | with an effective ten going to planar to going to | Consolidating task | |
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| B. Have you ever? | Week 20: Have you ever won a game? | Tu sels and answer questions is the form Heavy pourset, T | Ever, sources i sour (v), rook, original along offers belleg, arouting stat. | Despetanti periteci visce postere basio physioli disce, Pita, Halanti visi trassi Binterportugiare physio andres, Inter, sere Biolos, repie donalasi, tras Basi, collasi | Sa post a written message and an audio voter mentioning these trugs they consider Wootcurs that they how each and these they have not allow France Linguistics (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) (International Constitution) | |
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| | Wards 22: Have you ever eaten? | To understand a longer conversation. To three about the stress patients in difference words. | Earlier, run a with, lost plan with, for a solide particulous portroom, tobocope, convenient more | Research of pressent particit | | |



Engaging the disengaged student and the use of the L1

Hay momentos que los alumnos no entienden porque la profe habla solo en inglés y ellos necesitan traducción – There are times when students don't understand because the RT only speaks in English and they need a translation.

CT survey response

There has been a great deal of discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of using the L1 in language classes over recent years. There are a number of basic principles to take into account in deciding the amount of L1 use that might be appropriate in each context.

Firstly, is the obvious statement that all English learners need sufficient exposure to English to learn and practice. It is also known that teachers in most settings have often traditionally used too much L1 (Spanish in this case) in class, thereby reducing the exposure to English.

However, it is generally accepted that some use of the L1 (Spanish) in class can be useful. In the particular CEI case, it is clear from survey and interview comments and test results that there are some students in CEI who learn and some students who do not, and also clear that some CEI students get lost during class (due to the proportion of English used) and become bored and disengaged, and naturally learn less. The students who do not do so well in CEI tend to come from lower socioeconomic classes, so it is reasonable to assume that there are more disengaged students in more disadvantaged quintiles than in less critical quintiles.

The major focus in CEI is inclusion and closing the socioeconomic gap, and the CEI quality management team seem strict in their interpretation of how much use of Spanish is too much by RTs. RTs and institute managers in CEI tell us that they believe they should have more flexibility to use Spanish in class where appropriate. Our sense from taking all factors into account is that avoiding the use of Spanish as much as possible by RTs will indeed encourage engaged learners to make extra efforts to communicate in English. However, there is also a counterproductive effect. The avoidance of Spanish means that opportunities are lost to gain rapport with potentially disengaged students, to ensure that they are not lost in class, and to maximise the possibility of engagement.

Therefore, we recommend that there is further discussion of this point to ensure that an appropriate amount of well-used Spanish is allowed, taking into account the need to engage otherwise disengaged students, thereby fulfilling a fundamental aim of Ceibal – inclusion.

Furthermore, in pursuit of the aims of inclusion at a programme level and student engagement at a class level, we suggest measuring student attitudes to the English lessons, especially lesson A. If students become engaged, and enjoy the English lesson then they are more likely to learn now, or to want to learn in the future. On the other hand, unengaging lessons can put children off learning languages, and lead them to think "it is not for them". CEI carefully measures CEFR levels, but we did not see evidence of measuring student enjoyment. This implies a greater focus on the unengaged, which might mean less focus on the more active students, and might mean more use of Spanish.



The transition to secondary school

When the CEI and SL F2F primary English programmes were planned, little consideration was given to the consequent effects on secondary school English teaching. Previously, students arrived in public secondary school with no English from primary school, and secondary English teachers naturally assumed that their students were beginners. It is now clear that they are not beginners, all have some experience as English learners, whatever level of learning or non-learning they have shown in the NEAT test.

It is generally accepted that there is a "broken bridge" in Uruguayan education between primary and secondary school. Children move from a protected environment where they have one teacher for the majority of their lessons, to a situation where they have a different teacher for every different subject. Primary and secondary school teachers are trained differently and tend to have different attitudes to education. We heard no evidence that there was effective communication between them to facilitate the transition for children. None of this is specific to Uruguay and occurs in many different countries, and tends to be a major educational issue globally.

There are clearly varying attitudes to the English knowledge and skills of students arriving in secondary school after years of CEI or SL F2F in primary:

...you literally see no impact (of primary teaching). You have to go back to "Hello, how are you? What's your name? How old are you?" - colours. So there's no evidence of an impact of either of the primary programmes in the secondary level.

University teacher trainer

I worked many years with the first grade students at a middle school. I started to observe that students had a different background when they arrived first grade. I started to see that they would understand English very well and that they would say some things and understand what they were reading and interact among each other and that didn't happen before.

Ceibal manager

Me expreso no solo como docente sino desde el rol de madre de un estudiante que el único inglés que conoció, antes de promover a secundaria, es el de ceibal en inglés. Esto le sirvió de base y adquisición de conocimientos sobre la lengua para haberse desempeñarse en forma excelente, en el manejo del idioma, en el nivel secundario, sin tener que asistir a un instituto privado.

I write not only as a teacher but as the mother of a student whose only English before moving to secondary was CEI. This served as a base for the acquisition of knowledge of the language to achieve excellent results in the use of the language at secondary level, without having to attend a private institute.

Public Survey response

ANEP has produced a series of books for the teaching of English in secondary schools. It also acknowledged in 2017 the existence of students with previous English learning in secondary schools, and gave advice to secondary teachers on differentiation in their teaching to take account of the diversity of levels. It does, however, remain the case that the burden of teaching multi-level classes in secondary school lies with the individual teacher. This situation is exacerbated by the shortage of teachers in secondary schools, especially in Montevideo and the related phenomenon of lesser gualified and experienced teachers being assigned to the early years of secondary school.

The focus on developing English teaching and learning in primary schools has generated a good deal of attention and praise. What has not been discussed to such an extent is the neglect of the development of English teaching in secondary schools. There is a shortage of teachers and there has not been a concerted effort to ensure that a communicative learner-centred approach is being consistently applied.

It is likely to be the case that some English teachers at the beginning of secondary school are unable to recognize the prior learning in their students. In this study we were not able to get the first-hand opinion of learners, but one teenager who had been in the primary CEI programme, answering our public survey, stated:

Pude aprender algunas bases del inglés las cuales me impulsaron a tener más interés con el inglés, pero lo aprendido en primaria, no fue de tanta utilidad para la secundaria.

I learned some basic English which led me to have an interest in English, but what I learned in primary wasn't of much use in secondary.

An experienced teacher-trainer in Uruguay told us:

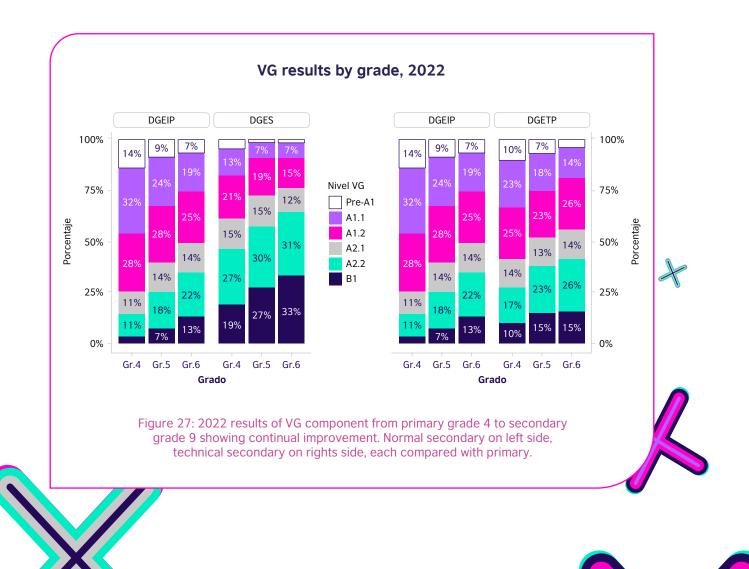
When you get to secondary, there is no methodology is just a collection of materials that students go through - there's no grading of those materials. There is no practice. Teachers go from presentation to expression. There's no mediation. There's no scaffolding, there's no practising the language. And after the pandemic, one thing that I keep seeing is "Teacher, I don't know what this means" – "Look it up on the internet". There's not even an intention to mediate through eliciting or to do anything principled. There's no repetition of any sort. So kids cannot speak, kids cannot read. And the kind of reading comprehension that you see in the materials is read and answer the questions or read and talk about the text. But there's no scaffolding, there's no explicit learning of the skills. So that to me is one of the reasons why there aren't better results.



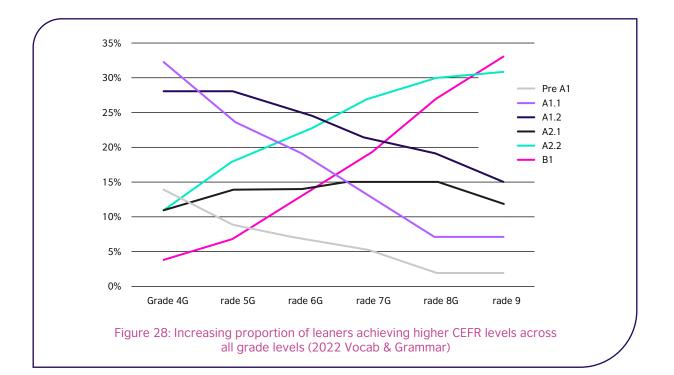


From a purely language learning perspective it may have been better to spend the resources on improving secondary school provision that have now been spent on primary school. However, that choice to focus on primary schools was not taken primarily by language education experts, but by politicians influenced by a public demand for the public sector to provide what the private sector was providing, and by a wider regional and global trend to have English classes from younger ages. There still appears to be scope to improve English teaching in secondary schools and to increase and improve the initial training of English teachers. These subjects are not within the scope of this study, but would form part of our overall recommendations.

To finish this section on a positive note, the NEAT test of 2022 looked at the levels of secondary school students alongside those of primary school students. While the samples are not aligned (a very small sample of the secondary population), and so we must view the results with caution, figures 27 and 28 show a continuing improvement from grade 4 in primary to grade 9 in secondary. There is good evidence of learning here.







In this question, I am expressing myself not only as a teacher but also as the mother of a student who, before going on to secondary school, only knew English from Ceibal in English. This served as a basis for her to acquire knowledge of the language and to be able to perform excellently at secondary level, without having to attend a private English language institute.

Public survey response





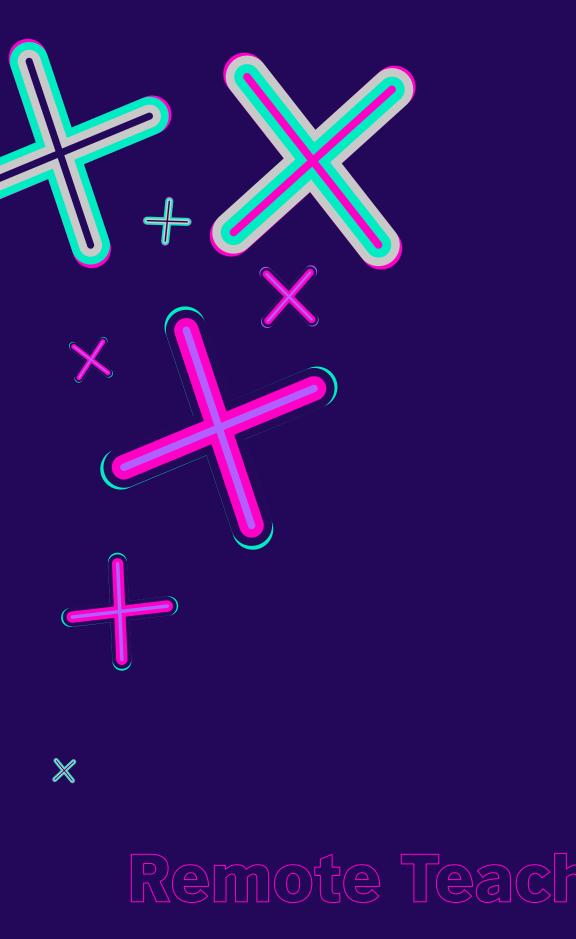
Keeping children safe in remote teaching and CEI

All schools need to consider child protection issues and the remote teaching environment of CEI using an online LMS raises new issues. The British Council has developed a sophisticated child protection policy for all its projects globally over the years, and these principles have been applied to CEI. All RTs are given mandatory training in specific child protection issues, including raising awareness of different areas of risk, which can range from spotting a potential case of abuse or neglect via video in lesson A to cases of exposure to inappropriate content or cyberbullying via the CREA LMS. All British Council staff on CEI are subject to a safeguarding protocol which clearly assigns responsibilities and defines actions to be taken whenever a child protection risk is identified.

The British Council published a chapter on student safety in Chapter 16 of the 2019 publication Innovations in education: Remote teaching edited by Graham Stanley who was the British Council Project Manager of CEI from 2013 to 2018 as well as British Council Country Director Ecuador.



The CEI context is complex as the British Council is responsible to Ceibal who in turn providing a service to many schools and children under the responsibility of the education authority ANEP. Each organisation in a project has its own policies and procedures including its own risk assessment. The British Council clearly takes child protection very seriously in CEI, ensures its RTs are fully trained, and reports incidents to Ceibal.





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Part 8



What benefits have remote teachers gained as a result of the teacher development programme run by the British Council (i.e. methodology for teaching remotely, use of learning technologies, classroom management at a distance, etc)?

The Remote Teacher should be able to become a presence in the classroom, as close as if he or she was actually in the classroom. That has to do with knowing how to use technology – making the students believe that I'm looking at them when in reality I actually have to look at the camera and not at the students... knowing their names, using the zoom and the panning so that students can see that I'm paying attention to them and I'm looking at them and I'm listening to them.

British Council Manager

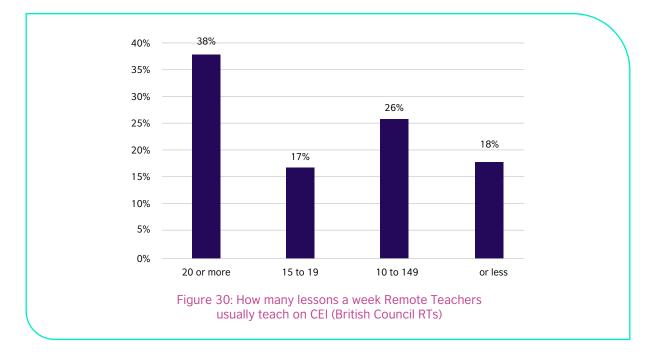
The role of the RT in Ceibal en Inglés

We might say that it is the development of the Remote Teacher (RT) concept, along with the technology, that has been the most innovative feature of the CEI programme. While remote teaching was taking place in 2012, this programme was innovative in its scale and its application in public sector primary schools. This required significant management effort, including the Quality Management system, which we will address in Chapter 9.

The number of remote teachers deployed on the programme varies slightly according to sources, but the figure for 2023 when this research took place, as given to the researchers by Ceibal was 207. The 207 RTs are employed by 13 institutes, including the British Council, which remains one of the largest. As there are around 3,200 groups, and 3,200 Classroom teachers (CTs), that means that each RT on average teaches around 15 lessons involving 350 students in 15 groups and coordinates with 15 CTs weekly. However, these averages conceal wide variations. There are many RTs designated as full-time, which in the British Council, means teaching 25 lessons and groups per week. This means that there are many RTs in the programme who teach fewer lessons than the average. Each institute has its own profile of RTs.

The main role of the RTs is to provide the English language input for the CEI English classes. As part of Lesson A they present the language contents for the weekly cycle following a standardised lesson plan and typically involving the use of slides either produced by the institute or by the RT themselves. In addition to this most obvious role, the RT must provide feedback to individual students on the CREA platforms, and also must coordinate regularly with the CT, a vital part of the CEI concept which is explored more fully in a section below.





In our survey of British Council RTs, we see a wide range in the numbers of weekly lessons taught (Figure 30). This issue is important as there are differing opinions on the optimum weekly load.

A full-time teacher teaching 25 lesson a week (Lesson A) will therefore need to interact with possibly 600 learners. This makes it particularly challenging for the RTs to get to know the groups and the individual students. However, use of children's names is one of the criteria on which RTs are assessed as part of the Quality Management process, and RTs have developed strategies including the use of charts and lists to ensure that they comply with this requirement. Knowing students' names, is of course a standard expectation of a teacher, but the different load between a normal primary school teacher who may need to know the names of 20 to 35 children is of a different degree to a RT who needs to be able to use 600 names.

RTs must be proficient speakers of English. There has never been any expectation or requirement for RTs to be native speakers, and both Ceibal and the British Council believe that being a native speaker offers no practical advantage over being a qualified and proficient English teacher with a different L1. More important is the ability to coordinate with the non-English speaking CT, and therefore to have a good working knowledge of Spanish. The L1 of most RTs now is Spanish. RTs are qualified teachers holding a variety of national or international qualifications. It is the responsibility of the employing institutes to assure qualifications on recruitment and to supervise their work.

In joining CEI, the RT has to develop new skills beyond those that they would have developed in F2F teaching contexts, or even in other online contexts. In the years since 2012, online teaching at a distance has become more common and so new CEI RTs are more likely to have some previous online teaching experience. While this may be helpful, the CEI programme has particular requirements. Most online ELT contexts do not involve large groups of children in their everyday school environment, with their class teacher present.



The substantial extra competencies that the RT role requires and which can easily be overlooked or underestimated include:

• Technological skills involving camera work and resolving issues that arise, allied with the flexibility to change plans when issues arise.

• The application of a communicative approach to language teaching to a videoconferencing environment.

• Television skills including the ability to project into the classroom, the use of eye contact, and the importance of personal appearance with the RTs face magnified on a large screen in the classroom. • Workload as mentioned above, especially dealing with hundreds of children and weekly coordination with over 20 CTs for full-time RTs.

• Resilience required by working alone in a Teaching Point, basically a small cubicle, being always on screen, teaching the same content to different group several times a day, and being subject to a more rigorous quality management process than most.

• Team-teaching with CTs, involving building and sustaining multiple productive working relationships.

If the teacher is new to the predominantly 9 to 12-year-old age group, then they need to develop new skills to interact with the children.





What additional skills do Remote Teachers need?

Veronica Pintos analysed some of the essential skills involved in being an effective Remote Teacher in the 2019 book <u>"Innovations in Education Remote Teaching"</u> edited by Graham Stanley. What should be emphasized is that these skills are in addition to the traditional skills needed by any qualified English teacher.

Telepresence:

This involves a number of strategies that allow for a feel of physical presence to compensate for the distance and develop rapport with students. Certain good practices in the traditional classroom like eye-contact, proximity, some forms of signalling, are not possible through videoconference, so teachers need to implement other strategies to manage the class. Examples of these are exaggerated gestures and body language in general, voice control, zooming in and out on individual students, among other techniques to keep learners engaged. Active participation and interaction is essential.

Classroom management at a distance:

While the CT plays a big part regarding classroom management during the remote lesson, the RT also contributes to it through a number of strategies such as praising, keeping students engaged, supporting instructions with body language, grading their language, adapting the lesson plans to the needs of each group.

Learning Technologies skills:

So far, technology has been mentioned briefly, which makes sense, as being a good RT is mostly following good ELT practices. But technology does play a part. RTs should be skilful managers of the VC equipment, controlling screen sharing, zooming in and out to focus on individual students, playing with volume and image to engage students. They also need to be proficient users of the Learning Management System and interactive material that is centrally provided.

Troubleshooting ability:

Remote teaching implies being flexible and ready to troubleshoot when unexpected problems occur. It involves anticipating tech and other types of problems, as well as possible ways around it. Teachers need to plan for alternatives and know who to reach out for help in case anything goes wrong.

From: <u>https://www.britishcouncil.org.ar/</u> en/remote-teaching/what-we-do/ceibalen-Inglés-success-story The core work of the RT has been to deliver the curriculum, using the lesson plans and materials in use. At the time of this research this is the Little Bridge (LB) curriculum including lesson plans and digital learning material available to students on the LB platform. However, the situation has become more complex over the years, due to a number of developments. One innovation has been the addition of "special projects" to the programme. These special projects, which at the time of writing are being rebranded as "essential activities" take various forms, the first of which was the concept of the "Shakespeare Festival" in which students learn about a Shakespeare play, like Romeo and Juliet, work on the play in class with the CT, and sometimes put on a show for parents. Other special projects have arisen.

Factors leading to greater development and integration of special projects include:

- · Dissatisfaction with some elements of the core materials
- Enthusiasm of CTs to have activities that can be integrated into the wider curriculum and increase learner engagement
- Enthusiasm of individuals to create projects
- Perception of increased learning

A second development is the increasing differentiation among school and group types. The initial CEI programme was targeted at standard urban schools. In an ambitious desire to include as many learners as possible, especially the marginalized, other school types have been added. These include small rural schools, which sometimes only have a single teacher and are therefore often "multigrade", with more than one year grade in each group. Special schools for learners with special educational needs have also been added. There is also now a category of "Making it Happen" schools, which are schools which have not performed so well in the previous year's text and therefore have been allocated extra resources. Each of these categories offers an extra challenge to RTs who are allocated one of them.



One example of this is that when working with SEN schools, the following needs to be considered about each group and individual learners:

- Grades are not always related to learners' age as many schools work with a wide range of age groups.
- Learners' age may not be reflected on their maturity, interests or abilities.
- Grades may not follow common nomenclature such as 4th, 5th, 6th.
- Learners may not be able to speak or write.

• Learners may experience difficulty when reading lower-case letters.

• The use of technology will depend on each learner and group's needs and capacity.

• Learners may not be able to participate orally in the lessons.

- Evaluations are not always applied.
- Learners may attend only on specific days of the week.

In 2022, CEI launched its first SEN ART Festival. This festival's aim is to combine English with art work produced by the learners. After its success, a new edition of the event will be developed in 2023.

The role of the RT was radically changed during the pandemic. This study does not focus on changes specific to the 2020-21 Covid pandemic so our comments are brief here. Responses of Ministries of Education to the pandemic have been reported elsewhere by the British Council in two reports, the second of which includes Uruguay.

It would be reasonable to assume that the CEI programme had advantages in coping with the restrictions involved in quarantine and lock-down. However, the limitations to overcome were many and multifaceted. On the one hand, everyone was confined at home and, even though many teachers and students had hardware at their disposal, connectivity was not available at home to many students. The routines of coordination between RTs and CTs were also disrupted. Interim measures were put in place to deal with the breakdown of the standard videoconferencing approach. Videos were produced by RTs and distributed for use asynchronously.

When classes resumed and students returned to school, it was possible to return to the previous model of lesson delivery, but there was much work to be done to catch up and make up for the lost time. One side effect of this was many RTs requesting to continue teaching from home rather than from a Teaching Centre.

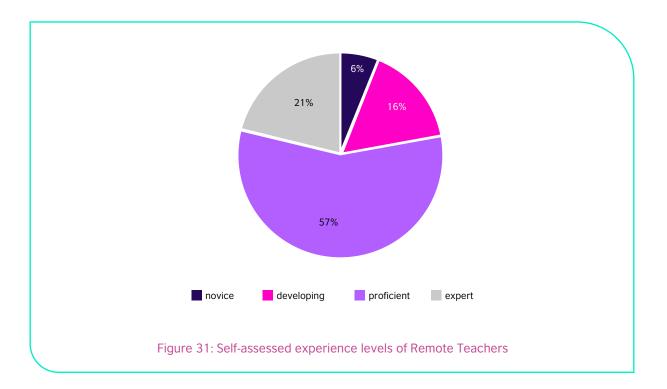


The characteristics and perceptions of RTs

Remote Teachers are predominantly female. Of the 99 British Council RTs responding to our survey, 90% were female.

Other institutes will vary from this but not enough to alter this predominance. When we take into account that around 90% of CTs are also female, we can see that this programme, and the British Council's input into it, have an especially positive impact on females.

The British Council and many other providers have developed a cadre of skilled RTs over the years. In our survey of British Council RTs, 78% considered themselves Proficient of expert as RTs, with only 7% considering themselves "novice" (Figure 31).



I feel it was one of my best experiences ever. I was trained and guided by great professionals. I keep my best memories at Ceibal and at BC. It was a unique and rewarding learning experience.

RT survey respondent



We wanted to measure how RTs felt about their work overall. That depends both on the CEI programme and also on the employing institute. Our survey only included British Council employed RTs. 86% of RTs surveyed were very satisfied (49%) or quite satisfied (37%) with their job.

The main reasons that British Council RTs gave for job satisfaction were the support that they received, the pleasant working environment (including physical and human elements, the personal and professional development that they experienced, and the satisfaction they felt from teaching children.

The innovative nature of the programme has always been a benefit in attracting new RTs, but recruiting and retaining a sufficient number of qualified teachers to work as RTs has proven to be a challenge to institutes. For teachers it was an opportunity to be part of an innovative experiment using techniques which have more recently become widespread as the technology has developed, costs have dropped dramatically and the Covid pandemic has meant that many schools throughout the world were forced to teach online during lockdowns.

Each institute decides its own employment policies for RTs. In some cases, teachers work part time as RTs on the programme and hold other jobs, with the institute or elsewhere. RTs are often taken on by institutes as self-employed freelancers, which means they have to arrange their own tax affairs and do not receive typical employee benefits such as holiday pay, sick leave, pensions and social security.

Recruitment advertisements for RTs regularly appears on social networks (e.g. LinkedIn), indicating that there is a permanently unsatisfied need.

In the early years of the programme new RTs rarely had online teaching experience, this has now changed, particularly post-pandemic. Now online teaching, especially via web-based videoconferencing, has become far more common, and more new RTs have more relevant previous experience, although this by no means obviates the need for a special induction to the CEI programme.



Developing RTs

The British Council-managed teacher development offer for RTs across all institutes is extensive, well-planned, implemented and carefully reported. It is clearly well received and respected by Ceibal. Annual plans are created by the British Council Teacher Development Manager, based on the previous years' experience and in agreement with the Ceibal CEI team. In 2022 RTs across the CEI network participated on average in more than three development activities each. These included synchronous Zoom sessions, asynchronous self-access courses on the CREA platform (Figure 32), communities of practice, a resource bank, mentoring, and self- and peer-observation schemes. Focuses of sessions included SEN, mentoring, giving feedback, giving instructions, technology, and managing behaviour. RTs also form a community of practice and have access to that community on the CREA platform.

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The frequent practice of watching classes on video was a positive. One respondent in the 2022 report on TD made this explicit:

The activities I found more profitable in the mini-courses were the video clips of real lessons and the trainer demos. CEI is a very particular program so even when we may research a lot and find a lot of information on specific topics such as "providing instructions" it is difficult to take that knowledge to an actual CEI lesson, so being able to see how things should or could be done is very enlightening.

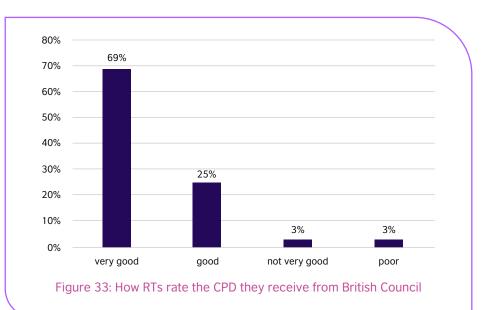
It is the responsibility of the institutes to provide new RTs with an induction to the programme. Continuing professional development is provided by the British Council and also sometimes by the institutes, which vary greatly in size and therefore in capacity to provide CPD. Professional development activities may include traditional synchronous or asynchronous sessions, different types of observations, support with online platform practices.

Feedback from RTs is regularly collected, with an approval rate from RTs of between 88% and 94% for specific sessions in the 2022 annual teacher development report. Overall feedback was also collected, for example:

As regards the mini-courses for self-access, the activities that I found more profitable include video clips of real lessons, teacher testimonials, hands-on "practice" activities and forum discussions. I consider them to be more useful as they demonstrate what the theory is about and come from real class-experience which is invaluable.



94% of the British Council RTs in our survey thought the teacher development they received was good or very good (Figure 33).







RTs were asked to comment and to give one or more specific examples. While the majority of RTs made comments, there were relatively few specifics, with the overall response being reasonably summarised by this response:

I greatly value all the sessions I've attended, although I may not recall all the names of the sessions or all the presenters.

RT respondents generally described development activities as helpful and practical. A few RTs mentioned individual trainers, with Anya Shaw receiving more than one mention. Sessions on technology, scaffolding, oral activity and feedback were mentioned. Some RTs mentioned support with the technology. There were a small number of non-specific negative comments, the only one of which we found to be specific and actionable being that the induction period was too short, and so RTs did not feel fully capable before starting work.

The following survey response was heart-warming and gives a good model of what to aim for in any organisational training and development system:

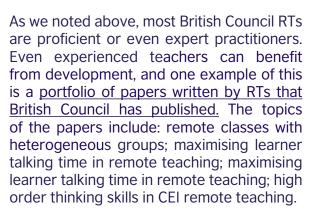
The professional development experience in our organisation is truly exceptional. The level of contact and interaction among team members fosters a warm and collaborative atmosphere. Expertise is not only encouraged but celebrated, creating an environment where everyone is empowered to excel in their respective roles. What sets our team apart is its effective structure, not only in terms of professional growth but also in emotional support.

We understand the importance of not just nurturing professional skills but also providing a space where individuals can thrive both personally and professionally. This holistic approach to team dynamics makes our organization a remarkable place for growth and development.

RT survey response

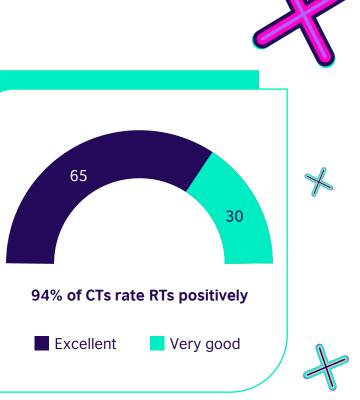
Given that the teaching in CEI is a collaboration between RT and CT, it is instructive to explore what the CTs think of the RTs performance. We asked the CTs how they rated the performance of the RTs that they had worked with. 95% said that they rated the RTs they had worked with as Excellent (65%) or Good (30%). CTs comment on the commitment of the RTs and the good relations that they have with them, and empathise with the extra challenges of teaching from the other side of the screen. Some CTs mention that they have preferred some RTs to others, a useful reminder of the diversity that exists in the programme, whether RTs, CTs, or students.

The link between the teacher development manager (TDM) and the Ceibal quality assurance management team is important, and the relationship is systematic and constructive. The quality management team pass on findings from observations to the TDM who can then plan relevant development interventions. One recent example of this is the increasing integration of special projects into the curriculum, which requires induction and training. The quality management team are able to pass videos of successful lessons to the TDM for integration into development sessions. Managers in Ceibal were enthusiastic about the contribution of the British Council to teacher development for RTs from all institutes. This success is largely due to having a very competent and experienced British Council TDM with good management and interpersonal skills whose work commands respect in Ceibal.



One development in recent years has been the increasing use of asynchronous teacher development material. Like the Lessons A to students, most teacher development in CEI had used a synchronous approach. The Covid pandemic triggered a change in that which allowed a more flexible approach. As the Teacher Development Manager explained:

Another thing that the pandemic brought was how much could we do a synchronously? We were used to doing everything synchronously. So all the training for remote teachers, the webinars we did throughout the year, everything was done remotely, but in real time, with some instances of face-to-face. Now that has changed and we do a lot of our training and development asynchronously. And we have really good feedback from that. We've increased participation by freeing the teacher from having to do it at a specific day and time, and letting them do it in their own time and then sharing a reflection after. It seems to work better for the type of teachers that we have – most of them don't do CEI exclusively but also teach in other places.



Lessons around RTs

Home-based teaching (HBT)

HBT is another issue within the programme. The standard for the CEI programme has always been that RTs must work teach from a specially designed teaching point (TP) in an institute, using the standard Ceibalapproved dedicated videoconferencing technology. The pandemic has changed the landscape with higher expectations or demands of home-working from both current and prospective RTs. Finding, hiring and retaining a sufficient number of qualified teachers to work as RTs has proven to be a challenge.

The opportunities for true remote teaching from home have exploded. And so now we're competing with things we weren't competing before.

British Council Manager

A side effect of the work conducted within CEI for RTs is that they were well-prepared to cope with the exigencies of the work during the pandemic. Their familiarity with remote teaching and digital teaching materials put them ahead of their colleagues in the process of putting classes online. It is not only the familiarity with the technology but the need to solve problems and collaborate with others in order to carry out their job that can be considered a positive sideeffect of their involvement with CEI. In terms of personal qualities, this has also allowed them to strengthen their resilience and capacity for organising their workload. The skills acquired while teaching on CEI have provided RTs with marketable skills that allow them to find employment with any of the growing providers of online English teaching thus posing further challenges to the retention of RTs.

Shortage of teachers is of course one of the reasons CEI was created. However, teacher

shortage appears to have increased over the years CEI has been running even in countries such as Argentina, which were considered to have plenty of teachers. If shortage of teachers increases in the traditional markets for outsourcing RTs, problems in relation to the practice or the principle of outsourcing English teachers are likely to arise.

The difficulties in approving HBT in the programme are likely to have an increasing effect on the recruitment of quality RTs. Under the current policy of all new RTs having to teach from a TP in an institute, there is no possibility of institutes recruiting qualified RTs from outside reasonable commuting distance. For institutes in Argentina, the ability to recruit nationwide would alleviate the difficulties that institutes are currently feeling. It is easier to see CEI being sustainable in the medium to long term if finding ways to incorporate home-based teaching effectively are prioritised.





The location of Remote Teaching Centres

In theory, RTs can operate from anywhere in the world. The first RTs were based largely but not exclusively in a number of British Council teaching centres in Latin America, with some sourced initially by Ceibal in Uruguay, as well as some outliers. As the programme grew in volume things needed to be standardised and new sources found. Over the years, RTs from more distant locations have been dropped in favour of RTs of greater geographical and cultural proximity (i.e. Argentina and Uruguay). Spanish as a shared native language between RTs, CTs and students was a factor that influenced this decision. The diverse contexts of RTs go hand in hand with different backgrounds in terms of their initial teacher education and professional experience as well as different levels of cultural affinity with CTs and students. Other issues that facilitate or hinder communication include the mother tongue of RTs, the time zones, the school calendar in their locations, and their employment conditions.

The reduction in the diversity of sources for RTs can be traced back to some or all of the following factors:

• reducing the timetabling complexity involved in dealing with RTs who are based in different time zones to Uruguay

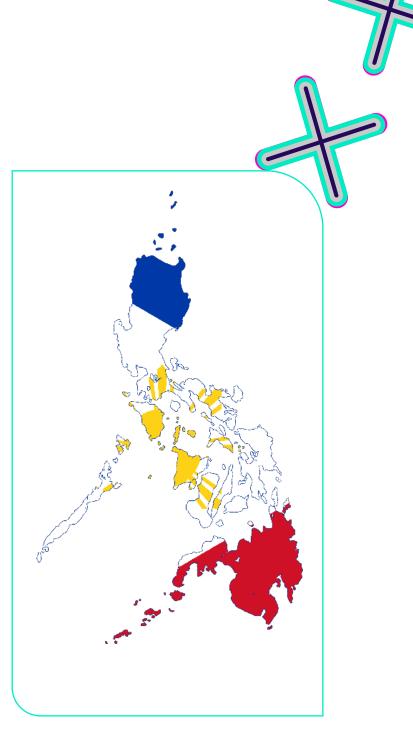
- Ensuring that RTs are speakers of Spanish to facilitate communication with CTs and with students.
- Reducing the cultural gap between the RTs on the one hand, and students, CTs and other CEI actors
- Ensuring some level of homogeneity as regards the professional background and classroom practice of the RTs.

Many people acquainted with Ceibal en Inglés associate the programme with Remote Teachers based in the Philippines, perhaps one of the programmes most interesting innovations.

In 2013, when the programme needed to expand rapidly, it became necessary to find a large-volume source of RTs. The British Council led on this search. While sourcing RTs in the United Kingdom might have been ideal from a British Council perspective, high costs made this impossible.

The Philippines became the preferred solution. The country was seen as having a good supply of English teachers at reasonable cost. The British Council subcontracted a private educational institute to set up a remote teaching centre and recruit and schedule RTs.

Many Uruguayan children and their CTs has Philippine RTs for several years. This was during a period where all parties, Ceibal, The British Council, and the Philippine institute, were learning how best to operate the CEI model of remote teaching. The process of setting up Teaching Points in Institute led to standardisation of the Teaching Point model.







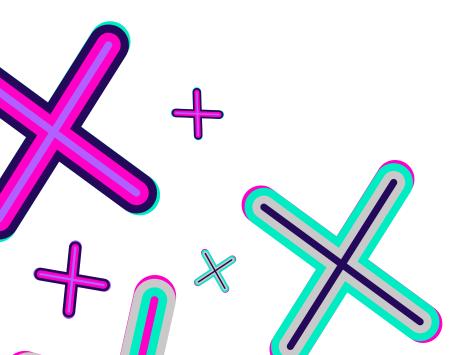
English teachers from the Philippines were generally well-received in Uruguay. There were some issues with a different variety of English pronunciation, but the main problem was the added requirement that RTs need to know Spanish in order to coordinate with CTs.

Few Philippine RTs could operate at this level of Spanish, and aims to improve the Spanish of the RTs proved overambitious. The large volume of classes taught from the country led to extra quality management staff needing to be sent by the British Council to the subcontracted RTC in Philippines.

One of the strangest elements of this link was that due to time zone differences, Philippine RTs needed to start work at around 20:00 in the evening, and the working day finished around 04:00 in the morning. These issues led to an increased desire for a Latin American regional solution to RT supply. The experience in the Philippines was of great use in the setting up of the British Council Remote Teaching Centres in Montevideo and Buenos Aires and in setting standards for Remote Teaching Centres generally. The supply of RTs to CEI from the Philippines lasted for several years, but was eventually phased out in favour of RTs based in Uruguay and Argentina.

The Philippines experiment, if we can call it that, was a bold and innovative move to teach English in public primary schools from one side of the world to the other, and was an important phase in the development of CEI and the learning of all stakeholders.





Coordination with the Classroom Teacher

The main innovation of the program is also the key issue for its success, and surprisingly at it might seem, it is not related to technology. It relates to the symbolic teaching space of the remote teacher of English and the classroom teacher, and the joint work between the two. This program requires for the remote teacher to rely on the classroom teacher capacity to organise the teaching situation to make a virtual communication real and effective. In turn, the classroom teacher needs to locate herself in non-traditional teaching space, in which she is not the one who knows everything, but she is learning together with her students and making it possible for her students to learn in a new and more autonomous way. This is not easy for any of them. The challenge for the British Council and Plan Ceibal working together is to help teachers get to that place with confidence, give them support and training. If we succeed, children will learn English and a lot more things that are waiting for them.

Claudia Brovetto, Head of CEI in Woods (2013)

Coordination between RT and CT (known as the pedagogic pair or the dyad in programme terminology) has always been seen as a critical success factor in CEI and given much attention in training, development and quality management. The dyad formed by the RT and the CT is at the centre of the CEI model, with each member bringing their background, knowledge and experience. Successful coordination of the RT and CT team is crucial for classes to develop successfully and for the children to learn. RTs are evaluated on their co-ordination with the CTs, and 15 minutes of their working week is theoretically apportioned to this coordination. CTs are given extra compensation for this coordination time, which would not be required if a specialist F2F English teacher were deployed to their class under the SL model in primary schools. We did not explore the extent to which CTs view the CEI programme as a paid extra as opposed to an unpaid or underpaid extra burden. We assume that CT views differ widely, but it is clear to RTs that this coordination is a central part of their job.

The core of the coordination between the RT and the CT is intended to ensure the CT understands what is going to happen in Lesson A led by the RT, and what their role is, and also to decide the best way to implement lessons B and C led by the CT. Another role of the CT to provide



information to the RT about the group and the individual children. It is an interesting and unusual form of team teaching which varies considerably in both its form and its level of success from dyad to dyad. The roles and activities of the two teachers are complimentary, their areas of expertise and contact with the students are distinct, their educational and professional backgrounds are different and their employment conditions and reporting structures are fundamentally different.

Evidence suggests that this innovative team-teaching element has been a success, with 95% of CTs rating coordination with their RT as either excellent (60%) or good (35%). One CT respondent characterizes the coordination as:







The way the coordination operates in practice was best explained in an interview with a Ceibal manager.

We care a lot about the CT - RT relationship and we really believe that it is at the core of the programme. That is the most important thing. If it works, it doesn't matter if they are experts or if they are "super wow" delivering a lesson. If they can understand each other, if they work collaboratively and try to find together the best strategies for their students.

If we have an excellent RT who is perfect in everything that he or she does and we have an excellent classroom teacher with excellent strategies but they don't communicate and they are, not fighting, but competing all the time then the students are going to feel that tension and they are not going to learn.

The principles of co-teaching where one doesn't compete with the other, but they work together. When things start to get weird or when communication is not the best you see the tension there. You see that the other doesn't feel very comfortable. So the classroom teacher may say I am not going to interrupt her because maybe or maybe I am not allowed to, and you have to work a lot on building that relationship. They are equal and that they have to work a lot on building that relationship. They have to reach agreements. The remote teacher is the one who masters the knowledge, but the CT is the one who knows the students.

It doesn't mean that you have to be best friends. It means that you need to have at the beginning of the year or when you start that relationship, a clear conversation of what we want, what each other wants, how you see teaching, how you see the students.

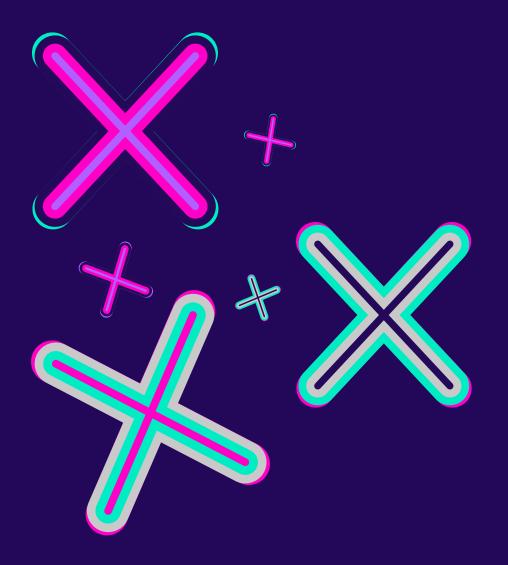
And then you start finding the way to talk. Maybe it is a meeting once a month. Maybe it is a Zoom meeting 10 minutes a week. They have like the freedom to choose whatever they want to do in that coordination. So maybe they decide we are going to text each other because both of them can see the plans, the lesson plans, they are available for both of them. I think that most of the communication between classroom teachers and remote teachers is through WhatsApp.

In spite of the above positive indicators and intentions, there is anecdotal evidence from RTs that there is a significant number of CTs that have limited engagement with the coordination process. A British Council manager put it like this:

I think the design and the way in which classroom teacher and remote teacher roles are supposed to function, and the idea of coordination are success factors. We know in reality that some groups have stronger relationships between CT and RT, but you do see very clearly that the groups that work best are. the ones where this synergy between the 2 teachers occurs. if you compare it with other programs where perhaps students have to access to lessons on their own or at home, it's not the same. Having the support of the classroom teacher on site at the school is major advantage.

A further element of the coordination is the potential for a physical visit to the school by the RT. This is often not possible for reasons of both distance and cost, and so is carefully controlled, but has been a motivating factor for all, and especially students, in some cases. The current CEI handbook does stipulate that RTs working with a Making It Happen school, which has previously underperformed on the national test, should visit the school at least once a year.





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What benefits did the local classroom teachers achieve in terms of English proficiency and improving classroom practice (e.g. methodology for practising English, classroom management, and professional awareness, etc.)?

> El diseño del programa invita a las maestras a dejar su zona de confort y a explorar otras formas de enseñar, y ello contribuye a su desarrollo profesional.

> The design of the programme invites teachers to leave their comfort zone and explore other forms of teaching and this contributes to their professional development.

> > Gabriela Kaplan, CEI Head (in <u>La Voz Docente</u>, 2021)



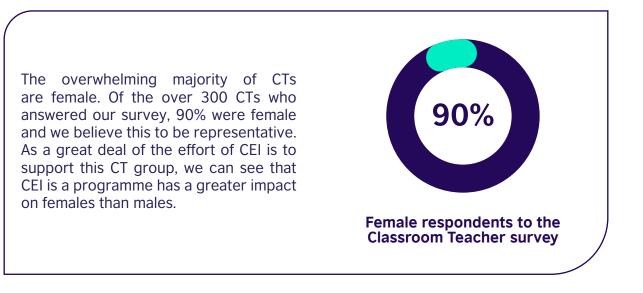
While Remote Teachers are recruited specifically to work in CEI, and a full-time RT will work 100% on CEI, this is not the case for the Classroom Teacher. The CT role exists in primary schools whether or not the CT's school has elected to participate in CEI. When the CT participates in CEI, the English programme may take up to around 15% of the CT's work (three lessons out of 20 in a standard primary school). It is important to keep this in mind when considering the role of the CT in CEI.

CTs are officially appointed primary school teachers. They are employees of the state,

with its intricate entry and promotion mechanisms. This means that they have job security, holidays, pensions, and access to unions. They have are responsible for teaching the school curriculum to the students (maths, Spanish, science, social sciences, etc.) and for reporting their progress in official documents such as report cards that lead to the students' promotion to subsequent years or levels. The contents taught through CEI are not part of this official structure and do not get reported officially. Our understanding is that progress in English does not yet form part of this official progress reporting.



CTs have typically completed what is now a four-year course in primary teaching at the national teacher training college. They work in one or more of a number of school types, which may include morning or afternoon shift standard schools, or schools with a longer day that includes a lunch break. It is common for teachers to work in more than one school, or to have other jobs, sometimes in the private education sector in addition to their primary school.



As we saw when discussing RTs, the core responsibilities of the CT are to support the RT in delivering Lesson A, and to take responsibility for Lessons B and C having agreed plans for those lessons with the RT. As we will see below, most CTs are not independent users of English, and thus the approach to these CEI Lessons B and C will require an important change of approach from the CTs normal delivery of a maths, science, or social science class, where the teacher is assumed to have the knowledge and skills to be passed on. The elements of joint responsibility for teaching, and of teaching lessons in which the teacher does not command the subject make CEI a disruptive and challenging element in the primary curriculum.

All public primary school children are now expected to have English classes, almost all

either through CEI or the Segundas Lenguas F2F programme. The two programmes stipulate the same intensity of three lessons per week at the primary grades 4 to 6, but the effect on the CT is guite different. In the SL F2F programme, a specialist English teacher takes the class, and the CT has no responsibility. We are told that they often have to remain in the classroom, but they are free to dedicate themselves to other duties such as class preparation or marking. CTs in CEI schools on the other hand, are expected spend time coordinating with the RT in order to actively support the RT in lesson A, as well as leading lessons B and C themselves. The difference in workload appears to be remarkable, and it is not surprising, based on this fact alone, that CTs express a preference for students to have F2F classes.

CTs belong to a union, and union views are a feature of education change programmes that are too often overlooked. While we did not seek the views of union leaders in this study, the subject arose in various discussions, and reminded the researchers that teachers' trade unions and related groups are a valid stakeholder in programmes like this one. Teachers Unions did not receive the implementation of CEI positively. There were a number of concerns raised, particularly in the initial stages of the programme concerning the status of CEI, provided by an organisation (Ceibal) that was external to the education system as a whole and not governed by its rules and regulations. Neither CTs nor their union representatives appear to have participated in the design or decision process that led to the implementation of CEI. Early negotiations did however lead to a pay supplement for CTs on account of the extra coordination they were required to undertake. In spite of these initial tensions, since CEI is, on the whole, perceived as a successful innovation, opposition has considerably reduced and the programme can be considered to have become part of the educational landscape, albeit not one of its central components. Union opposition has been a factor but not a main determinant of the programmes success or failure.

The coordination between the CT and the RT is central and the role of the CT in quiding students in lessons B and C is a crucial component in strengthening the work done during lesson A. A specific time allocation (15 minutes a week) and associated payment was agreed upon for CTs from the outset to cover this coordination time. During Lesson A the CT collaborates with the RT in the classroom management required to make the lesson a success. Since the CT is assumed to not speak English, the CT's role in Lessons B and C is to quide the often independent work of the students to reinforce the contents presented in Lesson A. In this sense, the CT is a facilitator of learning. The coordination between the RT and the CT is intended to ensure the CT understands how to implement this work. Another role of coordination is for the CT to provide information to the RT about the group, and their needs. The roles and activities of the two teachers are complimentary, their areas of expertise and contact with the students are distinct, their educational and professional backgrounds are different and their employment conditions and reporting structures are different. This can lead to a relationship where the two parties complement and help each other but the distance between the two parties requires commitment to build a good working relationship based on respect and trust.





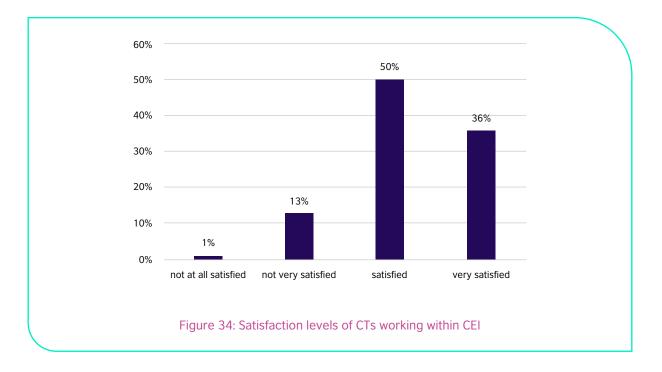
Perceptions of CTs

338 CTs in Uruguay working with British Council RTs replied to our survey, with every one of the 19 departments of Uruguay represented. 42% had more than five years' experience in CEI, while 33% had two years or less.

However, they were experienced teachers, with 48% having more than 15 years primary teaching experience,

and another 32% having between 5 and 15-years-experience. Only 6.5% were in their first two years of teaching.

86% feel satisfied or very satisfied working in CEI (Figure 34). With most positive comments mainly relating to children in public education having access to English lessons, and to the good work of the RTs.

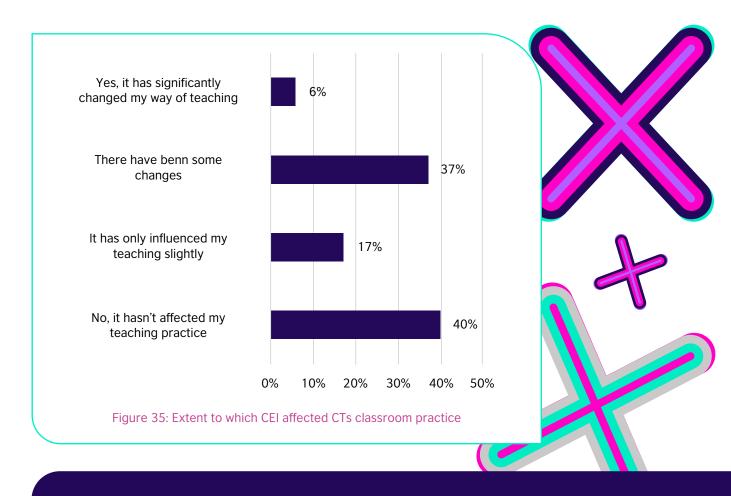


Criticisms from the CTs who did not feel satisfied were generally around the inferiority of videoconference classes to F2F classes, and also expressing frustration around the CTs own lack of English limiting their ability to contribute in lessons B and C.

We asked CTs if the CEI experience had affected their classroom practice more

widely (Figure 35). Managers involved in CEI hoped that the communicative studentcentred and dialogic approach encouraged in CEI would have a knock-on effect on the teaching of other subjects. The results show a mixed picture, with a good number saying that the CEI experience had had an effect, but almost as many saying that it had had no effect.





Comments in this area included encouraging responses:

Mis prácticas docentes han mejorado ya que he aprendido a usar recursos, actividades lúdicas, etc. que permiten que la transformación educativa sea un proceso desafiante tanto para los educandos como el educador. My teaching practices have improved as I have learned to use resources, play-based activities etc. that allow the educational transformation to become a challenging process for both learners and the teacher.

Classroom Teacher

Some CT comments make the point that the CTs generally use child-centred approaches:

No para nada, mi propuesta es integradora, atendiendo a la diversidad y basada en problemas y proyecto.

(it's not changed) at all, my approach is integrative, paying attention to diversity and problem- and project- based.

Or simply

No modifica mi clase. It doesn't change my class

English proficiency and development of CTs

The issue of the English proficiency of CTs has always been an issue of discussion in CEI. In the very early years of the programme there was a clear and explicit plan for CTs to learn English so that they could at least be in a better position to lead on Lessons B and C, and at best might take a more active role as English teachers. CTs were enrolled in a British Council online English course named Learn English Pathways guided by a team of British Council tutors. Some CTs took on this challenge enthusiastically and did improve their English language skills considerably, others found the selfaccess, computer-mediated nature of LEP rather daunting and did not sustain their participation in the programme. Others felt that the learning of English should not be imposed on them.

As the programme evolved, the opportunity for CTs to improve their English continued. but it became clear that enthusiasm for this opportunity was less widespread amongst CTs than had originally been hoped. Many CTs viewed this as a burden on their busy personal and professional lives and not a central feature of their identity as teachers. Over the years there was a growing realization of how difficult it is to improve CT's English substantially and this element of the programme was rethought by Ceibal, making it very clearly an optional extra and neither an obligation nor an expectation. This confirmed the ongoing official status of CTs in CEI as facilitators without knowledge of the language. After a few years the course was outsourced to another provider, and while still offered to CTs, does not form a priority part of the programme.

The situation is summarised by one comment from a Ceibal manager:

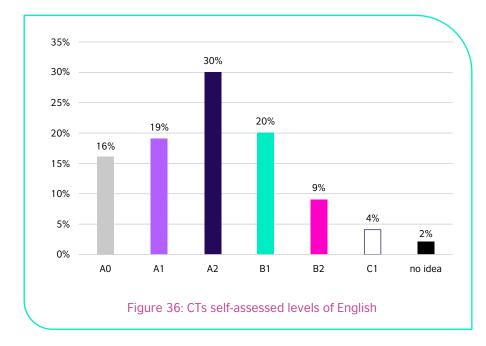
What is ELP of CTs? Well, honestly, I don't know if there is any data about the English levels of CTs. I can only tell you from my experience is that surely they must have learned a bit. Also surely they have lost fear to English language learning if there was a barrier there, and also what we see is that many classroom teachers are taking classes.

Another view from Ceibal is:

We try to not to make them feel uncomfortable with not knowing English. It is not that we have less commitment to CTs learning English. In fact, we send every month reminders that they have this course that is available for everyone for free and it is a good course, they have the synchronous session and they have asynchronous work and they ones that are in that course are very happy with it. The thing is that you can't punish them for not doing it, but we still are very committed to that.

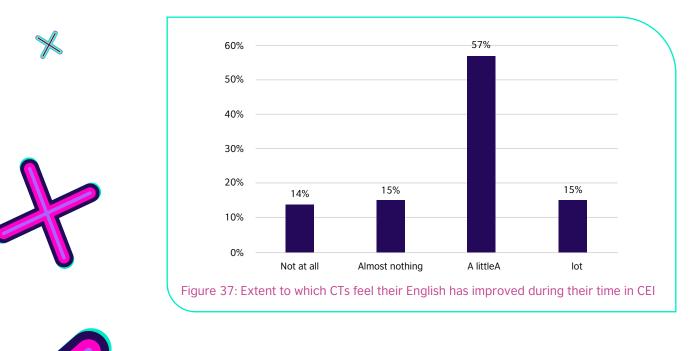






When asked about their level of English proficiency around two-thirds of CTs place themselves at elementary level or below (Figure 36).

When we asked CTs if their English had improved as a result of their participation in CEI, 72% said that their English had improved a lot (15%) or a little (57%). Nearly 30% said that their English had improved hardly or not at all (Figure 37).



On the other hand 63% of surveyed CTs say they are not satisfied with their level of English. Many say they would like to improve, but have insufficient time to devote to this activity and, since it is not a requirement, they do not have any need to pursue it. Others mention their lack of motivation or capacity to learn languages.

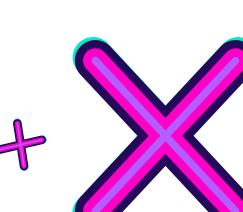
Another angle on the issue of CTs and English is that English is neither an entry nor an exit requirement for teacher training in Uruguay. Young people leaving school with an intermediate level of English or above have work and study options that are not available to those with no English. But there is also a perception that CTs who develop English skills are likely to leave the system to pursue more attractive employment. If this is true to any degree, then improving the English of primary school teachers would be counterproductive for the public education system. While English is in theory taught in all schools at secondary level, we know there is a significant shortage, especially in the capital Montevideo. This points to the reality that there is a wider job market for English speakers, especially in the capital, which we find unsurprising.

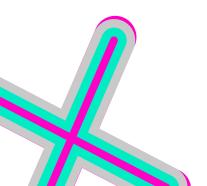
CTs unsatisfied with their level of English

63%

Nevertheless, there seems to be something contradictory in the policy of aiming for school-leavers with an intermediate knowledge of English, but not to encourage or even insist on that skill for the teachers who will be models for those young people.

In summary, there is great diversity amongst CTs in their attitudes to and levels of English. The programme has clearly had some success in promoting English amongst CTs. However, one lesson is that we cannot expect our enthusiasm to teach and learn English to automatically transfer to groups of established professionals who had not considered English as a skill that they wanted or needed to master.







A diversity of Classroom Teacher views on learning English

| Ha mejorado mucho mi nivel porque he hecho cursos para maestros de ceibal en Inglés. | My level has improved a lot because I've done Ceibal English for Teachers courses. |
|--|---|
| Mi nivel de inglés ha mejorado debido a que en muchos casos aprendo con mis alumnos. | My English level has improved because I learn along with the students. |
| Manejo mejor la fluidez ya que trato de comunicarme en inglés durante la VC también. | I'm more fluent because I try to communicate in English during the videoconference. |
| Lo practico y aprendo junto con los niños. | I practise and learn along with the children. |
| Me encantaría hablar fluidamente inglés. | I'd love to speak English fluently. |
| Me he enamorado del inglés. | I've fallen in love with English. |
| Día a día aprendo más. Es gratificante!!! | Day by day I learn more. It's satisfying!!! |
| | |
| Nunca tuve afinidad con otros idiomas, no fue a clases particulares de inglés. Soy de una generación que inició desde primero hasta sexto de secundaria con inglés. No me sentí motivada. En cambio, desde que se inició en Primaria me sentí una alumna más. | I was never comfortable with languages; I didn't go to private English classes. I'm from a generation that had English from first to sixth year of secondary. I didn't feel motivated. Since English started in primary, I feel like just another student. |
| Puedo entender muchísimo mejor, aunque no hablar. | I can understand much better, but not speak. |
| Me gustaría avanzar mucho más en el idioma. La falta de tiempo me lo impide. | I'd like to improve my English. Lack of time is what stops me. |
| Estoy al nivel de los niños. | I'm at the level of the children. |
| | |
| No es un objetivo, porque me resulta muy difícil. | Not my objective, it's very difficult for me. |
| He estudiado muchísimo pero no tengo facilidad. | I've studied a lot, but I'm no good at it. |
| Se me complicó hacer cursos de formación por situaciones familiares vividas. | It's difficult for me to do courses due to family circumstances. |
| No me gustan mucho los idiomas. | l don't like languages much. |
| Quisiera saber más pero ya estoy por jubilarme pero tampoco tengo interés. | I'd like to know more but I'm about to retire but I'm not interested. |
| Es una materia que nunca me gustó. | It's a subject I never liked. |
| El nivel de jnglés del maestro de clase no debería interesar porque el docente no es el responsable de la enseñanza. | The English level of the teacher should be an issue because the teacher isn't responsible for the teaching. |
| No lo necesito. | I don't need it. |

Supporting CTs

Classroom Teachers in CEI have their support systems for the 85% of their work which is not CEI, this includes the in-school support from Heads and colleagues, and a system of supervisors which has both a formative and an evaluative function. However, Heads and Supervisors in primary schools typically have no English and no knowledge of the skills of language teaching, So CEI set up its own system of support, which consists of a group of over 20 mentors to cover the more than 600 schools enrolled in CEI across the country.

The CEI Handbook states:

CEI places CTs in a complex position. For this reason, CEI has created the role of the Mentor. Mentors are English teachers and professionals with backgrounds in the area of Humanities and with experience in the field of English Language Teaching. They visit schools and their CTs in order to provide them with the necessary support to confidently participate in the programme. A Mentor's visit to a school implies meetings with the Head teacher and the CTs, lesson observations and feedback, and may involve workshops on a variety of topics and assistance with Special Activities. Mentors provide aid and support to CTs suggesting strategies and tools to make them feel comfortable in their role within CEI which will have a positive impact on learners' acquisition of the language. Mentors make sure that CTs are able to access and manage CREA and Little Bridge, and help them integrate coordination as an organic component of their relationships with RTs. The Mentor is also available for CTs to reach out to whenever they feel it is called for. The Mentor keeps in touch with the school staff mainly via phone, email and CREA to share updates such as news and developments throughout the year.

It became clear from interviews that mentors are stretched. With over 30 schools and maybe 150 teachers per mentor to supervise, and travel time involved, it is not easy to visit schools often. Another issue is access to CTs in the school. CTs, who are employees of ANEP, not Ceibal, have a busy schedule in schools, and have other things to do when they are not teaching. Finding time to sit down with CTs is not easy for the mentor, and this is not helped by the fact that the mentor comes from an organisation (Ceibal) that has little influence over a teacher's wider professional life, even if the mentor can help with the teacher's participation in CEI.







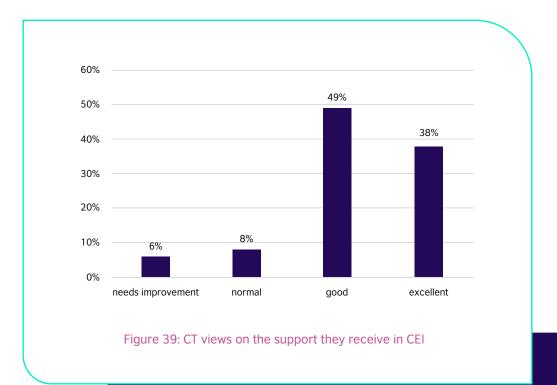
New CTs have an induction to the programme. Early in the programme, Dario Banegas, one of the first British Council project managers wrote this for a British Council internal briefing on CEI. Any innovative project in education entails the involvement and training of teachers since they are the driving force in curriculum As part of Plan Ceibal en Inglés, the British Council and Plan Ceibal run orientation courses to support Uruguayan classroom teachers and remote teachers throughout the programme. These orientation courses take place in Montevideo. A typical orientation course for classroom teachers is an intensive two-day course led by the experts covering the main components of the programme. Classroom teachers

are first introduced to the overall spirit of this ground-breaking undertaking and how Ceibal goals are embedded in the national curriculum. Lesson plan writers, lead sessions on the pedagogic rationale underpinning remote and follow-up lessons and explore the materials produced for the lessons. In relation to materials development and remote lessons, the Ceibal team talk teachers through CREA, the learning management system of Plan Ceibal in which teachers participate in fora and access the teaching materials. Teachers are also given the opportunity to explore the videoconferencing equipment and experience a remote lesson with a teacher based in Buenos Aires.

Induction and development sessions for CTs have developed over the years, with less emphasis on F2F training courses, and more use of asynchronous video. Material for CTs is now hosted on YouTube (Figure 38).



When asked how they rated the support they received in CEI, 86% of CTs rated the support as excellent (37%) or good (49%), while 14% were less positive (Figure 39). In their comments on this issue, CTs regularly mentioned the RTs as their main support, especially in helping CTs with Lessons B and C. Mentors were mentioned positively but much less often than RTs. From interviews it was clear that mentors were stretched and had limited time to visit CTs.



El apoyo recibido es principalmente de la P. R. al enviarme las propuestas para las clases B y C con todas las explicaciones posibles, facilitando mi tarea.

The support received is mainly from the RT in sending me suggestions for classes B and C with all possible explanations, making my task easier.

El profesor remoto. Es un gran compañero de trabajo a distancia. Nos comunicamos por mensaje de WhatsApp y siempre está dispuesto a ayudar y aclarar dudas o como trabajar algún tema. Visitó la escuela y los chicos lo recibieron con mucho cariño.

The remote teacher is a great long-distance colleague. We communicate via WhatsApp messages and he is always willing to help and clarify doubts or suggest how to work on a topic. He visited the school and the kids received him affectionately.



One major celebration of the achievements of CTs in CEI was the publication of a collection of Spanish language papers written by CTs and edited by the Head of CEI, Gabriela Kaplan, <u>Ceibal en Inglés: La Voz Docente.</u> Kaplan celebrates the publication as:

evidencia de que los docentes han aceptado el desafío de la innovación educativa. Han respondido con soltura desde sus conocimientos didáctico-pedagógicos, superando miedos y aprehensiones. Han sabido integrar el programa de Primaria con el programa de inglés, han sabido integrar las tecnologías a sus prácticas, han sabido inte¬grarse con el otro, integrar el aprendizaje a la vida, a las experiencias propias y las de sus estudiantes. Han logrado mayor equidad e inclusión educativa.

evidence that teachers have embraced the challenge of educational innovation. They have responded confidently based on their didactic-pedagogical expertise, overcoming fears and apprehensions. They have managed to integrate the primary program with the English program, they have learned to integrate technologies into their practices, they have been able to integrate with others, to integrate learning into life, to their own experiences and those of their students. They have achieved greater equity and educational inclusion.





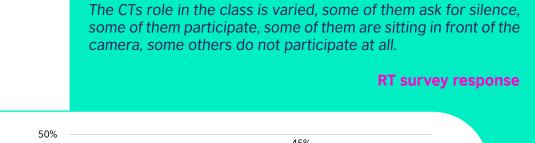
Issues and lessons around CTs - Lessons B and C

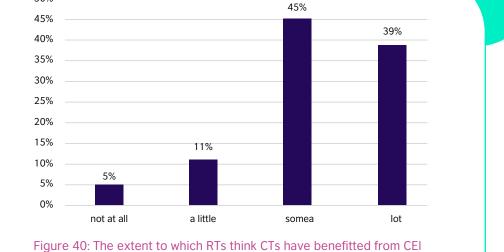


We can see from the responses from CTs that Lessons B and C are generally taken seriously, but there is no doubt that there is variability in the way they are implemented from CT to CT. It is ultimately up to the CT to fit Lessons B and C into the school week. At times CTs may feel that this takes away time from duties teaching maths, science, L1 oracy ad literacy etc. Others may feel uncomfortable working outside of their area of expertise. Mentors visit schools regularly, but not necessarily frequently. Mentors are confident that they know when Lessons B and C are happening, but this is not a systematically recorded activity, and given the power dynamics between the CT, the School, and Ceibal probably can never be so. The

control over the CT in CEI is in stark contrast to the control through the quality management system over the RT and their institute which is a supplier to Ceibal.

RTs believe that CTs benefit from the programme, and the great majority of RTs are positive overall (Figure 40). However, many RTs mention the variability of commitment amongst CTs and say that a substantial minority of CTs do not engage to the high standards expected by the RTs. Such variability is to be expected in a population of 3,200 CTs. This new approach to teaching a skill that the teachers do not themselves possess is bound to cause difficulties at different levels for different teachers.







An early comment in the British Council's "Ceibal in a Box" project around 2014 shows that this uncertainty and variation in Lessons B and C was an issue from the beginning of the project.Very often, a typical case is, say, we have the A lesson, which is a remote lesson, and then the B and C lessons. Well, we have a feeling that the B and C lessons are not taking place; the classroom teacher will never tell us, I am not doing this, but when we do have a feeling that this happens, we send the message to the mentor team, to see if they can pay a visit, and we have had positive results from that. It's not 100% successful, but it's a very high success rate from getting the mentors involved.

Dr. DJ Kaiser, in his evaluative visit of 2015 paid particular attention to Lessons B and C.

And I said, "so what class comes after English?" And they said, "what do you mean? I said, "so what's scheduled? So on the schedule, what is after English?" "No. we don't have a schedule. So it's. whatever the teacher wants to teach next". And so they have what they refer to as an integrated curriculum. And I will say I've seen teachers be very innovative in integrating their curriculum. One class I observed a teacher integrated math and English. And I was like, oh my goodness, it's beautiful. She was recycling things that had happened in the Ceibal class and was using it to teach math concepts. When you're able to do that integration, it's wonderful.

The real challenge of the project is getting those B and C lessons in. Now, when I did my observations, I was setting up a specific time to come. And they made arrangements that week to teach a B or a C lesson. So what I saw was very ideal, but in the week to week basis there's so many things that happen. There's so

much ebb and flow. And teachers really do make these decisions of what they're going to focus on. It's good in the sense of you get to know your students and you adjust instruction based on where they're at. The challenge is if you're trying to ensure that everyone is receiving the same type of instruction and the same number of hours and if you're trying to do an assessment where you're saying everyone's done the same thing so everyone's had the same number of hours of math and the same number of hours of history and the same number of hours of English. It's really difficult to do an assessment and figure out if the schedule that you have and the number of hours is adequate.

I would see in directors' offices a schedule. And the schedule would be of these classes where a teacher would travel in to do this. So you'd have physical education, you would have art. You might have music. Otherwise, there wasn't a schedule. Yes, it was up to the teacher.





Clearly the programme has taken these issues on board and changes have been made. A British Council manager noted:

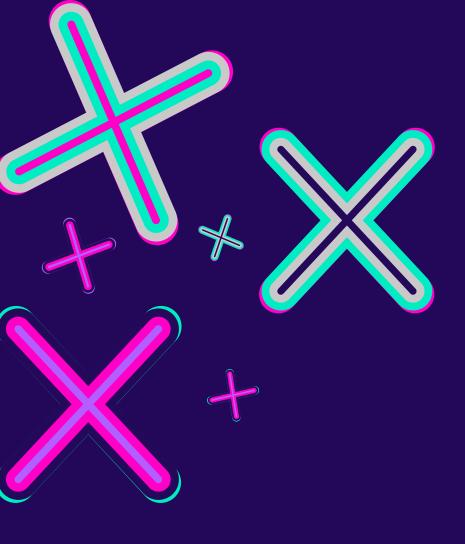
We are aware that in many cases these lessons don't happen. This lessons are not lessons as such. In the past we used to have lessons B and C with a lesson plan. That was a 45-minute lesson in Spanish delivered by the CT - it had a lesson format. Since we adopted Little Bridge or even before this morphed into now teachers are given a bank of activities. Most of these activities are self-access online activities and games, and it's like once a week or twice a week, your role as a CT is to give the learners time in the school to work on the suggested activities with their devices.

Comments from observers in the early days of CEI and later comments show a development in attitudes to Lesson B and C. Variability in the delivery of Lessons B and C clearly remain. The more recent additions of special activities and projects as an alternative to the stricter lesson plans of Little Bridge seem to show promise in engaging CTs more, allowing them more agency and more scope to mesh English with the rest of their work. It seems to be the case that it is the RTs who need convincing to adopt these special activities. The Ceibal management of CEI remains convinced that the Lesson A. B, C approach remains the best design. As long as attitudes remain positive, and formal assessment show this mode of teaching to

produce similar results to F2F teaching, then it is difficult to argue.

To conclude this chapter on CTs, we can observe that Ceibal en Inglés asked thousands of gualified, experienced, unionised primary class teachers permanent contracts with on busv professional and personal lives, through their Head Teachers, to start helping to teach a language that they did not know, using a new pedagogical approach which required more working time. Ceibal has no authority over those teachers. It is a credit to the programme that there has been such widespread success.







A





What has been the effect of the quality management system put into place for CEI?

Overview of quality management system



The quality management system in CEI is remarkable and the most rigorous enforcement of standards that the researchers have seen in large-scale public sector English teaching. The reason that this is possible is that it is in fact the private sector - the institutes and their Remote Teachers - that are being quality assured. Such a rigorous and detailed examination and evaluation of a teacher's performance would not be welcomed in the public sector systems that we are aware of.

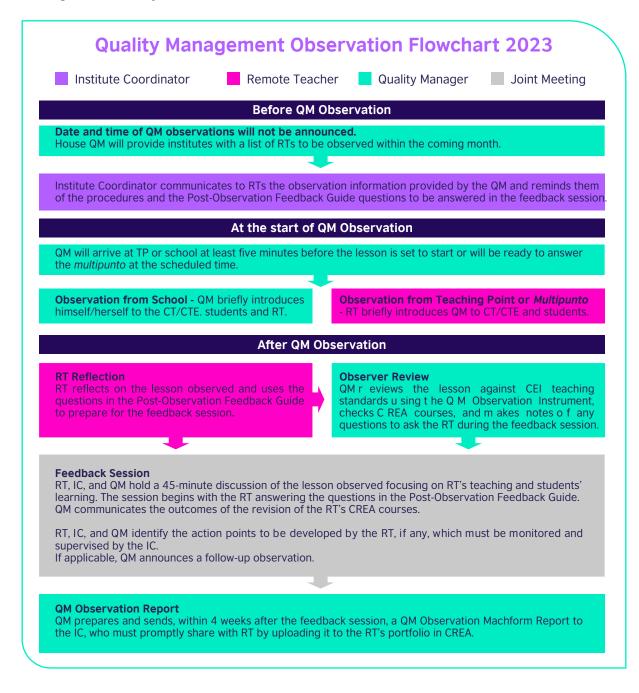
Before outlining the quality management system, we clarify that there have been two phases to the system. The first phase until 2017 was part of the contracted responsibilities of the British Council. The Council was responsible for assuring that remote teaching in its own remote teaching centres (Buenos Aires and Montevideo), its subcontracted RTCs (eq in the Philippines). and other RTCs contracted directly by Ceibal. In this phase the quality management system was part of the same department as the teacher development system. Quality managers were responsible for teacher development. The second phase from 2018 started with the second extension of the British Council contract when Ceibal decided it was ready to directly manage guality in the institutes. At this point a quality management department was established within CEI headed by a Quality Assurance Manager. The British Council continued to have contracted responsibility for teacher development as a separate, though connected, function within the programme.

The quality management process is described in the CEI handbook, which is the 116-page manual which CEI provides to all institutes and which lays down the regulations and processes of the programme. The Institute Quality Review (IQR) of the CEI programme comprises Remote Teacher observations and the institute assessment. The IQR is to be carried out in an objective, fair and transparent way and based on evidence. It is an ongoing process that provides each institute with annual gualitative feedback on the most important factors that contribute to the teaching quality of CEI lessons and the Institute's compliance with CEI requirements. In the review, the Quality Manager (QM) carries out a formal assessment of the Institute's Remote Teachers and internal processes. The aim of the IQR is to guarantee that remote lessons meet CEI standards by: assessing Institutes and their Remote Teachers, conducting RTs' formal observations, and benchmarking teaching guality across CEI and striving for remote teaching excellence. It is notable that in line with the 2018 division of quality management from teacher development, the aims of this process are described in terms of assessing compliance standards. rather and meeting than developing competences, which is seen primarily as a responsibility of each institute, with the support of The British Council's Teacher Development Manager. This should be understood in the context of Ceibal having contracted thirteen different institutes to provide remote teaching, and there is a need to ensure consistency of quality between them.



Remote Teacher observation

RTs are observed at least once a year, and sometimes more. The priority RTs for observation are new teachers and those deemed to be at higher risk from previous assessments. The observation process is shown in the flow-chart from the CEI handbook Figure 41). Each institute is designated one or two CEI quality managers, who may observe the lesson in one of three ways depending on context: from the RT's Teaching Point; from the school classroom alongside the CT; or from a third location, observing both the RT and the group via video, termed "multipoint". A recent modification is that RTs are not advised in advance that a particular lesson will be observed.









For each of the twelve areas there is a descriptor. Here is one example - Engagement:

Ceibal Ceibal en Inglés - Primary - Lesson Observation (2023)

Engagement

Input

Remote Teachers must:

• expose learners to language pitched slightly above their level in order to develop language proficiency.

• deliver the whole lesson using accurate, graded and adequately paced English showing knowledge of the target language when teaching and bonding with learners.

• give clear instructions so that learners know what is expected of them during all lesson stages. Instructions must be checked and they must be modelled when necessary.

• effectively communicate and check concepts throughout the lesson avoiding metalanguage.

| Undeveloped | Emerging |
|--|---|
| RT's English is ungraded and/or too fast/slow/ | RT's English is not consistently graded |
| complex for the learners to follow the lesson | or paced for learners, and/or some slips, |
| stages, grasp concepts and explanations, | inaccuracies, and fossilised errors may |
| and/or RT shows inaccurate use of the target | persist in non-target language, and/or |
| language of the lesson by making errors | RT resorts to Spanish for clarification, |
| that are frequent or basic in nature, and/or | explanations, or small talk. RT does not |
| RT resorts to Spanish throughout the lesson. | systematically use non-verbal strategies |
| There is a lack of non-verbal strategies and | and contextual cues and/or meaning are |
| contextual cues or meaning is conveyed | sometimes conveyed inaccurately. Some |
| inaccurately. RT's instructions and concepts | instructions and concepts are unclear., |
| are unclear, inadequate, and/or not checked. | inadequate, and/or not effectively checked. |
| RT resorts to unnecessarly long explanations | RT occasionally resorts to unnecessarily |
| and/or metalanguage. | long explanations or to metalanguage. |
| Developed | Advanced |
| RT's English is consistently graded and paced | RT's English is effectively graded and |
| for the learner, and RT shows accurate use | paced, and RT shows accurate use of |
| of the target language throughout the lesson | the target language throughout the |
| although rare slips may occur in non-target | lesson. RT uses a range of non-verbal |
| language. RT systematically uses non-verbal | strategies and contextual cues to convey |
| strategies and contextual cues to convey | meaning. Instructions and concepts are |
| accurate meaning. Instructions and concepts | clear and adequate and are effectively |

meaning. Instructions and concepts are clear and adequate and are effectively checked. Explanations are concise and metalanguage is avoided.

Figure 43: Descriptors for RT observation performance: Engagement – input.

are clear and adecuate and are effectively checked. Explanations are concise and

metalanguage is avoided.

These descriptors are very useful not only to achieve consistency and reliability between the assessment of QMs, but also to increase the understanding of the RT as to what constitutes quality teaching in the CEI programme.

The descriptors are based on accepted good practice in the ELT sector, indeed the final page of the observation instrument is dedicated to a bibliography of sources. The one area for discussion that we noted. and which we have referred to in another part of the report, is the use of Spanish in class by the RT. This can be seen in the descriptor above. The use of Spanish is mentioned as an indicator of an undeveloped or an emerging performance. This of course can be the case, and a common weakness in language teachers is the use of too little target language and too much L1 in classes. However, it can also be the case that the judicious use of Spanish either in order to quickly clarify a confusion, or to create rapport and build engagement for less engaged learners, can be an indicator of a developed or advanced level teacher. Some experienced RTs mentioned this constraint to us, and some CTs mentioned the need for more Spanish. What appears evident from our surveys is that it is common in groups for some students to be unengaged and

lost. Use of their own language is one way to engage them. This is not to say by any means that Spanish should be used for most of the lesson, but rather that RTs might be using Spanish for excellent pedagogical reasons and this might be evidence of a developed or advanced level of teaching. RTs are also assessed on their use of the CREA LMS, including on written feedback to students. There is also a section for free text comments and action points. There is a separate section applicable to those teachers operating from home as opposed to from a Teaching Point in an institute.

After the observation and prior to a meeting with the QM, the RT is expected to reflect on five questions. In a 45-minute postobservation meeting any action points are agreed and later followed up. The Institute Coordinator is involved and responsible along with the RT for monitoring any action points.

RT Post-Observation Feedback Guide

Reflect on your teaching and your students' learning and performance, partnership and coordination with the CT, and your strengths and areas of development in the observed lesson in preparation for the Feedback meeting with the QM. Come prepared to elaborate during the Feedback meeting.

- 1. Was the learning outcome achieved by the learners in the lesson?
- 2. Were the learners able to produce the new target language at sentence level?
- **3.** Were the learners and the CT left adequately prepared to continue with the weekly cycle?
- 4. What went well in the lesson that was evidenced by the students' response?5. Reflecting on the lesson observed, what areas of your teaching do you think need
- more development?

In cases of underperformance by RTs there is a strict procedure to ensure improvement, which will include where necessary an instruction to the institute to remove the RT from the programme. This underlines the seriousness of the CEI approach to quality teaching. The arm's length employment relationship between Ceibal and the private sector RT enables this strict approach.



A main part of the Institute Assessment is ensuring the institute has its own internal quality assurance processes which will maximize the possibility of quality teaching being delivered. As the CEI handbook stipulates, the Institute Internal Quality Assurance must be recorded in a written document which each institute must produce to describe how they implement their processes regarding the CEI programme. Institutes have to provide Quality Managers with evidence of their processes in CREA. The documents must demonstrate compliance with the standards required.





Section 1: Remote Teacher Assessment

Section 2: Institute Guidance & Support to Remote Teachers and Processes & Systems

Section 3: Institute Operational Management

Sections have different weightings and a final total is used as a proxy of the overall performance of each institute across the programme. An action plan for the institute is agreed, which may include, amongst other things, the allocation of experienced RTs to the more challenging groups, for example Make It Happen schools, and special education groups.

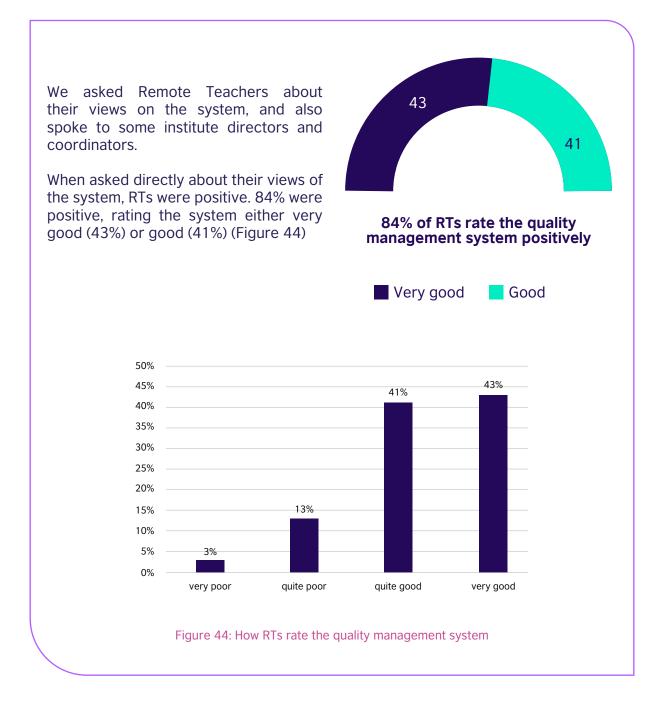








Perceptions of the effectiveness of the quality management system



The most common positive comment about the system is that it gives clarity to RTs about what the programme expects. Negative comments refer to the approach limiting RT agency and choice, and being a stressful experience for RTs.

Diverse comments on the quality management system

It helps to improve RT`s teaching as long as it is carried out by experienced remote teachers who really know what happens in a Uruguayan classroom. When it is done with respect and innovative ideas, it enriches teaching a lot!!!

does a great job checking whether classes fulfil the standards of CEI and making changes.

It is great to receive feedback from QMs. I benefited a lot through these years. They give very good pieces of advice which I take into account and consequently my classes improve.

Before quality management processes were in place the way they are now. Everything was the more relaxed and teachers perhaps had a bit more. Decision making power in how to run certain things in their groups. I remember when I was a remote teacher, yes, we had lesson plans, but there was great flexibility. In whatever you did in your class. As long as it was coordinated with the CT.

I believe it is very good and it aims at the excellence of the programme, however, it is extremely thorough on teachers, leaving little space for teacher flexibility.

...felt more like a supervision where you would be penalised if you didn't follow the plan as written, and I believe we must always adapt the plan to reality and not the other way about.

Takes a toll on many teachers. the level of scrutiny has gone past what's required. The observation instrument should be more flexible and anecdotal rather than just ticking boxes.

Not knowing when they will come generates anxiety and anguish in most of us and those feelings are not useful while working and trying to be professional.



Reflections on the CEI Quality Management system

The rigour of the QM system needs to be viewed in the context of an organisation contracting teaching services from 13 different suppliers and quite reasonably wanting to ensure a degree of consistency across those suppliers, given that teaching is an inherently variable activity.

We have no doubt that the system assures that institutes and RTs do their best to provide a quality teaching service to the programme. In the CEI programme that aims to reach every primary student in the country, the QM system is the principal mechanism for ensuring that a service of quality is being provided. It is a far more rigorous system that others that we have seen I the public sector and this level of rigour is dependent on the provision coming from outside the public sector.

While the system is currently clearly evaluative in design, it also has formative elements, with action plans developed at both teacher and institute level. The system of separating quality assurance from teacher development is interesting, but we noted that there is a regular and productive communication between the two. Ceibal managers told us that meetings with the teacher development manager were regular, and that issues noted in QM observations were fed through to teacher development so that targeted initiatives can be designed.

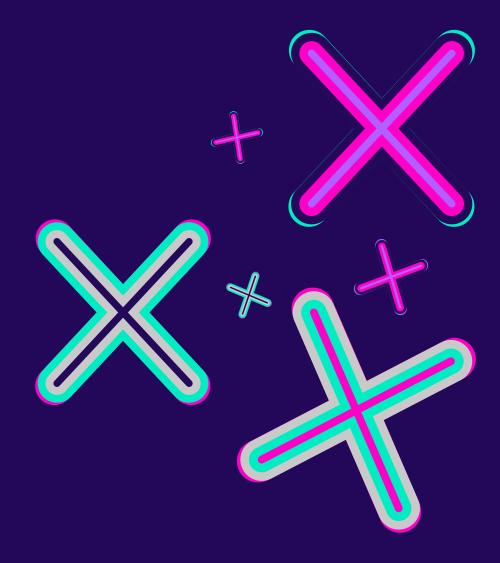
The system has adapted QM to circumstances over the years, The most striking instance being during the pandemic. This response is recorded in the Ceibal publication Against All Odds, a selection of narratives about the CEI response to the Covid crisis, (see pages 110 ff for the quality management response). Negron, Stanley, and Lind provide an excellent overview of the Quality Management system as it was in 2018 (in Innovations in Education: Remote Teaching, Stanley, 2018, p. 78 ff).

While the system assures a consistency of quality, it can be argued that it comes at some cost to teacher agency and the opportunity for teachers, especially the more experienced and competent to adapt their practice to different contexts.

It is clear that the main challenge to the operations of the system are the increasing demand for Home-Based Teaching (HBT). The CEI quality team are already coming to terms with this an it will continue to develop over the coming years.







Part 11 Public-Private Partnerships



Ceibal en Inglés relies on collaborative expertise between the private and public education sector, and on (mostly) private sector English language teachers working in the public school system in Uruguay. What challenges and/or difficulties exist when it comes to facilitating / enabling this cooperation?

The involvement of the private sector in CEI is an interesting aspect of the programme and one which others can take lessons from in other contexts. Essentially the Uruguayan system has solved the problem of a shortage of English teachers in public primary schools by outsourcing to the private sector in Uruguay, but more often outside Uruguay.

While Uruguay is generally a country that scores higher on most international comparisons of socio-economic development, often alongside Chile, it shares many cultural and educational traditions. There tends to be a social divide in the region between families that send their children to private school and those that send children to public school. The more affluent classes strive to send their children to what they see as good private schools. It is common for such families to network with others with children at similar schools and not to have members of their social circle whose children go to public school. Private education is not just a question of accessing a school which might have better resources, smaller classes and more highly qualified teachers. It is a statement of social class. Private schools exist at various pricepoints in the market, and cater for different sections of society, sometimes based on religion or ethnicity. There is a tendency for private schools to prioritise other languages, especially English, with many introducing English in pre-school or primary level. All this is a generalization with many countries having some prestigious and elite public

schools, often in capital cities, with places much in demand and competitive entry based on some combination of meritocracy or social standing.

A number of regional initiatives arose in the 2000s to give access to English to a wider population as a priority of the democratic governments of the region as one way of reducing entrenched social inequalities. These initiatives included Inglés Abre Puertas in Chile, Bogota Bilingue in Colombia, and PNIEB/PRONI in Mexico. The emergence of the Segundas Lenguas English programme F2F and Ceibal en Inglés in Uruguay fit neatly into this regional pattern.

The other element of private education that forms part of the background is English language institutes and private English classes. It is common for children to attend English classes in an institute after school or to have arranged informal one-to-one or small group English with a private tutor. These lessons are regularly referred to in responses from Uruguay to our surveys in this study. Families who can afford it will often arrange these classes for their children in order to catch up with those children with the advantage of quality English teaching in their schools. It is also common to attend extra English classes even when attending English classes at school.

It is against this social and educational background that we look at the privatepublic relationship in CEI in Uruguay.

How the public sector in Uruguay benefits from the private sector in CEI

CEI started due to a shortage of teachers to teach English F2F in public primary schools in Uruguay. If there had been enough specialist English teachers to cover all schools and students in Uruguay under the SL programme, CEI would not have been designed and implemented. English teachers needed to be found elsewhere. That elsewhere could be Uruguay in the private sector or in other countries. The other countries solution was always more feasible for two reasons. Firstly, there was and is a limited resource of acceptably qualified English teachers in the private sector in Uruguay to cover such a large demand. Secondly there was reluctance and resistance at a more political level surrounding the use of private sector teachers in Uruguay. These arguments appear to have abated in recent years and the use of RTs from Uruguay itself have increased as a proportion, though most RTs continue to operate from Argentina, though the British Council and other institutes.









Benefits of outsourcing teachers (RTs) from the private sector and related issues include:

• It allows Uruguay to access a new source of English teachers without interfering with the policies in public sector schools. This includes recruitment policies to primary school teaching positions which limit recruitment to teachers with special qualifications from approved teacher training institutes in Uruguay.

• RTs come largely from outside Uruguay so there is less potential for poaching of teachers who might work in the public sector if appropriately qualified.

• The option of paying teachers of one shortage subject more than other subjects, which might be considered as a supply and demand free-market solution but which would be politically unacceptable as divisive within the teacher cadres does not arise as the teachers are sourced as part of a commercial agreement with institutes.

• The extra work that primary school teachers (CTs) have to do over and above their normal work is compensated.

Our understanding is that the extra payment was negotiated specifically for the extra time that becomes necessary for coordinating with the RT.

• Issues with the teachers' union are mitigated as the union members are not obviously adversely affected.

• Employment responsibilities of the new cadre of RTs are avoided by the public sector as the contracted institutes employ teachers on a variety of contracts from zero-hours contracts to full-time, and from self-employed to fully employment rights status.

• The arms-length relationship between CEI and the RTs via the institutes mitigates the duty-of-care to teachers, and also allows for a culture of quality assurance with a more demanding and rigorous approach which would not be possible to apply in the public sector education system.



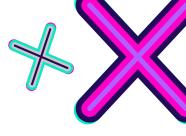
Benefits and issues for the private sector

The main benefit for the private sector institutes is that they receive extra income. The thirteen institutes contracted in 2023 are a mixture of private companies with the financial aim of providing an income for the owners and managers from the profit on that activity, and foundations which exist to achieve a social mission but which are also subject to their own internal targets to produce surpluses on CEI activity.

These language institutes usually provide services for a range of audiences including children, young people till in education, and adults working people. They usually provide F2F lessons as well as online lessons of various types. Often the demand for lessons is in the afternoon or evening when school and university lessons have finished. Providing RTs and lessons for CEI during the morning and afternoon allows institutes to use resources (teachers and premises) that might be unused at that time. Of course institutes have to factor in the set-up costs of remote Teaching Points, which might be used for other remote or online services.

The supply and demand of various forms of online teaching has increased substantially over recent years due to improved access to useful technologies. There was a large step change increase in online teaching as a result of the 2020 pandemic, which has continued. Institutes which were involved in CEI told us that they benefited from this experience with the pandemic inspired increase in demand for online teaching and corresponding decrease in the demand and feasibility of F2F teaching. The experience of remote teaching in CEI built the institutes' capacity and expertise. While the CEI service to students was changed dramatically during the pandemic, it nevertheless continued. Some informants expressed the opinion that some institutes were able to survive this period purely due to their CEI contract.





Special issues in Uruguay

Researcher: What is the most challenging part of your work?

CEI manager: Working with the public sector

Researcher: But Ceibal is the public sector, isn't it?

CEI Manager: Yes, but...

The nature and culture of Ceibal

A factor that is important in understanding both the great success of the CEI programme and the gaps in dealing with the larger picture of ELT in Uruguay is that the relationship of the British Council as provider of various elements of the programme, and the institutes including the British Council as providers of RTs is with Ceibal and not with the Ministry of Education nor with ANEP, the authority that implements education and manages schools.

Ceibal, as we have seen, was established separately from the main educational authorities and given substantial independence as a government agency. Importantly Ceibal quickly developed a culture that was quite different from the culture prevalent in ANEP and perhaps the public sector and ministries in general. This was explained to us again and again, and with some pride, especially by Ceibal managers. This culture is characterised by a can-do attitude, a focus on results, a lack of bureaucracy and risk-averse processes, and a limited hierarchy. This explains the exchange with a CEI manager above.

ANEP, or for that matter any traditional public sector organisation in the region would be unlikely to find it as easy to recruit and control the institutes as Ceibal does. Ceibal now has years of experience in sourcing and monitoring large contracts from the private sector for laptops and other technology, and ensuring value for money.

Thus Ceibal operates as a kind of buffer between the private sector institutes and the public sector schools under ANEP.





We must also note that this separation of Ceibal from the centre of operations of the education system is one of the factors that has limited Uruguay's ability to move forward on ELT reform on all fronts, rather than limiting its focus to providing English for primary school students. A fuller and earlier review of secondary school teaching and an increase and improvement of opportunities for initial teacher training for English teachers or Classroom Teachers with English would have been ideal, but Ceibal had no remit or influence in these areas (apart from providing some remote teaching support to CTEs (secondary level English teachers). The British Council's agreement was specifically with Ceibal, and there was never any formal agreement with ANEP of the Ministry of Education.

Do RTs understand the Uruguayan context?

Make sure that this teacher understands that on the other side you have students that are cold or they're hot or they're hungry or they're tired

British Council manager

RTs in general may have a more privileged background than their CEI students. We saw no specific evidence of problems arising from this though British Council managers are aware of the potential "culture gap". If the culture gap is due to socio-economic class, then RTs in Uruguay may be just as vulnerable to lack of understanding of the students' daily lives and backgrounds.

When the RT is in a different country the risks are amplified. While the cultural differences between Argentina and Uruguay might be thought of as minimal to observers outside the Southern Cone, Uruguayans are acutely aware of their national identity as separate from their larger neighbour to the south and west. The culture gap between RT and CT was most obvious in the period when a large amount of remote teaching was carried out from the Philippines with Philippine RTs. Apart from the clear difficulty that a teacher from the Philippines would have in imagining the reality of a Uruguayan primary school child, there was also the linguistic difficulty, as generally the RTs did not speak Spanish at a level adequate to coordinate lesson plan with the CT.

This potential culture gap is acknowledged by Ceibal. The CEI handbook states:

Cultural awareness. Understanding the differences in cultural and social backgrounds and realities is essential and it involves the ability to stand back from one's cultural values, beliefs, perceptions, and realities in order to be able to see and interpret those of others. Cultural awareness becomes central when the RT has to interact with the CT. Many times, these two professionals work in completely different environments, which makes their experiences very distinct from one another. That may lead them to see, interpret and evaluate things differently, which may cause misunderstanding. Consequently, it is strongly advised that the RT steps outside of their cultural boundaries in order to realise the impact that this factor may have on the CT, the learners, and the lessons.





Part 12 Long-term impact



What long-term, sustainable, positive impacts can be determined on the education system in Uruguay, and to what extent are they due to the longevity of the project and / or partnership?

When the design of CEI was being discussed in 2011 and during the pilot in 2012, there were many in the English unit of the British Council in UK the United Kingdom who were extremely sceptical that this was a feasible and sensible way to solve the problem of a shortage of English teachers in a country. What if every country that had a shortage tried this? Where would the teachers come from? Would the technology work? Yes, you can give a few lessons by videoconference, but there was no way that you could scale it up to teach tens of thousands of children every week. Uruguay would have to find another way, at least a parallel way, to fix its English teacher shortage. The word "crazy" might well have been used more than once.

Even the most enthusiastic, led by Michael Carrier, Head of English Innovations for the Council, looked for a solution with a wide ranging package of solutions to the teacher shortage alongside the remote There was corresponding teaching. scepticism in Uruguay and some resistance to Ceibal getting involved alongside ANEP with the pedagogical rather than purely technological aspects of teaching English. This included concerns from unions over impact on CT jobs, and concerns around the privatisation of education.

The leaders of the project, once it got under way as a pilot, were however, fully committed to making it work, and resilient to the nay-sayers. What we see through the life of CEI is a long line of sceptics visiting and seeing the programme at first hand, and being converted to believing it does work after all.

CEI was implemented as planned, with the Ceibal team supported by the British Council team in first the United Kingdom and Argentina and then very soon in Uruguay, expanded the programme in three years, as planned, to over 70,000 students. The implementation of the programme went as planned, with the many problems arising being solved along the way. These included big problems to solve including how to increase volume rapidly when there were insufficient funds to pay the requisite number of RTs from the United Kingdom or from other British Council teaching centres around the world. The amazing solution was to subcontract a huge remote teaching centre in Philippines from 2013. The only aspect of the original plan was a deprioritisation of improving the English of CTs alongside a strengthening of the new pedagogical approach in which the CT was a facilitator of learning rather than the traditional role of transferor of knowledge.

So CEI was implemented according to plan. But that is not enough for a change initiative to have a long-lasting positive change on the Uruguayan system.



Institutionalisation

For an educational change initiative to be successful and sustainable we would expect it to be institutionalised, to become a normal and expected part of life in the institutions it is expected to change, as opposed to being a temporary solution. The leaders of CEI in Ceibal told us that it became clear to them very early in the programme that CEI was not a "plan B" to solve a problem until a better solution could be found. Nobody in Ceibal really thought about how long this innovative way of teaching and learning would last, it was an openended programme, and that is why we have referred to CEI as a programme rather than as a project which is expected to have a closure throughout this report. On the other hand, the British Council contracts were generally for three years and there was no solid expectation that there would be a renewal or extension.

So has CEI become institutionalised within the Uruguayan education system? We assert that the answer is yes, and we offer the following evidence for this finding.

Since 2016 almost all primary school children in Uruguay receive at least three years of English lessons. This fact is universally applauded within Uruguay.

Since that date the numbers and proportions of children in Primary Grade 4 to 6 have remained stable, with over 60% of children participating in CEI with most of the rest enrolled in the Segundas Lenguas F2F programme. There is no clear tendency for schools to remove themselves from the CEI programme in favour of the SL F2F programme.

Most (five out of six in our survey) CTs involved in CEI see their involvement as positive, and many of them have been involved for many years.



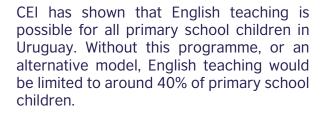


The annual adaptive test continues to be developed in sophistication and in 2022 reached the largest proportion of children studying English to date. The results of the test clearly demonstrate learning.

The collaboration between Ceibal and the educational authority ANEP has grown and become more constructive, for example in the annual test development, and both parties recognise the success of the other's programme. Ceibal used to be called Plan Ceibal at the beginning of the programme, with the "plan" an indication that it had an element of experiment to it. In 2022 the name was changed to Ceibal, with a more permanent ring to it, and the governance of Ceibal was moved to place it more firmly alongside ANEP under the Ministry of Education.

One element that has allowed the institu tionalisation brought by longevity is political backing. DJ Kaiser, the 2015 evaluator of CEI put it like this in an interview:

Its persistence is amazing to see. Another project I studied in Rio was using video conference and it was funded through municipal funds. Once the Olympics ended and once that mayor was no longer mayor, it just fell apart. The funding wasn't there. So that funding is important for Uruguay. What helps this? Politicians being on board. And this whole idea of democratization. And each new elected official still being in favor of this. Look at the discourse of different political parties and the reason they believe in English. The reasons may differ, but there seems to be buy-in for teaching English and having that at earlier levels. So It's worked well for politicians.





The benefits of longevity in CEI

There are many aspects of the programme and its success which would simply not have been possible without time. This was a big learning curve for Ceibal managers and staff who had not administered a large scale teaching programme before. The organisation at the time had been focussed on providing devices and connectivity, and not focussed on how to integrate them into children's learning. Remote teaching at such large scale had never been attempted before, and every aspect of the programme had to be implemented, monitored, and adapted, then implemented and monitored again. This applied to the curriculum and materials, the test, quality management and teacher development. In the first four years much energy was expended on managing the volume growth.

The longevity of the programme has allowed for the following benefits which would not have been effective over a short time-span, and which are generalizable to many other contexts:

- Increase in volume per year to 75.000 students (over four years)
- · Change of focus after four years from volume to quality
- The development of experienced cadres of teachers (CTs and RTs)
- The evolution of the British Council relationship over four three-year contracts
- Gradually increasing ability of Ceibal to operate independently
- Development of relationship with ANEP with its different culture
- Development of testing system from home-made to national validated 2013-2022
- Evolution of materials for teachers and students through at least three phases
- The development of an integrated teacher observation and development system into a complete Quality Assurance system
- Achieving a stable platform where incremental change is possible and measurable across all elements of the programme.

• Ability in later years to focus on the learners who are most difficult to reach and have the greatest needs, for example, rural schools, SEN schools, and the Make It Happen initiative for underperforming schools.



Impact of CEI on institutions

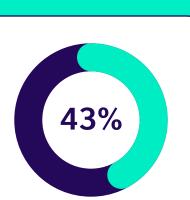
CEI was Ceibal's first venture into pedagogy but it has given Ceibal the skills and confidence to launch more pedagogical programmes including jovenes a programar, a scheme to facilitate employment in the IT sector for young people. After some years in which participation of women and girls was below 40%, the 2024 version will be dedicated to females.

Ceibal explicitly acknowledges the influence of CEI in its strategic plan:

Through CoLAB Uruguay, the Data Science Program seeks to make Uruguay a regional hub of educational projects in innovation, entrepreneurship and ICTs strongly linked to productive development. The first proposal of CoLAB Uruguay is UTEC's Master's Degree in Data Science with MIT's academic support and Plan Ceibal's logistics and technological support...This has been possible thanks to Plan Ceibal's knowledge transfer on the lessons learned on remote teaching (Ceibal in English and JaP).

Ceibal strategic plan (p. 57)

We should also bear in mind that CEI has affected the wider teaching methods of a substantial minority of Classroom Teachers (43%).

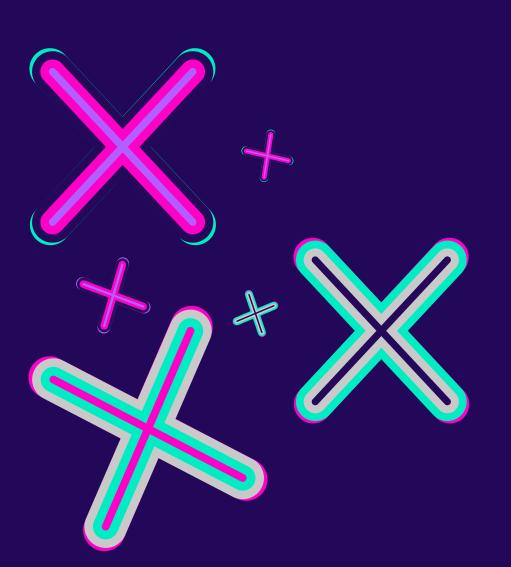


Classroom teachers who have changed their teaching practice as a results of CEI involvement

It definitely works because if it didn't, it would have crashed already.

CEI Manager

Part 13 The British Council as long-term partner



What is the value of that the British Council brings as a long-term partner for the Ceibal en Inglés programme?

The CEI programme supports inclusive, quality teaching, learning and assessment of English, which is a core British Council aim (see chapter 14). This chapter looks in particular at the contribution the British Council has made and continues to make to the overall CEI programme and thereby to Uruguayan education.

Phases of British Council contribution to CEI

We've learned a lot from the British Council a lot. We've learned a lot about processes, about protocols.

Gabriela Kaplan. Head of CEI

We can identify three phases of the British Council's participation. While the exact boundaries are not clearly defined, they can be seen as follows:

2011-2012. Ceibal and British Council discuss possible scenarios. Ceibal issues competitive invitation to tender to provide services relating to remote teaching. British Council wins tender. Proof of concept pilot phase takes place.

2013-2020 British Council establishes a presence in Uruguay alongside Ceibal team. British Council remote teaching centres are established in Montevideo and Buenos

Aires. British Council works alongside Ceibal as advisor in the management of CEI, manages some aspects directly as part of the renewable contract, progressively passes elements of operational management to Ceibal team.



2021- present British Council no longer has presence in Uruguay. CEI contract is managed from British Council Argentina. The contract now is to provide a substantial proportion of remote teaching from the Buenos Aires remote teaching centre, and also to provide Teacher Development throughout the programme.



This pattern of British Council contribution fits a standard model for collaboration in English programmes overseas in which an initial period of discussion leads to a formal agreement.

As part of the formal agreement, which can be renewed with adjustments, the British Council progressively passes its technical expertise to the client or partner, until the overseas partner feels confident to continue without the support of the British Council. The CEI programme is evidence that in a complex project then a good number of years are recommended to ensure the expertise is transferred and good practices are embedded.

British Council was very generous, very flexible. As time went by we took over responsibility. The British Council was generous. They gave the team more space, more room for decision-making.

Claudia Brovetto – Head of Ceibal Learning Networks

We can also break down the phases of British Council contribution along the line of contract renewals. At the signing of each contract it was not clear if the contract would be renewed or not, so decisions had to be taken based on a possibility that the contract would not be renewed.

2013-2015 – The original agreement. The three objectives were to deliver lessons to students, to improve the English of teachers, to provide management, materials and training to allow for that to happen. The five contracted services were: project management; materials development; training; teaching; and testing.

2015-2017 – The first extension (signed 1 year before original agreement finished). Changes included setting up an RTCs in Montevideo and Buenos Aires and reduction of classes delivered from Philippines.

2018-2020 – The second extension. Changes included handing over of quality management to Ceibal. **2021-2023** – The third extension. Changes included handing over of project management and subcontracting of teaching, and delivery only from Buenos Aires not Uruguay. British Council continued with teacher development across the project.

2024-2025/6 – A proposed fourth extension (currently in negotiation at the time of writing this report).

One specific feature of this programme is that it was to take place in a country where the British Council had no representation nor activity.

This was an unusual scenario and caused extra obstacles as the signing of an agreement had to be approved at a very high level. It naturally also created operational issues, as the British Council had no knowledge of operating in Uruguay with its own national legal and financial regulations, and all contacts in the country had to be built from scratch.



Several operational elements of the programme were passed over to Ceibal after the second extension by which time the programme had reached its maximum volume, and the CEI team had more capacity to focus on issues beyond volume growth. Thus the long phase of the British Council's presence alongside Ceibal in Uruguay can be divided into several sub-phases of volume growth and learning, passing of elements of the programme management to the programme owner, Ceibal, and then a withdrawal from presence in Uruguay to a less central, though still important role in CEI managed from Argentina.

The original agreement established a programme steering group with seven members, four from Ceibal and three from British Council, with the British Council responsible for chairing the meetings and producing minutes. This both shows the responsibility of the British Council for management but at the same time, it cannot be said that the British Council "managed the programme". The steering group was advisory, not executive, and there were major elements that remained in the hands of Ceibal, including the areas of establishing links and agreements with schools through ANEP, and decisions around technology. Ceibal decided which elements of management would be delegated or contracted to the British Council. In the chain between the RT and the CT, the British Council was delegated the management of the RT end, while the management of the CT end was managed by Ceibal, in coordination with ANEP.

At the beginning of this project both Ceibal and the British Council were learning. British Council had decades of experience of English programmes globally, but had no experience in Uruguay. Ceibal was expert in introducing technology into schools but had little experience of pedagogy and had recruited language experts from the education sector who were to become the leader of CEI. Remote Teaching was new to both parties as there was no previous example of language being taught by videoconferencing on a systematic long-term, large-scale basis to children in public schools. It was thus a steep learning curve for both parties. Ceibal learned about ELT and pedagogical principles and processes, while the British Council learned about remote teaching.

Initially there was more dependence on the British Council: the design of lesson plans, materials, the CPD, the familiarity with digital materials. All these were prepared and tailor-made, not an off-the-shelf solution.

Claudia Brovetto, Head of Learning Networks, Ceibal

We learned from those first years with the British Council a lot in terms of the pedagogical part of the program. The BC was in charge of that and we've learned and we have a solid team right now. We've learned to manage things. We have institutes that support us and the British Council still plays an important part.

CEI manager

Elements of British Council contribution to CEI

Each of the main areas of expert contribution by British Council over the length of the programme are present in other British Council English programmes.

However, it is difficult to identify another programme where all of these elements are

applied in an integrated fashion. The five elements present in the original contract are: project management; materials development; teacher development; teaching students; and testing. Some of the subheadings below are subsumed under one of those five headings.



The creation of lesson plans for teachers for the three-year programme along with the selection of digital student material from the British Council's extensive range was part of the original agreement, and a great deal of time was dedicated to both writing and reviewing by British Council contracted experts. Ceibal had decided not to work with commercial publishers in the original tender and lesson plans were designed from scratch with the new remote teaching model in mind. Each lesson plan then had to be tested in practice. In general, the first set of lesson plans were found to be too long and too detailed with too much material.

There was a continuous cycle of revision to improve the plans. The didactic materials available to students were taken from a bank of items mainly from the British Council Learn English, including videos and games as well as texts. This meant there was no single student text-book, either digital or in hard-copy, which some CTs regretted. After some years Ceibal identified the commercial publisher Little Bridge (LB) to provide an integrated curriculum and materials which would include a LMS based text-book.

This was a complex process including tailoring LB's generic material to the Uruguayan context and the LB material was not fully implemented until 2021.

Some CTs in our survey still regret the lack of a hard-copy text book to supplement the material that students can access on their laptops.

It was important to establish a teaching methodology policy and the first methodology policy statement was developed by the British Council in 2013. The methodology statement has been revised several times in the interim. The current 2023 statement remains true to the principles of the 2013 document.

Recruitment, induction, management of Remote Teachers

This was also a part of the original responsibility of the British Council. The ClassroomTeacherside of the "pedagogical pair" was of course already present in the schools. The sourcing of teachers had to take into account the tension between quality of teacher needed, the resources available to fund the Remote Teaching workforce, and the need for rapid volume growth to reach more students and schools in Uruguay. The uncertainty of the future of the programme also had to be taken into account, including the three-

Development of student testing

See Chapter 7: Learners for the background to the annual test. The British Council local team developed the first pilot test in 2013 and the British Council's <u>Assessment Research Group</u> led the development of the first adaptive

Professional development of teachers

The area of development of RTs has been a British Council responsibility from the start of the programme to the present (see Chapter 8: Remote Teachers). It is perhaps the most common feature amongst British Council English programmes and in all programmes is founded on the Council's Continuing Development Framework, which has

English improvement for CTs

(See Chapter 9: Classroom Teachers) This was one of the three core objectives of the original agreement and fell under the task of teaching in the five tasks in that agreement. The British Council assembled a team of tutors to support CTs who voluntarily enrolled, and many CTs did benefit from this. A study of the motivation of CTs to improve their English in 2015 showed that there was less year contracts between Ceibal and the British Council. In these circumstances, the British Council and Ceibal agreed that an outsourcing strategy by the British Council would be most appropriate. This led to British Council contracting a largescale provider of Remote Teachers in the Philippines (see Chapter 8 Remote Teachers). RTs were also recruited in smaller numbers from other countries, sometimes from British Council teaching centres.

test in 2014. This continued until a global search for an independent consultant who could help to validate the test took place, and the <u>CRELLA</u> unit at the University of Bedfordshire joined the test design team.

been adapted for the CEI programme by trainers with knowledge of the local environment based on needs analysis including regular coordination with the quality management team who regularly observe teaching. The British Council has also developed and delivered induction and development for CTs.

enthusiasm than had been hoped. This is also reflected in the CT survey done by the current study, as reported above. The objective of improving the English of CTs was de-prioritised as returns were less than expected. This was a sensible course of action in the circumstances. Courses for those CTs who want to enrol are still available through one of the institutes.



Standard-setting & quality management of institutes and teachers

The British Council developed the original systems for assuring quality of remote teaching. As the British Council administers the <u>Accreditation UK</u> quality assurance process to officially accredit private sector providers of ELT as well as universities in UK.

It also has long-standing procedures to assure and improve quality in its teaching centres. However, this experience needed to be adapted significantly to suit the remote teaching environment. For the first years of the programme, the managers assuring quality were also responsible for teacher development. This changed in 2018 when Ceibal took over quality assurance (changing the name of the process formally from quality management to quality assurance). At that point the quality assurance process became separated from the teacher development process (see Chapter 10: Quality Management).

Management processes around all the elements

The British Council elements of CEI were themselves quality assured within the British Council by a process of regular reporting which applied to all English programmes globally.

Part of this process was a Project Quality Assurance Framework (PQAF) visit in 2016 to formally check compliance of the project against a set of project management quality indicators. As is usual this inspection recommended a number of improvements as well as highlighting areas of excellence (see Chapter 4: Evaluations).

Regular evaluation of the programme

In the early years of the programme Ceibal allowed a budget line for evaluative visits (apart from the British Council PQAF visit described above). Evaluations by Sheehan in 2012 and Wilson in 2013 organised by the British Council and Kaiser organised by Ceibal with the Fulbright Commission in 2015 are described in Chapter 4. After that visit and the PQAF visits, the budget for external evaluations was cut, and as far as we know there has been no significant evaluation of the CEI programme until the current study in 2023.

They would do recording of lessons so that they could then review them for quality control, to provide feedback and inform training. For me it was it was great to see how British Council and the team worked together. Having offices that were on the same campus really helped.

Dr. DJ Kaiser interview



International exposure of the programme

The British Council was aware and proud of the innovative nature of the programme from the beginning. It regularly organised conference presentations at IATEFL in UK, TESOL and in USA other international conferences. With ambitions to replicate the programme elsewhere or at least use some of the basic principles of success, the British Council in UK developed a training pack of lessons learned "Ceibal in a box". This was never published but rolled out to British Council English

Safeguarding of children in remote and online environments

The British Council has rigorous policies and processes to ensure that children are safe which must be applied to all its programmes. The new model of remote teaching with its online elements provided new challenges for this. The British Council led the design and managers across the world. There were also a number of papers published by British Council managers such as Banegas (2013) and Stanley (2015) to bring the programme to wider attention. The most ambitious project was the publication of the volume Innovations in Education: Remote Teaching edited by the British Council Country Director and CEI project Director Graham Stanley, which was a comprehensive examination of all the elements of this innovative new model.

implementation of the new processes. Visitors to the British Council Remote Teaching Centre are left in no doubt that this is kept at the front of RT minds through poster reminders as well a regular mandatory training (see Chapter 7 Learners).





Perceptions of the British Council

The most convincing demonstration of Ceibal's satisfaction with the British Council is the fact that this contract was not only awarded to the British Council but has been extended three times and is about to be extended one more in 2024. The leaders of CEI in Ceibal and their managers clearly appreciate the British Council's contribution and there are a number of quotes to demonstrate that. The two leaders of the programme in the 12year period both speak in complimentary fashion, with Gabriella Kaplan talking of how much Ceibal learned from the British Council, and Claudia Brovetto referring to the generosity of spirit and flexibility of the British Council in giving space to the CEI team to learn and to take over responsibilities themselves. Where rare critical comments were made by managers, it was always about specific operational issues, most particularly turnover of RTs, leading to changes of RTs mid-year. One Ceibal manager made both the strategic positive point and the topical negative point at the same time:

It's fantastic that the British Council has provided continued support to CEI since the beginning in different ways, because the British Council is a renowned institution. It's important to have a strong partner. ...The remote teaching at the moment is going through some tension at the British Council because there has been a great turnover of remote teachers, probably influenced by the situation in Argentina and, obviously that affects the classes, the teaching and the learning because the students had change their remote teacher a couple times or 3 times a year.

Ceibal manager



There were often positive comments about individuals in the British Council and about British Council teachers from Ceibal managers:

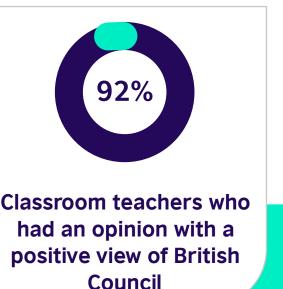
she's a highly qualified professional and she's supporting RT in several ways providing professional development...

Classes that are delivered by British Council are usually very good. They're very creative. Feedback sessions with teachers from British Council are usually very good where they're reflective- "Yeah, I saw that I did this and maybe that wasn't the best idea. I think I'm gonna do this the next class". BC has grown with us. And helped us grow also.



The British Council aims to generate positive opinions of the United Kingdom and of the organisation itself as a proxy for the United Kingdom. This is not easy when the only activity in the country is providing an educational service within a commercial context with limited opportunity for branding and promotion. As one Uruguayan academic with international experience of the British Council told us, 'they were not the typical Council, like there were no banners and no fanfairs or anything. They were very subdued, very low profile'. Of course the British Council has no separate bricks and mortar physical presence, and no public funds for a more general communications and promotional strategy.

Classroom Teachers who had worked with British Council RTs, when asked their opinion of the British Council. While over 40% had no opinion, the rest were almost unanimously positive. In the public survey 30% had no opinion, and 92% with an opinion were positive. There were not many comments made though some clearly knew of the Council's greater involvement in early years.



El know-how que aportó el British Council, especialmente en los inicios del programa, fue clave para poder desarrollar un programa que atendiera a las necesidades y características específicas de Uruguay.

The know-how that the British Council contributed, especially at the start of the programme was key to developing a programme that takes account of the needs and specific characteristics of Uruguay.

Public survey response

...las capacitaciones que ofrecieron a los docentes. También apoyó a los institutos en la implementación de los programas.

...the training they offered to teachers. They also supported the institutes en implementing the programmes.

Public survey response

We also asked what other country survey respondents associated with the programme. The majority (67%) of CTs who had an opinion cited Argentina where is of course the British Council RTs are now based. United Kingdom came second with 15% and USA very similar on 15%. In the public survey those who had an opinion were evenly split between Argentina, UK, and USA with a few mentioning the Philippines.

> La relaciono con Argentina porque muchas de las profesoras están ahí, con Estados Unidos por los convenios y becas; y con Gran Bretaña porque el British, según entiendo, promueve el inglés de Inglaterra.

> I relate it to Argentina because many of the RTs are from there, with USA for the agreements and grants; and with the UK because the British, as I understand it, promotes British English.

Public survey response

That quote from the public survey highlights another international aspect of the project. The Fulbright commission offer visits to the USA to Classroom Teachers as well as CEI staff, which is obviously popular.

A few respondents, through our survey answers form Uruguay express concern that the teaching is being outsourced, particularly to the private sector, and at times mentioning to organisations outside Uruguay, implying fears of a wider privatisation of the public education system.

The fact remains that the British Council presence remains low-key and behind the scenes, which is presumably Ceibal's preference, and the most common response in Uruguay is summarised as:

No sabía de la presencia de British Council en Ceibal. I didn't know of the British Council presence in Ceibal

Public survey response



How did the Ceibal - British Council relationship begin?

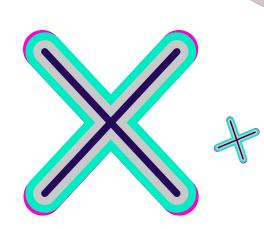
There are lessons for the British Council in this story. Before 2012, the British Council had no presence or activity in Uruguay.

In early 2011, Michael Carrier, Head of English Innovations at the British Council, was talking with Michael Trucano, both then and now Education Technology expert at the World Bank. The two Michaels knew each other from gatherings such as the mEducation Alliance symposium series. Carrier had a particular interest in technology in ELT; Trucano in technology in developing education systems. Trucano learned about the British Council interests in getting involved in large-scale English improvement projects from Carrier.

Trucano was naturally well acquainted with the innovative work of Ceibal in Uruguay, starting with the One-Laptop-Per-Child project. He knew that Ceibal were interested in expanding their activity into pedagogical areas, including English. He recommended to the President of Ceibal, Miguel Brechner (the third Michael in this story) that he contact Carrier. Brechner visited London shortly after this and had a number of meetings with Carrier. Carrier drew up a number of scenarios to solve the problem of Uruguay's shortage of teachers and its desire to universalise primary school English learning, using technology and specifically remote teaching as part of the solution. The concept of the Lesson A, B, C approach and the relationship between RT and CT was conceived in this period. Paul Woods of the British Council Argentina was tasked with drawing up the project plan for the proof of concept phase in 2012.

The scope and focus of the project changed over the 2011-2012 period. In 2011 Carrier and the Council included pre-service teacher training for new generations and increasing the supply of trained teachers in Uruguay as components of the overall project. Ideas included the conversion of English-speaking subject teachers, the fasttrack training (CELTA type) of non-teacher English speakers in Uruguay, and the use of native-speaker language assistants. The pilot phase was to be development of





two groups of teachers, as opposed to groups of students which it turned into in 2012. The appetite for fast action and results on the part of Brechner and Ceibal led to the focus turning to the provision of Remote Teachers and the testing out of how the remote teaching model would work. The wider issues of how to produce more English teachers within Uruguay were deemed to less practicable, and needing the involvement of a wider group of Uruguayan decision makers outside Ceibal, who did not have the same appetite for rapid action. The implementation of the remote teaching model could be enough in itself to achieve the universalisation of primary school English learning in the country.

By late 2012, when the proof of concept phase was well under way, conceptual discussions were still ongoing. Carrier discussed with Brechner "the long-term goal to ensure the language level of local teachers improves, so that they can slowly take on more responsibility and own the long-term sustainability of the project". That focus on improving CTs' English proved to be less achievable than envisaged. It is interesting that the emergence of "special projects" in the CEI curriculum in the later years of the programme does show some elements of CT responsibility and ownership, in line with the original aspirations.

The first Ceibal contract with the British Council was signed in May 2013.





Comparisons with other British Council English programmes



The British Council has, and has had, many English programmes around the world. Very often they are focussed on teacher development. CEI has been more wide ranging than most, involving teacher development certainly, but led by delivery of teaching, curriculum and materials, assessment and programme valuation, with an underpinning of research and external communication. It has certainly been more innovative than most, and has led the field globally in remote English teaching for schools.

As we saw in Chapter 12, a lot of the success depends on its longevity – twelve years at the time of writing. It is not the British Council's longest running English programme, that accolade probably goes to the <u>Bilingual Education Project</u> in Spain. But it is the longest running commercial contract, which has not only survived but also grown, in an environment of a decade of change for English in the British Council.

CEI delivery by the British Council has much in common with the services provided by the Council's teaching centres around the world, which often provide English courses for educational institutions, but not on the scale of CEI, and without the elements of curriculum, teacher development, and testing which make this programme a more comprehensive contribution to raising the quality of inclusive education in a country.







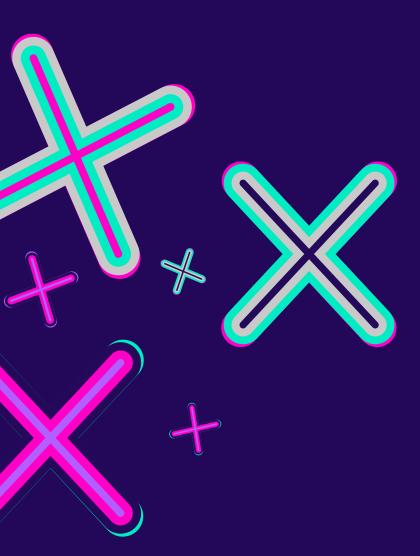
Why the British Council?

It is interesting to reflect on what Ceibal chose the British Council – an organisation generally unknown and not active in Uruguay as the main organisation to help them get CEI under way. Our feelings after our conversations especially in Uruguay lead us to believe that the following factors were involved:

- A wider public sector organisation in which profit for shareholders is not a prime aim.
- A clear track record of success in education reform programmes.
- An organisation that guarded its reputation thus reducing risk.
- A convincing contribution to forming the initial design through a number of phases

The award of the contract to initiate and develop the CEI project to the Council rather than to a publisher motivated by making a commercial success of it and generating profits for shareholders, or a local supplier without the extensive range of international connections and access to global expertise was an astute move by Plan Ceibal. It allowed a lot of additional benefits to accrue not solely those specified in the detailed project specifications: for example, the involvement of remote teachers from a variety of different countries, cultures and backgrounds from around the world, the added value of accessing online resources and materials such as the language improvement programme for Uruguayan classroom teachers at no additional cost to the project, opportunities for interaction of local teachers and managers with the global ELT community e.g. attending conferences such as TESOL and IATEFL; involving local private language schools in Uruguay in the project as a source of remote teachers etc.

Interviewee









A

Linking CEI with British Council outcomes and outputs





Background and evidence map

All British Council activity is expected to make a contribution to the British Council mission, and the high-level outcomes expressed in the various departmental theories of change, logical frameworks and programme level outcomes and outputs.

Reviewing a project like this against the various outcomes, outputs and indicators, we note that this British Council programme is in the form of a commercial contract which generates a surplus for the British Council. To gain this activity the British Council had to comply with the terms of the competitive invitation to tender set by the client Ceibal, and is classified in the British Council as a commercial contract. There was quite appropriately no scope for the British Council to alter the programme in order to achieve British Council outcomes. British Council money from public funds is not used in this project.

Uruguay is no longer a country which is eligible to receive ODA funds according to international agreements, which limits the British Council's scope to spend public funds in the country under current policies.

Despite the net zero cost to the British Council and the public purse, the results of the research and the narrative and evidence in this report demonstrate that the CEI programme makes a significant contribution to the high level aims of the UK and the British Council.

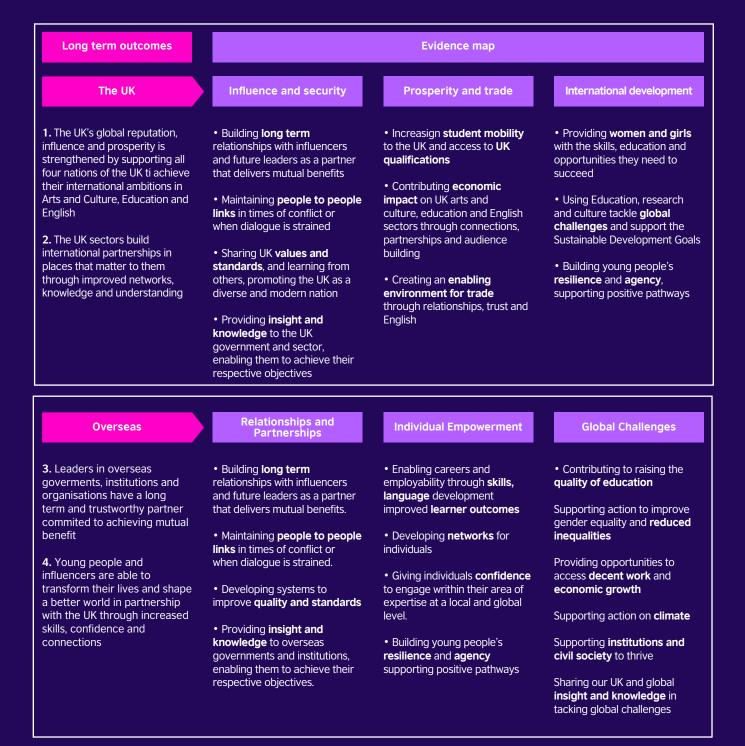
The highest level evidence required to show this contribution to long-term outcomes is given in the British Council evidence map (Figure 45)





V4 Evidence map structure

In order to understand better where we need to be more strategic with our evidence, we have developed an **evidence map.** This includes our long term outcomes, which are grounded in the audience groups we serve. Our programmes and services contribute to at least one of our four long term outcomes.





We would highlight the following elements of this map as **points of excellence** of the CEI programme, as demonstrated throughout this narrative:

• Developing systems to improve quality and standards in Uruguayan primary school education. (Overseas – relationships and partnerships) • Providing insight and knowledge to the Uruguayan education system to help them achieve objectives. (Overseas – relationships and partnerships) • Building long-term relationships and influence with Uruguayan influencers for mutual benefit. (Overseas - relationships and partnerships; UK - influence and security) •Providing women and girls with the skills, education, and opportunities they need to succeed. (UK – international development) • Contributing to raising the quality of education (overseas – global challenges) • Supporting action to reduce inequalities (overseas – global challenges) • Supporting organisations (Ceibal) to thrive. (overseas – global challenges) • Giving individuals – teachers – the confidence to engage in their profession that's the weather



Outcomes and outputs of the global ELT in Education programme

The narrative also demonstrates that British Council participation in CEI contributes clearly to the **ELT in Education** high-level **impact statement**:

Education systems that support inclusive, quality teaching, learning and assessment of English.

There is clear evidence in each of these four areas from:

- Reports measuring socio-economic and rural groups (inclusive)
- Reports from the quality management system (quality teaching)
- Responses from teachers and test results (learning)
- Test reports (assessment)

The British Council ELT in Education framework includes a number of outcomes and outputs to which the British Council CEI project has contributed:

Uruguay is a country in which BC **contributed to policy/system level changes** (Outcome 1 indicator). It is difficult to identify another country where British Council has contributed more fully - bringing quality ELT to three years of primary children who would otherwise not have English lessons – around 280,000 children in total.



British Council in CEI contributes to **global networks disseminating evidence base** (Output 1) through **number of policymakers and policy influencers at tending relevant events** (indicator) through ongoing participation in international events. Uruguay punches well above its weight. There have also been important publications available in the reading list appendix of this report.



The programme has led to **Increased opportunities for UK research sector to collaborate internationally** (Output 2). Most notably through CRELLA of University of Bedfordshire, also through other consultancies including The Consultants-E and TransformELT.

Contributing to **Sustainable improvements in inclusive teaching and learning** (Outcome 2) and **Teaching/pedagogy knowledge and skills** (Outcome 2 subhead) have been improved through sustained teacher development over 12 years. Clearly evidenced through quality management system and teacher survey responses.

Classroom Teachers have **improved English proficiency** (Outcome 2 subhead), demonstrated from the Classroom Teacher survey in which 71% of teachers said they had improved their English.

Collaborative learning (subhead). Shown by pedagogical pair. 96% of CTs rated collaboration with RTs positively. 87% of RTs surveyed benefitted from working with CTs.

CEI contributes substantially **to Teachers** **undertake appropriate professional development journeys** (Output 2), with BC leading CPD activities of all indicator types for 12 years. 0071%00<tr

The programme clearly contributes to **Fit for purpose assessment and curriculum as well as resources for educators and learners in formal education contexts** (Outcome 4) through the development of Lesson Plans, materials, special projects, and the Adaptive English Test. The current methodology statement of CEI remains modelled on the original 2013 statement developed by the British Council.

The programme contributes to the ambition of scale - it has reached around 280,000 children in public education.

Costs of achieving the M&E outcomes and outputs. As the BC CEI is a contract for supply of educational services, and creates a surplus, then all the above benefits come at no cost to UK public funds.

The programme level CEI Logical Framework

The narrative shows that the following programme-level outcomes are being achieved. In most cases our comments in this narrative apply to activity throughout the 12-year duration of CEI and not related to the most recent year. It is outside the scope of this study to calculate precise indicators which The British Council reports on internally on at least an annual basis.

> Teachers become more proficient and empowered to deliver EL teaching and remote teaching (see Chapter 8: Remote Teachers and Chapter 9: Classroom Teachers).

> Quality of classroom delivery improves (see Chapter 8: Remote Teachers)

Wider and better implementation of research in remote teaching internally (within the program) and with external ELT professionals (see Chapter 13: British Council).

Change in approach to English language teaching and learning in Uruguay has a sustainable and positive impact (see Chapter 12: Longevity).

More learners have improved proficiency in English (see Chapter 7: Learners).

The British Council and the UK are positioned as authorities in language policy, practice, and teacher development, driving high quality teaching and assessment (see Chapter 13: British Council).

Students improve their English language skills (see Chapter 7: Learners).

Students increase the level of engagement with the language and the culture (see Chapter 7: Learners).

Teachers improve their teaching practice -classroom management, use of learning technologies, professional awareness (see Chapter 8: Remote Teachers and Chapter 9: Classroom Teachers).

Quality managers' feedback to teachers and they act on that feedback; if needed there will be a performance improvement plan for teachers (see Chapter 10: Quality management).

Student level of English at the end of the third year of primary (grade 6) improve to at least CEFR A1+, after an estimated 200 hours of language instruction (see Chapter 7: Learners).





It is clear from the survey results and interview quotes that the British Council is viewed positively as an authority. A claim to wider UK positioning is based on the fact that CEI has chosen and maintained three long-term commercial contracts with UK providers (British Council, CRELLA, Little Bridge) although it could be argued to what extent this is a causal outcome of the programme.

Institutional development and knowledge transfer between partners happen as part of long-term relationships (see Chapter 12: Longevity).

Due to increased communicative capability and confidence in speaking English, young people in Uruguay have better skills for employability, access to wider networks, more personal and professional opportunities and greater resilience. (a Legacy outcome – see Chapter 7: Learners for indications). There is evidence in CEI of improved English among students. The theory



of change suggests that this will lead to employability, networking, opportunities, and resilience outcomes. This study does not attempt to test the link between improved English and those longer-term outcomes.

More widespread and better knowledge of English through teaching,

learning and assessment (see Chapter 7: Learners)

We note that the quality outcomes in the CEI logframe relate to the contractual requirements of the programme – indicating that a key British Council objective is to **satisfy the client by complying with the terms of the contract.**

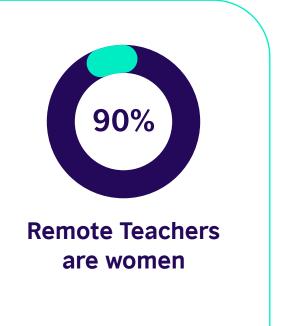


Gender - The British Council, Ceibal, and CEI

Both the British Council and Ceibal take all forms of inclusion very seriously. Gender is a key inclusion issue in Ceibal's STEM work and is carefully researched. In CEI, Ceibal see the critical inclusion indicator as being socio-economic status. Gender is not seen by Ceibal as a core concern in CEI, and it does not figure in contractual agreements with the British Council.

Thus the disaggregation of data by gender for the programme is not applied as it would be the programme were owned by the British Council.

However, CEI and the BC contribution to teachers have a greater impact on women than on men, given that 90% of RTs and 90% of CTs are women. Women teachers on the programme do not benefit more than men teachers on the programme, but more women teachers then men teachers benefit overall.





This extra benefit to women in the programme is not due to the design of the programme or the contract, and there has been no intention in the design or implementation of the programme or contract to benefit women more than men.

Part 15 CEI and principles of good practice in large-scale ELT projects

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The researchers have distilled a list of 20 principles of good practice for large-scale English reform projects globally. These principles take into account literature on the subject and are distilled from the experience of multiple development projects over the past thirty years. They

are usually applicable to other education change projects and programmes, and to wider programmes of social reform. We recommend the following three titles all of which are available to download free online at the time of writing:

Experience. Tribble C. (Ed.) British Council 2012.

Factors Influencing Success in Teaching English in State Primary Schools.

Hayes D. British Council 2014.

<u>Planning for Educational Change: Putting People and their Contexts First.</u> Wedell M. Continuum 2009.

Below, we consider the relevance and compliance of the CEI project with these general principles.

Principle 1: The aims and scope of the programme are clear to all from the outset

The planned aims and activities were clear from 2011, to reach all primary schools not served by the SL programme with English lessons. The outcome will be access to English for all public primary school children for the first time, leading to an upgrade in English language proficiency in schools across the country, bringing significant improvements in pedagogy, the deployment of technology in schools, and social inclusion of learners.

The aims of the agreement between Ceibal and The British Council were clear:

1. teach children taking them from beginner level to A1/A2 by the end of class 6

2. improve the English of the classroom teachers

3. provide management, infrastructural support, materials and training.

However, beyond the high-level aims, the detailed way to achieve those aims was always flexible. The programme has been complex and contains many elements and there has always been a culture of continual improvement.





Principle 2: The local contexts, realities, and baselines are understood and taken into account

The combination of Ceibal's local knowledge and expertise in technology in schools with the British Council's ELT knowledge ensured that the local context was taken into account. The proof of concept period allowed all parties to understand issues. Classroom teacher unenthusiasm for their own English learning was underestimated, and when this became apparent less energy was dedicated to this element of the programme.

What English do we teach? My answer is Uruguayan English Gabriela Kaplan – Head of CEI

Materials design has been aligned to Uruguayan realities and the primary curriculum.

PQAF report 2016

Principle 3: Issues of equality and inclusion, and differences within the target audience are addressed

This has been a point of excellence of the CEI programme. The whole concept is based on the aim of providing children in primary public education with access to English that only children in private schools had. Beyond that all schools are divided into socio-economic quintiles, with results disaggregated and monitored, and various actions taken to bridge the gap between richer and poorer households.

RTs and CTs are encouraged to adapt lessons and to take individuals into account. In later years CEI has expanded into SEN groups. As fibre-optic connectivity has increased to small remote schools over the twelve years of the programme, otherwise excluded children in remote communities have been brought into the programme.

This is a notoriously difficult objective to achieve: reaching the final few percent is what takes the time and effort.

Ceibal focuses on gender and opportunity for girls in its STEM programmes, but does not prioritise this issue in CEI.

One aspect I appreciate about this project is its inclusivity, offering learning opportunities to all students. Learning a new language isn't limited to those who can afford it; it's accessible to all children.

CT survey response



Principle 4: Improvement objectives are realistic and practical

One element of improvement was increased coverage of the target population by the programme, and this was achieved. The same applies to coverage of the annual test, now up to 80%.

CEI has avoided the mistake of other programmes of stipulating unrealistic learning outcomes. It was clear that Ceibal wanted to see measurable improvements. Wisely and unlike many other programmes around the world that have stipulated ambitious and ultimately impracticable aspirations, CEI was never so specific. The principle aim was reaching those that had not yet been reached, and ensuring quality teaching. The original agreement with the British Council stated a target level of A1/A2, which is quite a wide range. In the annual test reports percentages of students reaching level A2.1, that is complying with some but not all A2 competences, is reported as a group with a targeted level of English.

We noted that also that at no point did Ceibal stipulate acceptable proportions of students reaching CEFR levels. This was sensible in the context of the main aims of reach and inclusion. Ceibal now report learning outcomes of individual institutes.

Principle 5: Time-scale is appropriate to aims

The ambitious volume growth over the first four years was achieved.

No fixed-term was established for CEI at the outset. The CEI programme was not seen by the authorities as a temporary solution to the shortage of English teachers but as an open-ended programme. The extended threeyear contracts with the British Council along with the progressive transfer of knowledge and expertise to Ceibal. CEI remains appropriate for the Uruguay context given the continuing lack of English teachers. Should more F2F teachers become available and schools prefer that modality, then CEI has the capacity to gradually reduce coverage. However, there is no sign of that happening at present.

Principle 6: Source of funds and budget across the length of the project are clear

Funding has been consistently enough for aims to be achieved over twelve years, especially the sourcing of RTs and the maintenance of a CEI management team with funds to continue innovation. Note: This study has not attempted to analyse the financial position of the programme or any part of it.



Principle 7: Clear and strong programme leadership is established

This has been a strength of the project. Miguel Brechner, the well-connected President of Ceibal took a personal interest in the establishment of CEI as an important new direction for Ceibal as well as being a national priority.

At an operational level there has been a strong vision and leadership over the twelve years of operation from Claudia Brovetto and Gabriela Kaplan as Heads of CEI, with support of Ceibal top management. When Kaplan took over from Brovetto as Head of CEI, Brovetto moved to a post overseeing CEI and other Ceibal learning programmes. Continuous British Council leadership during the growth phase was provided by Graham Stanley as Project Manager / Country Director from 2013-2018.

Stanley then moved to a role overseeing all English Programmes activity in British Council Americas including as Senior Responsible Officer for the CEI programme.

The Director and managers at British Council Argentina have led the programme operationally since the removal of the British Council presence in Uruguay.

Principle 8: The programme is protected against changes in authority

The positioning of the programme within Ceibal as a semi-independent agency with its own government funding separate from the Ministry of Education and ANEP has protected the programme through changes in government. When the governing party changed in 2019 only the president of Ceibal was changed, with managers below that level keeping their positions.

Principle 9: Strong project management systems are established to drive and monitor progress and address changes

British Council led regular evaluations of the programme in the first five years, including a formal Project Quality Assurance Framework evaluation in 2016.

CEI learned from British Council experience in managing large-scale education and ELT projects and processes specific to CEI. Ceibal built up a competent, committed and experienced management team over the years.

CEI has continued to develop monitoring systems as it has taken over elements from the British Council especially through its Quality Assurance Management processes and operations management team.



Principle 10: All stakeholders are considered, consulted, involved, and informed as much as possible in design and implementation

CEI has benefitted by being optional for schools, which means that school heads, presumably in consultation with teachers, are able to decide whether to join CEI, although if there is no availability of a specialist F2F teacher for the SL programme, the alternative to the CEI programme is no English for the children.

There has been tension and some lack of coordination between Ceibal and the core education authority (ANEP), though this appears to have improved over the years as ANEP and the wider educational community has come to accept CEI as a part of the school, and the systems have worked together on the annual test and other project components. Looking back at the early objectives of improving the English of CTs, we need to ask to what extent the CT community was consulted before the programme was implemented.

Providers of RTs (the Institutes) are bound by supplier contracts. There have in the past been consultation meetings between Ceibal and the institutes. Such consultation meetings with institutes or wider stakeholders are a valuable part of education reform programmes. Such meetings or feedback mechanisms serve various purposes including avoiding criticism that the owners of a programme do not engage all stakeholders.

Principle 11: All elements of the system that lead to learning are considered: infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, materials, methodology, assessment, quality assurance

CEI is an excellent example of taking all elements into consideration. All elements are addressed explicitly and have been developed as seen throughout this report. The longevity of the programme has allowed the stretched management team to focus on the improvement of different areas at different periods.





Principle 12: Teachers are a key part of ELT reform programmes – initial and continuing training and development are addressed

CEI has been a pioneer in the articulation of the core skills of RTs and the training and development needed to achieve them.

The development of new skills in CTs has been more challenging. The system of mentoring has offered CTs opportunities but the programme has limited leverage over CTs in the context that CEI is a small and new part of a CTs job which needs to be taken into account.

A major challenge has been initial teacher training in Uruguay. Although CEI was

designed to deal with lack of English teachers in Uruguay, we do not find any systematic effort to produce more teachers of English in teacher training colleges or universities. Clearly it is not Ceibal's role to produce more English teachers. However, by delivering the classes, CEI has solved the problem of not all students having access to English learning. It remains somehow contradictory that a country with a professed plurilingual ambition does not seem to encourage or incentivise its future teaching cadre to be part of that.

Principle 13: Measurement or assessment of learning outcomes is addressed

This is another point of excellence in the programme. CEI has been dedicated to measuring outcomes with increasing coverage using the National Adaptive Test of English (NEAT) since 2013, with regular public reporting on results, latterly as part of a nationwide initiative in collaboration with ANEP.

Tests of students learning outcomes have developed throughout the programme, with listening being added as a skill and speaking being piloted. CEI has used UK international expertise to develop tests, including British Council Assessment Research Group in 2014, and CRELLA from around 2018. CEI published test results for most years from 2014 to 2022. Continually developing test methods mean results are not easy to compare from year to year.

CEI uses the results from NEAT to improve the programme, for example it identifies underperforming schools and allocates more resources to them to improve performance.





Principle 14: Impact on all levels of the system is considered (i.e. pre-primary to post-HE)

Ceibal has no control over the curriculum at any level of education except where invited by the authorities. While the initial goal for CEI was to improve English at primary levels, in the early years of the project, little attention appeared to be paid to the knock-on effects on secondary. Later the need to adapt secondary teaching to take account of learning in primary has been acknowledged by all parties, with teachers being urged to use differentiation in their classroom practice to take account of learning at primary level. National education authorities acknowledge the "broken bridge", the long-standing difficulty of transition between primary and secondary school. This is a problem that is common in many countries. In 2022 ANEP produced a series of books for the teaching of English in secondary schools, <u>Living</u> <u>Uruguay</u>, which take account of the fact that children joining secondary school will have learned English for several years in primary school.

The annual NEAT test is offered to secondary school students up to secondary grade 3, but coverage is still low at 5% compared to 70% for all students in primary (SL as well as CEI). There is no attempt to measure student knowledge at school-leaving age, but it seems to be a small step to adapt or apply the NEAT to students in upper secondary.

Principle 15: Pilot programmes are considered to test and reduce risk

Piloting has been used extensively in CEI, starting with the full proof-of-concept phase in 2012.

The testing system including adaptive test have been built up slowly over ten

years, adding skills and volume yearby-year. This started with first pilot test in 2013. New initiatives have been tried out on small groups before being made available more widely, such as the Shakespeare Festival.

Principle 16: De-centralisation of decisions is considered to take account of local contexts

Schools choose if they want to joint CEI. Pedagogical pairs (CT & RT) decide some curriculum elements, for example whether they want to integrate special projects into the curriculum. However, the curriculum in general allows for limited variation by the RT in Lesson A, with some RTs commenting on the lack of freedom to adapt practice, which can lead to going too fast and thus leaving a proportion of students behind.



Principle 17: The role of external advisers is clear

The British Council has been the most significant external adviser over the years, and its role has always been clearly laid out in a supplier contract. Institutes are viewed clearly as suppliers by CEI, not as advisers. Nevertheless, we would encourage CEI to continue regular formal consultations with institutes.

Principle 18: Commercial interests of suppliers and partners are not allowed to drive the programme

External commercial interests have not been a driver in CEI, as they are in some other programmes in other countries. When invitations-to-tender have appeared, they have been rejected if no bid is convincing, as was the case when Ceibal searched for a supplier of student materials prior to the contracting of Little Bridge. Supplier contracts are explicit and rigorous.

Principle 19: Monitoring and evaluation systems are established from the outset and measure amongst other things the difference between policy (what should be happening) and practice (what is actually happening)

There are a number of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in CEI. A management team within CEI tracks achievement of outputs including volume. The adaptive test is the principle method of measuring learning outcomes. The Quality Management system has developed into a sophisticated way of measuring quality of RT delivery. On the other hand, it has not proved feasible to formally measure the implementation of lessons B and C as outputs, and there is evidence that practice varies considerably from the policy.

Principle 20: The programme is communicated appropriately externally

The programme has a comprehensive website which allows for good dissemination in country. The increasing number of events (festivals, competitions) bring the programme to the attention of communities and families CEI has been presented at many educational conferences and events over ten years, bringing knowledge of the programme to professionals internationally. Regular publications have raised the profile of CEI as well as developing team professionalism.



| Project Report Card: Ceibal en Inglés | |
|---|-------|
| The aims and scope of the programme are clear to all from the outset | **** |
| The local context, realities, and baselines are understood and taken into account | **** |
| Improvement objectives are realistic and practical | **** |
| Issues of equality and inclusion, and differences within the target audience are addressed | **** |
| The time-scale are appropriate to aims | **** |
| Sources of funds and budget across the length of the project are clear | **** |
| Clear and strong programme leadership is established and sustained | ***** |
| The programme is protected against changes in authority | **** |
| Strong project management system are established to drive and monitor progress and address changes | **** |
| All stakeholders are considered, consulted, involved, and informed appropriately in design and implementation | **** |
| All elements of the system that lead to learning are considered, e.g. infrastructure, teachers, curriculum, materials, methodology, assessment, quality assurance | **** |
| Teachers are a key part of ELT reform programmes - initial and continuing training and development are integral | *** |
| Measurement or assessment of learning outcomes is consistent and regular | **** |
| Impact on all levels of the system is considered (i.e. pre-primary to post-HE) | **** |
| Pilot programmes test and reduce risk | **** |
| De-centralisation of decisions takes account of local contexts | **** |
| The role of external advisers is clear | ***** |
| Commercial interests of suppliers and partners is not be allowed to drive the programme | **** |
| Monitoring and evaluation systems are established from the outset and measure amongst other things the difference between policy (what should be happening) and practice (what is actually happening) | **** |
| The programme is externally communicated appropriately | **** |





In this narrative we have looked at the aims and elements, and the phases of the CEI programme to its institutionalisation in the Uruguayan educational sector. We have made some assessment of its processes and achievements compared to what Ceibal set out to do, the specific desired outcomes of the British Council, and some principles of good practice for educational improvement programmes. We have shown evidence to answer specific evaluations questions around the perceptions of remote learning, student learning outcomes, teacher development, quality management, public-private partnerships, the importance of longevity in projects and programmes and the value of the British Council contribution.

In this final short chapter, we offer a tentative glimpse into the future, consider the potential that this or a similar model of remote teaching in other contexts, and finally offer some reflections on possible ways forward for some stakeholders.

The future of Ceibal en Inglés

The programme, while still innovative in global terms, is long past being an experiment. It is institutionalised in the Uruguayan system, generally very well perceived, and is set to continue with continuous improvement for as long as there is demand from schools.As the only current alternatives to CEI are the SL F2F programme, which still suffers from shortage of qualified teachers, or no English lessons at all, then any significant drop in demand for CEI seems unlikely.

The increase in the use of special projects, or essential activities as they are becoming known, will continue. This is to be welcomed as it will allow more active involvement of CTs who will be able to find links with the general primary curriculum and to integrate English learning more easily into their weekly routines. This trend may place extra burden on RTs who will be responsible for more lessons which do not follow the normal Little Bridge lesson plans. The demand from RTs and their institutes for Home-Based Teaching will grow. While this trend will increase the difficulty of ensuring consistency through quality management for CEI, it will be hard to resist, especially as it becomes clear that it is a better value for money option for the programme, and not merely a question of improved convenience for RTs. Eventually this will allow for recruitment of RTs from outside commuting distance of remote teaching centres in large cities, and potentially increase the recruitment pool exponentially.

The British Council will continue to provide services to CEI as long as required, and will promote the programme as a prime example of where it has contributed to an improvement in quality inclusive education by facilitating the transfer of knowledge to educational authorities.



Insights, implications, and applications to other contexts

Graham Stanley, who led the British Council involvement in the programme from 2013 to 2018 stated, 'After successfully implementing remote teaching in Uruguay, I am convinced that this is also an effective way of making up for the shortage of teachers that many other countries are facing.' For this reason, it is important to show the progress made through Ceibal en Inglés, to capture the lessons learnt, and to tell the story of what is needed if others are to attempt something similar.

Since its early years CEI has generated interest from authorities in other countries. So why has such an innovative and successful programme not been replicated at scale in any of the many countries in the world which have a shortage of English teachers? The short answer is that a high level of technological connectivity is required for this model to succeed. The countries with better connectivity tend to be the richer countries, which tend to suffer less from a shortage of English teachers. A second important factor is that few other countries have an agency similar to Ceibal with the technological expertise, security of funding, and leadership commitment to drive a project like this forward. In Uruguay the CEI programme sat on the shoulders of Ceibal's one-laptop-per-child initiative.

There have been other small-scale initiatives, Stanley (2019) has chapters on teaching refugees in Argentina, secondary school pupils in Mexico, Syrian refugees in Iraq, and teaching Spanish to primary school children in the United Kingdom. All these largely from the British Council remote teaching centre in Buenos Aires Argentina. A lot has changed since the first years of CEI. Web-based video-conferencing systems such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet, have increased in accessibility and technical reliability enormously meaning that the need for dedicated videoconferencing equipment has become less essential. The shock to educational systems of the 2020 pandemic when schoolchildren worldwide were unable to attend school for long periods also gave a great boost to the potential for various form of online learning including models replicating some aspects of the CEI remote learning programme.

The British Council has recently facilitated agreements with municipalities in Colombia and Argentina to provide models of remote learning to students. This raises the issue of scale. While CEI is a national programme, it is a small nation of 3.5 million people. In many countries it will be more feasible to look at the move to include remote teaching as a municipal or provincial initiative rather than a national initiative.

There is plenty of scope for the integration of remote teaching into already existing programmes, similar to the case of CEI secondary where remote lessons from teachers or sessions from native-speakers in English are used to supplement already existing curricula, giving students authentic exposure to new varieties of English, or offering an intercultural element. The reduced reliance on costly dedicated technology means that this remote teaching can even be organised at a school level, especially given the increase in the providers of online teaching.



Reflections on ways forward for stakeholders

Ceibal

Ceibal clearly has a clear strategic view of the programme. It has been committed and resilient in pursuing its remit to ensure that all schools not covered by other programmes receive some form of systematic provision. It is evident that Ceibal has no remit in decisions around the production of new Uruguayan teachers of English or other issues regarding curriculum and assessment in the different levels of education in Uruguay.

Given Ceibal's commitment to inclusion, and the clear messages that we received about the common variability in student engagement in lessons, we suggest that the CEI team consider ways to increase and measure student engagement. This would mean a focus on the students who are less engaged, who will tend to be the ones with lower test scores. Searching for ways to engage these students in lessons, and to measure their engagement by for example evaluating their enjoyment of lessons may be a way to promote greater inclusion. Engaging students who are lost during lessons might involve some more professional freedom for RTs around the use of Spanish in Lesson A, or in CREA interactions, as explored in our chapter 7 on Learners.

We applaud any initiative that brings the CEI lessons more in line with the wider primary curriculum thereby responding to criticisms that CEI lessons have the feel of a private language lesson in a public school day. The increasing use of special projects as a partial replacement of the more rigid grammar, vocabulary and function curriculum seems to be the clearest way forward here. Any opportunity to increase the involvement of CTs is to be welcomed, and while we note that there is great variability in both the commitment and the English language proficiency of CTs, this research suggests that 30% of CTs may have a B1 level of English, which is certainly enough for that group to make a further contribution to their student learning and to integrate that learning into the curriculum, even if not at the level expected of a specialist English teacher.

Los proyectos especiales me encantan, son muy motivadores. Ahora estamos en el proyecto de las Reading Cards y nos han permitido muchos avances. Participé de los concursos de videos como News from a distant future o Apollo CEI y las dos experiencias fueron muy positivas.

I love the special projects, they're very motivating. Now we're doing the Reading Cards project and we've made a lot of progress. I took part in the video competitions like News from a Distant Future and Apollo CEI and both experiences were very positive.





A related issue is the issue raised by many RTs about the lack of opportunity to exercise professional agency in teaching decisions. Any authority would do well to keep this under review. One method of this is to ensure the continuation of regular formal consultation with institutes on pedagogical (not only management) matters.

The commitment of CEI to cover certain levels of the CEFR - sometimes it's a bit unfeasible. I feel that we're teaching maybe 45 min lessons once a week and the program would benefit from more recycling, more revision.

You can't teach a new grammar structure each week and just imagine that children will take it in and be able to use it communicatively in authentic situations independently when they've only practiced this new structure one week of their life.

Manager in an institute

As the CEI programme has become institutionalised in schools, the relationship and collaboration with ANEP has increased in various areas such as the development of the NEAT test. It is obvious that this collaboration is core to the success of the wider education system and should be nurtured. Efforts to repair the longacknowledged "broken bridge" between primary and secondary schooling should continue between all parties.

Uruguayan educational authorities

While the Uruguayan system generally aspired to a "plurilingual Uruguay", there is little or no progress in embracing future teachers in this aspiration. If Uruguay wants its young people to be plurilingual, they need to be encouraged by their teachers in primary and secondary school modelling that plurilingualism. While CEI might be seen to have solved the issue of shortage of primary English teachers, there are clearly shortages of fully qualified English teachers in secondary schools, and probably in F2F primary classes as well. We saw no evidence that steps have been taken over the last decade to encourage school-leavers or others to train as

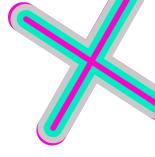
English teachers or to incentivize other kinds of teacher-trainees to learn English as an added competence. Improving the provision of initial teacher training for specialist English teachers with possible specialisms in different age-groups would be appropriate. A system giving recognition for reaching an intermediate level of English to teachers who are not training to be specialist English teachers would also encourage more other subject teachers to develop their language ability. Uruguay aims for a developed knowledge economy with a substantial bilingual population. Teachers need to be a part of that population.

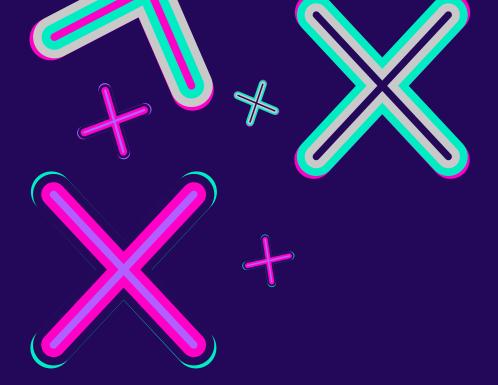
The focus on English teaching in primary school over the last ten years has not been reflected in secondary school English teaching. Greater priority for the improvement of secondary school teaching including CPD for secondary teachers is recommended for this area to take advantage of the gains made by improved primary ELT. The annual adaptive test of English (NEAT) has been developed enormously over recent years with the support of a cross– departmental and expert international team. This test could be extended even beyond lower secondary level to move towards a measurement of Uruguayan school-leavers, in line with aspirations for a plurilingual Uruguay.

The British Council

Lessons can be learned from how British Council became involved in CEI. A senior BritishCouncilmanagerwastalkingtoaWorld Bank education expert at a conference in the wider professional educational field (the <u>mEducation Alliance</u> symposium, not purely ELT), mentioning British Council interests, expertise and ambitions. The World Bank expert recommended the President of Ceibal to contact that individual in the British Council. This relationship (in a nonrepresented British Council country) would not have happened without that networking. Recognizing the continued importance of networking for senior staff in recruitment, and encouraging space for networking (physical and virtual) in conferences such as TESOL USA, and other multi-national forums and communities of practice could lead to more widespread opportunities.















Appendix A: Reading list and references

Website links are operational as of December 2023



Further Reading

To read more about the CEI programme the best starting point is the programme website, which is principally in Spanish with some documents in English. This website has a library with sections on evaluations, curriculum, and publications / conferences. The evaluation section contains the annual reports on the NEAT test, as well as a selection of papers such as the DJ Kaiser 2015 evaluation and academic studies carried out by Ceibal staff and collaborators. The Curriculum section contains the curriculum for the three levels of primary as well as the methodology statement. The section on publications and conferences contains a number of more recent publications coming out of the programme. Notable are edited volumes with views from teachers and mentors in "La Voz Docente" and "Eyes and Ears in the Field". Also a paper on the design of the speaking test by experts from CRELLA UK in collaboration with Ceibal. There is a valuable volume documenting the CEI response to the 2020 Covid epidemic: "Against All Odds".

For a wider view of the work of Ceibal beyond English, see the English version of the website.

The most complete treatment of the CEI programme in book form is "Innovations in Education: Remote Teaching", published by the British Council in 2019 and edited by Graham Stanley who was British Council Project Manager for CEI and Country Director Uruguay until 2018, and then Head of English Programmes for the British Council Americas. This book has chapters dedicated to each element of the CEI programme by professionals involved in the programme.

The British Council Remote Teaching Centre in Buenos Aires has published <u>a collection</u> <u>of papers by Remote Teachers</u>.

The British Council contribution to CEI is part of the British Council's global English Programmes <u>https://www.britishcouncil.</u> <u>org/partner/international-development/</u> <u>our-expertise/english-programme</u>

These recommendations for reading and the accompanying references to the text are not meant to be exhaustive. The CEI programme is referenced in a number of international publications.



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Unpublished documents:

A number of internal British Council documents were consulted during the research. Those referred to in this report included:

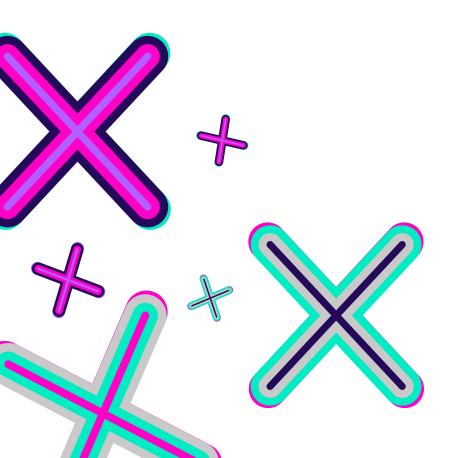
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Appendix B: The consultants

Lead Consultants

John Knagg OBE FACSS is lead writer for the project. John has a first degree from Oxford University, he is a qualified teacher with QTS and a PGCE specialising in ELT, and a Masters in Applied Linguistics from Edinburgh University.

He worked for the British Council from 1981 to 2018 as a teacher, teacher trainer. teaching centre manager. country director (Ecuador and Chile), Global Head of Research and Consultancy in English, and finally Global Head of English for Education Systems. He was Chair of Accreditation UK. the British Council's inspection and accreditation scheme for UK ELT providers from 2010 to 2018. He developed and oversaw the British Council's research output and publications in collaboration with UK universities from 2009 to 2018. He gave presentations on a range of topics on behalf of the British Councilatinternational conferences, with a specialism in largescale English improvement programmes and how to ensure transformational improvement in English teaching. John was co-author of the British Council's initial internal policy guidance on teaching English at pre-school level. In 2018, John was elected as a Fellow of the Academy of Social Scientists, nominated by the British Association of Applied Linguists. Since leaving the British Council in 2018, John has been involved in a number of projects on a consultancy basis, including work with British Council China on English Medium Instruction in Higher Education with British Council China, the development of a British Council programme for English in Higher Education with British Council East Asia in 2020-21, and an overview and evaluation of the implementation of the national PRONI programme for basic education at state level in with the British Council Mexico in 2022.





Alan S. Mackenzie is a founding director of TransformELT, and has been an English language teaching professional since 1989. Having worked in language schools and the tertiary sector in Japan, he has also designed and taught master's level courses in Developing Autonomy for Teachers College Columbia University and NILE.

Alan was a project manager for British Council across East and South Asia for ten years. He now designs, develops, implements, and evaluates large-scale change projects both online and face-toface.

Over the past seven years Alan has lead several large-scale research projects including understanding primary school teacher participation in online and offline professional communities in Bangladesh; the four state review of the PRONI programme of English language provision in basic education in Mexico; and investigating English for Employability in Francophone Africa: Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Angola, Cameroon and Djibouti.

He was the sole researcher and report writerfor Nepal English Language Teacher Education Project (ELTEP) Evaluation; the British Council East Asia English for Education Systems Programmatic Framework; Ukraine PRESETT Programme evaluation; Teaching and Learning of English in Vocational Education, Georgia; English for Success Evaluation and colead researcher on the study of teacher English language ability in Sri Lanka. Alan is used to managing complex projects and working with officials in education systems in developing contexts.

Consultant Researchers

Dr. Cristina Banfi is a senior Buenos Aires based educator with experience of working with schools in Uruguay. She led a team of researchers that produced a report in 2009 on the bilingual schools of the country and participated in the team that designed the first materials for Ceibal en Inglés and the initial teacher preparation sessions. In other areas of her work she explores innovative teaching options that can use technology to reach students who would otherwise not have this opportunity. She is a Professor of the University of Buenos Aires. Martin Eayrs wrote the British Council Landmark Review of ELT in Argentina. He inspects and evaluates language teaching providers with a number accrediting of bodies. Не works with examination boards on writing examinations, including with Ceibal en Inglés. Martin understands the interplay between private and public sectors he owned and ran a private language school in Buenos Aires for many years. He divides his time between his homes in UK and Argentina, and speaks Spanish fluently.





Methodology

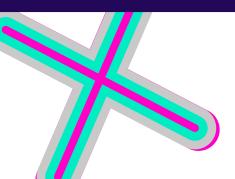
TransformELT conducted a mixed methods investigation of CEI using Thematic Analysis to identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data to answer the eight research questions. We reviewed previous external evaluations between 2012 and 2016 which were generally positive about the programme as well as other documentation including yearly internal evaluations. The researchers interviewed a range of stakeholders in Ceibal, The British Council and others with knowledge of the programme, and conducted three online surveys of Remote Teachers, Classroom Teachers, and other interested parties in Uruguay.

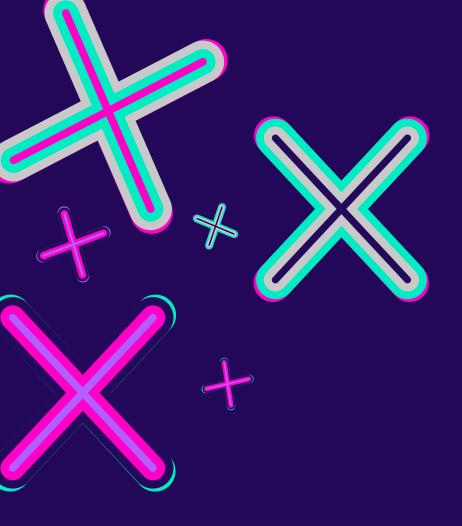


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We thank all those who took time to meet us both face-to-face and online and to respond to our questions with good humour. We are grateful to the over 600 teachers and others who responded to our surveys. We especially thank Gabriela Kaplan, Head of Ceibal en Inglés, for being so free with her time and facilitating access to her team. Finally, we thank Graham Stanley, Liliana Carral, Ana Rosales and Victoria Maineri from the British Council in Mexico and Argentina for their guidance and support on the project steering group throughout this complex research project.







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