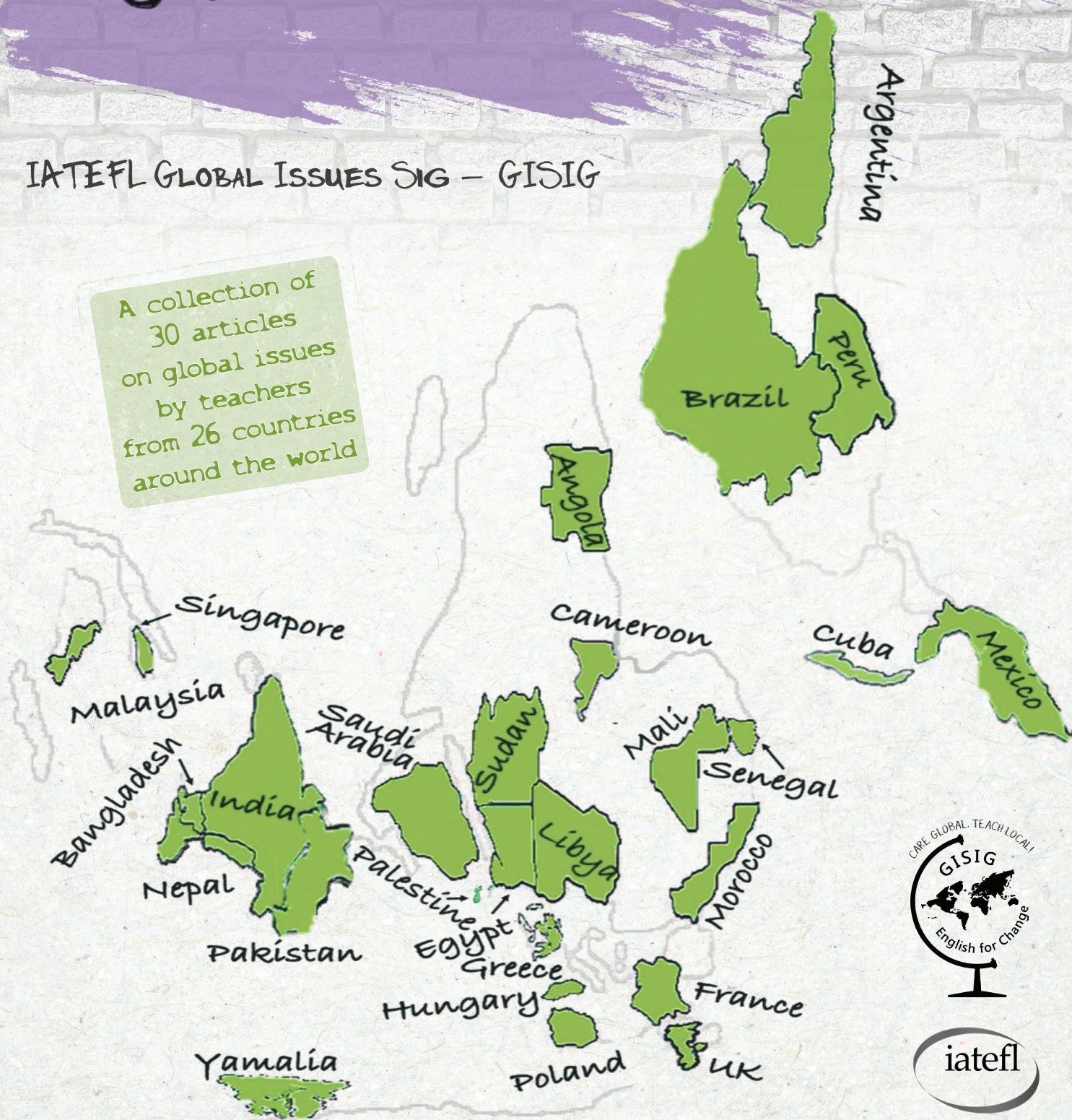


CREATING GLOBAL CHANGE

IATEFL GLOBAL ISSUES SIG – GISIG

A collection of
30 articles
on global issues
by teachers
from 26 countries
around the world



iatefl

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Cover design, showing all the countries the contributors of this publication are from, by Luciana Ruas of Translasaurus: <https://en.translasaurus.com/>

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Did you notice that the world map on the cover is upside-down?

We wanted to show where all the contributors' countries are, but also wanted to show that we in GISIG want to question the traditional, look at things in a different light, value and include the often-ignored Global South, and turn ideas – or worlds – on their heads.

The idea comes from this 4-metre-diameter sculpture by Mark Wallinger outside the London School of Economics, entitled *The World Turned Upside Down*. The sculpture is named after a 17th century English protest ballad.

Did you also notice that we have used the Peters Projection world map? In contrast to many world maps, which show the USA, Europe and Russia as much larger than they really are compared to Africa, South America and Indonesia, this is a more accurate version of relative size, although it does change some proportions.

And the countries are squashed together, nicely illustrative of how oceans and borders can be bridged by shared interests, technology and projects such as this one.

As we look at this map, we can think about English teaching in all these different countries. As we read this publication, we can learn more about the teaching, the countries, the issues teachers and students care about, and how they have worked with these in class. If you would like to contact any of the authors and work together on similar projects, I can put you in touch.

This publication, the result of the most truly global of all the Global Issues SIG activities in which I've taken part, shows some of the many English teachers who want, apart from teaching English, to create change, to help solve local or global problems and to make a difference.

Over the last few months, nearly all of the contributors have participated in our purpose-built publication WhatsApp group. We have shared in a wedding in Sudan, Eid celebrations and various discussions about gender inequality, polygamy, amongst many other global issues.

Just as this publication has helped me keep both sane and productive during lockdown, so I hope that reading the many excellent articles will help you in the next stages of, hopefully, recovery from COVID-19, and that many more teachers will be inspired to create global change.

Linda

August 2020

Foreword | by Margit Szesztay

There is a quotation attributed to Aristotle that says 'Where your talents and the needs of the world cross, there lies your vocation'. Reading the many stories shared in 'Creating Global Change' made me think: 'Where the passions of a teacher and the needs of the community meet, there lies a creative idea for an English class with a difference'.

This publication takes us on a magic carpet tour and allows us to peer into thirty classrooms across four continents. What makes it special is that each article is written from a practitioner's perspective, in a personal voice. Reading the articles feels like sitting with a fellow teacher over a cup of tea and listening to their stories.

There are stories of pain and hardship, of students and teachers who live in places under the threat of terrorism and armed conflict, many of whom have lived through emotional and physical trauma. There are stories of stark gender inequality and the lack of basic education - especially for girls. We hear about places facing environmental issues that have a dramatic impact on the lives of teachers and their students.

But above all, these stories are about teachers turning their classrooms into a safe place where students under their care are given a voice and where real concerns, problems, hopes and aspirations can be discussed. For example, you can find out about how creating 'menstrual cycle bracelets' contributes to sex education in Cameroon or the way thinking routines such as 'See-Think-Wonder' can empower young female students in Saudi-Arabia. Reflecting on our everyday language use, a fellow teacher from Singapore suggests that it makes a difference whether we 'kill two birds with one stone' or 'feed two birds with one bowl'.

I was touched and inspired by the care, commitment, compassion and creativity of these teachers. They stand as examples of the way seeds are planted and lives transformed through the English classroom. Linda Ruas and everyone else involved in putting together this publication have done an amazing job -

Creating global change.

Margit Szesztay

Former GISIG Coordinator and past President of IATEFL

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Learning by caring: service learning in Thies, Senegal | Mouhamadou Sadibou Diouf

Senegal is in the westernmost point of the African mainland. The Atlantic Ocean separates it from the USA but the English language seems to be stronger than the water that divides the two continents. As Jesse Jackson once put it: ‘the blood that unites us is thicker than the water that divides us’. Senegal is a French-speaking country but there has been a rise of English here since our independence in 1960. Even in colonial times, English was taking baby steps in education. The main reason for the rise of English in Senegal had something to do with the civil rights movement in the USA in the sixties and the Harlem Renaissance. The ideas of freedom and equality advocated by the then black leaders influenced a lot the African elite and gave birth to a literature known as Negritude which boils down to the values of Africans and African renaissance. Through poetry, politics and music (James Brown), the English ‘virus’ spread in Senegal and now English is mandatory in middle school. English clubs have been thriving in Senegalese formal schools. In almost every middle or high school, there is an English club. At present, the trend is in non-formal sectors, in community English clubs founded by students or ordinary people outside the school system, and dedicated to service learning. These community English clubs are the focus of this article.

First, let’s look at what service learning is. ‘Service learning is a structured learning experience that combines community service with explicit learning objectives, preparation, and reflection. Students involved in service learning are expected not only to provide direct community service, but also to learn about: the context in which the service is provided, the connection between the service and their academic coursework, and their roles as citizens. It is a form of education that is developed, implemented, and evaluated in collaboration with the community that responds to community-identified concerns; attempts to balance the service that is provided and the learning that takes place; enhances the curriculum by extending learning beyond the classroom and allowing students to apply what they’ve learned to real-world situations; and provides opportunities for critical reflection’ (Lance Arney, Ph.D., University of South Florida).

‘John Dewey theorised it as progressive education aiming at training good citizens, as argued by the first philosophers, like Aristotle, who planted the first seeds of service learning. The heart of education is the education of the heart’.

Over the past ten years, community English clubs have started rising in Thies, Senegal, West Africa, serving as formal platforms for service learning for students. Three community English clubs stand out as the most impactful in Thies. However, there is no academic structure overseeing these activities, and teachers who volunteer have no specific training apart from professional development activities by teacher associations. The three clubs are:

- ▶ ECEF (English Challenge, English Family), which teaches English to apprentices like mechanics and street children studying in Quranic schools known as ‘talibes’ (Arabic for disciple).
- ▶ WorkTogether, which gives extra English lessons to young learners and organizes contests.
- ▶ ELC (English Lovers Community), the most ‘formal’ among the community clubs

ECEF: street children’s lives matter

[ECEF](#) is an English Club with considerable impact as they teach English to street children called Talibes (students learning in Quran schools), mechanics and joiners. The founders were an English teacher, Ousmane Bane, current President of the local teacher association, and a student, Amadou Bocoum Fall. The lessons are delivered by high school students, with support from teacher Bane. The focus is on communication and conversational English. Classes are organized on Sundays, in general.

The content is not religious, and disciples are supported to attend by their Quran teacher. For these children, learning a trade (masons, carpenters...), and learning communicative English, with a focus on dialogues and role-play/drama, is vital for their future. As we are in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context, direct grammar teaching is done too, occasionally. Most of them learn English just because they are ‘loving it’. Others go for English because they hope they will travel some day and fulfil the American or UK dream. Some learn English there in order to improve their marks at school, while others see it as a language for business. The activities in this non-formal context culminate in two big events: a conference in English (I had the honour to organise one in 2013) and an English Day with contests and prize giving by community authorities. The last one was held at the American Corner with dozens of Quran teachers as guests. At present, with the decline of English in Senegal, the focus is shifting to social aid and donations. The club collects clothes and basic commodities which they donate to the needy. They organise days to clean dirty beaches, streets and markets. There is a need for restoring the club’s activism.

WorkTogether : a tribute to women’s leadership

The first community English club to be created was the WorkTogether English Club in Thies, a city known as the Senegalese capital of English. This club was founded in 2007 by a woman leader, housewife Sawdatou Sall Ndiaye, called Godmother, who strangely, is not an English teacher. Her influence goes beyond the circle of WorkTogether.



Godmother

Like the other English Clubs, membership is structured. Most members are middle and high school students, but the club is also open to the wider community and to local authorities, as there is more freedom in this learning environment. Older students teach the younger ones. The school is Godmother's house and classes occur mainly at weekends. WorkTogether organises a local contest for formal English clubs called the English Contest, in collaboration with some English teachers (who used to have a vibrant Facebook page). The culmination is the finals, with drama, grammar and general knowledge.

The contributions of WorkTogether go beyond the English language and involve community action like environmental protection (sensitising through drama and poetry), and community service, for example, cleaning days. As the job market is shrinking in the city, they are now

helping to support self-employment in business (selling African cloth and articles). The income goes to the business managers (former students or Godmother) and is partly ploughed back into the club's activities. The principle is if the members are better, the club is better. This idea of supporting business could also help rekindle the other two community clubs which have been losing ground over the past months.

ELC : English Lovers' Community

ELC stands for English Lovers' Community. It was founded in 2014 by Moustapha Diagne, a university student, and a group of students from Malick Sy High School, the first high school in the region of Thies, built in the 1950s. It is the youngest community club and is still 'linguistically' active, unlike the two others. This is a more formal club, as their headquarters is a middle school, used with the permission of the principal.

ELC : English Lovers' Community



ELC with guest speakers.

They hold meetings on Tuesdays and Fridays after school at Mbour 2 Middle School. They deliver English lessons, give exam preparation courses for free to students, organise lectures, drama, choir sessions, and invite international guest speakers staying in Thies. They have a yearly event called English Afternoon, during which they perform plays, songs and speeches. I serve there as a



Moustapha, the founding father of ELC.

counsellor and my role is to give an overview of community service theories and basic principles of teamwork. Their focus is English, leadership and global citizenship. They use social media like Facebook : English Lovers Community-ELC.

John Dewey, the American philosopher planted the idea of 'learning by doing' - and community English clubs in Thies have dug out the project of 'learning by caring'. To the hands-on-minds-on principle, they have added the belief in hearts-in involvement.

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Mouhamadou Sadibou Diouf has been teaching English for 30 years. He has attended three Hornby Schools in 2015, 2016 and 2019, and took the ILEP programme at NKU in 2009. Mouhamadou, a former ATES (Senegal English Teachers' Association) president, is currently a teacher at Serigne Ahmadou Ndack Seck High School in Thies.

The journey of an African teacher: decentring ELT, | Mohamed Lehjef

“Never underestimate the power of a small group of committed people to change the world. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has” - Margaret Mead.



The bell rang. It was midday. Students immediately closed their books before they finished writing the examples of passive voice I had written on an old wooden board we call the ‘blackboard’. Even though I didn’t appreciate their hurry to leave the classroom, I felt relieved that they had mastered all the forms of the passive and were then able to transform my sentences from the active to the passive form. This great achievement is attributed to my unwavering dedication to the PPP method (presentation, practice, production) which can turn any grammar lesson into a comprehensible one. “Isn’t this what they taught us in the teacher training center? Who cares if my students can use the flesh of the language? The bones, the grammar and usage are enough now.” I gained control, they gained practice. A win-win deal.

Exhausted, I left the classroom, covered with white dust. I washed my hands in the only fountain in a school that hosted more than 1000 students; a school that stood in a desert area, proud like a woman who did not fall down despite the strong sandstorms and buried dreams. This beautiful southern part of Morocco used to be a Spanish colony.

A student passed by and shouted: “Thank to you what you did teacher!” I tried to correct him, but remembered that feedback should be given gently and constructively, so I swallowed my words, nodded and smiled.

On my way, I trod a dusty old road that led to a shabby fish restaurant, where I collected some fried fish and bread. Then I went back home. I had a long nap and then went out to embrace the small world of a town where welcoming faces and musical Hassaniya words flew in the air, reminiscent of a simple nomadic life that struggled under the tyranny of mortar and bricks. A rich nomadic life used to exist here decades ago but now the city has blossomed into a modern area, like other emerging cities, with both opportunities and challenges.

As I walked, I also thought about how our English classes could help with these. We can produce some materials to raise awareness about both, and get students discussing and debating what actions they can take.

Many other questions crossed my mind: “Shall I get rid of the toolkit that I carry on my back from the training center? Is Krashen’s ‘Comprehensible Input’ simply a cliché – in David Crystal’s words, a ‘Lexical Zombie’ that cannot be grown in this arid area? Are CLT, CBLT, differentiation or even BYOD new ideas that I should strive to adopt and adapt? Can these new methods, approaches and techniques that were born in the centre, in the West, can they be planted in this arid land where a dripping fountain in my school can barely quench the thirst of crowds of learners? Will my students, the sons of Ifergan and nomadic hunters, embrace the idea of group work when their whole life is about reaching out to their kinsmen and relatives? Can storytelling in ELT open the minds of my youthful learners who are used to hearing much more exciting stories from grandmothers and grandfathers? Can the ‘brand new ideas’ in the official guidelines and pedagogical meetings help me feed my learners some language that will help them understand who they are and what they should become?

I warded off these ideas and looked at the sky serene, resilient and quiet. Why can’t the mind of a teacher be as calm as this vast, beautiful sky? I sank into a deep reflection while gazing at some scattered clouds. I thought about our worth as teachers, our voice, our agency. I felt confused, disappointed and lost.

I went back home and grabbed a copy of *Forum* (a US ELT magazine), seeking to find answers to my burning questions. I read brilliant ideas about how to make students speak, communicate, work on projects and master 21st century skills. I thought to myself: can these imported, centric ideas set a fire in the minds of puzzled and perplexed young souls who were silenced for years? Is it time for us to speak a language that our students understand, a language that shapes who we are and who they are?



The next day, I called a teacher friend. We had a long conversation on many issues. How beautiful it is to have a chat with like-minded people. He suggested that we should get involved, that we should think and act beyond the walls of our classrooms.

A few days later, we joined a local teacher association where we had the opportunity to interact with fellow teachers. Together, we agreed to do meaningful things that would impact our students, things that mattered to us and to them. We held events on public speaking and debating. We also organized spelling bee contests. We coached and mentored students and showcased their work in local and international events. We celebrated our successes and welcomed our failures. A light at the end of the tunnel in the mind of a perplexed teacher started to shine - learning to grow professionally with colleagues and students has changed my life in a considerable way.

Online networking has also helped us reach out to educators beyond the borders of our town and our country. I realized that I had the same concerns and worries as fellow educators in Nepal, India and Nigeria! Through the lockdown webinar series, presented by AfricaTESOL, together with the A.S.Hornby Trust, we learnt about these concerns and worries, and about the Hornby Decentring initiative. This complex, and still developing, idea really interested us, as although we want to be part of the global ELT industry, we want to develop our own ideas of what works best locally, for our students and teachers. For too long, many countries, for example in Africa, have almost unquestioningly adopted the methodologies, coursebooks and teaching ideas that were developed for small, technology-rich classes in Europe and the US. For too long, the so-called 'experts' have been teachers who had little experience of teaching in Africa, but even so, we were encouraged to pay expensive air tickets for them to come and train us in approaches that work in completely different contexts. But all contexts have experts of their own – in our case, those who have been teaching for many years with just a blackboard and chalk. When these local teachers get together and discuss solutions, and when we allow and encourage them to teach in the ways they know are most effective, with their own, locally created materials, they will then become our own experts.

New ideas began to shape my professional journey and that of my colleagues, as we decided to 'think globally and act locally' as a small community of dedicated teachers. We decided to organize local CPD events and even international conferences, to empower our teachers and break the isolation in which many of us used to live. Both students and teachers took part in these international events. The first conference was held in 2018 under the theme: 'Promoting ELT: local and global dimensions' and the second, 'ELT in a changing world: challenges and opportunities'. At the latter, we were very lucky to have several guests from the AfricaTESOL board, and especially our keynote speaker, Harry Kuchah Kuchah, President of IATEFL and advisor to AfricaTESOL. He is also a member of the A.S.Hornby Trust and gave us more information about decentring.

الجمعية المغربية لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية – فرع العيون
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السلطة المغربية
 وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
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In collaboration with
Africa TESOL

Keynote speaker:  **Dr Harry Kuchah**
 President of IATEFL, Lecturer in Language Education at the University of Leeds, UK

Isn't it quite amazing how a small group of committed teachers can impact their realities if they work together and advocate for each other?

Through networking and organizing conferences, we have seen our teachers grow and become more confident. We have seen our students grow as a result and learn more than just grammar and the bare bones of the English language. We are planning to engage our teachers with more interest in action research – so they can find out what works best in our context – and global issues – so we can link up more with the wider world, and through our English classes, help create a better world.



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 A.S. Hornby Educational Trust - Projects: <https://www.hornby-trust.org.uk/projects#Projects>



Mohamed Lehjef has been a high school teacher for 23 years. He is currently a teacher trainer at CRMEF, Laayoune. He was President of the Laayoune local branch of MATE (Morocco Association of Teachers of English) 2018-2019 when he coordinated 2 international ELT conferences. His professional interests include action research and teacher leadership.

Terrorism and Mali | Patrice Kane

Since 2012, Mali has been hit badly by a multi-dimensional insecurity crisis. It expanded from the north to the centre. It first began with the separatist MNLA (Mouvement de la Liberation de l'Asawad) claiming independence, then the insecurity grew to include attacks led by armed groups affiliated with Islamic State and Al Qaeda (MUJAO, AQMI, Ansardin, Katiba Macina), and terrorism.

With military and logistical support from the United Nations and other international forces, the Malian government has established peace in many regions. However, Mopti, one of the central regions, remains a dangerous area for terrorist attacks. It is mainly occupied by Dogon, Fulani and Bozo people. The terrorist attacks have been complicated by an ethnic conflict here: terrorists conceal themselves amongst the Dozo (meaning 'hunters'); Dozo are Dogon militia; terrorists then attack Fulani communities. So terrorists dress in the Fulani way, speak in Fulani, then attack Dogon communities, who are very often Christian.

This situation prevents many people from farming, housing and attending school. About 866 schools have been closed; 525 schools were closed in Mopti from 2018 to 2019 (UNICEF report, April 2019). In addition, 70,000 people have moved from their home village to safe areas, according to the government and the IOM (International Organisation of Migration). In the Mopti region, 157,000 children have no access to education out of 260,000 who have been affected by schools closing.

So, how does this situation of great instability affect our teaching and learning of English?

In Mali, students begin learning English at junior high school around 13 years old. The official syllabus is loaded with grammar and text work, and generally doesn't focus on global challenges. There is a lack of English teachers, which is a challenge for the department of education. Teachers have large classes (50-100 students) with very limited resources (not enough desks, student books and classrooms).

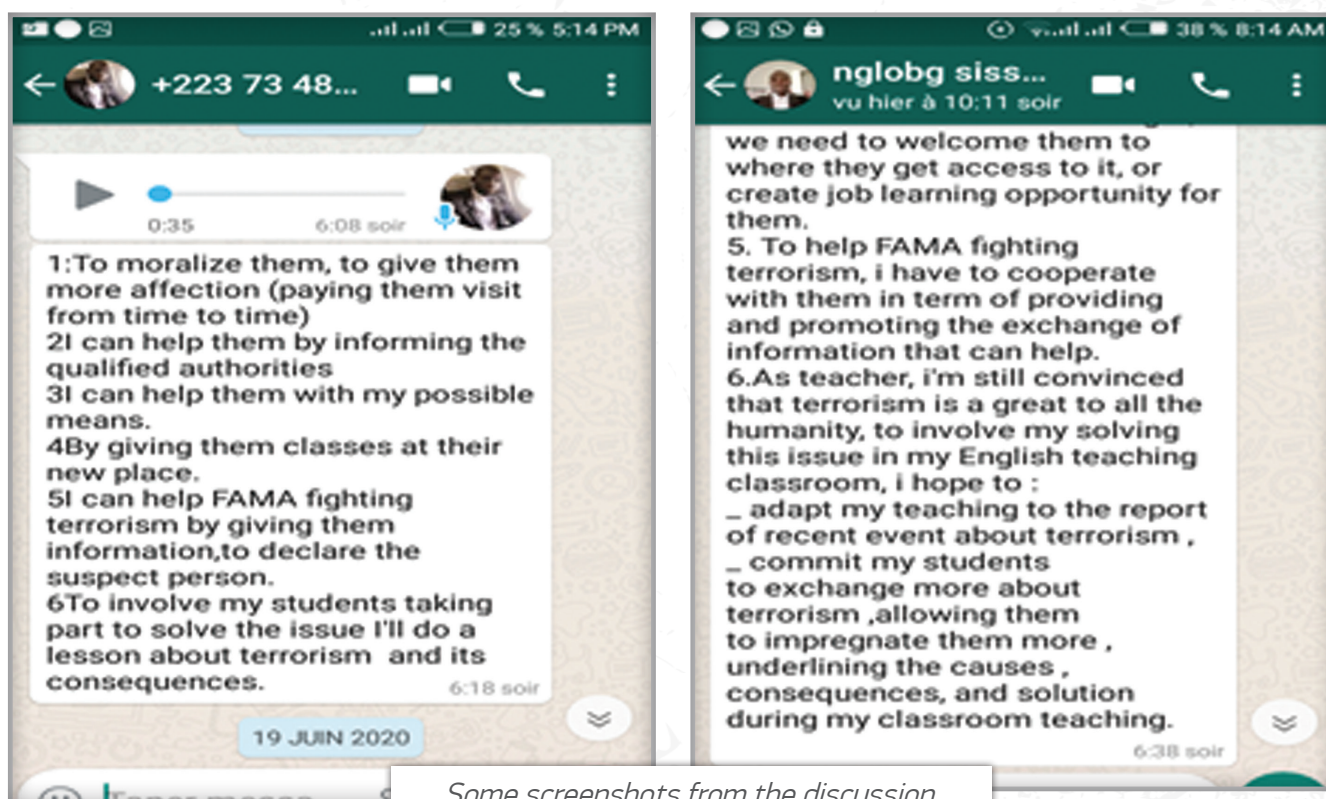
As a teacher educator, I'm mentoring 24 teachers, and we have formed an ELT community through a WhatsApp group which is a quick, cheap way to share experiences. We have had several discussions about how terrorism has affected the teaching and learning, and what we can do to help students understand what is going on, and what we can all do to help. Firstly, we all agreed that it's a good idea to give learners good citizenship education and start to find solutions for social problems while they are still young. Discussing global issues like terrorism can empower learners and give them the ability to solve global challenges.



Map showing MNLA and Islamic groups occupation. Captions: **Red area:** formally advised not to visit. **Orange area:** advised not to visit except for essential travel.

From our discussions in the WhatsApp group, it is relevant that all those who took part want to support the victims of terrorism. 50% of them think they can give materials (home, clothing) and funding support, 20% think they can engage students with this issue in a classroom discussion, 20% think they can teach displaced people's children in their new place as volunteers, and 10% think the government, humanitarian NGOs, and the local population should be more involved in supporting victims. However, the threatened areas will remain inactive because teachers and learners are in danger, as the armed groups are hostile to French schools that are non-Muslim. All the participants think they can help **FAMa** (Forces Armées Maliennes) fight terrorism by giving vital information about any suspicious person and strange event. But teachers in red areas feel they can't do that. One teacher reported:

'Discussing your topic here is a danger. I'm not sure I can tell you more things, as you know they have killed someone dealing with information about terrorists'.



Some screenshots from the discussion.

I then prepared a lesson for use in class with level B1 students and above, and shared it with the teachers in the WhatsApp group to also use with their students.

This class focuses on presenting situational problems, to which learners will propose solutions. It involves individual, pair and group work activities.

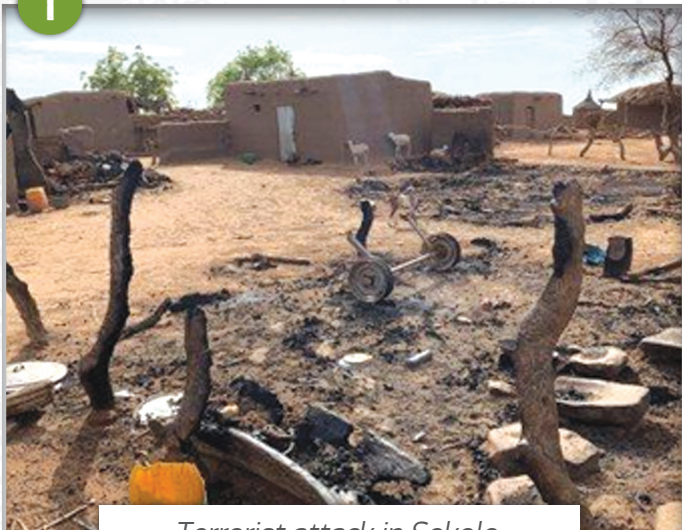
Aims:

- ▶ raise awareness of the damage caused by terrorism in some areas
- ▶ practise using comparatives and superlatives.

Task 1 (individual)

You have three minutes to look at the following pictures:

1



Terrorist attack in Sokolo.

2



Terrorist attack in Ogossagou.

3



People fleeing from a terrorist attack.

4



At 6 p.m. passengers sleep by the roadside due to the insecurity.

5



FAMA fighting against terrorism.

Task 2 (pairs)

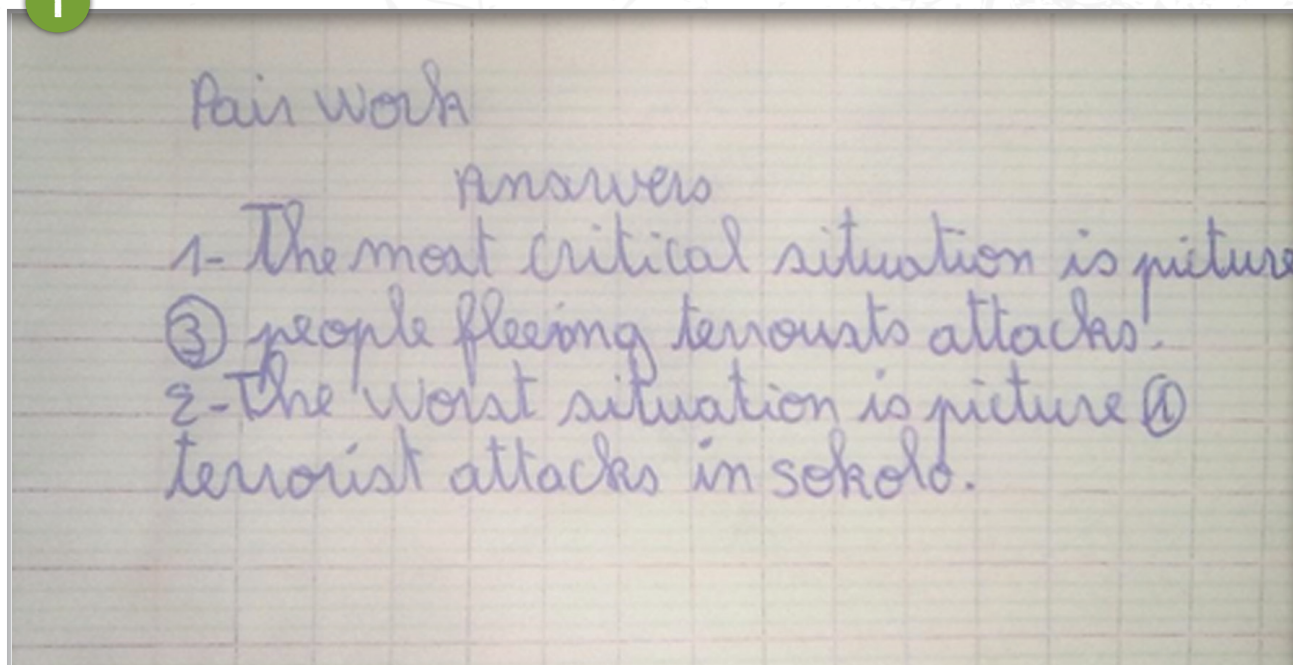
Find a partner and answer these two questions in writing together (3 minutes).

1. What do you think is the most critical situation in the pictures?

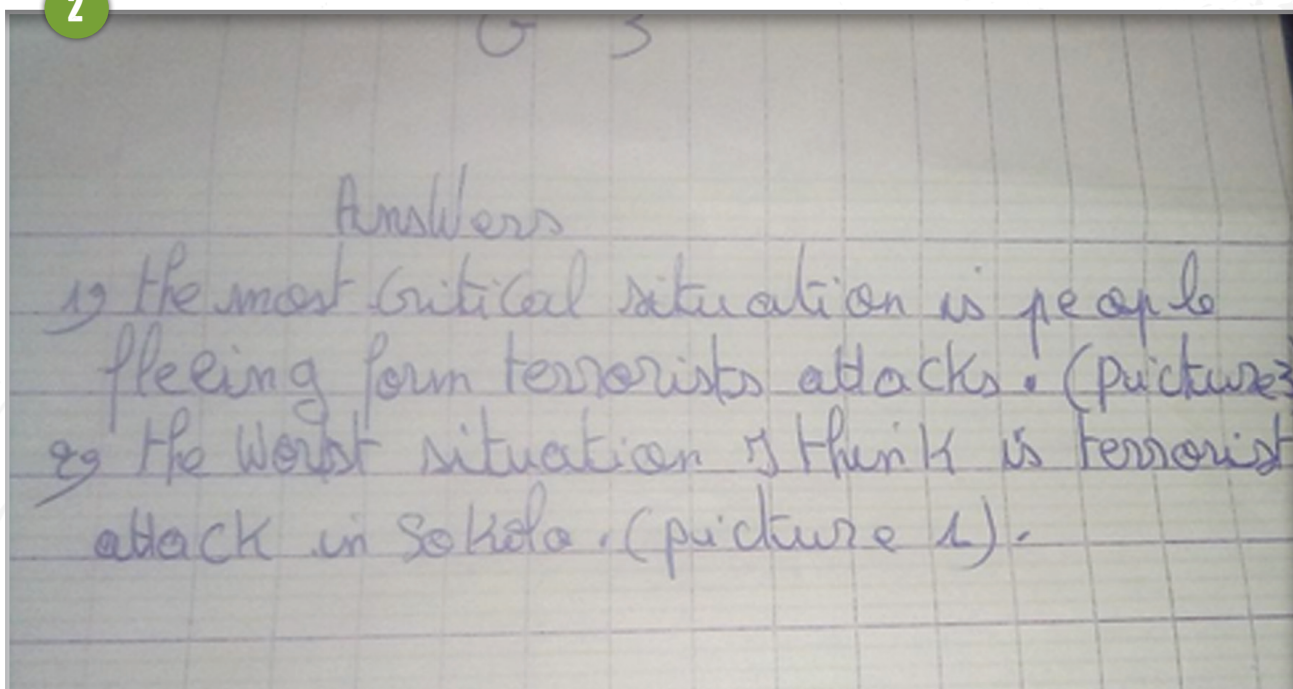
2. What do you think is the worst situation?

Photo 1 and 2 are students' posters.

1



2



After answering the questions, move around and find out what other students think are the most critical and worst situations (5 minutes). This activity will encourage learners to express their feelings freely. Here I play the observer role, intervening where necessary to provide language they need.

Task 3 (groups)

In new groups of 10, discuss each problem situation and complete the following chart, using CAN to propose solutions (10 minutes).

Here I move around to each group to help. Then learners form new groups and share what they agreed on (5 minutes).



A group work discussion.

1) terrorism as a global challenge in English classroom
discussion: Situation/problems

Picture No	Problem situations	Proposing solutions	Period (when are you going to do it?)
1	How can you help people who have lost everything during Sokoto attack?	I can give them food	
2	How can you help those whose parents have been killed during Ogoni attack?	Give money to support	
3	What can you do for your buddies fleeing terrorist attacks as they have no access to education?	I can give exercise to some of them	
4	What can you do for passengers who sleep by the roadside for insecurity reason?	I can give food	

A poster from group work.

When the discussion began, some students were surprised, because they didn't think they could do anything about such a challenging situation at their age.

"I'm not sure we can do something. I believe only the government can solve this issue", answered one student. I encouraged them to do something and I let them know I was sure they could think of good ideas to solve problems. Students reacted in different ways: some had strong sympathy with the victims and felt they were directly affected; one student reacted gloomily: "I think you don't imagine how the life will be so complicated to them without their parents"; and some students thought these facts happened in very distant areas, so think they are not involved, but can support any victim they meet.

I told my students these events have already happened. They can support the victims' children to live without their parents by playing with them and sharing what they don't have. I also told them that when I was younger, like they are now, I used to watch on TV people fleeing war during the Rwanda and DRC conflicts. But I thought all these events wouldn't concern me. Now I can see near me people facing similar problems, so everyone of us needs to face these global challenges at a distance or close, older or younger. By the end of the activities all the discussion groups put together a resolution.

Task 4: Making resolutions (3 minutes)

Here I explain to my learners that they are going to take the final resolution. Each group brings their propositions, and puts them together with the following statement (as modelled below).

We members of group 1, 2, 3 and 4, agreed to fulfil the following actions as part of our contribution to solving the global issue of terrorism:

PROBLEM SITUATIONS	Proposed solutions / time Group 1	Proposed solutions / time Group 2	Proposed solutions / time Group 3	Proposed solutions / time Group 4
How can you help people who have lost everything during Sokolo attack?	I can give some money to support (Nov 2020)	I can give them clothes. (Nov 2020)	I can give them food.	I can give some money.
How can you help those whose parents have been killed during Ogos-sagou attack?	We can create a reception centre. (Jan 2021)	I can ask my parents to adopt a child.	I can give money to support them.	I can build a relationship with them to make them safe.
What can you do for your peers fleeing terrorist attacks as they have no access to education?	I can teach some of them. We can do exercise together.	We can create an Association to help refugees for education. (Dec 2020)	I can give exercises to some of them.	I can give them school kits
What can you do for passengers who sleep by the roadside?	I can give them mosquito nets.	I can give them food.	I can bring them sheets.	I can give them food and water.
How can you help FAMa (Force Armée Malienne) to fight against terrorism in your role?	I can give information.	I can inform FAMa.	I can give them information.	

To follow up on this lesson in the local area, I corresponded with some local teachers from the WhatsApp group, and others who shared their opinion, and decided to deliver a follow-up lesson about terrorism. A copy of this follow-up tool below will be given to each teacher who has taught the lesson. Some photos can be shared through the WhatsApp group once an action is completed.

Activities	Executed	In progress	Not executed	%

We all, teachers and students, agreed that this lesson made everyone feel empowered. As the student above said, we often feel that we have no power to change anything, but by using the modal verb *can*, we focus on what is possible, not what is impossible. In this lesson, the English language perfectly mirrors the feeling that we want to inspire in the students, and the language helps the students to create change, even in this terrible situation of terrorism.

References (Images)

MNLA and Islamic group occupation: <http://bamada.net/nord-mali-la-situation-est-toujours-critique>

People fleeing from terrorist attacks: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Wm8g6YG0ns>

FAMa fighting against terrorism:

<http://kayeskunafoni.net/2019/08/21/boni-les-fama-deplorent-5-morts-dans-une-embuscade/amp/>



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The healing classroom: ELT during armed conflict, |

Gladys Focho and Harriet Ndikum

Many countries around the world are suffering or recovering from one kind of crisis or the other, due to war, armed conflict, fire, flood, drought and epidemic or pandemic diseases like COVID-19. In such situations everything is disrupted and it becomes an emergency to restore all sectors of life to normalcy. This includes education (giving rise to the notion of 'education in emergencies'). In the two anglophone regions of Cameroon (the North West and South West regions), education has been stalled since 2016 by armed conflict and this is now compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Only a few schools in the North West region are functional, but teachers and students face enormous academic, psycho-social and emotional challenges imposed by the crisis.

Cameroon has a dual heritage from its colonial antecedents. The French-speaking (francophone) part of the country was colonised by the French and the English (anglophone) part by the British. The anglophones feel marginalised by the majority francophones and agitations resulted in an armed conflict in 2017 with the anglophone separatists demanding secession.

The education sector has been hard hit due to shooting, killing and the burning of schools, forcing many students to abandon school altogether. Out of frustration, some young people of school-going age have been lured into the separatist camps as soldiers. The few functional schools are thus faced with heterogeneous groups of students with varied challenges.

In order to get first-hand information about the effects of the crisis on students and teachers, their opinions were sought through two sets of questionnaires. The results indicate that both students and teachers suffer academic, social, psychological and emotional trauma, as will be discussed later in this article. Evidently, the onus is on the teacher to deal with this for any holistic teaching and learning to take place.

In times of crisis, if all sectors are collapsing, education is one that needs to be sustained. Education cannot wait because the future reconstruction of the country will depend on human capital. However, the conditions under which teaching and learning take place during crises are more difficult than during normal difficult circumstances. The class size is plethoric (100-200 students) and heterogeneous with students of varying ages, cognitive ability, and those silently nursing the invisible wounds inflicted by the armed conflict. Others express their frustrations through anger, aggression and all kinds of disruptive behaviour.

The classroom can be viewed as a healing or therapeutic centre where teacher and student wellbeing is promoted. The concept of the healing classroom presupposes that as a community, teachers and students can help each other overcome their negative experiences. Teachers can help students to recover and develop by re-instilling a sense of stability, safety, belonging, self-esteem, positivity and control over their lives.

The language class gives the perfect opportunity for activities that can foster healing. A teacher in a healing classroom can therefore use content related to psychological and emotional healing to teach. This implies that language activities could be focused on such themes as peace building, forgiveness, love, understanding, motivation etc. By sharing experiences through songs, poems, essays, testimonies, stories and projects, students find the perfect venue to purge their fears and pain.

Furthermore, teachers assume multiple roles in the healing classroom, such as counsellor, therapist, peace builder and parent. S/he has to advise students on academic, emotional, safety, health and even financial issues. S/he has to make the classroom an inclusive community encouraging positive social relations among students, and between students and teachers/adults. The teacher needs to set the pace by exercising fairness and justice to all, and help students cultivate a positive self-image through goal setting and positivity. It is the place of the teacher to stimulate the students intellectually through inclusive and remedial teaching that meets the needs and learning styles of each learner.

It should be noted that many teachers have similar negative experiences as their students; therefore if they embrace the approach of the healing classroom, they will be conscious of healing themselves first, to be able to effectively help students. From this perspective, CAMELTA North West Chapter sought to build the capacity of teachers to be more effective during crises, such as armed conflict and now COVID-19. This was made possible by a grant from the Hornby Trust.

In the spirit of decentering, the Hornby Trust empowers local teachers to develop their own approaches in small projects by allowing local chapters of TAs to bid for grants alongside the national body. CAMELTA North West Chapter thus won the grant which enabled it to implement a project meant to upgrade the capacity of teachers to meet the current challenges.

The first phase of the project consisted of finding out from students and teachers how the conflict affects them. Responses from students' questionnaires indicated the following:

- ▶ Loss of at least 1 year of schooling (some 2 or 3 years)
- ▶ Experience of rape, torture, kidnap etc.
- ▶ Loss of pedagogic material, uniform, school bags etc.
- ▶ Loss of reading, writing and mathematical skills
- ▶ Involvement in drug, alcoholism and abortion
- ▶ Lack of interest and motivation in education
- ▶ Loss of parents/family members
- ▶ Poverty, hunger, inadequate accommodation, illness etc.
- ▶ A general sense of fear, depression and insecurity

A summary of teachers' questionnaires revealed these experiences:

- ▶ Kidnapping, torture, fear and insecurity
- ▶ Loss of pedagogic material
- ▶ Loss of family members
- ▶ Inadequate accommodation due to displacement
- ▶ Losing track of academic events, syllabus change etc.
- ▶ Lack of motivation
- ▶ Expressed the need for in-service training
- ▶ Eager to embrace CPD opportunities

The above insight helped the CAMELTA North West project team to formulate modules to help alleviate the psycho-social and academic setbacks experienced by teachers and students during the crisis.

The project team analysed the responses on the questionnaires to teachers and students and came up with these 5 modules:

- ▶ Handling learners' psycho-social problems
- ▶ Building peace messages
- ▶ Meeting students' different learning styles
- ▶ Remedial teaching
- ▶ Continuing professional/personal development



The team of facilitators with the Coordinating Inspector (male in centre).

Participants began by describing their general observation of students:

- ▶ no uniforms, books
- ▶ laxity, no concentration/motivation
- ▶ looking sad, depressed, lost, confused, insecure
- ▶ reluctance to participate, or do homework
- ▶ aggressiveness
- ▶ lateness, absenteeism

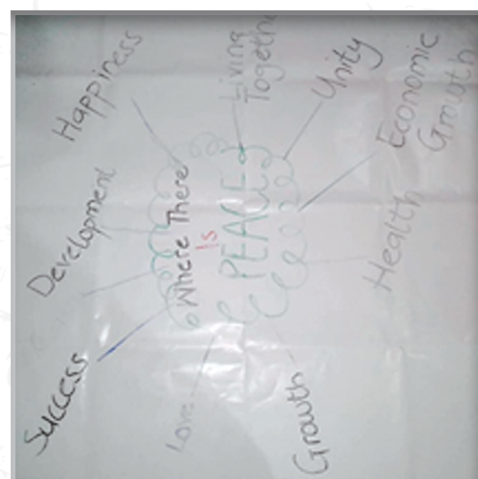
The above exercise underlined the importance of noticing the characteristics of students and adapting teaching to cope with the times. In addition, counselling is seen as instrumental in alleviating psycho-social trauma and can be whole-class, small groups with similar issues, or individual. There could also be out-of-class after-school sessions. Some language activities that target psycho-social issues are suggested below:

Problems	Proposed Activities
Fear	Speaking exercise: causes and solutions using their own experiences.
Anger	Writing: who you are angry with and why? Dealing with your anger.
Sadness	Listening: A story about a little boy orphaned by the crises but who embraces education. Lessons learned.
Drug abuse	Sketch: the effects of drugs on students.
Rape	Poem: the negative effects of rape.
Loss of parents	Song: overcoming being an orphan and forging ahead .
Low self-esteem	Project: groups develop questionnaires and to find out about the self-esteem of students.

Teachers were expected to encourage learners to tell their stories through the above activities, which constitutes therapy.

Building Peace Messages

The 'Building Peace Messages' module focused on building messages meant to encourage peace within oneself and with one another. Below are examples of participants' mind maps on the concept of peace:



The vocabulary generated was further used to create peace messages, as indicated below:



Students' peace messages should be on walls and boards, exercise books and portfolios. Peace vocabulary should be used as much as possible, in and out of class.

For no learner to be left behind, teachers need to meet the different learning styles of their students. In very large classes, the best approach is to vary activities that incorporate these styles, as suggested below:

Learning Style	Suggested Activities
Visual	Pictures, flash cards, realia, charts, maps, drawings, mind maps, videos, silent reading, observation.
Audio	Listening to the teacher, classmates, tapes, radios, songs.
Linguistic/Verbal	Role play, dialogue/sketches, recitations, songs, story-telling, debates, speeches, reading aloud, brainstorming, Q&A.
Kinaesthetic	Note-taking, written exercises, drama, role play, card/board games, demonstrations, projects, other physical activities.
Naturalistic	Nature observation, outdoor activities, field trips, activities centred on nature.
Interpersonal	Group work, exposés, discussions, debates, people-centred projects.
Intrapersonal	Silent reading, written exercises, creative writing, keeping diaries or portfolios, critical thinking tasks.

Teachers were advised to use the above activities while teaching language skills.

Remedial teaching

The 'Remedial Teaching' module was intended to help with difficulties learners indicated with reading and writing. Remediation could be viewed from the perspective of The 5 Ws of Remediation:

Who? – the language teacher, parents, school/classmates

Where? – in and out of the class

When? – during all language lessons (and out of class)

What? – all language skills and sub skills

Why? – so as to carry all learners along

The teacher must view remediation as a continuous process, beginning with diagnostic tests to evaluate learners' abilities. These will help develop remedial lessons for the whole class, groups or individual students.

Alarming as it might seem, some of these students are very weak in reading and writing so teachers were called to pick up sound and word-building activities to help learners to read, write and spell effectively. Below is a simple example:



The slogan adopted at the end of the module was: 'Leave no one behind'.

Continuous Professional Development (CPD)

Since most teachers had not taught for one or more years, they expressed the need for CPD, acknowledging that they cannot empower students if they are not empowered themselves.

In this CPD module, the emphasis was on drawing attention to various avenues for upgrading and reskilling knowledge, thereby keeping abreast of changes in the field, like the use of ICT in language teaching. They were also updated on:

- ▶ National / international conferences
- ▶ Webinars / seminars / workshops
- ▶ Online courses
- ▶ Extensive reading or self-tutoring
- ▶ Reflective teaching

- ▶ Mentoring
- ▶ Writing course or textbooks
- ▶ Doing research and publication
- ▶ Further studies
- ▶ Personal physical, emotional, psychological and social wellness

Teachers were encouraged to make a CPD plan, after identifying their needs via a personal SWOT analysis.



Groups at work.

After the workshop, teachers of some functional schools had this to share as feedback from their classroom experiences:

Teacher A: “I identified 5 students terribly affected by the crisis and took special interest by way of follow up ... they have gained their place in school.”

Teacher B: “I noticed an irregular student who later expressed his worry about the arrest of his parents... he had to cater for his family... I had one-on-one counselling that provided healing.”

Teacher C: “I encountered a new student who had not schooled for 3 years and not studied the four literature texts... I encouraged the student and enrolled her for private lessons... Presently she is writing the Ordinary Level GCE Exams.”

Teacher D: “I took the 5 modules of the workshop and shared the contents with my colleagues during a staff meeting. This empowered them although they were not attendees of the workshop.”

Teacher E: “I met an over-aged student of 20 years in form 5 who was stigmatized and called IDP (Internally Displaced Person) by his classmate. This caused low self-esteem and he attempted dropping out. I took time to educate and share peace messages with the class. The boy is now fully integrated and accepted by classmates.”



Teachers at the workshop.

Teachers can, and should help students recover from trauma caused by any kind of crisis if they transform their teaching space into healing classrooms. All it takes is commitment and creativity.



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Taking responsibility for sexual health: How English lessons can help | Chi Anestin Lum

Sex education remains a ‘taboo’ subject in most communities across the African continent. Yet, many children are having sex at a relatively young age. It’s a common phenomenon, in both rural and urban schools in Cameroon, to see teenage girls drop out of school because of unplanned pregnancies and often blaming male class- or schoolmates for this. It becomes even more touching when the victims are grades 7, 8, 9 students – generally below the age of 15. While it is largely agreed that sex education is important in the formation process of younger generations, especially during adolescence, the question of how to deal with this subject matter when we are neither biology teachers, nor guidance counsellors, is what I will discuss here.

The integrative approach to teaching entails planning learning experiences as a whole and in meaningful contexts. It builds on learners’ experiences to support new knowledge and gives them opportunities to make connections between their experiences and the knowledge they have during their course. The rationale for integrating experiences and new knowledge is that in real-life situations, language is used heuristically. Hence, English language lessons should be approached in a way that learners see the relationship between what they learn at school and what happens in real life. As Littlewood (1981:95) states: ‘...language teaching must be concerned with reality: with the reality of communication as it takes place outside the classroom and with the reality of learners as they exist outside and inside the classroom.’

This narrative will share some classroom activities with Grade 8 learners of English as a foreign language with a French-speaking background, between the ages of 12 and 14, at a Government Technical College, Ndimi. GTC Ndimi is a rural school situated in the Mbam and Kim division of the Centre region of Cameroon, which serves a community that survives mainly on cocoa farming. The activities, which go beyond teaching the rules of the language, show how teachers can bring different themes into the language classroom, and relate the content they teach and language processes that students need, in order to make learning meaningful, enable learners be more engaged, take ownership of their own learning and make meaningful connections between subjects. Here, the focus is on sex education, which is very relevant in my teaching context in Cameroon.

Vocabulary lesson: adjectives of colour

When teaching adjectives of colour, I brought beads of different colours to class and together, we designed menstrual cycle bead bracelets.

Step 1: I gave learners different beads and asked them to write short sentences describing the colour of the beads. With this task, they learned adjectives of colour.

Step 2: Then, I asked learners to write what the colours represent to them. This task gave them the opportunity to use adjectives of colour in sentences. Here are examples of sentences they wrote:

Red represents blood
 Black represents dark
 white colour stand for ~~purity~~ ^{Purity}
 red colour stand for ~~danger~~

Step 3: Using the sentence from one of the learners, that “red represents blood”, I taught learners to design menstrual cycle bracelets and say what each group of colours in the bracelet represents.

TASK CARD

In groups, use the rope and beads provided to design a bracelet. Look carefully at the samples hanging on the walls or the drawing on the board. Respect colour order and number of beads used.

After designing the bracelet,

- ❖ say what you think the bracelet represents for girls/women: How can girls/women use this bracelet to improve on their health and well-being?
- ❖ What does each group of colour represent in terms of menstrual cycle?
- ❖ Do you think using this bracelet can help girls to avoid unplanned pregnancy? Justify your answer



With some support, learners were able to come up with the following sentences:

The bracelet ~~is~~ ^{has} 28 beads. Women can use for represent menstrual cycle.

Red is for blood. Woman have blood for 15 days.

White and black colour mean is safe.

pink colour stand for danger. Woman is ~~have~~ ^{has} sex she can ~~get~~ ^{be} pregnant.

G R O U P A

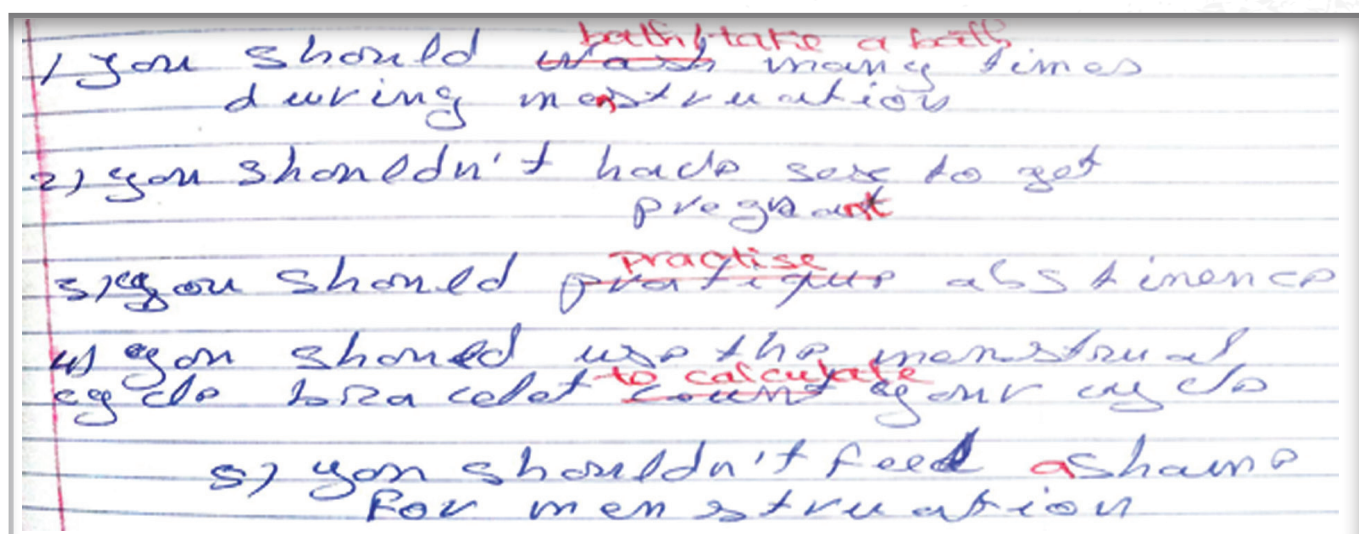
Step 4: We concluded the session by teaching a grammar lesson on using the modal verb should/shouldn't.

Learners were asked to advise their sister or friend on what they should or shouldn't do when they start menstruating.

TASK

- Your younger sister has just started menstruating. Write five sentences advising her.
- Remember to use the modal should or shouldn't

Students produced interesting write-ups. Here is a sample from a group:



Through the different tasks, learners were able to revise numbering (given that they needed to count beads), learn new vocabulary (action words related to designing, such as cut, insert, fold, tie etc.), use adjectives of colour to describe the menstrual cycle (the 28 beads represent the menstrual cycle, while each group of colours represents the various stages of the cycle: menstrual flow, hormonal changes, ovulation, hormonal changes and pre-menstrual syndrome), and provide menstrual hygiene advice. At the end of the lesson, both girls and boys were able to understand and/or help their peers and sisters to understand what is happening to their body, give advice on menstrual hygiene and dispel the myths and taboos about menstruation as a period of shame, which keeps girls away from engaging in community activities or even attending classes because they are unclean. Students often tease their classmates about this as a reason for absenteeism. This was also a great opportunity to integrate speaking, listening and writing skills, while using language in a meaningful context, as learners discussed in mixed groups of boys and girls, and shared with the rest of the class.

Grammar lesson: the first conditional

In the next class, we used the same menstrual cycle bead bracelet to teach another grammar lesson.

Step 1: At the start of this lesson, I asked learners to recall the colours used in the menstrual cycle bead bracelet and what they represent. This was an opportunity to revise the previous lesson on adjectives of colour.

Step 2: I asked learners to state what may happen in the following scenarios by completing the sentences on the activity card.

Step 3: To reinforce the use of the first conditional, I used a real life situation – the case of a boy who was reported to be notorious for touching the breast of girls and I asked them to discuss, in groups, what they will do if they are victims. Feedback on the task was provided for correct use of language structure.

ACTIVITY

In groups, state what will happen in the following situations by completing the sentences below:

- 1- If you have unprotected sex during ovulation, you _____
- 2- You won't get pregnant if you _____
- 3- Girls are healthy if they _____

1- If you have unprotected sex during ovulation, you will get pregnant.

2- You won't get pregnant if you ~~practice~~ ^{practice} ~~protected~~ ^{obedient}

3- Girls and women are healthy if ~~menstruate~~ ^{menstruate} ~~menstruation~~

Feedback on this activity served as a learning point for the first conditional.

Step 4: Then, I showed them some pictures to describe and say whether or not the pictures depict responsible behaviour. This was an opportunity to talk about various forms sexual harassment.



Learners discussed the images in mixed groups of boys and girls and came up with the following:

in picture A the boy is touch the girl at wrong place but the girl not to say & stop.
in picture B, the girl is refuse the boy not touch

In Picture A, the girl and boy not follow the ^{lesson} ~~lesson~~. They are ~~Amante~~ ^{romance}. It is not ~~responsible~~ ^{responsible} behaviour.

From their responses, I asked them to say what they will do in the circumstances described in the pictures (sexual harassment, which can also be between two girls, or two boys). Then, I divided the class into groups and assigned them different tasks.

WORK IN GROUPS

- **Group A:** Say what you will do if a classmate/teacher/relative is displaying irresponsible sexual behaviour (touch your breast or lap, attempt to kiss you, ask you to sit on their lap) towards you.
- Use the following structure: If + noun/pronoun + verb + ..., I + will + verb + ...
- **Group B:** Tell a group of friends what will happen to them if they display irresponsible sexual behaviour (touch breast or lap, attempt to kiss, ask someone to sit on their lap) towards a classmate at school or a relative at home/in the community.
- Use the following structure: You + will be + verb + if + you + verb + ...

This activity allowed for the use of grammar in context as learners used the first conditional, in both active and passive forms, more naturally, without so much focus on the rules. In the course of this activity, learners also built knowledge about responsible behaviours and how to deal with sexual harassment, while practising the language structure. Below is some written output:

GROUP A

1) If a boy touch my breast in class, I will report him to the discipline master.
If my uncle tell me to sit on his lap, I will refuse.

Group B

1) you will be dismissed from school if you do sexual harassment in school
2) you will be punished if you will touch the lap of girl during ^{lesson} ~~lesson~~

This activity included all four language skills as learners shared with one another, wrote and read out their sentences. Learners got to master tense sequencing with feedback provided on written tasks. In addition to learning and using the grammatical structures correctly, learners became more aware of sexual harassment.

Overall, I realised that students were more motivated and engaged during the lessons and were able to communicate in groups using the appropriate vocabulary and grammatical structures. Grammar rules were introduced through topical discourses. This shifted the focus on rules and gave learners the opportunity to learn the structures in context. Familiarity with the context of the knowledge enhanced their motivation and level of understanding. The learning situations described in this write-up contributed not only to functional language proficiency, but also to learners' ability to construct new knowledge. In this light, English language becomes a vehicle – a means to an end, and not just an end-in-itself. It's worthwhile for teachers to develop context-sensitive integrative pedagogic approaches so that learners stop seeing English language as an abstract subject.

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Oil in Angola: the motivation and the solution? | David Fernando

Luanda, the capital city of Angola, has been said to be the most expensive city in the world to visit, but this is for wealthy foreigners who need security and comfort. Of course, most people in Angola do not have a lot of money. How did Angola get to be a country of such extremes? This was mainly due to its extensive oil reserves.

Angola is the second largest oil producer in Africa, after Nigeria. It exports oil to many other countries, and has a lot of very advanced technology relating to this industry.

So, what does oil have to do with teaching English in Angola?

Oil was first discovered here in 1955, but production didn't really start until the 1960s. Angola didn't achieve independence from Portugal until 1975, but there then followed a terrible civil war that lasted for 27 years, until 2002.

During this time there was a lot of investment, and with the exporting and trade this started a great interest and need to be able to communicate in English. Many foreign oil companies came to operate in Angola, and from the late 80s to early 2000s a lot of young Angolans thus became interested in learning English. They wanted to have a job opportunity in one of those companies as translators and interpreters, mainly in provinces like Zaire, Cabinda, and Luanda.



Apart from those people that wanted to work for oil companies, there were also others who decided to learn English because of their studies, for business, and because it is an international language.

In the early 90s almost everyone that spoke English wanted to teach it, whether they were trained or not. The aim was to teach, and to help others learn and speak English. Nobody knew how they were going to do that, but I am certain that some of those untrained teachers did a very good job, and today we can see the results of their hard work. For example, there are people who are working for the US and British Embassies, journalists, and lecturers that were taught by them. There were English schools and English speakers everywhere, and some speakers were showing off their command of English. However, things have changed. Now more people see the need for using and teaching English for particular purposes, for example, for using it in business, or academic studies.

There are very few qualified teachers in Angola teaching English. Of those who are qualified, many are not working as teachers. It is now very common to see teachers that did a different degree teaching English. What usually happens is that someone goes to a school to apply for the job of teacher (of maths, Portuguese, science etc) and when they get there, they find out that a post is not available, but the post of English teacher is, so they have to take that instead. Consequently, many of these teachers don't speak English very well.

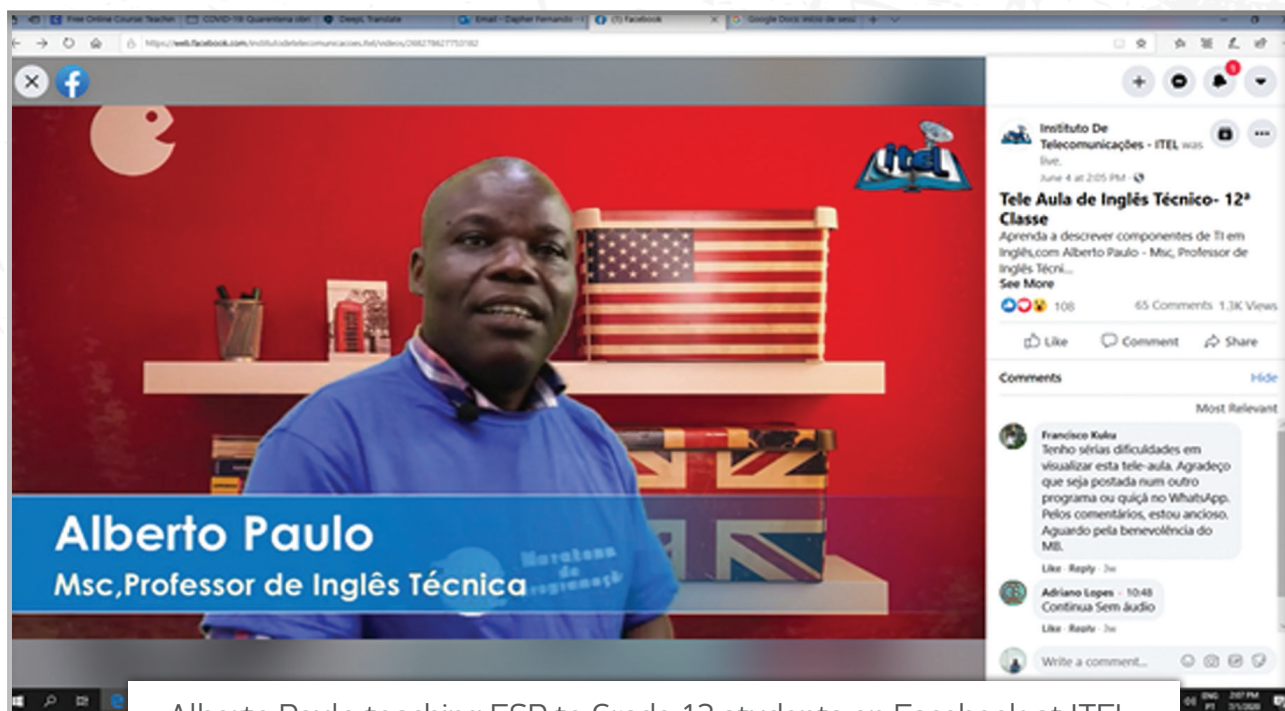
The first two cases of coronavirus in Angola were announced by the Minister of Health on 21 March, and on 27 March the government declared a State of Emergency. This caused so many problems, as most people depend on the informal market to survive.

So far, most cases have been in the capital, Luanda, and at the time of writing in June, there have been 353 positive cases, 226 active, 108 recovered, and 19 deaths. From May the country started opening up, with schools planned to open on 24 June.

Very few teachers have been able to teach in lockdown in Angola, because they were not ready to face this sudden shift from face-to-face classes to online teaching, and many of them do not have any training or experience in online teaching. Also, many do not have a Smartphone, iPad, tablet, laptop, or a desktop to run their classes, or not enough money for the internet, which is very expensive here, and bad quality. For example, an internet package for a month costs the same as 36 kilos of rice, enough to feed a whole family for the same amount of time.

Most online teaching, and training to teach online, is being done in private schools. Although some public schools are trying to teach online too.

One example is the Institute of Telecommunications – ITEL, which has a lot of resources. It ran a course on how to teach online right after schools were closed. The aim of the training was to help teachers cope with online teaching. Teachers were trained in how to project their voices, position themselves on the screen, how to use the board, how to make learning enjoyable, how to select clear images, and plan short lessons.



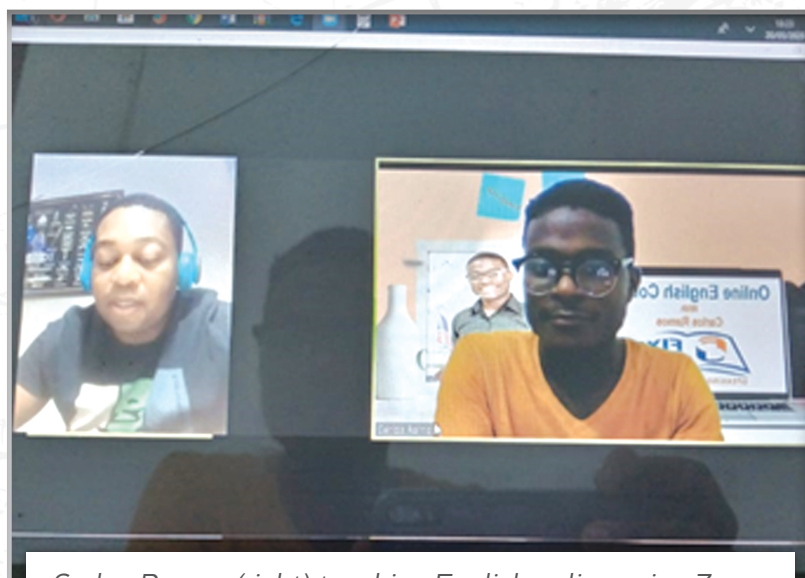
Alberto Paulo teaching ESP to Grade 12 students on Facebook at ITEL.

Most schools and teachers that are teaching online have been running their classes on WhatsApp, Facebook, Zoom, Messenger, YouTube, and MOODLE, but separately. ITEL has been running live 30-minute classes on Facebook from Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

One private school has been running classes on WhatsApp and Zoom. The school has created different groups on WhatsApp, with 20–25 students in each group. Teachers share the material on the WhatsApp groups, then, after students have read it, they have a Zoom class. Students can also ask their teacher questions or comment on WhatsApp, by recording their questions or comments, or writing them, or even in a short video call.

For those students who don't have mobile phones, internet, or a laptop, their parents go to school to pick up work. Their teachers have to leave printed papers or recordings at the school for them.

Carlos Ramos works for Luanda Communication Centre (LCC), but due to the pandemic, he was forced to move classes online. He usually teaches 40 hours per week. Although he doesn't have any training in teaching online, he's been doing his best. For him, a good internet connection, a computer, and his own skills are enough to teach online. He's been using mostly Skype, and Zoom, and sometimes WhatsApp.



Carlos Ramos (right) teaching English online using Zoom.

Both he and his students have coursebooks, which makes it easier for him to refer to content.

Lecturers at a higher institute have been using Moodle in order to teach. They usually upload the content, audios, videos, documents etc., and students access the platform and get the content, and can then leave questions, and comments in their own time. The only problem that they have been facing is the internet connection, which sometimes stops students from accessing the content.

I asked several colleagues for their opinions on how the pandemic has changed their routine. Frederico E. Epalanga Hama, a teacher of English in a public school in Uige province, claims that the pandemic has changed his routine and he cannot wait for the reopening of schools, because he misses that personal interaction with students in the classroom, and also with his colleagues. But for Mateus Cangoma, a lecturer at a higher institute in Huambo province, this pandemic has not changed his routine drastically because he's been in touch with his students through online classes. The only difference is that he doesn't have direct contact with them and hasn't been waking up early to go to school.

We now need to look for solutions to the many problems with teaching English online in Angola.

One solution is for ANELTA (Angolan English Language Teachers' Association) to do more training of English teachers. ANELTA was the winner of 2020 IATEFL Projects. That amount will enable ANELTA to run the project 'English Clubs Leadership Training', and this aims to train an initial group of eighty participants with the leadership skills required to run English clubs in a local context.

This project will gather twenty participants in each of four regions, and teach them the necessary skills to support English language learners who wish to practise listening, reading, speaking, and writing. The aim is for the participants of these leadership workshops to be able to set up and run English clubs in their local areas and that the clubs can provide a community hub for those who wish to learn English. Also, the English clubs will offer opportunities for students to engage in role plays, debate, general conversation, interview practice and to learn English in an informal and enjoyable atmosphere.

The Angolan government also has a clear role to play. They have been making a considerable effort to spread the internet, with WiFi hotspots now in some provincial capitals. We need to put pressure on telecommunications companies to improve the quality and speed of the internet.

We really need more WiFi hotspots, and more WiFi available in people's homes, and lower internet prices.



WiFi hotspot in Luanda.

People are now talking more about teaching English online, and wondering if more classes will move online. But there are still a lot of inequalities in Angola and few people with affordable Internet access.

This brings us back to Angola's oil from the beginning of the article, the motivation for many people to start learning English. One possible solution to many of these problems is for the oil companies to invest. ANELTA, our English teachers' association, has already approached some oil companies to ask for sponsorship of training events and our annual conference. Through ANELTA, we can open a channel of communication with these oil companies to work on providing more, better, and cheaper internet, sponsoring more people to train to teach English, and sponsoring training in online teaching. This will help reduce the huge gap in Angola, especially in education, between the rich and the poor. Surely, more equality will help our country.



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Integrating environmental issues in the English writing classroom | Hamed Suwaed

There is a growing need to include environmental issues such as global warming, species extinction and soil erosion in English language lessons. Cates (1997:4) points out that we can't call our English teaching successful if our students, however fluent, are ignorant of world problems, or have no social conscience and use their communication skills for international crime, exploitation, oppression or environmental destruction. This implies that EFL teachers could use their lessons in building up a sustainable environment for future generations.

However, some English language teachers in EFL contexts, including many in Libya, view their role as teaching only language skills and grammar i.e 'learning about the language' not 'using the language'. Language cannot be taught in isolation in our world today where global warming, water availability and desertification are very common. These issues can be integrated into lesson plans in a way that connects students to the real world.

Libya is threatened by scores of different environmental issues such as water availability (El-Tantawi, 2005), a problem that was solved partly by the Man-Made River Project which brings water from the south of Libya to the coastal north of the country. However, due to the conflicts and unstable political situation in Libya, water supplies have been damaged due to lack of repairs and power cuts.

In addition, Libya is threatened by desertification as more than 95% of the country is desert and semi-desert. Desertification is the result of climate change, over-cultivation, insufficient water resources and population growth. The population growth in Libya is high, which makes it more difficult for the government to attain sustainability. Population growth increases water and energy use. Consequently, more effluent and waste damages the Mediterranean Sea which is already overfished and polluted. Also, the development of industry and agriculture have put extra pressure on the limited natural resources which led to desertification.

Due to the unstable political situation, there is no national plan to deal with environmental problems, no control against exceeding the permitted levels of pollutants, and no follow up for burning garbage. In addition, because of the insecurity, international environment experts have not yet returned to Libya which has led to lack of training and specialists and lack of studies and real facts about the environment in Libya.

Although the local civil society organizations organize many campaigns to clean beaches and streets, protect sea turtle nests and raise awareness towards protecting the natural resources, more work is needed. Thus, environmental consciousness is a must and increasingly demanded among the young generation, of whom many are students.



I was thinking about how I can raise my English language college students' awareness about the environment. Lecturing about the issue may not be effective as students need to be involved in the lesson. So I decided to use a 'providing solutions to problems' essay to answer the question: how to protect the environment.

After explaining the structure of the 'providing solutions to problems' essay, students were divided into small groups. Then, they were asked to research the environmental issues in Libya by reading articles and reports, brainstorm ideas, then choose an environmental issue in Libya such as rubbish or desertification. After being given an outline for the essay, with one problem and two solutions, students were asked to write a four-paragraph essay.

Two groups selected rubbish as a main problem in the big cities such as Tripoli, and one group selected air pollution. There are two main causes of air pollution in Libya: natural such as sandstorms, and anthropogenic activities. These include: smoke from factories, from oil and petrochemical industries, transportation, greenhouses and burning of solid waste.

After submitting the essay, the small groups presented the problem that they had selected and their solutions. There was general agreement among the students that the main problem is that people are not aware of the damage that they cause to the environment. Based on that, students made posters and signs to raise awareness among the other students about the environment. One group suggested recycling as a solution to the rubbish problem so they brought three rubbish bins with different signs to recycle the waste, (see picture below). It is worth mentioning, however, that the government does not recycle plastic or paper waste, so this piles up randomly in the big cities. There are a few attempts to recycle plastic and paper waste in some cities such as Zleten (a city in the north of Libya), but not in most.



Based on the discussion with the students and their writing in reflection journals, integrating the environment into the writing classroom has several benefits. Firstly, the lesson raised students' awareness about environmental issues such as rubbish. This awareness might lead the students to play a positive role in protecting the environment from further degeneration. Simple steps such as writing posters and signs that advise other students in the department to take care of the environment (see pictures), might lead them to play a commendable transformative role in protecting the environment in the future by organizing campaigns to clean beaches and try to raise peoples' awareness by talking about the issues to friends and family and on social media. They can also collaborate or volunteer in non-profit local associations such as The Libyan Wildlife Trust and Oxygen to Protect the Environment, to combine their efforts by establishing groups to raise environmental awareness, and encouraging people to use environmentally friendly products.



The students found out a lot of facts about the environment in Libya, for example, that the air quality in Libya is considered unsafe (according to the WHO), as the most recent data shows that the annual mean concentration of PM2.5 is 54 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, which far exceeds the recommended maximum of 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. This can be an invisible type of pollution and causes many breathing problems, more especially now with COVID-19, and even things like lung cancer, heart attacks and strokes.

They had, of course, already seen the rubbish piling up in many streets in Tripoli, for example, for years. This research gave them the opportunity to find out facts about rubbish, and try to find practical solutions. They learned about its negative effect on health. It causes terrible smells and very bad air quality, which becomes even worse when people burn the rubbish.

Most students stated that they learned new vocabulary related to the environment, such as adjectives (sustainable, reusable), verbs (recycle, reuse) and nouns (soil erosion, deforestation), and information about the environment which improved their reading and writing skills. This was clear in their essays where they used the new vocabulary from the texts that they had read.



In addition, students mentioned that this task helped them to improve skills such as 1) communication because they had to discuss together and to share ideas and views, 2) critical thinking when they had to analyze the available information and choose an issue to write about and 3) group work because they had to think, discuss and write together.

English language teachers should open up a safe space for students to discuss issues and ask questions about issues that they have heard or read about in social media or observed in their context, whether they are related to the environment, such as deforestation and global warming, or to their daily life, such as bullying and girls dropping out of school. This will enable them to acquire new vocabulary and communicate with each other to express their views. Also, students will be more responsible citizens because reading about global issues will widen their horizons globally.

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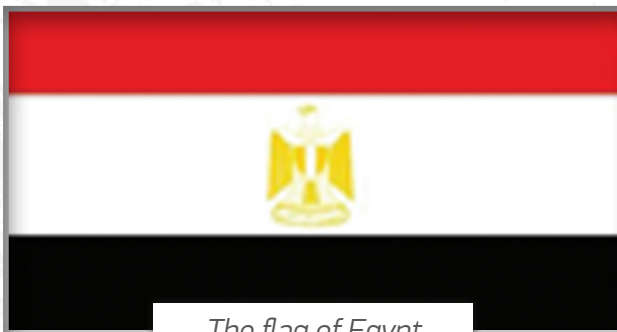


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Learning and Teaching online in the Land of the Pharaohs | Amira Serag

Egypt is famous for its pyramids and for the huge expanses of sandy desert, contrasting with the green areas of agriculture around the River Nile, the life blood of this arid country. This article is about the contrasts within education in Egypt, and the huge challenges, like the amazing pyramids, that rise up out of the desert.

The Egyptian government guarantees free public education for all. The system includes nine years of basic education up to the age of fifteen, followed by secondary education and higher education. Although public education is free, there are also private schools, with freer curricula, and private universities. This is where one of the big contrasts and problems lies. There are almost 7,000 private schools, which include religious schools, private language schools that teach the state curriculum in English, and some 100 international schools that teach foreign curricula (mainly British, U.S., German, and French).



The flag of Egypt

In the past, the majority of Egyptian students attended public schools and government universities. However, due to the decline in standards of public education, this is changing, and now almost 50% of students attend private schools (national and international schools) as well as private universities. This puts a huge financial

burden on middle-income families to have to pay for good quality of education for their kids. Now, private spending on education exceeds public spending.

This is creating a very big gap and contrast between students educated in the state system, and those educated privately. The quality of public schools needs to be substantially improved. Attendance at private schools and universities, as well as the frequent reliance on private tutoring, signal that the quality of public schools is low. This may be related to the large increase in population over recent years. Students in private schools now have a range of other activities such as music, sports, arts, theatre, civics and field trips. The students gain many different skills. This leads to inequality of employment opportunities in the future and it opens the door for social differences.

I believe that every child has the right to have a good education in order to be a good citizen for the country and we teachers need to work to create this.

It has been said that Covid-19 is a great leveller in that it does not discriminate in who it attacks. However, this is not true, as it has, in many countries, including Egypt, exacerbated the inequalities that already existed. Before coronavirus, we had regular classes and exams in our schools and universities. Then in March, we had to start teaching online via Zoom, Google classroom and submitting research via the Edmodo platform due to the spread of Covid-19. For the next academic year (2020-2021), it is expected that we will deliver a kind of blended learning, with a mixture of regular, face to face classes and virtual classes.

From talking to other teachers in Egypt, colleagues at my college and via WhatsApp in a teachers' group, I have realized that many have several challenges teaching online courses and these challenges can negatively influence students' learning. One thing I can do to help is to share advice and materials. Here are a few common problems related to online teaching that other teachers have complained about in the WhatsApp group:

a. Technical difficulties because of the low internet speed / power cuts

Technical problems are one of the main obstacles of online learning here in Egypt. Very often, students do not have access to the internet with the high quality or the strong internet connection that online courses require, and thus they fall behind their virtual classmates. Some students are generally tech savvy — especially young learners — but many older students, and teachers who have had little opportunity to engage with online platforms, are unable to handle virtual classes or become very stressed. Power cuts are another obstacle to consider. They sometimes happen due to the heavy pressure on the appliances and can take several days to be fixed. All this adds to their frustration and reduces students' engagement. The learning experience is disrupted and time is wasted.

b. Distractions

As an online student, your virtual classroom is often at home, and many distractions may seem impossible to avoid. Social media and texts ping you with notifications, and the desire to respond can pull at your attention. Egypt has a very strong family culture, and family members can represent distractions by talking to you during your study time, asking you to open the door for your uncle, make tea, and asking you irrelevant questions like “where are the keys?”.

One assignment description is often not enough; you are not focused on your lesson and the tasks to submit, not paying attention to assignment instructions.

c. Lack of engagement

Many online learners lack motivation and are not engaged. After enrolling in online learning courses, many learners fall behind. It often takes more self-discipline to study online, when there is no teacher standing in front of you, organizing your learning.

I felt strongly that I wanted to help with this, both by making the state school system and the private school system more equal, and by providing solutions to the above problems for teachers. I have been researching solutions and sharing them with groups of public and private teachers, in a WhatsApp group, and at a few teachers' meetings I have attended online. This has meant that other teachers have started sharing suggestions and materials.

These are some solutions I have suggested to the problems above:

For the technology problem, firstly we need to know exactly what kind of technological support the students will need for a certain course before starting it. We need to provide very clear instructions, and maybe even get a technical support team, if available. Calling someone to help sort out your problems is often a very big help, as is following up in a WhatsApp group. This has helped many of my students on my English courses.

Another solution I have found that helps with power cuts and weak internet is recording my classroom sessions. These recorded sessions will be a good reference for students who, for any reason, miss the session, and are also useful for students who want to watch them again.

Also, with technology, we need to be flexible and offer different ways of engaging. For example, if students have very slow internet and cannot watch a video in real time, we can send it to them in advance. I sent my students short videos of me teaching and it worked well. If students cannot write in a chat group, maybe because their phone does not allow this, we can give them the option of writing on paper and then sending a photo of their work.

For the disruptions, we need to help students (and teachers!) to manage these, and turn off notifications during the time of learning. I tried helping my students set up a Google calendar with alerts to keep track of deadlines, which helped several of them. It helps to get groups to talk about these distractions in an English class, so everyone knows that this is normal. It is also good practice of English fluency and conversation.

As for the problem with lack of engagement, I have advised colleagues to develop learner engagement, work on developing a positive relationship with our students and interact with them more. It always helps to involve students if we teachers call students by their names, and this creates a good rapport. It's a helpful idea to personalize the session by asking students questions such as which activities they have been doing during the quarantine. This is also a good opportunity for natural English conversation.

Teachers could enhance students' motivation and engagement by rewarding students' successes and sending them online certificates and digital badges. Some free websites to make online certificates and badges for teachers to use include: [makebadges](#), [Adobe spark](#) and [Accredible's](#) badge designer.

These websites provide a quick tool to create a badge and download it immediately. Badges both online and printed, offer feedback and self-assessment opportunities, making the process more interactive and game-like. The younger learners I teach have become very excited about these.

This [certificate generator](#) is another website that allows you to make online certificates easily. Teachers simply fill in the necessary fields to get an editable certificate they can award to their students.

Finally, one of the best ways to help students engage with the lesson is for teachers to provide a fun assessment atmosphere, by using online assessment tools such as [Kahoot](#) (for engaging quiz-based games) and [Quizlet](#) (for simple learning tools to study anything).

All these suggestions above help with face-to-face teaching of English too. However, my main aim here was to get teachers of English in Egypt to start sharing their solutions to problems we experience, as we had many more problems recently due to the coronavirus lockdown. Sometimes, big problems like this are a blessing in disguise. They make us stop and think about what is wrong with our systems and in our country, and give us the opportunity to do something about them.

I have volunteered helping teachers of community learning with the basics of using their new laptops with an NGO in my city. I created a Facebook page called ‘Super Teachers’ to help teachers, especially Egyptian teachers, with PDFs of teaching materials, lists of resources to enhance English language and teaching skills, and share experiences. I gave presentations about teaching in professional development events in Cairo and Upper Egypt. I insist on giving back to my community in a professional way from the conferences and training I have attended.

My hope is that English teachers from state schools and private schools will continue to share ideas and solutions, so that the teachers from private schools can help those with fewer resources in state schools. I hope this will be a start to reducing the inequalities between these two types of schools, and between the widening gap in social levels in Egypt.



Amira Ahmed, from Beni-Suef, is an English Teacher at St. George Language School. She has presented at several conferences, including RELO *1st Ed Hub Deraya University in Al Minya Governorate, Egypt (2019) and at the 22nd NileTESOL/AUC Conference at AUC/Cairo (2018). She was recently awarded a RELO-NileTESOL Mentor-Trainer Certificate in recognition of her service to English teachers in her community throughout 2019-2020.

English language teachers as peace ambassadors, Sudan | Ahmed Z. Shareef

Sudan is changing, and change is not easy. Eventually, Sudan is getting on the right track after the success of the recent peaceful revolution from December 2018 to August 2019. It is all people are talking about: what will the new Sudan be like?

To take part in building up the New Sudan, English teachers, under TESOLSudan, decided to reflect on this in their annual conference. The 9th international conference was called 'ELT in Times of Revolution and Tumultuous Change'. This conference took place in Al-Zaiem Al-Azhari University and more than 10 papers were delivered. There were also four workshops and two pre-recorded video sessions by IATEFL Global Issues SIG committee members. Attendees were very happy to network and participate at the event, as its theme and all the papers reminded them of the holy moments of the revolution.

These holy moments will remain in people's minds for a long time. People were helping, supporting and protecting each other. Everyone suddenly began to believe in a better future, that we could all have a part in. Many platforms were created, and among these, many English clubs. The topics discussed were all about peace and how we can benefit from speaking English and helping to build up the new Sudan. All this was reflected in our conference, for example in the names of sessions, such as 'Revolutionize your professional network: Africa TESOL and its activities'.

Sudan has been governed by what was called the Inghaz regime since 1989, during which period many areas were partially destroyed due to the spread of corruption, misuse of authority and the unequal distribution of opportunity. Undoubtedly, education was one of the negatively affected areas, especially the teaching of English language. For that reason, TESOLSudan has been one of only three active groups supporting the work of ELT in Sudan.

The 9th conference came as a reminder for all ELT practitioners that they must take part in building the new Sudan. It was a great opportunity to exchange many ideas to change the vision of ELT in Sudan.





One of the most fatal ideas that was crippling the work of ELT in Sudan during the removed regime is that they foolishly or intentionally believed in the idea of linguistic imperialism. As a result, policy makers only gave the teaching of English language very few periods in schools. Unfortunately, this did not work, as English was a requirement at university, where students badly needed it for both scientific research and communication purposes, and few students were prepared for this.



The conference recommended many great practical ideas that can help to beautify the image of ELT in Sudan and improve it in practical ways. Among those ideas was the greatest one of all: the national cascade training of teachers. It seems a bit ordinary for those who have not witnessed the negligence of the last regime. However, apart from its pedagogical benefits, the training programme will also be used to help in spreading peace all over the new Sudan.

The programme is designed to cover the eighteen states of the country. A team consisting of one certified trainer, two assistants, one of the writers of the new curriculum, and TESOL Sudan coordinators will visit each state to run a three-week training course.

There are some remote areas in Sudan still under a kind of partial military/tribal conflict, especially in Darfur. Many children have been prevented from going to school, and many have also, sadly, been killed.

Hence, the objectives of the programme have been designed as follows:

1. Beautifying the image of teaching and learning English in both students' and parents' eyes.
2. Emphasising the ease and importance of learning English language in students' minds.
3. Providing in-service training to teachers to teach the new curriculum - SMILE (Sudan Modern Integrated Learning of English)

The general vision of the programme is English language teachers as peace ambassadors!

The sessions of beautifying the image of the teaching and learning English in both students' and parents' minds will be delivered in the local language (Sudanese Arabic) so that the whole audience will fully understand the message. There will also be pictures and short documentary films shared about Sudanese figures who succeeded after they mastered English. To create a good atmosphere, simple competitions with valuable prizes (items that people need) will be held.

To fulfill the second objective, two lectures will be delivered, also in local language: one about the human capability of learning/acquiring language and the other about the situation of English language as a lingua franca.

The pedagogical sessions training teachers to teach the new curriculum will be delivered in a communicative style to urge the teachers themselves to follow the communicative language approach.



It's designed to be a continuous cascade training, but the first psychological part will be finished by the first round, almost three months after full release from lockdown. The part related to peace and remote areas will be taught continuously, as will the pedagogical one.

Of course the idea came from and was led by TESOL Sudan members during the last conference, but it would never have come to fruition unless it had been shared and supported more widely by other Sudanese ELT organisations. For instance, The Association of Sudanese Teachers in Washington, Association of Sudanese Teachers of English Language (ASTEL), The National Training Centre, and Sudan English Language Teaching Institute (SELTi). Moreover, some other international bodies are professionally and generously giving a hand, such as The British Council and The American Embassy. The Ministry of Education have provided a vital contribution, as they have approved the project and promised to provide both financial and administrative support.

How will we know if this new vision is successful and if it has changed motivation and achievement in English? We plan to follow up on this at our next TESOL Sudan conference. We plan to do surveys and interviews to see all the effects, and we will present these there. We are very much hoping that change will be created!



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Girls' right to quality education, Sudan | Amna Mohamed Bedri

Wherever there is a problem of low enrolment in schools, there are always fewer girls. This has always been the case in spite of all the commitments made by governments at several regional and global events, from Dakar to the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. We still need to focus on goals four and five and ensure that all children have access to quality education.

Of all the girls deprived of primary education, some sectors are even more disadvantaged: girls from poor families, of internally displaced families, girls with special needs, girls who live in remote villages or who are victims of different kinds of violence. These girls are not only missing an opportunity to get educated but also an opportunity to develop themselves as human beings and their future families. A good quality education, designed on the basis of women and girls' immediate and strategic needs builds women's capacities and prepares them to seize opportunities in the public and private domains. Good knowledge of the English language is at the center of these strategic needs.

The challenges of providing free and compulsory primary education to all are many. In the case of Sudan, these are the most urgent:

- ▶ Lack of infrastructure and resources; some schools lack classrooms, children sit on the floor in a tent, in temporary structures or in the open air. Seating — the availability of chairs for children is one of the biggest problems. The only resource they have is the teacher with a blackboard hung on the tent or straw walls.
- ▶ Lack of qualified education personnel — to make up for the shortage of teachers, the previous Ministry of Education recruited young graduates who are enlisted into national service, irrespective of their degree or desire to work as teacher. Some have only completed secondary school.
- ▶ Besides low enrolment rates, retention rates are also low. Most of the girls who enrol in first year stay until the fourth year when they either get married or have their first period, and are then forced to leave school.
- ▶ Disparities in girls' education compared to boys', especially in villages and rural areas compared to towns and cities.
- ▶ Great disparities in education provision between various geographical locations. War zones, nomadic areas and villages come at the bottom of the list. In some nomadic schools there is one teacher for the whole school, i.e. the teacher teaches three classes simultaneously.
- ▶ Children of poor families have to work to support their families, especially in the case of single parent families (depending on the mother) at the expense of their education. In fact, child labour is more common among boys.

- ▶ The school environment is not motivating, for example, some buildings do not have walls or clean drinking water, and most of them don't have toilets, which is especially important in the case of girls' schools. Many of the facilities considered very common in schools around the world are not available and some children have not even heard of them, e.g. CD players and workbooks, flash cards etc.
- ▶ Early marriage is also a serious problem, not only because it deprives girls of their education, but it is also a health hazard. These girls usually leave school in the fourth grade and get involved in family life and domestic chores, and eventually forget all that they learned in school.

One of the disadvantaged groups of girls and women are internally displaced persons (IDPs). These are people forced to flee their homes but who, unlike refugees, remain within their country's borders. People flee their homes for many reasons, such as internal conflicts, climate change that causes lack of rain and desertification, or floods. People who left their homes and moved northwards to Khartoum during the 1988 floods stayed there and never returned, while those who came from the south of the country (now the state of South Sudan) returned after the peace agreement. There is an active movement of IDPs within the Darfur states, mostly because of inter-tribal conflicts that have been going on for decades.

Women and girls suffer enormous hardship during and after humanitarian emergencies, and especially armed conflict. They seldom get the chance to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives, which can put them at great risk of harm. However, it's the displaced women and girls who hold families together under the most difficult and inhumane circumstances and do so while at increased risk to their safety and well-being—risks that include rape, beatings, torture, hunger and abandonment.

Issues faced by women in IDP camps:

- ▶ Effects of inter-ethnic, inter-religious or inter-clan conflicts
- ▶ Lack of male, familial or community support systems if the women / girls are alone, separated from families, or the head of the household
- ▶ Physical and food insecurity
- ▶ Recruitment by armed factions
- ▶ Poverty and the need for work
- ▶ Frequent harassment, intimidation and exploitative labor
- ▶ Lack of educational opportunities
- ▶ Breakdown of community structures, values and morals

It is difficult to speak of accurate figures for IDPs, as they are constantly fluctuating: some IDPs may be returning home while others are fleeing. It is estimated that Sudan has 2,072,000 IDPs, of which 162,000 are new displacements (between January and December 2018) (www.internaldisplacement.org).



There are some success stories of informal community-based initiatives and local education activities supported by the international community as well as contributions from UN agencies such as UNICEF. UNICEF provided access for some two million children (40 per cent girls) to primary school and accelerated learning programmes through temporary learning spaces and the provision of learning, recreational materials and training (www.unicef.org). Other suggested interventions are:

1. School health programmes in order to raise health standards of children and raise awareness about different health issues;
2. Link school staff and administration, school councils and PTAs with families and groups of school friends;
3. Capacity building and poverty alleviation through income generating projects, to be implemented within the school premises, e.g. raising chickens, food preservation, fruit and vegetable gardens, producing dairy products, handicrafts, and small industries of soap, oil and straw products;
4. Mobilisation campaigns to raise awareness of women, and sensitisation of communities about the health hazards of early marriage, the importance of education for girls as future mothers and for the economy (of the family and of the country);
5. To reduce the dangers on the route to school and mixed schools and encourage parents to provide opportunities for adolescents to continue their education;
6. School meals (breakfast) in rural areas;
7. Cultural and social activities and vocational training inside the school;
8. To end gender disparities by providing scholarships for girls or the construction of girls' schools and dormitories.

The British Council issued a book on creative methods of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Prior and Woodward (2017) wrote on Goal 5 and how teachers of English can become involved in achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. They suggested that teachers can start with the



classroom setting by making sure that 'the class is fairly distributed between female and male students'. As English teachers, we should ensure that 'our own question, answer and correction policies are balanced and fair... the amount of 'air time' we give to each student is fairly distributed between females and males... ensure balance in the lesson topics we choose, the materials and processes we use, our own use of language, the target language we choose to teach (e.g. the 'unisex' pronoun 'they', gender-neutral job titles) and our own attitudes towards and expectations of our students and our situation' (p. 57).

So, in fact everyone has a role to play in order to ensure that all girls in Sudan have access to quality education for their own self development and for the future of the country.

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Mindfulness – a raft on troubled waters | Tanya Meyer

As the smallest and most poverty-stricken – by far – of the North American triad, as well as the only one of the three to be part of the wider Latin American community, Mexico's geographic, historical and cultural roles in the American continent are full of potential and opportunities, as well as threats, paradoxes and contradictions. Salvador Dalí once famously quipped after a visit that he wouldn't be returning to Mexico because "it's even more surreal than my paintings".

The second-largest country in Latin America, with 1.96 million square kilometres (196 million hectares), Mexico has 20.3 million hectares of temperate forest, 850,000 hectares of mesophilic mountain forest, 50.2 million hectares of scrubland, 7.9 million hectares of grasslands and 11.5 million hectares of rainforest in 2016. It also has the fourth most extensive mangrove area in the world, covering approximately 1 million hectares.



Photo by
Christoph Neger

Of the 4,886 listed forest communities and 'ejidos' (land farmed communally under a system supported by the state), 2100 commercially exploit the forests, but only 600 (in charge of seven million hectares) operate with a management and conservation plan.



Photo by
Christoph Neger



Selva de
los Colibríes

Water and air pollution are serious and chronic in Mexico. Transportation vehicles are reportedly responsible for 76% of the air pollution and water pollution results from the combined impact of industrial, agricultural, and public waste. In 2016, its industrial carbon dioxide emissions totalled 486.4 million metric tons and its fossil fuel consumption continues to rise.

Having said all this, Mexico is, according to the World Bank, the 11th largest economy in the world, and the 15th largest exporter. Its trade agreements, geographical position, and growing domestic market, also make it a prime destination for investment. (1)

Still, over the last three decades, 'Mexico has underperformed in terms of growth, inclusion and poverty reduction compared to similar countries.' (2) When speaking of human rights, challenges also abound, such as those posed by poverty, immigration and drug cartels, to name a few. For example, the criminal justice system consistently fails to provide justice to victims of violent crimes and human rights violations. Drug-related violence and organised crime are combated by the military, where abuse and impunity are reported to be the norm. Torture, enforced disappearances, extra judicial killings, attacks against journalists and - the topic of the lesson included in this article - the inadequate protection of girls' and women's rights, are often cited as 'Mexico's human rights catastrophe'.

Culturally speaking, one of the key notions that characterises Mexico is pride. Although customs may vary locally between communities, towns, cities and states, one of the big no-nos here, especially for foreigners, is to draw attention to or highlight its problems. While being very critical of their own nation's issues, Mexicans are also highly sensitive to judgement from outsiders – especially when this criticism is rooted in stereotypes, implying that any attempt to broach global issues and their local relevance in the classroom does require them to be managed with great care, sympathy and sensitivity.

One way of achieving this is through the practice of mindfulness, because mindfulness always begins with ourselves. In his 'Letter to a Young Teacher', Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh says, 'The first step is to come back to yourself - the way out is in. Come back to yourself to be able to take care of yourself:

learn how to generate a feeling of happiness; learn how to handle a painful feeling or emotion; listen to your own suffering, so that understanding and compassion can be born and you will suffer less. This is the first step and, as a teacher, you have to be able to do this'. (3)

Mindfulness helps us calm the whirling of our own minds and look more deeply within. With practice comes concentration and with concentration we see more clearly that the problems we face are not so much out there as in our own misperceptions and wrong views, in our lack of understanding of the impermanence and interconnectedness of all things. In Buddhism this is referred to as the nature of reality.

Mindfulness is not something pertaining to the intellect and therefore can only be understood by means of direct experience. The outcome of diligent and consistent practice is inner transformation, and this transformation is then discernible outwardly, in the form of the practitioner's thoughts, words and actions, which become softer, more open, non-discriminative and joyful.

The practice of mindfulness is about raising awareness, but in such a way that inclusive, thought-provoking and fruitful discussions are possible. The analogy in the title refers to the 'troubled waters' of global issues. Without a raft, it's easy to drown in anger, frustration and even despair. Further, bringing global issues to the classroom in a spirit of anger or resentment is not only unhelpful, but more often than not, counterproductive, so we, as teachers, need to be aware of our own state of mind, the place from which we engage with our learners, if we are to have a positive, constructive influence.



Many teachers refrain from bringing global issues into the classroom for fear of rocking the boat, of being unable and/or unqualified to manage any strong emotions or views that arise from the topic at hand. The raft of mindfulness grounds and stabilises us internally, which helps us navigate choppy waters more skilfully.

Mindfulness practices have been instrumental in the self-regulation of emotions such as anger, fear and/or anxiety in my experience. The purpose of the practice is two-fold: on the one hand, we become more adept at managing our own mental, physical and emotional states. On the other, it promotes clarity of thought, which in turn helps us focus better, but beyond that, with clear vision, we see and appreciate all the conditions in our lives that support and promote our own well-being. And because well-being (and ill-being!) are not individual, but collective matters - as we can see so clearly these days - the more we practise cultivating well-being, the better able we are to be helpful and of service to others.



One of the lessons I teach dealing with global issues is on the subject of girls' and womens' rights in Mexico. This year, many women took to the streets in protest on Women's Day and called for a national strike the following day (March 9th) after a series of violent femicides.

'A Day Without Us' called for women not to go to work,

take their daughters to school, and not purchase anything. They also urged men to be allies and support the movement. The aim was to take a firm stand against gender-based violence: femicide, misogyny and inequality.

The movement received tremendous support, both nationally and abroad, and sparked a great deal of media coverage. Upon mindful reflection, however, I noticed that, although it is absolutely necessary to broadcast information and find ways of counteracting violence and injustice, it is equally important to address gender equality from different perspectives, such as nourishing wholesome aspirations, for example, rather than what could come across solely as angry protest and frustration.



At the risk of stating the obvious and beyond the dualism of gender, we humans are a single species. I sometimes teasingly mention to learners that just as kangaroos, gorillas, giraffes, elephants and other large mammals cannot be distinguished by gender from a distance, so we humans are not, fundamentally speaking, gender-specific. For example, the current pandemic affects everyone: men, women and children alike. Further, one gender cannot survive without the other. We need each other, and it is in a spirit of collaboration that we will find solutions to and overcome the difficulties we face. The lesson below is about role models: who we look up to and why (please see the Resources section). The target language is used to, be used to and normally or usually and the lesson is suitable for high A2 to low B2 levels.

Another of my areas of interest is the environment. The disposal and recycling (or not) of waste in this vast concrete jungle, home to some 21.3 million people, is a major concern. For example, up until as recently as December 2019, supermarkets in Mexico City were still offering plastic bags to pack our purchases and there seemed to be no awareness regarding the environmental damage caused by single use plastic. Not only in the classroom but in my neighbourhood as well, at the greengrocers, where in addition to plastic bags for fruit and vegetables, fresh orange and grapefruit juice was being handed over in styrofoam cups, my comments and concerns seemed to be falling on deaf ears. There was plastic everywhere: in the shops, on the streets and in our homes.

Then I was met with the news, on 1st January 2020, that - what might Dalí have made of this? - plastic supermarket bags had suddenly and without prior warning been banned, and we customers are now expected to take our environmentally-friendly packing bags or boxes with us to do our shopping.

In mindfulness, the reality of impermanence is contemplated again and again. Thich Nhat Hanh says: 'Everything is constantly changing. Nothing has a permanent identity. This impermanence is not a negative thing. Impermanence is the very heart of life; it makes life possible. [...] It is because of impermanence that everything is possible. Our hope lies in impermanence.' (4)

When speaking about the environment and the interconnectedness of all things, the wealth and abundance of Mexico's jungles, forests and mangroves is often perceived as a distant reality, something beyond learners' everyday experience or sphere of influence. Speaking about the five elements in our own body, for example, by means of an impromptu, short, guided meditation, whereby learners are invited to close their eyes for a few moments, look within and contact (with a smile to say "hello") their own body temperature (fire), their blood circulating oxygen and nutrients to every cell and the saliva that helps us digest food (water), the food in our digestive system, our bones and organs (earth), the oxygen in our lungs (air) and the spaciousness and freedom that arises when we are fully present, mind and body, in the here and now (space), is a way of raising awareness about the fact that the environment is also, not only out there as a separate thing, but within us, that we are part of it.

A good learner-centred lesson aimed at promoting autonomy and improving speaking skills is to give students flipchart paper and coloured pens and ask them to do some online research in small teams about things that give us hope about the environment. Depending on numbers and level, learners can either work on a single point within the suggested website(s) - and expand further with their own research - or simply present what they have understood from an assigned website (a different one for each group).

It is not uncommon for exchanges in the classroom about the environment to lead to conversations about our patterns of consumption. Despite having a great variety of tropical and exotic fruits, in addition to the highly nutritious corn-based tortilla, black beans and avocados, for instance, the consumption of dairy products, chicken, beef, pork and fish is remarkably high in Mexico. It is not uncommon for local greengrocers to sell a wide array of vegetables, a mouth-watering display of fruit — and chicken. I'm told one of the reasons for this might be that a meatless meal is looked upon as a 'poor' one, both in terms of purchasing power as in nutritional value: a good example of how misperceptions can create deep misunderstandings. [Linguahouse.com](https://www.linguahouse.com/lesson-plans/intermediate-level/Meat-and-the-environment) has a great ready-made lesson on 'Meat and the environment' for intermediate level students (link in the Resources).

There is no question that the raft of mindfulness has allowed — compelled me, even — to bring global issues into the classroom. It is out of a sense of responsibility and concern that I invite learners to discuss and reflect on these matters, frequently pointing out that each of us is an agent for change within our own spheres.

Resources

Role models lesson

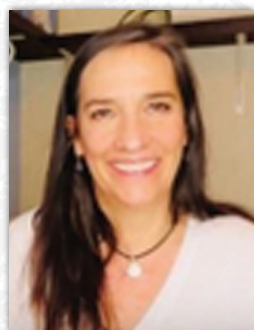
- [Lesson plan](#)
- [Role models' texts](#) from the IWD's website (I used the profiles for (A) Dr. Mae Jemison, (B) Malala, (C) JK Rowling, (D) Yuna Kim and (E) Greta Thunberg for this lesson)
- [Powerpoint](#) or [pdf](#)
- [Worksheet for Ss](#) and [T Notes](#)
- Follow up writing practice [handout](#)
- [Seeing is believing](#) - The short film included in this lesson by BBC Learning English is an additional resource to share with younger Ss as a further follow up

Environment lesson

- [The Environment discussion cards](#) from ESLGamesBox.com
- Linguahouse lesson, [Meat and the environment](#)

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Tanya Meyer is a freelance EFL teacher and online tutor, as well as long-term mindfulness practitioner. She has taught at British Council Mexico for the best part of 10 years and is now in the process of transferring her teaching practice onto more widely accessible social media and other online platforms. Tanya has lived in Peru, Brazil, the UK and is currently based in Mexico City.

Dealing with Othering in ELT materials: creation and implementation of materials that relate to the learners' context | Sergio Durand

Current ELT materials have tried to adapt to the new reality of English as a world lingua franca. Unfortunately, some of them might still be produced from a very subjective and privileged perspective. The topics and how they represent diversity (if they do), tend to see the world through the eyes of someone in an advantaged position, reflecting a polarized world: those who belong to a standard, westernized, heteronormative society, and how they see those who don't. Learners in my context cannot relate to materials that are produced somewhere far away, for a different context and that do not represent them in any way, unless it is to describe a 'remote' culture.

The Other and how humans relate to others is something deeply studied in philosophy, art, history and other disciplines. Othering is a concept widely used today that is also discussed in many arenas. A good definition to start with is that by Thornbury. He states that: 'Othering is the way members of one social group distance themselves from, or assert themselves over, another by construing the latter as being fundamentally different (the 'Other')' (Thornbury, 2017 p.119). This seems even normal when you think that identities are usually formed using differences from others. Unfortunately, trying to be different has not been enough for certain cultures that have consistently built a superior identity over other cultures in their narratives, like literature, history or art.

Spivak (1988) believes that the culture in power would always try to construct a strong identity by diminishing other cultures' features. The superior gets to be the one who decides what is right and what is wrong. The different culture, commonly portrayed as inferior, is then Othered by being defined as exotic, eccentric, unreasonable or uncivilised whereas the superior culture is often portrayed as civilising, knowledgeable and fair.

Just as some narratives like literature in the past, or media in recent times, have reproduced these ideologies, the ELT world has not escaped from them. The representation of those that speak English in the media or publicity adheres to the standards mentioned before and does not offer many diverse options. ELT textbooks and materials in general have perpetuated these same identities. Textbooks endorse life stories, visions and discourses that are socially situated and that represent a subjective vision of what it means to be a speaker of English in the world (Gray & Block, 2014). Textbooks then legitimise only certain users and leave out those who don't fit in the description. The legitimate speaker or user of the language is almost always someone who comes from 'the inner circle' – those countries like the UK or the US that speak English as their first language – of English speakers with certain accepted accents. When an L2 English speaker is represented, they come from a developed country or have become a legitimate user by living for a long time in an English-speaking country. The Other, those who don't fit in the concept of the legitimate user, is always referred to in the

third person, when a 'remote' culture is represented in a textbook and it is always through the eyes of a legitimate user: a linguist studying languages of India or a chef talking about Mexican food producers. We rarely get to listen to the Other, the one who is not considered a legitimate speaker, giving their own version or opinion about a problem.

I work in Escuela Normal Veracruzana, in Xalapa, Mexico. Normales are schools that train future preschool, primary and secondary state school teachers. Being the biggest Normal in the state, the population is really diverse. English is compulsory, but most students have never studied it systematically. They come from difficult backgrounds in which they have heard the same discourse (from media, social media, and schools) for a long time: English is not for them. It is either too hard or expensive. You will only get to speak it if you have been to a private school or travelled abroad. When they see their textbooks (recommended by the Mexican Minister of Education) they see that discourse materialised. A reality of topics and people they don't relate to because they have never travelled to New York (and probably don't expect to) or have never been to a movie premier or on a skiing holiday. The few examples of L2 English speakers are people who went to bilingual schools or have lived in the US for a long time. My students even joke about how far away from this reality they are.

On the other hand, migration is a key topic that is poorly discussed in textbooks. Especially in a country like Mexico with a complex relationship with the US in terms of migration, this is a topic that needs to be discussed in classrooms. Every student in my classes knows someone who is or has been an undocumented worker in the US. We see people from other Central American countries crossing Mexico every day in the streets. Online shopping, restaurant chains and other similar topics might be relevant in other contexts, migration is very relevant in ours.



I have tried to supplement materials from another view. First, giving a voice to those groups that are weakly represented in textbooks. Second, discussing topics that can make my students feel involved, like migration or equality in education. As future teachers, they feel they need to give their opinion about what they have experienced, and how they want to change it.

The purpose of these activities is to offer more disruptive materials that somehow deconstruct the embedded representations

of the legitimate users in textbooks. We, as teachers, need to offer them other possibilities of imagining a different legitimate user, a more similar user to them.

The activity that I describe below is part of a textbook to which I contributed a lesson. The project is called Raise Up! and it tries to bring issues to the classroom that are not commonly found in mainstream textbooks. The topics included in this textbook are migration, different types of families, attitudes to old people, working class culture and others. I think that Raise Up! is a good example of how Othering can be approached and tackled.


In the activity described in the picture, I tried to bring in an interesting issue for my context – migration. When this topic is mentioned in textbooks, they sometimes talk about Einstein or Messi, really well-known migrant figures that have somehow transcended to be taken as models of migration. However, books don't normally present the other side: those immigrants that are not welcome.




1 Look at the pictures and decide if people feel welcome or unwelcome in these situations. Does the answer change depending on the identity of the person?


2 Read the tweets by two associations in Mexico. Decide if the tweets describe situations where people were welcome (+) or unwelcome (-).

1  **Las Patronas @LasPatronas_dh**
We are a group of local women who got together **as** we saw an opportunity to help our migrant brothers and sisters.

2  **Las Patronas @LasPatronas_dh**
Respect is a crucial thing in all our everyday activities, at school, at the office, in the countryside, on your way home, on your way to the market, especially if you want to find a better life. This defines what migratory movements are about. Respect!

3  **Las Patronas @LasPatronas_dh**
Our migrant brothers and sisters get abused everywhere. At Las Patronas, we help our migrant friends **instead**. We cook at least 300 lunch boxes every day to our friends travelling on The Beast on its way to the North.

4  **Club de Deportados @ClubdeDeportados**
No human being is illegal, no one deserves to be treated as a criminal for just trying to get a better life.

5  **Club de Deportados @ClubdeDeportados**
Although we were all deported, we decided to fight back. We all fight now **in order to** get an opportunity to go back to where our family is.

6  **Club de Deportados @ClubdeDeportados**
Among other things, we listen to all the ones that have already been deported and help them to adapt to their new reality. **Besides**, we go to schools to deliver talks, we inform people who are under a deportation process. We stand together.

I used some tweets to make learners more interested in the topic. The tweets come from two organizations that try to help migrants in different situations. They are presented in the first person and they have their own perspective of a problem they experience every day. It is not a New York Times article on migration in Mexico and Central America, it is a class based on texts – tweets – that someone like them produced. The topic is used to later review linkers in their writing. The aim of the class is to have them produce tweets from an association they would like to create, to help a local problem in their community.

One of the main objectives of creating this kind of activity is to get students to reflect, as future teachers, on the implications of using materials that Other their students and see the advantages of materials that discuss relevant issues in their communities.

Having reflected on the Othering that takes place in textbooks (not just in English), future teachers would be better equipped to go to their future schools and teach from another perspective. My students have found the discussion about these materials very motivating for learning English and really useful to their own practice. Future teachers need to be aware that they need to give a voice to everybody and to represent people in their own communities more accurately. Education should not be prescriptive, it should not tell us how we are supposed to live or speak; it should be about celebrating our differences and embracing our uniqueness.

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Modern slavery and teaching English | Charo Sifuentes

As teachers of English, we encounter many challenges in our day to day work that do not only deal with language teaching, but go far beyond. We sometimes assume the role of a facilitator, a resource person, a censor, a teacher, a coach and many more roles while in class. It is through our teaching that we can share and deal with different subjects; that we can contribute to raising awareness of social issues, and with this seemingly small contribution we can create change.

I run World Communications, a language school in Lima, Peru. In order to give the best service, the latest developments, materials and tips from the English language teaching world to our students, who are business people, I started attending the IATEFL annual conference in 2015. But it was not until the 2019 conference held in Liverpool that I learned about The No Project and modern slavery. This cruel reality with its daunting figures shocked me so much that I had tears in my eyes at the end of the presentation I attended. It made such an impact on me that I remembered the reasons why I became an educator. Fortunately, I learned that we are able to use these materials in our classes and I decided to do so, but I did not have a very clear idea of how we could do this as we mainly work with business people.

Upon my return to Peru, we started having discussions among the World Communications coordinator and supervisors, and we were able to organize a couple of video calls with Judy Boyle, founder of The No Project. She explained to us what some of the lessons were about, the stories behind them and how we could use the materials. We were all deeply moved and touched by the stories depicted in the lessons and started organizing ourselves to implement them in some classes. We decided to introduce them as conversation topics starting with Pre-intermediate and Intermediate students (B1 and above).



I have to mention here that Peru is a developing country and there are issues of social inequity, as well as racism, that undermine our society. The access to quality education (private) is a privilege for middle and upper classes, and public education is ranked one of the worst in the world (PISA results 2018, 2019). Therefore, most of the population don't have the means to become part of the formal society through formal jobs. There is a lot of sub-employment, such as maids and workers in the informal mining sector – mining is the most important source of our country's income – to mention just a few. Unfortunately, in many cases, these workers can be considered modern slaves due to the characteristics of their so-called 'jobs'.



We decided to pilot the lesson 'The Truth Behind Closed Doors' first. Here in Peru many houses have maids and even people with relatively modest incomes can afford one. Of course, they are paid no social benefits in most cases. The students we piloted the materials with were people with very good positions, such as an HR director from the biggest supermarket chain in the country, a CEO from a transnational pharmaceutical company, managers from different corporations, and different level employees. All of them were business people.



The reactions were very similar in all cases: outrage, anger, sadness, a sense of injustice and hopelessness. In one case, a company director, sent the link to the lesson to her whole team. This gave us a lot of hope and satisfaction because we knew she was truly interested and connected to the lesson. Above all, she was spreading the subject to the employees in her company and since she was the boss, they were certainly going to check the materials too.

In another case, an important manager made comments that showed how deeply concerned he was about the subject.

We knew the use of these lesson plans had an effect on our students and they spread the word about the different situations presented. This hopefully contributed to creating awareness and making a change. Since we work with people with high incomes, who have one or two maids as house workers, we know they also became more aware of their workers' feelings.

After the lesson 'Gold costs more than money', our students started to think twice when buying jewelry; and when buying chocolate, after the lesson 'cocoa truth'. These lesson materials are shocking, but they are shocking topics that we all need to pay attention to. There are several short videos that really bring the topics to life too. Other lessons that we plan to teach in future with our groups are: 'Eyes Wide Shut' (about child grooming), 'Something Doesn't Feel Right' (about human trafficking) and 'Carpet of Dreams' (about forced child labour in the carpet industry).

Using these lessons can certainly be a vehicle for creating change and will definitely impact on the students who work in class with them. After using them in class, we felt that we had made a contribution to our world, through something as simple as an English session, but which can have a far-reaching effect in peoples' lives.

References

The NO Project: <https://www.thenoproject.org>

Lesson plans: <https://www.thenoproject.org/lesson-plans/>



Charo Sifuentes has a degree in Education and English teaching from Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru. She has been Director of World Communications since 1994, and a Business English teacher and teacher trainer since 1993. Currently working from home due to the pandemic situation, Charo has attended IATEFL conferences since 2015.

Micro-glocal project on age-related issues at a Cuban elementary school | Lázaro Michel Fernández Jaramillo and Dr Diana Rosa Morales Rumbaut

A growing number of professionals have come to believe that language teachers are more than just teachers of language. Thus, foreign language teachers must convey an educational dimension to the class and one of the best ways to do this is by bringing real-world issues into the classroom.

Hence, teachers of English as a foreign language, can make a difference with the lessons they teach by inspiring their students through what they teach, their attitudes and practices, as an enduring influence on the future attitudes and personalities of their students. It is the authors' belief that collateral learning in the formation of long-term attitudes is as important as lessons on grammar and vocabulary.

It is true that there are no quick-fix solutions to 21st century global issues but many would argue that the teacher of English has a major role to play in helping to change unhelpful mindsets, and in raising awareness of the problems and issues faced, rather than continuing to turn a blind eye to them.

Several global issues that affect mankind can be found in Cuban society due to different factors such as stress, the lowering of birth rates and increasing life expectancy, among others. It is a fact that age-related issues are a big challenge in present-day Cuba. The positive impact our health care system has on our population, due to the amazing opportunities for study and the services offered, has allowed for a longer life-expectancy overall. However, this has also presented us with the challenge of preparing younger generations to face this issue, by demonstrating higher awareness and sensitivity to elderly relatives, who mostly live with families due to cultural reasons or lack of available housing.

Based on the theory studied during pre-service training, and under the guidance of my tutor, it was determined that through the teaching of English, particularly through storytelling and short stories in extracurricular activities, many positive changes can be achieved among young Cubans. These include increasing students' knowledge and awareness of how to be sensitive to the elderly, which shows the concern about global and local issues in our society and the importance given to raising awareness among students.

That is why at Ramón Pando Cuban elementary school, with Group 6th A - a form of 11-year-old children, one of the authors carried out teaching practice while the other played the role of the mentor. While researching the students' records, the researchers agreed that the students have the potential to grow as human beings and that they could be better prepared to face the challenges of the 21st century since they have high levels of motivation to learn the language.

To carry out this research the authors decided to perform extracurricular activities at the school. This was a *micro-glocal project*, included within a macro-glocal project which comprises the whole community. Thus, for the authors of this paper, micro-glocal projects are thoughtful activities created from research, to tackle a certain issue which requires a transformation at a local level, and these are of global importance and relevance. Through this, teachers, students and some members of the community are transformed by being active participants.

First, we decided to explore whether the students were motivated to learn about the issues mentioned above, and if they showed high levels of motivation. They were all willing to participate and agreed to do the extracurricular activities, which would require extra planning.

The authors acknowledged that most of the students live with elderly relatives and sometimes they do not know exactly how to treat them. Some of the possible causes could be encountered in the lack of *knowledge, skills, attitudes and actions* regarding the way they deal with them.

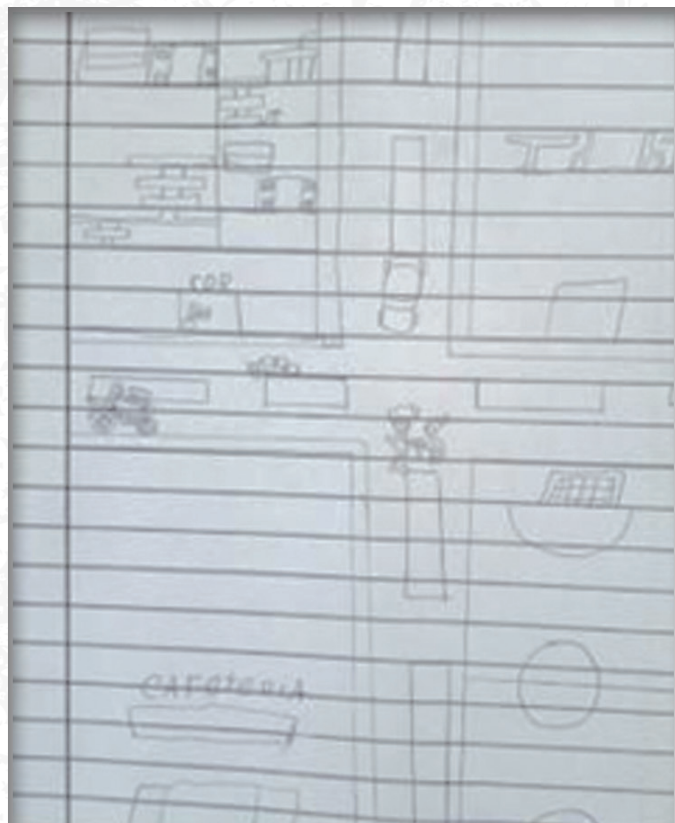
After mentoring sessions, it was agreed that we would go to the school and read a short story to the children (by Australian children's author Mem Fox). This story is about a boy who lives in a village and next to his house, in a nursing home, lives an old woman who is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The vocabulary was new and difficult, so pre-teaching it with pictures and gestures, and changing intonation when reading played an important role for the students to acquire global comprehension.



The boy in the story asks a single question to the people in the village: 'What is a memory?' and each character answers the question from his/her own point of view. The students were then asked to divide into small groups and to try to explain which concept of memory they liked the most out of the ones given in the story. While the students were reading the story, awareness of many different attitudes and values towards the old woman in the story were observed in the students, some verbal

and others non-verbal. Some students cried, others paid such close attention that they seemed to be one of the characters, and most of them demonstrated respect and love for the elderly.

The next task was very interesting. The story was read again and students were supposed to state 'R' for phrases that show respect, 'D' for dignity and 'S' for sensitivity. They also had to do some painting, or to write simple sentences about what they can do to help older people remember important moments in their lives; some students asked if they could show old pictures to elderly people in order to help them remember.



After reading the story again, it was agreed to have the students work with their grandparents or elderly people in the neighborhood in order to build a collage with paintings and pieces of writing created together. This turned into a whole-class activity, in which all were involved, and constituted one of the action points for the glocal project conceived to raise the students' awareness about age-related issues. It was of great interest and impact to look at the collaboration and motivation among grandparents and students.

After doing these activities, students from other classes came to us and asked if they could have an amazing lesson like the one delivered to Group 6th A, because they wanted to experience the same feelings towards elderly people during English lessons — and so the experience was extended to all the rest of the 6th grade classes.

It is important to say that parents and grandparents also expressed positive feelings about the experience. They showed a willingness to continue supporting the awareness-raising project because they had felt the impact of the lesson on their children. They said that educating children on these topics needs innovation and creativity from the teacher, and this was demonstrated through this English lesson about age-related issues.

The authors agree that in Cuba, incorporating glocal issues into language education, is an approach that is gaining followers and can be constantly improved. Glocal is a term formed from the words global and local. It means an issue that is globally recognized for its worldwide impact and locally relevant to the people in a certain community. It is also believed that it is very challenging to educate elementary school students on glocal issues, but every attempt is worthwhile.

It is important to highlight that the fact that the whole class was very motivated to learn how to be better citizens demonstrated a positive learning atmosphere: the students decided to talk more to older people who live with them and those who are alone. They also considered reading stories to them, which is a good start for this research. Though curricular activities are very limited in elementary school, particularly in 6th grade, extracurricular activities can be enhanced to change the present reality.

In Cuban communities there are leaders who coordinate activities to increase the life quality of members. A link with universities is central to raise their cultural level, leading to becoming a better citizen. Schools are also considered important cultural centers in the community and, in them, teachers and students are very active.

Taking into account this experience from a Cuban context, some key procedures to be followed while working with storytelling can be suggested for teachers:

- ▶ Determine the glocal theme potential in the story
- ▶ Determine the educative objective(s)
- ▶ Design tasks to meet the glocal issue impact in terms of knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions

- ▶ Create a positive atmosphere in the classroom
- ▶ Organize the class in a different way to show a sense of sharing (e.g. semicircles, story corner etc.)
- ▶ Speak clearly and slowly
- ▶ Use visual support and make comments
- ▶ Use gestures and facial expressions to help transfer meaning
- ▶ Evaluate the main transformations attained in the students, and in the community

The final result was a system of extracurricular activities to promote students' knowledge, awareness, values and actions towards age-related issues, as part of the citizen education strategy, carried out through extracurricular activities.

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Comprehensive Sexuality Education with future teachers of English: an opportunity for social change through the exploration of gender stereotypes | Paula Cossu and Gabriela Brun

In Argentina, the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) Law (N° 26,150) was passed in 2006. It establishes the right of all students, at all levels, to receive CSE in all educational institutions, both private and state-run. This law provides a new definition of sexuality, which involves biological, psychological, social, affective and ethical aspects, and cannot be understood without reference to gender, as diversity is a fundamental characteristic of sexuality. Before this law was passed, Sexuality Education was included in the curriculum but was limited to topics such as anatomy, reproduction and sexually transmitted infections. Now that the word comprehensive has been added, the focus has shifted to empowering students to become active citizens, by providing them with tools to develop critical thinking and make informed decisions, not only about their sexual health, but also in other aspects of their lives, such as relationships with peers, family members and the community in general. It builds the skills and attitudes necessary to treat others with respect and empathy, regardless of their race, social or economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity. So CSE goes beyond a biological standpoint and includes a wider range of topics, such as relationships, rights, gender violence, female empowerment throughout history, and gender diversity, among others.

Additionally, the CSE programme in Argentina features five intertwined axes which ensure an integral approach to all human dimensions:

- ▶ Acknowledge gender perspective
- ▶ Respect diversity
- ▶ Value affectivity
- ▶ Exercise our rights
- ▶ Take care of the body

Although the CSE law was passed more than a decade ago, several other laws were passed later that enriched the CSE programme, including Law N° 26,485 Comprehensive Protection of Women (Prevention of violence and abuse), Law N° 26,618 Civil Marriage (same-sex marriage), and Law N° 26,743 Gender Identity. Two specific feminist movements, namely *Ni una Menos* (Not one [woman] less) and the *Marea verde* (Green Tide) helped CSE become known by more people. The first movement advocates an end to violence against women and girls, while the second demands the legalization of the Voluntary Interruption of Pregnancies. These issues, as well as all CSE-related content, can be framed within one or more of the axes we mentioned before and have become two of the most highly requested topics by students, especially at secondary school. However, there are also some groups, many of which are related to the Catholic Church, which are against the inclusion of CSE at schools. One example is the movement *Con mis hijos no te metas* (Don't mess with my kids), who, among other things, believe children should not be exposed to gender diversity.

Gender is defined as a social construct, determined by social norms, culture, attitudes, values, tradition, beliefs, and practices, and which refers to roles, responsibilities, identities, or other qualities attributed to people because they are men or women (UNESCO, 2019). Gender is one of the social and cultural aspects that shape people's behaviour, decisions and opportunities and these can lead to social inequalities, discrimination and violence. Education plays an important role in terms of providing students with the tools to identify and fight against injustice. By bringing these issues into the classroom, teachers can create spaces for awareness, social transformation, and justice.

Dealing with CSE topics in general, and gender issues in particular, in initial teacher education is essential. Teachers are central to the education system for the key roles they play in the transmission of values, knowledge, and the development of human potential and skills (UNESCO, 2015). Equipping future teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach this content in their future lessons guarantees a more systematic inclusion of such content by providing them with adequate training and resources to address it. In the same way, it contributes to teachers becoming critical thinkers themselves, capable of 'permanently re-examining the social fabric and social assumptions about the purposes of schooling within which he or she must daily practice' (Cowen, 1995: 21).

As we mentioned before, gender affects and organises many aspects of our lives, increasing or reducing opportunities on the basis of a particular gender. For example, a recent publication by the National Ministry of Women, Gender and Diversity (2019) showed that, in terms of sexual division of labour, there is a concentration of men working in areas typically considered productive, such as manufacturing and construction, while there are more women working in the areas of health and educational services. One possible reason is the perpetuation of stereotypes in the world of work — women being associated with caring and motherhood and thus generally considered more apt than men for certain jobs, such as nursing and teaching.

Taking into account everything mentioned above, one way of bringing about change is discussing gender-related issues in our lessons.

Our project to explore gender stereotypes in teacher initial education was carried out at I.S.F. D N° 129¹ during the first term (April- July 2020), as part of the syllabus of an introductory course in English language that students take part in to reach the level of proficiency necessary to attend those curricular subjects delivered in English. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were delivered through an online educational platform, both in synchronous and asynchronous ways. This project was developed in a period of two weeks and it consisted of two synchronous online meetings and some tasks which were done at home. Ten first-year students, aged between 18 and 23 years old, who attend the introductory course, took part in this project.

The topic chosen was gender stereotypes and societal expectations in traditional stories for children. Tales for children are a wonderful genre to explore how gender has been portrayed historically and in current times. In children's books, the character's gender determines their activities and the expectations that a reader has about them.

1. Instituto Superior Formador Docente N° 129, situated in Junín, Bs As province, Argentina, is a teacher education state-run institution.

Given that these students will become teachers and will work with children's literature in primary school, this project was a good opportunity to deal with this CSE topic, while at the same time to work with language and skills.

In the first lesson, the teacher and students brainstormed well-known stories for children, such as [Little Red Riding Hood](#), Cinderella and Snow White. The teacher divided students into groups and each group was assigned a breakout room, in which they had to compare and contrast the main characters in the different stories and think of adjectives that would best describe these characters. After all the groups had shared their ideas, the whole group came to the conclusion that most female characters shared certain characteristics: they are generally depicted as naive, obedient, and sweet. The same applied for male characters, who are generally portrayed as strong, robust, and clever. Then, the teacher introduced the idea of societal expectations and gender stereotypes, and together with students, discussed how these impact our own lives and how we see the world. Some of the examples that came up were, among others, women seeing marriage as the ultimate goal in life or the expectation to become mothers, and men being the breadwinners and expected to show their masculinity through muscular bodies. The main goal here was to have students engage in critical thinking by examining the society they live in, while practising the target language.

Next, students watched a fractured version of a tale known by all of them: Little Red Riding Hood. In this version, called 'How it should have ended: Little Red Riding Hood', shows an empowered little girl who cleverly deceives the wolf. The students were asked to work in pairs and, using the language seen in the previous tasks, compare and contrast how the main characters are portrayed in each case. The teacher provided a couple of examples and took the opportunity to revise some linkers of contrast such as while and whereas. Some of the sentences produced were: 'In the original version Little Red Riding Hood is naive and weak, while in the fractured version she is clever and ingenious' and 'The wolf in the original version is cunning whereas in the fractured version he is gullible.'

What are female characters typically like?

obedient
naive
sweet
weak
gentle
submissive
blonde

Word cloud created collaboratively by students using www.polleverywhere.com.

What are male characters typically like?

strong handsome
white clever
robust ingenious slim practical

Then the teacher showed them a screenshot of a video version of Sleeping Beauty — the well-known scene of the princess being awakened by the prince's kiss — for the students to guess which fairy tale it was. A think-pair-share activity followed, in which each student had to watch the whole video and write down all the gender stereotypes and societal expectations they could spot in it. They were then given some time out of the video call to contact a partner via Whatsapp to discuss their notes. Finally, the group met again and each pair shared what they had discussed. In this part of the task, students explained the connection they made between what they previously discussed about gender stereotypes and societal expectations, and the examples they spotted in the story. Some of the examples mentioned were the queen being 'realised' as a woman by becoming a mother, Aurora being depicted as a weak princess, everybody protecting her by removing potentially hazardous objects, and the fearless, brave prince saving the fragile princess.

In lesson two, the teacher again showed students the screenshot of the original story in which the prince is kissing the princess awake. The purpose was to briefly discuss consent, so the question that followed was: Do you think this is ok? After the students gave their opinions, consent was defined in the context of sexual relationships as 'the permission someone gives to another person to do something'. Students agreed that in the case of Sleeping Beauty, there was no consent at all. Next, the teacher showed them the image below in order to further discuss consent and introduce them to memes, given that students would have to produce one in the following task. Using this image as a trigger, the class discussed different ways in which the prince could have awoken Princess Aurora without kissing her. Some of the answers were: 'he could have patted her', 'he could have sung loudly' and 'he could have thrown water on her face'.



Sleeping Beauty In Today's Society

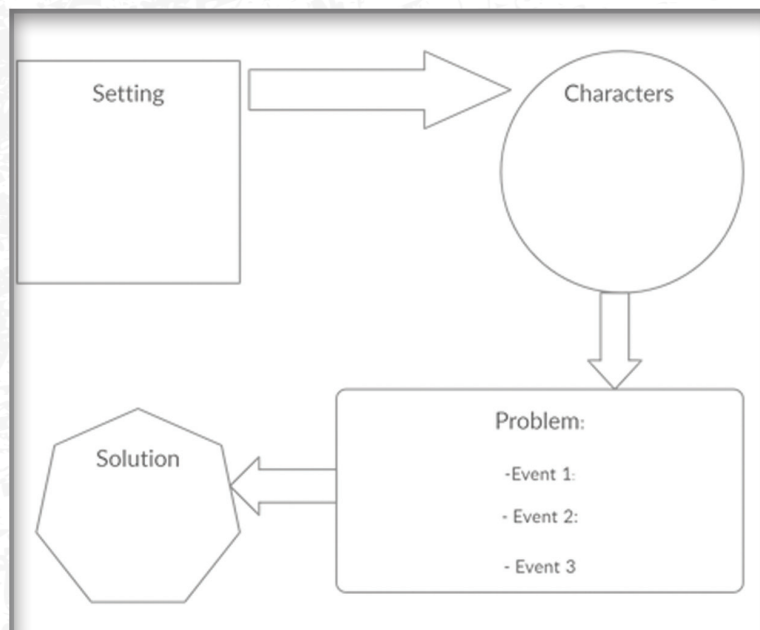
<http://www.damnlol.com/sleeping-beauty-in-todays-society-107467.html>

The following task consisted of students creating memes that would somehow challenge the stereotypes in *Sleeping Beauty*. Memes are a great resource to use in the language classroom because they are good fun, they are part of students' lives and, perhaps most importantly, they are good tools to help students think outside the box and express themselves creatively.



Some of the memes produced by students.

The final outcome of this project involved students creating their own, stereotype-free versions of *Sleeping Beauty*. These versions also had to deal with the issues of consent and societal expectations. In order to do this, students were given a graphic organizer to guide their writing.



At the end of the project a questionnaire was given, in which students were asked about their impressions of the topics and the activities. They claimed that the integration of content and language made the lessons more motivating, as they were using the language to talk and write about something that interested them in a contextualised way. The majority also concluded that working with these topics is important and necessary for their own personal lives, and in terms of their preparation as future teachers of English.

Discussing and reflecting upon these CSE topics with future teachers can be considered a first step towards raising awareness and finally attaining gender equality, since teachers play a key role in contributing to bringing about this much-needed change in society. In other words, education is an indispensable vehicle to achieve a fairer and more equitable world for all.

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Teacher, are you old?: ageism in ELT | Heloisa Duarte

How old is old? The answer to this question may vary a lot depending on the context we analyse. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2018), a person is considered to be old, or elderly, after turning 65. However, the idea of who is 'old' changes a lot according to the culture or country we analyse. Regardless of the context or the description of old age we take into consideration, one problem often seems to arise: ageism.

Ageism is the name given to the stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people on the basis of their age. It may also affect young people, in situations in which they may be considered too young to be knowledgeable about a subject or to be a good and respected professional, for example, but ageism is more commonly seen affecting older adults.

It is remarkable to notice though that, unlike what happens to perpetrators of other kinds of prejudice such as racism or misogyny, those who hold prejudice against older people will eventually become exactly what they were prejudiced against: an older person; or in the words of Jönson (2012:198), 'the perpetrator of ageism will belong in the victimized category'.

According to the United Nations (2019), 'in 2018, for the first time in history, persons aged 65 years or over worldwide outnumbered children under age five'. This scenario tends to be even more relevant if we consider the prospects for 2050, when, still according to the UN's projections, the number of people aged 65 or older is predicted to be more than twice that of children under five and surpass the number of people aged 15 to 24. Nevertheless, ageist stereotypes are still being used in various kinds of media to portray older adults and, according to the World Health Organisation, ageism is still considered to be the last socially accepted form of prejudice, and it tends to be prevalent amongst all ages and social classes.

In Brazil, statutory old age starts at 60, and the 60+ cohort currently represents about 13% of the population in the country. Life expectancy in Brazil has also been rising year after year and it is now considered to be 79.

Still, as happens in many other parts of the world, old age seems to be tacitly considered in Brazil as a hindrance. Older adults are commonly the victims of financial exploitation, family abandonment and all sorts of abuse. And in the time of the Covid-19 pandemic this situation appears to have grown worse.

But this ill treatment and prejudice against older adults in Brazil does not affect only those who are 60 or older. It starts to happen a lot sooner than that: people, especially women, tend to be considered old when they are still in their mid-thirties.

Actually, it has not got to do so much with a person's actual age, but with their looks. In fact, Brazil is one of the world leaders in per-capita plastic surgery procedures, and there seems to be an unspoken understanding that women should not look their age if they are a day over 35.

What about ELT?

As happens in many other areas, ELT is still quite ageist in many aspects.

Reports of teachers who were not considered for a job or a promotion solely because they were (or looked) 'too old' abound. Especially when it comes to teaching children or teenagers, older teachers face prejudice, more often than not, from coordinators and even from students' parents. The most common excuse used by them to explain why a teacher over forty or fifty cannot teach children or teens usually has to do with the belief that teachers, after a certain age, cannot use technology properly and so would be unable to use all the resources available in the classrooms or coursebooks or have the energy required to teach younger students. Experience in these cases tends to be seen as a liability instead of the asset it actually is. On the other hand, younger teachers are usually given groups of young learners or teens just because of their age or looks, not taking into consideration their experience, knowledge or preferences regarding teaching, which is another form of ageism.

Older adults (60+) also face prejudice when they decide to take on language lessons. As learners, they tend to be seen in a quite negative, stereotypical way, as if we were all unable to really learn anything after a certain age. The cognitive decline associated with old age is commonly seen by some teachers as a major impediment to the learning of a new language. Nevertheless, it must be said that although some gradual decrease in mental and physical capacity is part of the ageing process, it can only be associated to a person's age to some degree. It has actually more to do with each individual's lifestyle, and general conditions than with their age. Also, recent scientific developments have shown us that our brains are plastic, that is, they can adapt and evolve in the way we need them to, according to and depending on the received stimuli.

Older learners are also frequently seen as uncommitted learners, who are only taking language lessons as a social pastime. However, with life expectancy on the rise, it is not uncommon to see these learners looking for language lessons in order to find a new job (or to keep their current one) or to take examinations in order to start an MA or PhD. Still, even if they are taking language lessons only as a pastime, it may be better than being forced to be there by employers or parents.

Coursebooks

The role of older adults in coursebooks is, more often than not, a stereotyped one. They are usually represented either as loving grandparents, who seem to have no personal life apart from the moments spent with their grandchildren, or as super-humans who perform extraordinary deeds such as running marathons or climbing mountains. Other common representations of older adults in coursebooks usually include them being shown as frail, grumpy, lonely and in need of constant assistance, or as celebrities who have managed to maintain their success not because of their talent and charisma, but in spite of their age.

When older adults are portrayed in illustrations, they are generally shown in an unflattering light. Outdated clothes, with walking sticks and thick glasses tend to be common for both genders.



But for men, the typical outfit also includes braces, bow ties, hats and scarves. Women are shown wearing long loose dresses with round, ruffled collars and pearls, with their white hair tightly scraped back in a bun. In most cases, representations of older adults in coursebooks usually agree more with the idea of old age that was common decades ago, when life expectancy rates were considerably lower than the current ones, and 60-year-old people were seen as if they were living their last years.

The representations of the word 'old' also deserve attention, for it is commonly associated with decay and damage. Instead of showing a 'rare old book' or a 'beautiful old house', visual representations of the word 'old' usually include rundown places and broken objects, which only contribute to the association of 'old' with something bad.

What can be done?

Fortunately, in recent years we have seen some initiatives aimed at combating ageism in ELT in Brazil. There are language courses specifically for learners over 50, such as Tea Time, and an increase in policies supporting older professionals. Even so, the structural ageism in our society still needs a lot of attention.

In coursebooks, one of the finest recent initiatives is the launching of the Raise Up! coursebooks which are, according to their creators, Ilá Coimbra and James Taylor, an attempt to demonstrate how an accessible coursebook can be inclusive without being controversial, and to provide teachers with practical, ready to use lessons that are genuinely diverse – the type of lessons that are not currently provided by ELT publishers. As Coimbra and Taylor (2019:3) point out, there is no neutral position; not including certain people in lessons, even if by an unconscious bias process, is not an apolitical act, but by normalising the excluded we may make them become part of the mainstream.

I contributed to this with materials showing 'normal' older people using social media:



Challenging ageism cannot and should not depend only on large scale initiatives such as the ones mentioned above. It can and must be part of our lessons. Here are some ideas:

- ▶ Question ageist representations in coursebooks and start a debate with learners. If they are too young, comparing the images in the coursebooks to those of their own grandparents may also do the trick;
- ▶ Include positive views of ageing in your lessons;
- ▶ Start debates about age and the ageing process with learners, including the way age is seen differently for men and women;
- ▶ Challenge ageism whenever and wherever it happens;
- ▶ Include topics deemed as taboo, such as dating after 60 and the menopause, in lessons.

Levy et al. (2009) point out that negative age stereotypes can be harmful to us all, regardless of age. She also points out that the negative views of old age 'held earlier in life predict worse health among older individuals', so the earlier we start taking action to combat ageism the better, and the more we talk positively to children about ageing, the better are our chances of instilling in them a positive view of old age. We can change ageist beliefs; we just need to start. What better place than the ELT classroom?

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Imagine and fly with your English over the horizon | Haneen Jadalla

With its fantastic beaches, sandy shores and very tasty food, Gaza could be one of the most beautiful areas in the world to spend a holiday by the sea. However, the reality is not like that at all. Life in Gaza has become more difficult than one can imagine. There is a lack of clean drinking water, regular power cuts for more than eight hours a day, and, tragically, children often spend their nights listening to the bombing around them, their hearts beating very fast, worried that their houses may be smashed to the ground and that they will be underneath.

The blockade (now over 13 years long) which deprives people of their right to travel freely and see the outside world, as well as the repeated hostilities, has had a devastating impact on the people who live there and has resulted in them suffering from significant hardship and trauma. In addition, youth in Gaza are facing extremely high levels of unemployment and now the whole place is on the verge of a complete collapse because of this.

However, everyone here still has a dream that one day everything they hope for will become reality. Most people in Gaza are classed by the United Nations as refugees so their children access their education through roughly 300 UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East) schools. UNRWA strives to provide those children with stable learning opportunities, and with a sense of security and equality, despite the harsh circumstances they live in. To make use of the shortage of space (almost 2,000,000 people living in an area of land which is just 365 square kilometres) most UNRWA schools are double shifted and a few are triple. But there may still be well over 40 students per class so it is considered as a challenging context for the hundreds of English teachers who work in these schools.

Despite all the challenges there is a coursebook — English for Palestine — bringing a hint of normality to the situation, which is used by all teachers in their regular classes. Teachers also employ a variety of techniques including groupwork, pairwork, language games, and more recently drama, to meet the diverse needs of the kids. A lot of schools have been involved in the [Hands Up Project](#) to help kids be connected to the outside world through remote volunteers who arrange online interaction, drama and storytelling activities. In this way, Palestinian kids continue to thrive and have their voices heard all over the globe.



What is drama? Drama is the mirror of our souls and the reflection of our thoughts. It's the way we help our students learn more about life by putting their bodies, minds, hearts and emotions into a particular language context. Drama is a way of naturally activating language so that it sends a message to the listeners. It's a reflection on who we are and the experiences we have in life. Drama is where we belong now and where we would like to be in the future. It's a kind of survival when we are tired of life. It is life as it is and life as it should be.

Two years ago, I took part in a training course for establishing drama clubs in English in UNRWA schools in Gaza. This course was carried out by Nick Bilbrough - the founder of the Hands Up Project. This UK registered charity provides an outstanding communicative context for Palestinian kids to learn English through conducting online sessions with people all over the world. It helps the kids in Gaza to be released from all the obstacles that life throws at them and fly by their imagination all over the globe. They see the whole world through this very tiny screen that becomes as wide as the ocean in their eyes. I was inspired by this and by the idea of remote theatre (performing plays through simple video-conferencing tools to other parts of the world). So, I decided to establish a drama club at my school in Gaza and here I developed my own framework for student-created plays which I call 'Remote your story'. I also encouraged them to perform their plays remotely so that their voices may be heard loudly and clearly in the outside world. The framework works like this:



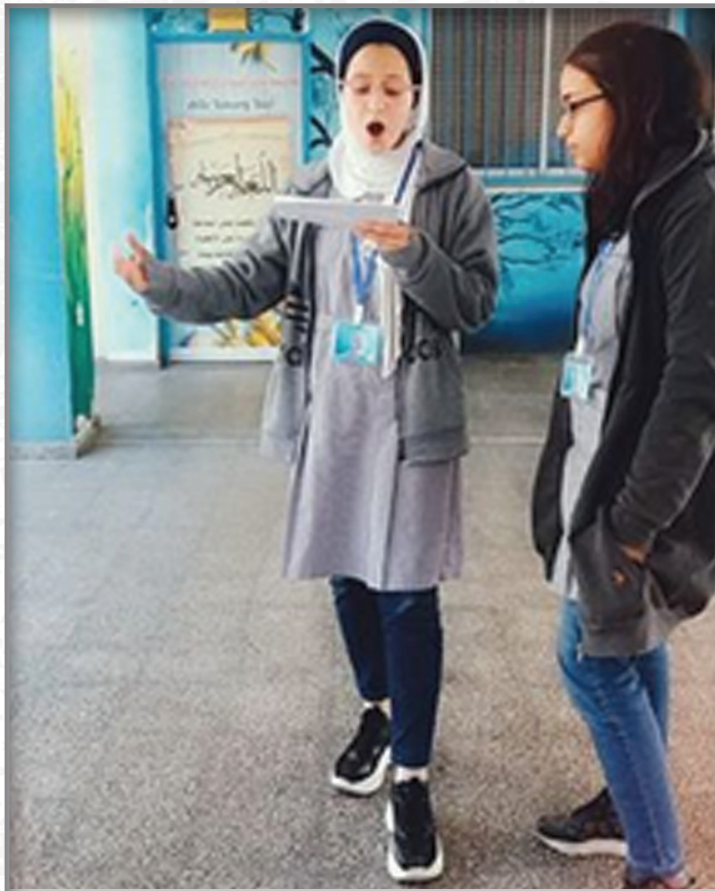
- ▶ The students write their own short stories in English outside of class time as a kind of homework.
- ▶ They come to class with these stories and I divide them into groups, each with a group leader. Their task at this stage is to agree on the best story to be converted into a play later. They do this by having a very lovely discussion about each other's stories and finally agreeing on which one would work best as a play. It's a very beautiful moment when you see those learners working like a beehive, reflecting on their own productions, respecting each other's point of view and learning to value each other's creativity and innovation in a smooth and sensitive way.
- ▶ Each group then creates a picture-story poster and presents it to the rest of the class as a group speaking task - a kind of sharing and caring.

- The students are then given a script as a model to imitate. Each group has a look at this script and notices the conventions used. They then start converting their own story into a script. A lot of learning is happening in all the stages so far. All the language skills are being integrated under the umbrella of drama: reading the script, reading their stories, discussing and listening to each other, evaluating their own work, taking turns in terms of turning this piece of story into a script etc. Those scripts could be about the hard situation of living under occupation, the loss of their loved ones, what it feels like to be a refugee, the rights of women, or it could be about the life they dream about like travelling outside and being very famous people, or even travelling to outer space and talking to aliens.



- The editing and reformulation stage: Now, each group has to submit their own script to me to help them with the language. I don't make any changes in their ideas but just make the script more intelligible or sophisticated in terms of the language. I might make the vocabulary more suitable or change grammatical structures etc. Then, I give both versions (before and after) back to them to highlight the changes in terms of the language. I think this is just perfect to give them a space to notice and masses of learning happens at this critical point. Here you can see a picture of the same script for a play called 'Ladies First' written following these stages and considering the rights of women in society

- Physicalization and Rehearsal stage: At this stage, I ask each group leader to establish a timetable of training sessions with the group members. This leader has to give each member a role in the play (including herself) and start rehearsing the lines. They do this on their own first, then I usually come in to give them feedback for improvement. Here, we can see drama as a kind of approach to life; the learners learn about values and principles in life. They learn how to have self-confidence to speak up in front of others and how to take turns. They learn that our biggest achievements in life happen when we cooperate with others, when we put our hands and our heads together towards an ultimate goal.



► Performing the plays remotely to the outer world. This is the last stage where we have a link up with one of the Hands Up remote volunteers to perform the plays. We receive feedback and the students take this feedback into account and try to improve their performance afterwards. It's a chance to see their hard work come to light through this tiny screen. I can see the joy in their eyes when they perform this to the Hands Up volunteer on the other side of the world. It is the moment when drama acts as a way to celebrate yourself. Nothing in the world could be more touching than seeing those kids flying by their souls and their minds to tell their stories to the world. The final edited versions of the scripts are published in the school magazine.

Here is a picture that summarizes the whole framework:



To conclude, I would like to say that drama is the most successful way I know to help kids speak the language naturally, spontaneously and confidently in an authentic context. Of course, it's not only about the language, but also about values, literature and culture. It's about helping those kids to establish their favourite space and put themselves into it. Each learner has a unique voice inside that needs to come out. For Palestinian kids, it helps them to stand very tall to tell the whole world how creative and innovative they are. Drama is also about building up a very confident generation that is well-equipped to lead the world one day. Drama is our root and we are all its branches and this is how we grow together.



Haneen Jadalla is an English teacher at Asma Prep Girls UNRWA B school, Gaza, with a special interest and expertise in drama and language learning. She has been teaching English for 6 years and now regularly trains other teachers in Gaza in drama techniques. She was due to present at the IATEFL conference in Manchester and at the Hands Up Project conference in April 2020, but both events were sadly cancelled due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Empowering Saudi female students through visible thinking | Fawzia Alghamdi

In the last two years, Saudi women have seen the biggest changes in their lives after facing systematic discrimination in law and other areas of life such as marriage, divorce, driving, and travel. After His Royal Highness the Deputy Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz launched the Saudi vision of 2030 reforms, women's legal rights now are fundamentally changed.

The new reforms removed discrimination against women as well as giving them a vital role in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's development strategy, Vision 2030. The demand for women employees has increased lately in all fields in the Kingdom. The labour market offers Saudi women senior employment positions to promote gender equality under the new vision. The percentage of women getting scholarships to study abroad is higher than that of men. Saudi women can now take important decisions in their lives, about taking custody of their children, and travelling abroad, and they can drive cars, without the approval of their male guardians.



Saudi Arabia is known as the most conservative culture in the world. Females were segregated from men in all life aspects in Saudi Arabia due to the conservative Islamic movement that started in the 1980s. Almost all Saudi schools are single-sex. Even after the latest dramatic changes in the country, many families are still feeling confused about whether to agree on letting their daughters work in a mixed environment, or not even consider a job that requires that. The reasons that make them worried about the new situation is the fact that their daughters are not used to dealing with men, besides other obligations such as, social pressure, religious devotion, and tribal loyalty.

As a result, many girls feel shy and anxious when working with male counterparts. Most of our girls are used to relying on their male guardians whenever they face social or economic problems. Their struggle starts when they travel abroad and begin to have male colleagues or start to work in a mixed environment. They begin to realize the difficulty of being independent women and having to deal with the real-world issues that most women around the world are facing daily.

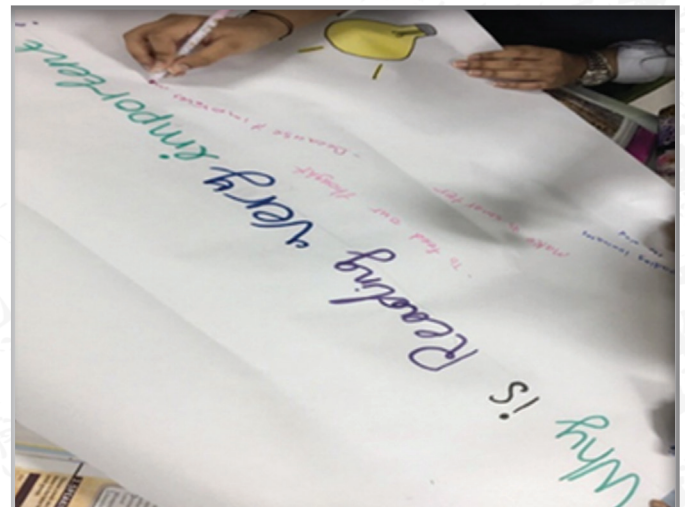
To empower our female students and boost their self-confidence, we need to change the way we teach. How can we prepare our female students to face those challenges and be part of the workforce and push the pace of change if we do not give them a strong foundation through education?

For our female students to develop their metacognitive awareness and communication skills, we need to discuss these issues in our classes and give students the chance to speak and give

their opinions. Speaking classes should include open discussions about many global issues such as women's rights. One suggestion to practise free speech is to let students participate in public speaking events, such as Toastmasters, an organization that teaches public speaking and leadership skills through a worldwide network of clubs. In writing classes, students can be asked to read about women's financial security and social status in different countries and write an article expressing their point of view about that. Teachers can also construct sentences around these topics in their grammar lessons. For example, if the lesson is about comparisons, students will form sentences like: 'Women employees are paid less than men around the world' and 'Saudi women feel more comfortable working separately from men'.

Last year, I trained over 300 female teachers to use new teaching strategies that suit all students' levels and learning styles; strategies that will give students the chance to think and engage actively in lessons. Teachers were very happy to learn these new strategies and they found them useful and easy to apply in their classes. The new strategies help teachers to uncover their students' thinking and correct the misconceptions their students face during lessons. These strategies are a set of thinking routines for scaffolding thinking that are easy to apply to a teacher's ongoing classes and become their daily teaching routines. These practices do not require any material preparation or spending money on printing. These simple practices are known as 'Visible Thinking Routines', which were developed by a group of American researchers from Harvard University under the name of Harvard Project Zero. The project aimed at exploring how to cultivate thinking dispositions in school settings.

One routine is called the 'Chalk Talk Routine'. This routine is a conversation conducted silently on paper. The teacher writes an idea, a question, or a problem on paper, and students respond in writing their thoughts regarding that prompt in writing. This routine ensures that we make room for all voices and invite all learners into learning. The prompt could be a global problem such as women's education or gender equality.



Another visible thinking routine for introducing and exploring ideas is called 'See-Think-Wonder'. The purpose of this routine is to open up whole new ideas of exploration and thinking initiated by the students themselves. Thus, this routine is a favourite choice of teachers when starting a unit and it allows students to raise questions that lead to further inquiry. The teacher only needs to choose the content wisely to provoke her students' thinking. The content can be an image, a painting, a video clip, or a chart to look at and observe carefully. This means that the image they are observing is not already known to them to help them synthesize the new information and offer different interpretations.

Finally, another simple visible thinking routine that can be applied throughout different classes and helps students identify the basis for their thinking is to ask them to elaborate on the thinking that lies behind their responses. The teacher can apply this routine simply by asking her student this simple question: ‘*What makes you say that?*’ By using this simple routine, the teacher empowers her students’ viewpoints and reasoning. Students will be able to share their interpretations and support them with evidence.

As an educational supervisor and teacher trainer, I worked hard to see real applications of these routines in classes. I was pleased to see teachers apply these visible thinking routines in their lessons. Teachers found the strategies useful, appealing, and applicable.

During my school observations, I have noticed a huge change in students’ participation. Silent girls shift from struggling to answer assigned reading comprehension questions to proudly displaying their thinking. They are given a voice, a purpose, and a sense of pride. They have more positive attitudes regarding learning English than before. Deep learning is happening in class and there is a change in the role of students and teachers. Finally, if we apply visible thinking routines and adapt them as a broad goal into our teaching, we can indeed support our learners and help them develop their thinking dispositions in the long term and be part of this world. Classrooms will become places that empower girls and boost their confidence. Girls will develop as individuals who can think, plan, create, question, and feel equal when they work or study with men. As a result of this positive change, I plan to organize an annual speaking competition for all schools and all students to participate. The competition aims to equip girls with the skills of speaking persuasively and listening to other opinions. It will provide a focus on the learning of effective English and communication skills.



Fawzia Alghamdi is an educational supervisor and teacher trainer at the Saudi Ministry of Education (Womens Sector). She works hard to train teachers and students on the latest educational strategies. Her vision is to empower Saudi female students and teachers through English lessons.

Protecting our identity in Yamalia | Eugene Kolyadin

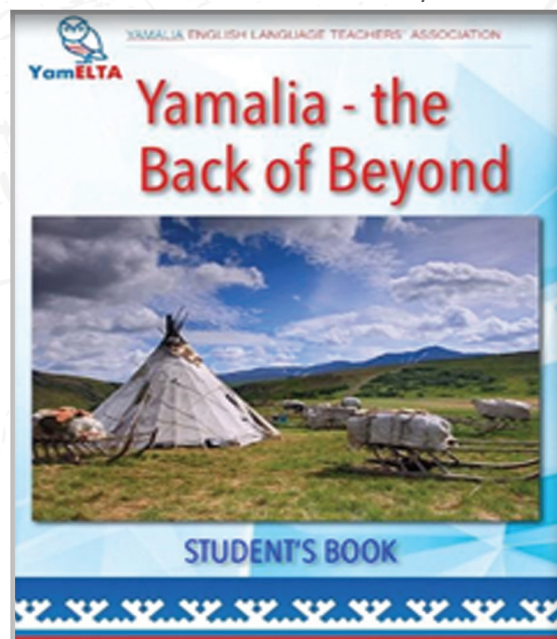
Yamalia English Language Teachers' Association (YamELTA) is a Russian non-governmental public organisation linking up more than a hundred professionals in the field of EFL. The Association, a regional branch of the National Association of Teachers of English in Russia (NATE-Russia) and an affiliate of IATEFL, implements its projects and activities on the territory of Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, or Yamalia.



Yamalia is a unique and breathtakingly picturesque land. It is the northernmost region on the West-Siberian Plateau, washed by the freezing cold waters of the Arctic Ocean in the north. But the most distinctive feature of Yamalia is its people. The region is lavish in oil and gas which once brought plenty of people from all the corners of the ex-Soviet Union, therefore you can easily meet representatives of almost all of more than a hundred nationalities inhabiting Russia here. At the same time the region has always been home to indigenous peoples such as the Nenets, the Khanty, the Mansi, the Selkups and others, who have been roaming the frosty desert of tundra with their reindeer herds from time immemorial. The indigenous peoples of Yamalia strive to keep their lifestyles, languages and literature, traditions and religious beliefs. Unfortunately, nowadays it is a global tendency for indigenous minorities to be gradually losing their national identities, cultures and languages as well.

YamELTA, like any ELT association, aims at the professional development of the regions' teachers of English through different means: social media blogs, conferences, professional contests and the like. But one of the major missions of YamELTA is moulding the students' sense of patriotism, respect and love for their Motherland. By Motherland we understand not only the country of origin in general, but

more precisely – the region, where they have been born and grown up, that is Yamalia. We know that our region is really unique and we would like our students to learn about it as much as they can while being schooled. In the present-day era of globalisation with English being a predominant tool of intercultural communication, it seems to us natural to teach area studies not only in the mother tongue but also in English for our students to become true cultural ambassadors of the region to all the countries of the world. We sincerely believe that it is invaluable for any person to be able to tell a foreign friend or business partner not only about the main sights of their country's capital, but also about the place they actually come from. We consider it to be our utmost duty to teach our students to love and appreciate their home region and preserve everything that makes it distinctive and original.



Working towards this goal, the Association has launched a number of area studies-oriented projects. The first and the most important one so far is '*Yamalia - the Back of Beyond*'. In this project YamELTA announced a contest of area studies-oriented plans of English lessons among the teachers of the region a few years ago. Sixteen lessons were selected, edited and aligned to a unified lesson plan template to be published as a teachers' book to give lessons on Yamalia to students of forms 8-11 (aged 14-18) at the secondary schools of the region. Publishing a full-blooded paperback edition for all students being impossible, the editors worked out and created digital presentations, cut-outs and hand-outs to accompany each of the lessons. This booklet as well as teaching materials including listening tasks recorded on demand and videos can be downloaded free of charge at the YamELTA website. The next stage of the project was creating an e-book. Thus, the teaching materials were put into two editions (student's and teacher's) of the e-book created on the *iBooks Author* platform designed by *Apple Inc.* These editions feature plenty of interactive activities for learners, listening tasks and videos, full-colour photos and also a glossary, containing regional studies-related terms. These editions offer all the teaching and learning possibilities a modern digital book can provide. The e-books are also available for free to everyone who is interested, and can be downloaded from the webpage mentioned above and viewed on any *iOS* device or *MacOS* computer.

To maintain the students' and the teachers' interest in the topic, YamELTA launched another project concerning the theme. A regional area studies olympiad in English '[The Polar Owl](#)' is held yearly for the secondary school students of forms 8-11 (aged 14-18). The event is organised in two stages. Due to transport and logistics peculiarities of the region it is next to impossible to gather participants of the contest for a face-to-face event. This is why the first stage is carried out remotely in a form of an internet-based quiz. The students performing best at this stage are then invited

for a videoconference interview with the olympiad experts for their speaking skills to be assessed. Using region-related materials (e.g. traditional food, flora and fauna, geographical features of the region, the indigenous' traditions, lifestyle, traditional medicine etc.), for both the online test and the speaking part constitute the distinctive feature of the project. Quite a high level of technical security as well as validity and reliability of testing materials have contributed to considerable respect for the event among the region's students and teachers.

Another activity of the association to raise the students' and teachers' awareness of the problems of the region in general and the indigenous minorities of Yamalia in particular, is organising annual contests. Teachers are usually offered professional contests in creating topic-oriented lessons of English. Now the board is working on a new project based on the results of the previous years' contests – '*MyBestLesson*' – an online bank of the best teaching practices of our teachers published on the association's website with free access and a hashtag search according to the lesson topic, the student's book title and the learners' level of English.

The essay contests for students pursue a set of goals. First, these are always devoted to acute social issues of the region or national events. What is more, the students are invited to write an argumentative essay on the topic with the requirements identical to the ones imposed for a similar writing task in the Russian National Exam in English. Thus, the contests give students an additional opportunity to master their writing skills for their future finals.

This year the essay contest, which was dedicated to the UN International Year of Indigenous Languages, was held in January. The Board made an announcement in a number of international ELT professional communities on Facebook to invite English educators meeting the requirements from Russia and abroad to partake in the contests as experts. As a result, a team of professionals from Hungary, Morocco, Romania, Russia, the UK and Uzbekistan was built. As the international experts were not 'in the know' of the criteria of the essay assessment applied to the writing tasks in the Russian national exam, the grading guidelines were translated for them into English. The essays submitted by the participants were depersonalised and encoded, which provided utmost impartiality in cases where the work was graded by local experts. The pieces of writing to be assessed were uploaded onto Google Drive with access shared via a link for the experts to be able to read the work at any time. The experts themselves were also encoded with numbers so that none of them knew who the other colleagues were.

The 2020 essay contest demonstrated that our students concern themselves about the acute problem of the endangered languages of the indigenous minorities: 'In the minds of people, a nation is often associated with its language. In fact, the language is a support on which national identity is formed. According to UNESCO, 43% of the world's indigenous languages are at risk of extinction. The situation with indigenous languages in Yamalia is relatively safe. Nevertheless, some people believe that it is necessary to intensify joint efforts of authorities, society, linguists and just caring people to protect the indigenous languages of Yamalia' (*Vlada Lomann, town of Muravlenko*). The students expressed

their grounded opinions on why the local minorities' tongues are of vital importance: '...they hold the key to understanding the environment we live in... these languages are closely connected to the environment they are spoken in; they contain rich, detailed, precise and technical knowledge about Yamalian flora and fauna. Consequently, an indigenous language is an ecological encyclopedia and if it dies, its wisdom is lost to humanity forever. ...[they] are the finest libraries in existence, where we can find the collective history, vast knowledge, unique mythology and perceptions of the northern peoples. ...Their stories, songs, poetry and rituals are passed down through the generations and remain astonishingly consistent and reliable through time.' (*Arina Pichugina, town of Novy Urengoy*). You can read the competition prize-winners' full essays on the Association contests [webpage](#).



Teacher prize-winner Irina V. Zinkovskaya, from the town of Nadym

This year's contest was exceptionally successful. The topic, though it seemed quite challenging at first, received a positive response from the participants and a considerable number of essays were really brilliant, well-thought-out and revealed the students' hard and profound work. Another significant feature of the 2020 contests was undoubtedly the international experts pool. We do hope that it was exciting and instructive in some ways for our

foreign colleagues to work on this competition as they surely have learnt more about Russia, its remote areas and the indigenous peoples living here.

The YamELTA Board intends to continue working in this direction in the years to come, since it seems to be of high importance for everyone: the students, the country, the planet and mankind. Educational initiatives foster developing young people's positive attitude and appreciation of the world around them, which can secure a better and healthier future for humankind.



Eugene A. Kolyadin (PhD) is President of Yamalia ELTA, a National Association of Teachers of English in Russia (NATE-Russia) board member, teacher of English and French as a foreign language and a teacher trainer. His professional interests include general TEFL problems, ICT, testing and assessment and teaching materials design.

Two sides of a coin! An overview of two former British colonies and their enthusiasm and resistance towards learning the language of the colonizers | Khadija Hamidani

Over the last few decades, we have seen the status of the English Language rise worldwide. A prediction was made by John Adams in Kachru in the 19th century that English would be the most spoken language in the century, and in the 21st century, that prediction has become a reality.

Prior to writing this article, I sat down with a local Malaysian student who is doing her diploma in Business Administration at an international university to know her views about English language acquisition. She said that learning English will help her in future, getting a job, and that it can also help her as an extra language to interact with foreigners. She prefers watching Tamil movies and songs to English TV, but does often speak English with friends to practise. I asked her whether English proficiency was key to a successful life, and she said no.

I then interviewed a Pakistani Bachelor of Computer Science student and, according to him, learning English is very important because it gives status in society and all jobs require English. According to him, to lead a successful life with better achievements one needs to be proficient in this language.

This shows the value of the English language in two different countries. More opportunities and more social acceptability is achieved by those who are proficient in English in Pakistan, whereas in Malaysia the same amount of opportunities and more social acceptability is given to those who stick with their own mother tongue. Although students of both countries agreed that learning English helps them with better job opportunities in international firms and companies.

According to Mufwene (2001), there are three types of colonies, namely 'trade colonies', 'exploitation colonies' and 'settlement colonies'. Trade Colonies had contact with European traders and local people and led to the development of pidgins. Gradually some of these trade colonies became exploitation colonies and came under the administrative and political control of European nations.

In many former British colonies, the colonizers required people who could speak English to administer the colony. Hence the British recruited their own people to act in senior positions, they imported administrators from other colonies, and trained locals as administrators in special schools where English became the medium of instruction. This contact between local and other languages led to the emergence of varieties of English in colonies such as Malaysia where the influence of local language and culture was greater in the development of a wide range of local English varieties.

Moag's Life Cycle Model (1982) of non-native Englishes, gives a vivid description of the dynamic development of Malaysian English. The first phase is *transportation*, where English arrives in a place it has not been spoken before and remains to stay. The second phase is *indigenization*, where English reflects local culture. The third phase is *expansion in use and function*, where the local variety turns into local varieties. The fourth phase is *institutionalization* and the fifth phase is *restriction of use*

and function. But in the case of Malaysia, there is a sixth phase whereby the English Language has been reestablished. Asmah (2000), one of Malaysia's leading linguists calls this 're-establishing English' to describe a re-emergence of English in Malaysia. According to her, the return of English is not 'full circle', but rather is being viewed as a language that plays a role in the development of the country since the status enjoyed by English during the colonial period disappeared and it became unfashionable following independence. Due to the firm establishment of Bahasa Malaysia as a national language, English no longer seems a threat to national unity.

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the land with highest mountain peaks, beautiful valleys, and mighty rivers, the English language after independence has not only flourished but has now become an official second language. Looking at the history of the English language in Pakistan, one can see that English was introduced in the Indo-Pak subcontinent in the 16th century. After the passing of Macaulay's minutes of 1835, it gained official recognition. Prior to independence, a colonial policy by Wood's Dispatch of 1854 declared that the western knowledge should be taught in English. Elitist jobs were only given to those who were proficient in this language. The political and social domain that remained until independence was kept in English. According to Baumgardner (1993), once Pakistan gained independence in 1947, English became part of the socio-political fabric of the region.

After independence, Urdu became the national language of Pakistan in the hope of unifying bonds between 4 major vernacular language groups in different regions of the country, for example Sindhi, Punjabi, Pashto and Baloch. In 1970 Urdu was imposed as the Medium of Instruction in government nationalized private schools. But the attempt failed since the government's own institutions resisted this change, and in 1979 there was a surge of English Medium Private Institutions. In 2009 the National Educational Policy supported and allowed the continuation of a parallel education system and dual language in education policy.

The English variety of Pakistan (Pakistani English, or PE) is created from the use of features of Punjabi, Urdu, Pashto, Sindhi and other languages. The speaking and writing is very similar to BSE (British Standard English) which is called Anglicized English. The acrolect PE is used by Elite English Medium Schools following the Cambridge and American Syllabus and on the other hand Mesolectal PE is used by Urdu Educated Pakistani, whereas people with little formal education use basilect PE.

On the flip side, in Malaysia, there are different levels of acrolectal English and it is used for official and formal purposes in written and in international communication. It conforms with British Standardized English, but some words are borrowed from Bahasa Melayu. For example, the use of the term '*rakyat*' (people) shows national identity in order to address people. Similarly, the word '*Bumiputera*' means the sons of the soil (ethnic Malays). These lexical borrowings are often found in English newspapers. The mesolect English is the medium of communication between different ethnic groups of Malaysia, namely Chinese, Indian and Malay. It contains some colloquial terms and its syntax and grammar deviate from standard English. For example, a popular suffix used most is '*Lah/La*', which originates from Chinese and Malay. Another one is 'Can or cannot?' Another example

is the word '*friend*' which is used as a verb, '*Can I friend you?*'. Whereas the basilect is a mixture of both pidgins and creole and is used very informally with limited proficiency and vocabulary in English and is hard to understand internationally. The basilect is often referred to as Manglish in Malaysia. For example, Manglish consists of words which have originated from Hokkien, Malay, English, Tamil, Cantonese and Mandarin.

So, what exactly is the problem?

Well, if we look at Pakistan there is a huge educational gap which is further widened by the high poverty gap. Due to poor infrastructure as well as the hostile condition of government schools, the teachers that are hired there rarely have proper training or exposure to standardized British English. Thus, after matriculation many students join language institutions to gain command of English, in order to pursue higher studies and better jobs. Sadly, some small private schools, in order to make money, hire unprofessional teachers with little exposure to the English language which results in devastating educational conditions since almost all subjects being offered in primary and secondary schools are in English.

In Malaysia, despite having well-funded government institutions, according to the most recent opinion printed in The Star newspaper, most of the local English teachers lack proficiency in English and hence do not feel so confident. This has been due to the going back and forth of instructional mediums from English to Bahasa Melayu in the educational language policy of Malaysia over the last few decades, which has led to an economic divide and also deprived many people from learning English from an early age.

As an educator, I see that a lot can be done to bridge the gaps in learning and teaching this language. Over the last decade or so there has been a significant change and urge towards empowering and pushing local teachers towards professional development in Pakistan by non-profit, non-government organizations such as SPELT (Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers), British Council, Oxford University Press, and so on. SPELT has been improving standards of English language teaching and learning in Pakistan in affiliation with TESOL (USA), IATEFL (UK), RELO (Singapore), and TESOL (Greece). The RELO office also provides a great deal of support. I myself am a member of SPELT and I have conducted some free workshops about dealing with reading difficulties and Educational Technology. I believe together we as teachers can help one another.



In Malaysia, professional development for English Language Teachers is provided by organizations such as MELTA (Malaysian English Language Teaching Association), British Council, ELTC (English Language Teaching Centre) and the US-Embassy. Most of the programs are offered at university level. I believe that if the professional development of English Language teachers is made compulsory on a wider scale in government primary and secondary schools, the education system will shape up better and students would learn English language in a better way.



Apart from joining an institution to learn English formally, there are many new ways to gain proficiency. With online learning, we can now improve our English ourselves, and also encourage students to learn English by doing extra practice using online applications such as Duolingo, Learning Chocolate, FluentU. Students can not only gain proficiency in listening and speaking, but they can also get better at reading and writing using online tools such as Read@Write, NoRedInk, StoryBoard That etc.

We can encourage our students to communicate and make E-pals from around the world. Many teachers use social media platforms such as Facebook to connect with other teachers over teacher forums and then conduct online conversations among students via platforms such as Skype, Zoom, MS-Teams. This gives students an opportunity to connect with other English-speaking students and practise their language skills. Apart from that, other essential ways to acquire language proficiency include listening to English music, watching shows and movies in the target language and reading and listening to audio books.

According to Reeve (1996), both internal and external factors can affect student motivation. These can start, discourage, intensify or sustain a behavior. The driving force has to be the teacher who can activate these motivational components in students in class. This drive of motivation can be derived in many ways in the classroom teaching environment. The first main way is to increase collaboration among learners through group and peer work. This creates a sense of community and builds an environment of mutual trust and confidence. Activities which language teachers can include for pairs and groups can be in the form of role plays, interviews, writing and practising dialogues, picture descriptions etc. Secondly, the seating arrangement determines the dynamics of a lesson. Seating arrangement in circles - groups, or U-shape seating with a hollow center helps in maximizing eye contact and creates an inclusive environment. Thirdly, teachers should opt for suitable strategies for correcting student errors by communicating in such a way that students do not feel any hurt or humiliation; and by keeping the affective filter low and making a class a place where students can practise language. Finally, teachers should allow use of L1 to a certain extent in the classroom to include cultural diversity and to celebrate different identities of the students and where they

come from. This will lessen their reluctance to learn new language and make them feel appreciated and respected in a way that would make language learning fun rather than a cumbersome task. For example in the English coursebook Headway, there are exercises which encourage students to translate model sentences into their own mother tongues to compare and contrast the grammar.

I would like to end this article with the words of William Ernest Henley, ‘I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul’ - *Invictus*. Hence, it is in our hands to shape our life and future as educators and have a ripple effect on generations to come.

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Links to teaching and learning resources:

<https://www.noredink.com/>

<https://www.fluentu.com/en/>

Read&Write for Google Chrome™

<https://www.storyboardthat.com/>

<https://www.learningchocolate.com/>

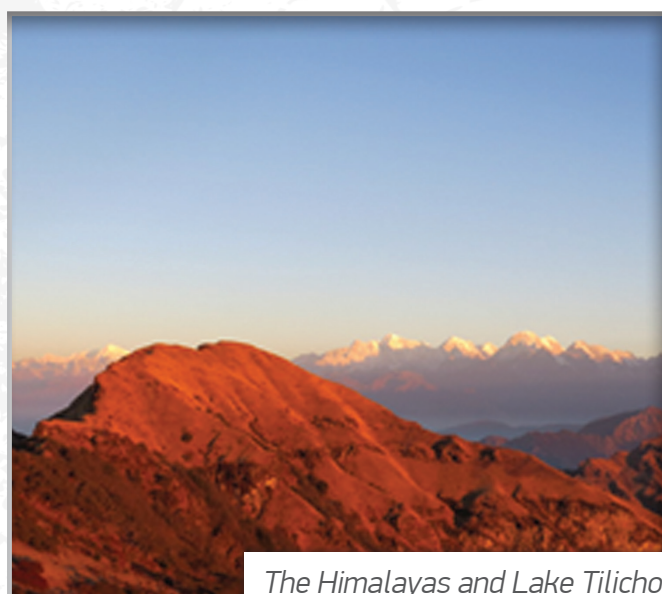
<https://www.duolingo.com/>



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From personal to political: establishing the agenda of teacher well-being | Laxman Gnawali

On 11 March 2020, the Government of Nepal, like many governments across the world around that time, declared the first phase of a nationwide lockdown due to the Coronavirus pandemic. It was initially taken as a break by most of the stakeholders in education but when the second phase came around, there was panic. Seven million school-going students and teachers would stay home without meaningful educational engagement. Missing learning opportunities was one issue facing them, and keeping the young ones safe and engaged at home was another. No one living now in this Himalayan nation had any experience of handling an emergency such as this one caused by Coronavirus pandemic. Nevertheless, life had to go on.

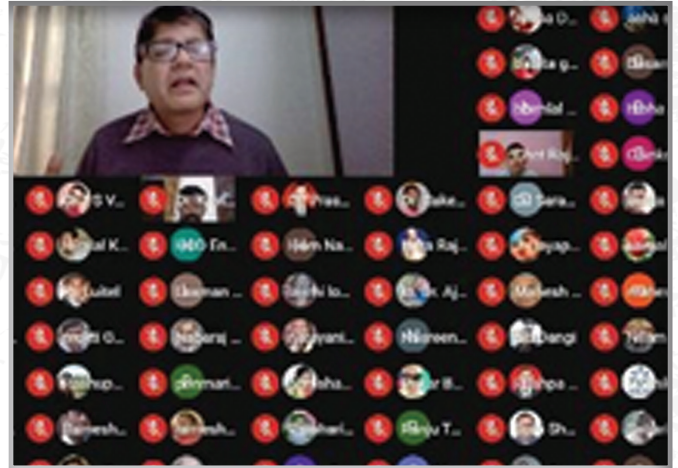


The Himalayas and Lake Tilicho, the world's highest lake at 4929m above sea level (photo taken by my son).

All of a sudden, the Internet was abuzz with Zoom pass codes and screenshots of participants on live sessions. Meetings and even random classes started running online. Kathmandu University followed suit, albeit in a formal setting. With the experience of running online degree programs, the School of Education, one of the seven schools of the university where I am stationed, mandated that all the courses would be delivered online. So far, online students had studied in asynchronous mode only, whereas on-campus cohorts were in blended mode: face-to-face lectures and Moodle, an asynchronous online platform. Now, all students would attend synchronous sessions on Google Meet, alongside Moodle. The question was whether all teachers were sufficiently ready to deliver at the standard expected.

I remembered how I had initially struggled when my university introduced the Moodle platform seven years ago. I had to pretend I was using it while feeling guilty for not using it. I had managed to upload only the PowerPoint slides that I had actually used in physical classes. I could not trust myself that online pedagogy would be my cup of tea. But, by the time the pandemic struck this year, I had developed skills in online pedagogy.

I empathized with teachers of my university, particularly those from other schools where online pedagogy was not mandatory before. But I was even more concerned about the school teachers across Nepal who had to learn digital technology and appear skilled in it, all of a sudden. In all these months, I had been in touch via online events with hundreds of schoolteachers who were struggling to learn the tricks of online pedagogy. The webinars run by colleges, universities, schools, NGOS and teacher associations gave an advantage to teachers to learn these unique skills. However, the teachers who lacked basic skills and proper devices to deliver lessons were at a loss as neither could they express their limitations nor run classes effectively.



Within my ELT network, I gathered that community school teachers were either dealing with the stress of learning new technologies or abandoning technology and not teaching at all. The government instructed them to use 'alternative pedagogy': visiting students' homes to set tasks and collect the outcomes later, but this did not work very effectively. Those who had difficulty in speaking fluently in English were exposed to the public; a closed classroom would be safer.

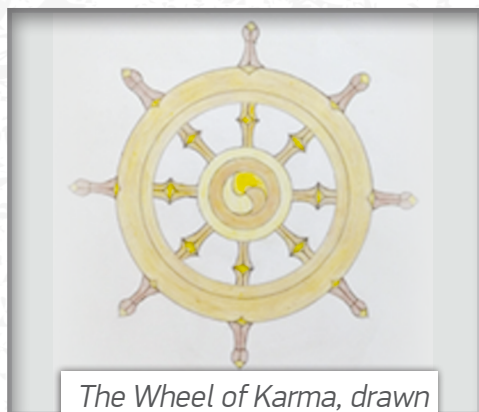
Though apparently better equipped and better skilled, private English medium school teachers had other concerns alongside the technological issues: time management stress and the pain of not getting paid. A few private schools were paying full salaries but many others were either paying part or nothing at all, the reason being that the government had put pressure on them not to charge any fees for online classes (nearly 21% of students go to these schools). However, the parents expected their children to engage in learning activities as much as they did before the crisis. The teachers had nowhere to go, and no one to talk to about a new job or for financial support. It was a terrible situation. However, the wellbeing of teachers was not an explicit part of the ongoing educational discourse at the time.



The stupa at Lumbini, where Buddha was born.

It may be due to the habit of making peace with everything as taught by Lord Buddha, the son of Nepal; or it may be the tendency of submitting to karma transmitting past life sins or righteous acts; or it may be that the pride of being the citizens of the land of the Gurkhas runs in our blood, but Nepali people seem to be largely resilient. Look at the way we slowly recovered from the huge earthquakes.

Or it may not be resilience of any sort at all but simply an avoidance of social stigma that individuals receive when they express their psychological issues in public. Whatever may be the reason, I felt that teacher wellbeing was severely at stake in this new context. Teachers hid their ordeal and moved with the flow. There was a need to break the ice. Not everyone would be as lucky as me, who had had enough time to learn something that had been problematic for me. I needed a platform to execute my plan and bring about change.



The Wheel of Karma, drawn by my student.

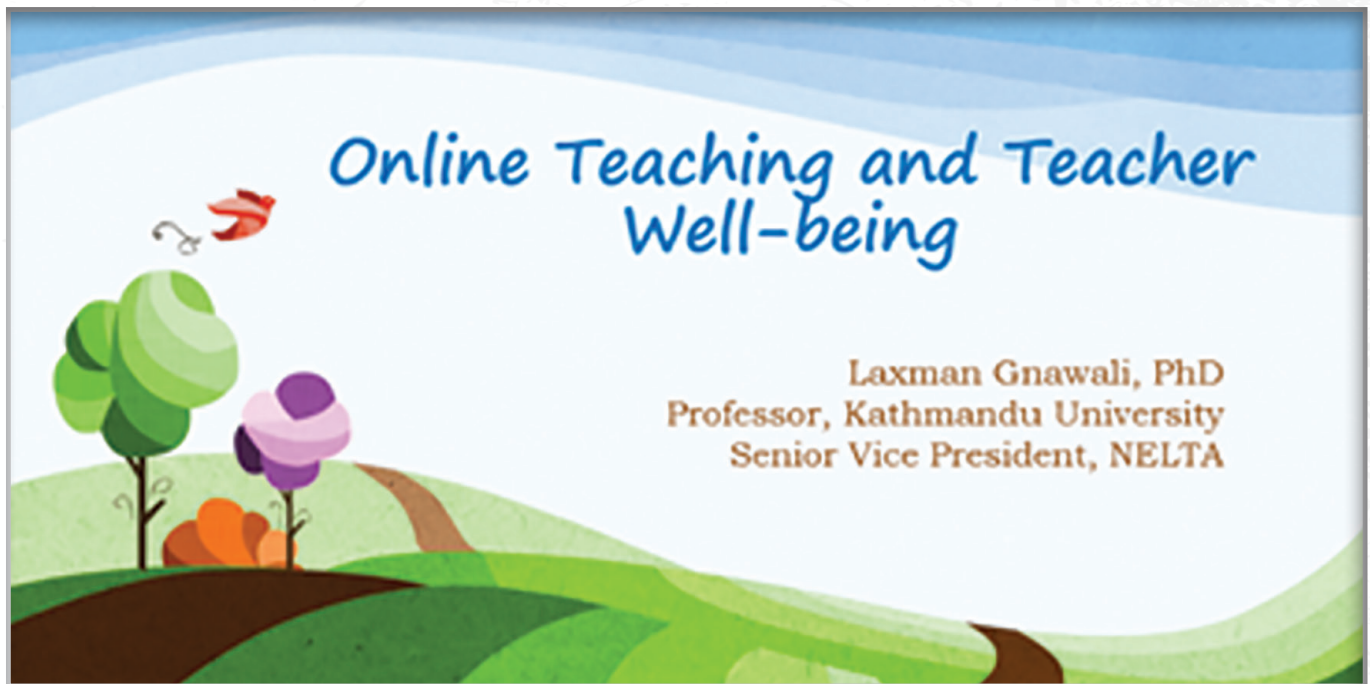
In one of the official meetings of my university, I demonstrated to the topmost officials, how to use the Google Meet and insisted that this tool had bigger benefits than Zoom. This worked as a turning point for me. I had done it at a time when the university was about to form a committee to develop online pedagogy guidelines for the entire university programme. They appointed me as the Coordinator of the Committee. We developed the guidelines which were immediately approved by the Executive Council of the university. The guidelines stressed facilities and

training for the faculties so they would learn adequately. Due to the fact that I was recognized, and that the guidelines we developed were on a public domain of the university, and that I had been a familiar face on the Google Meet and Zoom screens in the teachers' community in Nepal, I decided to touch base.

Whenever I was invited for a session in an online event, I proposed either to orient participants on how to use online tools or to talk about the teacher well-being issue. Dealing with the former issue, I would introduce the teachers to Google and other online tools to plan, run classes, design quizzes etc. I would do very elementary things because I knew where the shoe pinched. I would first show them how they work and then get them to practise. For the well-being issue, I would start with my personal story of how I came from a generation that used slates to learn the alphabet and how we grew up with a blackboard. I would also add how I personally came from a Sanskrit background and now have a proud title of Professor of English Education. Finally, I would come to my painful story about learning Moodle. I would console them that it's ok not to know. But it's not ok not to start or to give up. I would advise them that stressful learning would be detrimental to their wellbeing and they would need to practise things like 'sense of disinterestedness' as our traditional wisdom teaches. Yoga and meditation were other topics that we discussed. The feedback at the end of the session and later communications indicated that I had indeed left some footprints.

One more footprint is getting stamped now. One of my MPhil students was working on his dissertation proposal and was hinting at the tension teachers undergo due to time management for professional and personal life. This tension was even more apparent due to this pandemic and the flood of online activities. We finally decided to look into the well-being strategies of EFL teachers in Nepal.

He is now working on data collection. And we also plan to write a paper on these issues with focus on teacher well-being for the Nepali context.



Reflecting on all of this, it may be vain for me to feel that I started the movement on teacher well-being that is now more openly discussed in the ELT community. But, if it's a coincidence, it's an uncanny one. Before I delivered my sessions on teacher well-being, I would ask around teachers within and outside my network how they managed their personal and professional life and they would take it as a new issue. Those very same teachers report to me that there's a sort of 'teacher well-being' discourse they are engaged in or hear about now. Whatever the cause may be, my only hope is that teachers will now get a chance to speak and share their troubles. My heart reaches out especially for those English teachers who have had to first learn a second/foreign language, and then become adept at it enough to teach it to others, whether it's a normal time, an emergency, or the new normal! One's well-being always matters.



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Empowerment of transgender people and transformation of young minds | Revathy Natesan

When the sun appears in the sky, it becomes day on earth and when the moon appears, it becomes night. This transition that occurs every day is an ongoing natural process and every species on this earth accepts it without question. But when a transition occurs in a human mind or body regarding gender identity, the society, especially in India, is not ready to accept it so easily.

One day a student came to me and complained that all his classmates were bullying him and calling him a girl. I scolded his classmates and told them to stop. For a few days I observed his behaviour and I advised him with a smile 'whether we are boys or girls, it doesn't matter... but how we study and how we live in society matters a lot.' After a month I noticed changes in how he walked and talked. But I was not sure whether it was like a girl. Deep inside I was worried about the boy's future here, but I didn't show my anxiety and fear to him. Whenever he approached me for any help or doubts in lessons, I helped him with a smile and hoped my acceptance would build his confidence.

One evening on my way home, I saw two of my students teasing a trans woman who was collecting money from a shop. She swore at the shop owner when he refused to give her money. I warned my students not to tease her and told them to go home. But the incident disturbed me a lot. And so many queries were raised in my mind. Why do trans people use abusive language? Why do they beg the shop owners for money? Why do students tease them? Why don't they have proper education and a job? Why do they stay away from their family?

All these questions have only one answer and it is because society – in India at least – is not trans-friendly. All this happens to trans people because they are neglected by their family and friends due to social stigma. Fellow students make them leave school by bullying them. So they leave home to lead a life according to their gender identity. Devoid of love and care, education, job, respect etc. they become a laughing stock to others and face only insults in life. Will this happen to my student too? I was deeply worried about him. I was determined to change the mindset of my students. Before writing about an activity I did in class to bring about a change, I want to write about trans people in India and the various measures taken by our Indian government to protect their rights.

The word 'transgender' – or trans – is an umbrella term for people whose gender identity is different from the sex assigned to them at birth. A person's internal sense of being male, female or something else is their gender identity. For transgender people their gender identity doesn't match with their sex at birth, and they experience disconnect, pain and distress in life, which can force a transition.

In India, the transgender community and other LGBTQ groups are addressed using several different names, for example hijras, kothis, aravanis, thirunangai, and shiv-sakthi. Indian history shows evidence that LGBTQ+ people in the Mughal period were highly respected and played a major role in royal courts. But gradually in the later eras they faced all kinds of obstacles and hardships. There is evidence that trans people were treated as divine symbols too, yet modern society doesn't treat them in that way. Often they are treated as if they are not human.

In many other countries, many categories of LGBTQ people live their life with full freedom and enjoy every right. In India, the transgender community is called the third gender. The Indian government has laid down many rules and policies to protect them. Despite the legal recognition of the third gender, transgender people are teased, bullied and sexually harassed everywhere and their courage and confidence are being destroyed. Very few people from the transgender community have got jobs in government departments and lead a respectable life. Others live on railway platforms and in slums, beg on streets and some work as sex workers for their livelihood.

The Indian government has tried to encourage more transgender people to study at university, e.g. by offering scholarships and by including a column for transgender in the gender category on forms. But so far this has had little effect.

In schools, when the students begin to be aware of their gender identity, they fear facing others and confusion engulfs them. When their gender identity comes out through their changed behaviour, they become victims of harassment and pressure from their peers, family, and teachers. Only a society which can understand the distinction between biological sex and gender, gender identity and sexuality can provide a safe environment for these students. The Goa government, for example, has issued guidelines to make its schools 'inclusive' for such students and create an environment to make them feel secure. It ordered all the institutions to set up an anti-discrimination cell to keep a check on prejudice against the transgender community. Schools have been directed to admit all transgender students, and teachers are being sensitised about issues concerning transgender.

Teachers and schools play a major role in shaping the future of students. But sadly both fail in their responsibilities regarding transgender. Whenever I meet transgender people on the streets, they remind me of the failure of their parents and teachers. So I decided not to be such a failure as a teacher. I decided to teach my students to respect trans people and to treat them equally. I planned an activity for my students and with a determined mind I went to school the next day.



At the end of every lesson, my students do a role play. In the previous day's class the students learnt about a cricket player. So I asked the students to take on the role of that player and to say a few words about his personal life. Then I announced that I would give them a new character and they should talk from that character's point of view.

Students were so eager to know what role they were going to play. Then I announced that the role was a transgender person. Some students were shocked and some didn't know the meaning of the word 'transgender' and asked me what it was about. Though everyday they meet trans people, some didn't know the English term. After explaining, I asked the students to imagine themselves as transgender and write a few lines about the difficulties they face in their family and society. At first they all hesitated. But as I was so determined to do this activity with my students, I convinced them that it was a speaking activity for their formative assessment and marks would be given based on their performance.

Then I wrote on the board the topics for them to choose one: in my family; in my school; in the playground; in the streets; on the bus; what do I do for money? (beg); the place I stay; how do I lead my daily life? After giving them five minutes to prepare, I asked the students to come one by one to present their views.



Though everyone hesitated at the beginning, one by one they came out and played the role, speaking about the difficulties they face in society. At the beginning, students started to laugh when others were speaking. But gradually they became silent as some students made them emotional by speaking how they suffer.

Then I distributed a few copies of speeches made by trans people, from The Purple Project and The Red Wall Project. I asked them to read out loud one by one so that others could listen to them and to share their views on what they read. While sharing their views every student was empathetic. Reading the bitter experiences developed the feelings of sympathy and empathy in the minds of the students towards them. What surprised me was that some students were in tears.

When everyone had finished, I asked the students 'Do you think transgender people lead a peaceful life like yours?'. They all answered 'No miss'. 'Are they happy?' I asked them. 'No miss'. 'Then is it fair to tease them or insult them with rude comments when you meet them in the streets?' I asked. 'No miss'. I could feel a change in their attitude. I told them that being transgender is not their choice, and they deserve love and respect. Then I asked why trans people stop studying. They talked about discrimination and insults. All agreed that everyone should respect transgender people in future. I was happy when I left the classroom. We, as teachers, have a very important role to play in raising awareness, and we should lay a strong foundation for a conducive learning environment in schools.

The next day I was revising the present tense with the same class. I wrote 'I am transgender' as an example on the board and asked the students to come and write examples from the perspective of transgender people. One by one they came and wrote their example sentences. This time they didn't hesitate to think from this perspective. They readily came forward and wrote the examples on the board: I suffer a lot; my parents hate me; I struggle for everything; my friends tease me; people insult me; I cry every day; I beg others for money; I don't go to school; I sleep on a railway platform; I want to study.



These examples told me not only that my students understood the form of the present tense but also that they understood the difficult life of trans people in India, and what they deserve in life. I wanted my students to understand the pain and the struggle they go through in their everyday life. I hope these students will help bring about a real change in how our society treats the trans community in future.

Do you remember the student I mentioned at the beginning? None of the students in the class teased him after the speaking activity on transgender and they treated him well. Yet often he was teased by students of other classes and also was harassed by people in his home environment. So in spite of all my efforts, the student lost interest in studies and dropped out of school that year due to the harassment. At that time I was not bold enough to go to his house and convince him to continue his studies as his house was in a remote place. Though I felt guilty about it, I was a little scared about the comments I might receive from my colleagues and others. I convinced myself that at least I changed the attitude of my students. But now I'm determined not to ignore any such student.

Discrimination and violence in the lives of trans people begins in schools. All schools in India should initiate policies against transgender bullying. It is our duty to make our schools trans-friendly. If we take this as our prime responsibility, it will bring a change in our society and will change a generation.

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Can children still learn in the Covid-19 lockdown?

A scenario from Bangladesh | Arifa Rahman

Teacher Anjona hurries through her morning household chores. She is starting her home school virtual class at 9:30 am with her mobile phone. Meanwhile her first group of four students are also getting their books and stuff ready and, of course, their parents' mobile phones. Today they will be doing a lesson from their *English for Today* book. At 9:30, Anjona rings her four students through teleconferencing. She smiles remembering the first day they had tried teleconferencing and how the four kids were startled when she spoke to them simultaneously over the phone. Anjona gets to the lesson quickly – this virtual class is only 20 minutes long. She has to repeat this teleconference lesson with four more groups of children that day.



Teacher and two students in their respective homes during a virtual class using mobile phones (mobiles circled in colour). Photo: Courtesy of Masum Billah, BEP

Anjona lives in a remote area in Bangladesh, a developing country in South Asia, smaller than Great Britain but with a population of nearly 165 million, where mainstream education still does not reach children of impoverished and marginalised communities. In this context, an NGO named [BRAC](#) (Building Resources across Communities), founded in 1972, reaches 138 million of the poorest people in Bangladesh and in eight other countries in Asia and Africa. BRAC's mission is to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease, and social injustice.

BRAC's education programme (BEP) has been operating a non-formal primary education platform for underprivileged children since 1989. It runs 14,153 non-formal primary schools taught by 16,200 teachers (99% female), equipped with a high school education. Carefully structured with curriculum developers, materials designers, trainers and managers, it has a support system that provides pre-training in pedagogy and monthly refresher courses for its teachers. A typical BRAC primary school is a 'one teacher, one room school', with the same teacher for the same cohort of children for four years. Targeted towards 8-10 year-olds, class size is 25-30. With this model of 4-year schooling using low technology and low resources, BRAC has reached 3.17 million children in-country.

With the Covid-19 lockdown in March 2020, the country's education ground to a halt, as in most parts of the world. BRAC worked closely with the government, supporting lesson development of primary and secondary class lessons on TV. However, these telecast programmes barely served marginalized communities. Among BRAC school children, only 56% of households have access to TV. BRAC stepped up efforts in reducing learning loss by re-thinking strategies for developing a new model of homeschooling using the most easily accessible tech device available to even the poorest of the poor – the basic button mobile phone. This appeared feasible as 95% households have mobiles whereas only 37.6% have access to the internet. With 166,114 million mobile phone subscribers in February 2012 (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, 2020), Bangladesh has a high rate of mobile users and access to a basic handset is increasingly commonplace, even amongst poorer and harder-to-reach communities. Moreover, learning through mobile phones is not a new concept, as exemplified by an English language learning project implemented in 2009 - 2016 that offered three-minute audio English lessons and interactive quizzes to adult learners through mobiles (see Rahman and Cotter, 2014).

This home school model introduces learning through Children's Learning Groups (CLG) aimed at self-learning both individually and in groups with limited supervision by the teacher. The programme started from the third week of April and is currently being piloted in 50 BRAC home schools, with Grade 5 students. Anjona is one of the 50 female home school tutors located in disparate areas throughout the country.

Preparation for planning and piloting this home school model included three steps: selecting curriculum suitable for home schooling; the virtual training of teachers for homeschooling; and teachers carrying out virtual supervision over the phone. The curriculum focused on three main subjects – Bangla, English and Maths. National Curriculum textbooks supplied free by the government are used as reference materials. A bit of science, social studies and religion are also touched on. Virtual training of the teachers was conducted over a week by the supervisory team. Follow-up supervision and mentoring is carried out constantly.

A teacher takes a virtual class over a mobile phone by connecting to a CLG consisting of four learners in different households. The teacher and the four students communicate through teleconferencing. The teacher takes a lesson for 15-20 minutes. At the end, the teacher gives a small home assignment which is shared by the learning group. In the next two hours, the teacher repeats the same lesson with three or four separate CLGs, thus covering a total of 20-22 students in one day. Assessment from time to time takes place via voice call.

Interviews by phone with three teachers located in three different parts of the country in rural and semi-urban areas provided a window to teachers' perceptions and beliefs of their new role as a virtual teacher. Overall, they were satisfied with the training they received regarding the mode of delivery, and appreciated the support they constantly got from their supervisors. The students came from poor families with fathers working as rickshaw pullers, labourers, or vegetable sellers,

and mothers as household maids, cooks or garments factory workers. Teachers sometimes found it difficult to coordinate class timings as parents took their phones with them when at work. Sometimes, parents negotiated the lesson timing at their convenience. And the teachers were considerate so that children could avoid spending money on making calls. They advised students to make missed calls and teachers then would call back. Asked about children's eagerness regarding mobile schooling, the teachers replied that it varied. The more able students were keen but the weaker ones tended not to speak much. Parents are satisfied that their children are getting some sort of education during this lockdown period. The teachers felt that home assignments often suffered particularly with weaker students. They try to involve mothers to sit with their child when he or she is having a mobile lesson. Somehow the learning group idea worked when there was a strong student in the group and that student tried to help the others but there was usually no exchange or collaboration among the learners. In their opinion, English and Maths suffered most. Teachers wanted more specific training on how to move step by step.

It is too early to make an evaluation of the home school concept. There are two things at the heart of the model:

- ▶ Providing lessons, assignments, conducting assessment in groups through mobiles.
- ▶ Introducing Children's Learning Groups – aimed at self-learning, both individually and in groups, with limited supervision by the teacher. This is difficult in a culture which nurtures teacher dependency with little experience of self-directed learning.

ELT in particular is not quite functional. Limited competencies of both teachers and learners seem to affect learning in a setting where visibility of English learning materials is seen as a scaffold to learning.

BRAC has drawn up future plans to continue the building back of education in the pandemic situation. So plans are being put forward in phases.

Phase 1: (April-August 2020) Virtual classes over the phone through CLGs are nearing completion. Now it is being scaled up to include more schools and other grades.

Phase 2: Transition phase (August-September to December-January). Moving physically back to school but with fewer students attending in batches to maintain social distancing. *Blended Learning* is a strategic option involving in-class learning and take-home group projects. Also the introduction of hand-washing stations made from indigenous materials near the school premises.

Phase 3.1: New Normal (January-June 2021): Limited face to face classes in 2/3 batches together with take home group projects and lessons and assessments in *Tab*s. Also, introduction of lessons and workbooks on a *digital platform*.

Phase 3.2: New Normal (June 21 onwards): Face to face class with a new dimension. *Teachers with a Tab* for Teaching and Data Sharing. *Assessment in Tab* – real time monitoring of students' progress. The Introduction of *Tab Based learning* in the classroom.

Saleh (2020) states that planning and implementation need to be modified to context and changes need to be introduced gradually. Firstly, this lockdown situation has provided an opportunity to bring technology into education and administration. But technology literacy and access have a long way to go in low-resource settings. Secondly, children drop-out is likely to increase in developing nations in the post-Covid-19 situation, due to economic reasons. So adaptability and flexibility to the changing scenario in any model is essential to reduce drop-outs. Finally, building back needs the right balance of investment into capacity, technology, literacy and infrastructure, better assessment and more autonomy to students for learning. Indeed, this disruption in education is likely to be an opportunity to bring more self-learning, better assessment of outcomes and more equity in bringing technology into the classroom.

Acknowledgement

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Community engaged educator for kindness towards farmed animals | George Jacobs

Looking back on the George of my high school days in the 1960s, I and probably everyone else who knew me then would never have predicted that I would grow up to be an activist for anything, let alone farmed animals. I wasn't even into pets. I didn't and still don't have a stereotypical activist personality. I'm mostly an introvert who doesn't like to stand out, and who is shy about disagreeing with others. Second, I know activists for farmed animals who while still in primary school figured out that the delicious meat on their plates used to be animals who just wanted to live their own lives. That wasn't me. Growing up in the U.S., I enjoyed what I now call the SAD (Standard American Diet), consisting of animal-based foods at every meal, from the milk on my Raisin Bran for breakfast to the meatloaf and mashed potatoes with butter for dinner. For my brothers and me, the week's big treat was a visit to McDonald's for burgers and fries, or to a Chinese restaurant for spare ribs. The irony escaped me that from the pigs' perspective, they had no ribs to spare.

At age 28, two things led me to go vegetarian. One, I had a vegetarian cousin, born five days before me. More academically than my cousin's pronouncements and example, I read *Diet for a Small Planet* (Moore Lappe & Collins, 1971). The book focuses on the inefficiency of meat production, e.g., cows need to be fed 17 kgs of plant food to produce just 1 kg of meat. That was talking about my McD's burgers. The authors asked how we could countenance this waste of food when 100s of millions of our fellow humans lacked food, with thousands dying daily? [Note: I wasn't fully aware at the time, but the key cause of World Hunger is not a shortage of food (in fact, humans were and are producing enough food), but the distribution system that allocates food resources to the highest paying customers. That said, meat's inefficiency exacerbates World Hunger.



As a language teacher (mostly in Asia and most EFL/ESL but also English as a first language), I think about the language my students, colleagues, and I use. Just as language plays a role in combating sexism, so too can language counter speciesism, i.e., bias against other species. For example, I avoid anti-animal idioms, such as 'more than one way to skin a cat' or 'kill two birds with a stone.' Instead, I sometimes make up new idioms, such as 'feed two birds with one bowl'. However, unless I'm working with advanced students, my new idiom will probably not be understood, nor will it increase

students' useful vocabularies. A more useful strategy may be to avoid any idiom, such as instead using, 'achieve two goals with the same action' or instead of skinning cats, I could talk about there being 'more than one way to achieve a goal.'

Similarly, just as pronoun use in English has been a focus of the movement against sexism and prejudice against transgender people, with 'they' sometimes used instead of 'generic he' or gendered pronouns (Foertsch & Gernsbacher, 1997; McGlashan, H., & Fitzpatrick, 2018), conflict over pronouns also arises as a sign of human treatment of our fellow animals. For instance, I was involved in a study (Gilquin & Jacobs, 2006) in which we explored whether people use the relative pronoun who with nonhuman animals. Fortunately, my co-author, unlike me, was good at linguistics, especially corpus linguistics. In the study, our data consisted of: (1) what dictionaries, an encyclopedia, grammars, publication manuals, newspapers, and news agencies said and did regarding who; and (2) a 100-million-word collection (corpus) of spoken and written English. We found that opinions and use were divided, with a trend toward use of who when humans felt close to the nonhuman animals being discussed. In the article's conclusion, we advocated greater use of who to express and advocate for kinder human treatment of other Earthlings.

Continuing with this discussion of the politics of language use, sometimes when I publish various works, I have to inform the editors that the who I have used is there intentionally, and I ask, not always successfully, that it remain. This reminds me of the time that I had co-authored a children's book about food and, upon receiving the page proofs, was shocked to see a ham sandwich on the cover. Fortunately, my meat-eating co-author stood by me when I gently suggested that the cover be changed. This was the 1990s, and the editor didn't think a change was worth the bother, until I told her we couldn't have a ham sandwich because I'm Jewish.



There seems to be an overlap between using student-centered, communicative language teaching and being able to integrate content relevant to my concerns about human treatment of other animals. Yes, even if I am using a textbook to lead a fairly rote, teacher-directed grammar lesson, e.g., on the difference between present tense and past tense, I can seed my explanations and exercises with content, such as

1. Yesterday, he _____ (buy) tomatoes.'

2. Rosalita often _____ (enjoy) tomatoes and other veggies with noodles.

However, when the lesson rises above worksheets and rote learning, students have more opportunities to connect their learning to the real world, to maybe even impact that world. One tool I find to be useful in formulating such lessons are the six Environmental Education objectives (UNESCO—UNEP, 1976):

1. *Awareness* of environmental problems.
2. Basic *understanding* of the environment and its problems, and human beings' roles in relation to the environment.
3. An attitude of *concern* for environmental problems.
4. *Skills* needed to overcome environmental problems.
5. *Evaluation* of the quality of proposed solutions to environmental problems.
6. *Participation* in solving environmental problems.

Regardless of whether the issue(s) involved deals with the environment, animals, or whatever, I try to include one or more of the objectives, usually with an eye to eventually include the sixth objective: participation. However, I make it clear to students that they have the freedom to choose the issue, how they will participate or whether they will participate at all.

Once, another Singapore teacher and I joined a team of about 10 Indonesian EFL teachers to prepare a book of what we called EEE (English for Environmental Education) lessons for non-English majors at Indonesia universities (Jacobs, Lie, & Amy, 2006; Lie, Jacobs, & Amy, 2002). All the lessons included some form of participation in environmental protection and a couple also covered animal protection.

We defined actual participation in protecting the environment in three categories:

- a. Educational: Students act to educate peers and others about environmental issues, such as students posting on social media about how taking public transport, walking, or bicycle riding reduces greenhouse gas emissions;
- b. Behavioral: Students themselves take action to help the environment, such as they reduce their consumption of animal-based foods.
- c. Exerting influence: Students can send emails, launch petitions, use social media, etc. to attempt to influence companies, governments, their own schools, etc. to have more environmentally friendly policies.

In regard to participation, I once helped with a study analyzing 17 ESL textbooks for the presence of lessons related to environmental education and Environmental Education Objective 6, participation, in those lessons (Jacobs & Goatly, 2000). This time, my co-author brought with him expertise in critical reading. We found that of the 6,167 activities in the 17 textbooks, 134 (2%) had environmental content, with four of the books containing an entire unit or lesson on environmental issues. As to the UN's 6th environmental education objective, participation in protecting the environment, 76 (57%) of the activities with environmental content were rated as not involving any type of participation on behalf of the environment, three (2%) asked about students' own or classmates' participation, three (2%) questioned students about participation by others besides themselves and their classmates,

22 (16%) asked students to read or listen to accounts of participation by others, eight (6%) involved reading about or listening to someone urge participation, eight (6%) asked students to simulate participation, 12 (9%) called on students to describe how they could or would participate, but only two (1%) asked for actual participation in environmental protection.

Intersectionality (Collins, 2019) looks at how various factors, such as race and class, overlap in society, and how activists in various areas might collaborate. Chen (2012) explained that those with less power tend to be seen as unworthy, less deserving of fair treatment. Activism for animals intersects with so many other areas of activism. For instance, in Singapore, every year since 2009, people have held a Pink Dot event to promote awareness of LGBTQ? issues, and in more recent years, the vegan organization I belong to has participated, and we often give away food to attract people to our booth. One year, at Pink Dot, we handed out big pink cookies.

The welfare of poor and working class people intersects with animal welfare in several ways. First, the CAFOs (Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) where farmed animals, such as chickens (approximately 44 billion chickens are slaughtered annually worldwide, usually before the age of six weeks), are often sited near where low income people live. These CAFOs generate large amounts of air and water pollution, just as other companies locate their polluting factories near low-income neighborhoods. Second, most slaughterhouse jobs are relatively lower paid and dangerous, often taken by migrant workers and refugees (Grabell, 2017). Third, while advocating for avoiding foods from animals fits with advocating for whole (less processed) plant-based foods, a major study in the U.S. (Holben & Marshall, 2017) found that poor people tended to eat fewer fresh fruits and vegetables and more processed foods, such as french fries.



Would second language students rather talk about visiting a beach in some third world country or would they prefer to discuss and perhaps participate in helping children in that country who are dying or having their physical and cognitive growth permanently stunted due to malnutrition, while the food the children so desperately need is fed to animals being raised for meat, eggs, and dairy? Or maybe the two can be combined via eco-tourism, e.g. at one seaside resort in Indonesia which offers vegan dishes, visitors can donate a small amount and spend a morning building sanitation facilities in nearby villages. However, is eco-tourism just greenwashing (Mikono & Hughes, 2020)?

As I'm writing this in mid-2020, I'm 68 years old, and I hope to continue my teaching and activism for many more years. Following a whole food plant-based diet should help me achieve that goal. Fingers crossed. I try a two-hats approach. One hat is as an activist with community organizations. The other hat is as an educator. Sometimes my educator work seems to have little directly to do with my other hat, but I explain to colleagues in both the community organizations and in the education institutions that just as what we teach sends a message, so too does how we teach and how we live our lives.

This link between the what and the how of teaching and living may be best understood as part of an overall paradigm shift in society that is reflected in education (Jacobs & Farrell, 2001). In the emerging paradigm, the emphasis is on bottom-up power, on the importance of context and how the specifics fit into the bigger picture, on the value of diversity, and on cooperation and empathy, rather than on competition. Student centered learning represents a prime manifestation of this paradigm.

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Reflect and participatory approaches online |

Clare Solomon

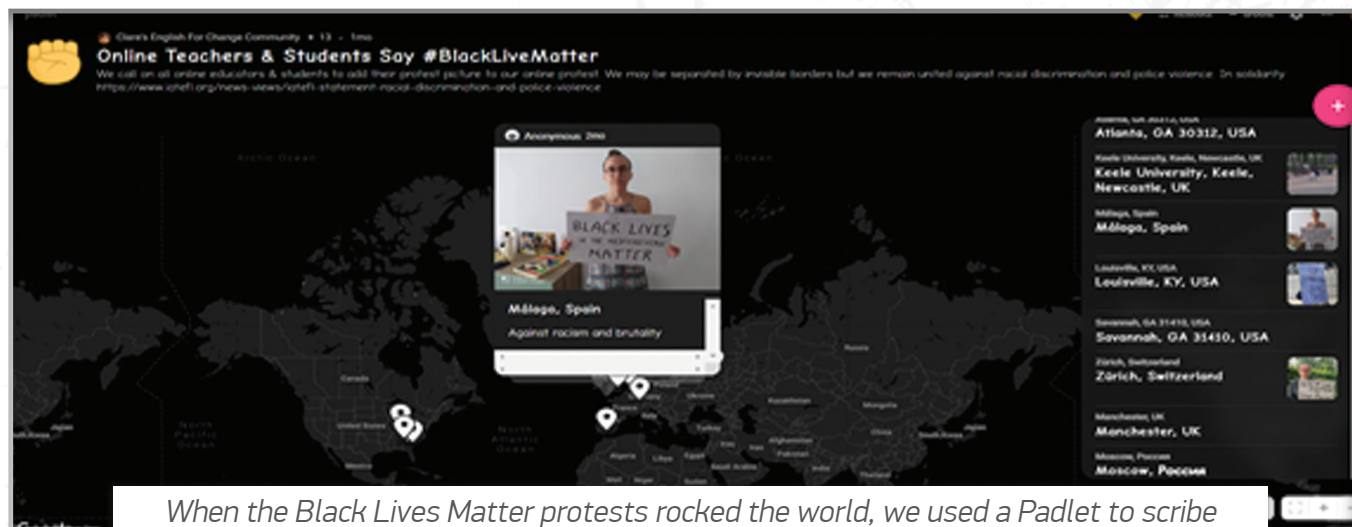
Working as an online English language teacher has brought as many opportunities as it has challenges. With Coronavirus forcing us all to work from home, online teachers didn't really know what to expect; would we all be busier? Would students have more time on their hands or would they be busier due to having to adapt to the new situation? Perhaps they've lost their jobs, or are looking after sick relatives. Children not being at school may also present distractions and further caring responsibilities.

In the UK, the majority of our front-line workers are BME (black and minority ethnic) and migrant workers and have suffered disproportionately from the effects of Coronavirus, perhaps now is not the best time for the additional pressures of studying. Yet, this may be the time they need these additional skills the most? To be able to get what they need in these challenging times...

Almost all the in-person English language schools and programs have had to close, many now facing huge financial difficulties, but many have also been able to adapt their programs to be delivered online.

The current situation has highlighted how important it is for us to campaign for free access to the internet and decent equipment for all.

On the other hand, we have also noticed that online learning can enable students to access education, with many previous barriers now being removed: no transport costs and no travelling to lessons, perhaps no childcare, and we're discovering that learning from home can be a pleasurable experience, once we have the stresses of learning how to use online technologies out of the way. Many people are now familiar with at least one online conferencing system, which has brought a new layer of learners to the online classroom.



As a teacher with a deep desire to help my students make the changes they seek and to also change the world, finding materials with content which brings global issues into the classroom is not always easy. However, the Reflect ESOL materials and the Participatory ESOL training and tools from our friends at English For Action have really helped me teach my students in a different way and give students the opportunity to take some responsibility for their learning, by requiring them to decide on the topics, using the participatory and democratic methods developed by Brazilian educationalist Paulo Freire.

Paulo Freire originally worked with developing adult literacy, and teaching this together with his 'critical pedagogy', and 'conscientizacao', to lead to awareness of social issues and positive action for change. English For Action have been developing a Participatory ESOL approach based on his ideas, and those in Reflect for ESOL. The three suggested phases for learning are: making meaning, going deeper, broadening out.

I began by designing a rough outline for a 3-week 'Be The Change' mini-course for intermediate to advanced level students, which I offered for free to people on Facebook. I ran it twice with two groups of about 10 people.

In the first week, I started the class by introducing the concept of democratic education, some of the principles of power within both society and our educational institutions. Students were asked to type into the Zoom chat function or to offer their thoughts verbally.

I stressed that these lessons were not about learning lots of new vocabulary or grammar, that there would be no verb conjugation drills or translating from L1, although I would expand on a few items in the context of what was being learned. I wanted to encourage them to use the words they already know, to feel more confident in themselves.

This proved to be a bit strange for most of the students, as they have become accustomed to being presented with long lists of vocabulary and idioms to memorise. Indeed, the learners asked for more new vocabulary for the next lesson, so I thanked them for their feedback and created something for the next lesson.

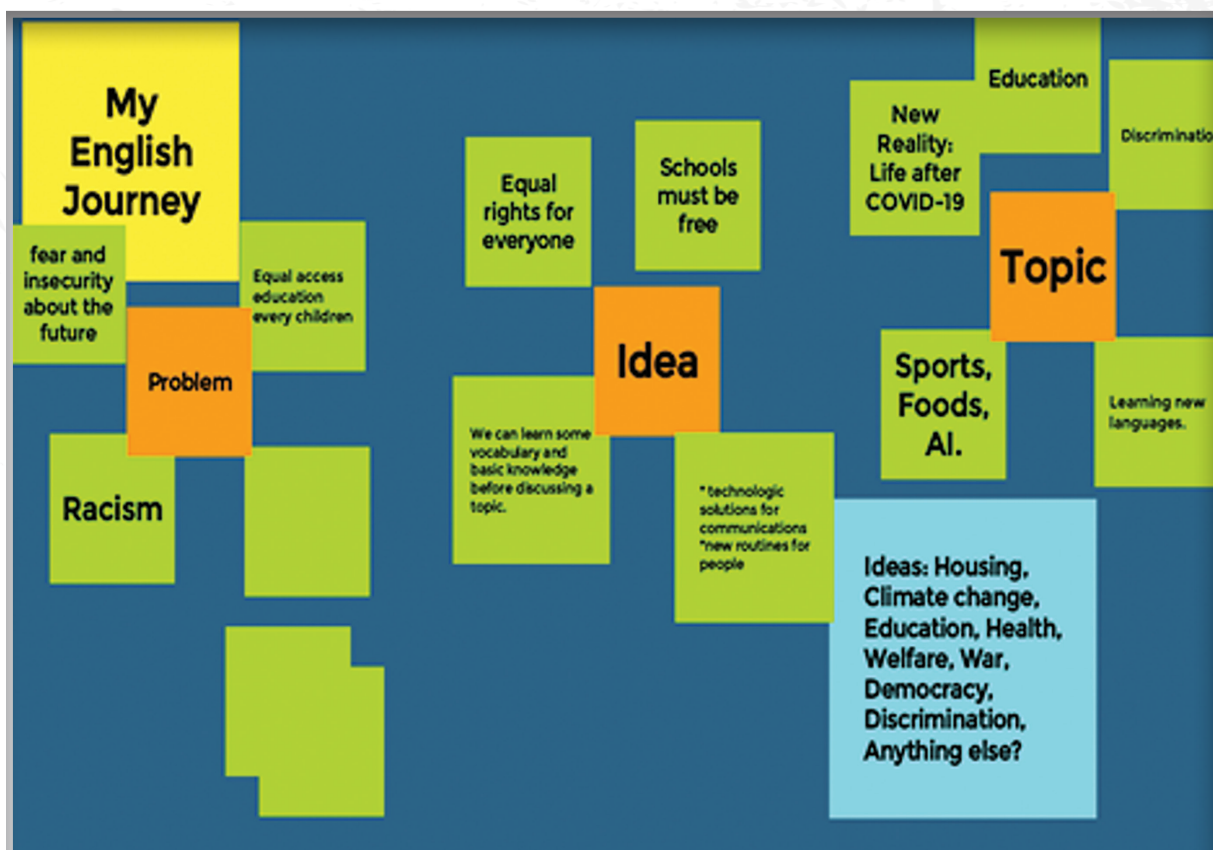
We then debated and decided upon our ground rules: to respect each other's opinions, to recognise power relations, to not speak over each other, to raise our hands to speak, to be punctual and so on.

I then screen-shared the [Picture Pack](#) designed by our friends at English For Action. The topic question was 'How I feel about my English learning journey'.

Each student had to pick one picture that represented how they felt. I found it quite surprising how much they enjoyed talking about their feelings on this topic, and students were encouraged by each other's contributions.

Students were then put into breakout rooms of three, asking them to discuss and decide who would be the facilitator, who would act as a scribe and who would be the spokesperson to relay their

group's thoughts when returning to the main room. They then had to discuss ideas around their English journey and come up with a number of topics to discuss in the next lesson, which they scribed onto a [Jamboard](#).



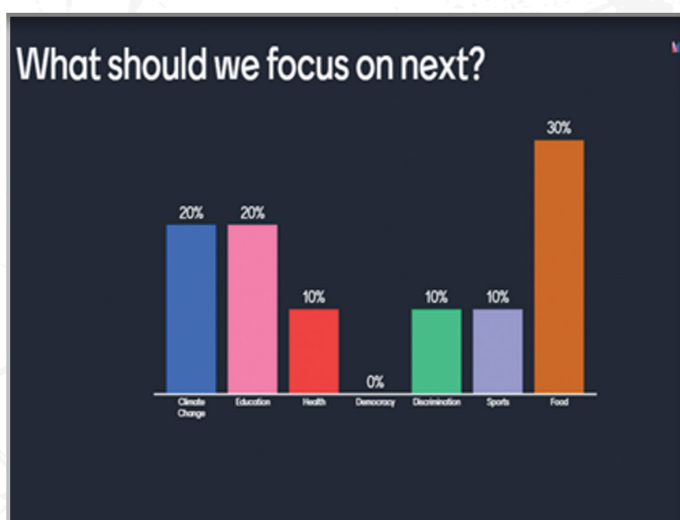
Finally, they voted on which topic they wanted to discuss for the next two lessons, using [Mentimeter](#).

One group democratically decided upon 'food' as the topic, the other chose 'climate change'.

We then brainstormed words and ideas around each topic. For food they came up with these as a starting point for discussion:

- ▶ Food packaging
- ▶ Food waste
- ▶ Different food in different countries
- ▶ Different diets: vegan, vegetarian, meat (any others?)

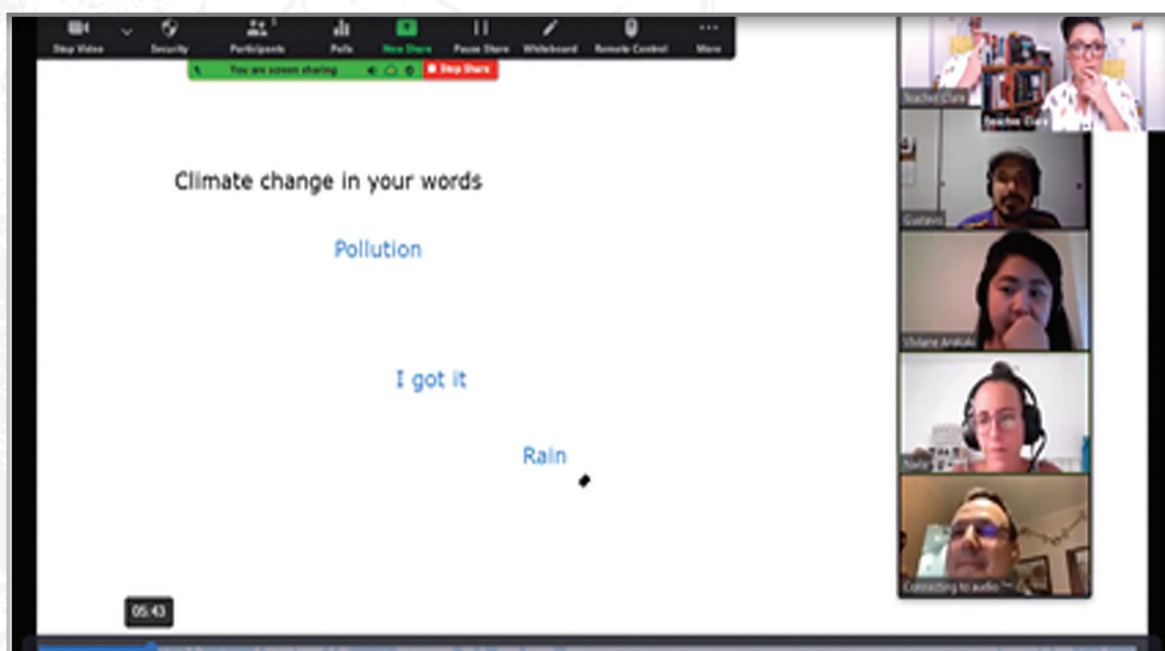
For the following week, we used a few other tools to dive deeper into the topics, and used a Pecha Kucha (a Japanese presentation technique) that I had prepared in advance, to encourage speaking quickly without thinking too much about words. This was challenging but a lot of fun!



With a bit of humour, we noticed that the first-past-the-post method of voting meant that 70% of the group had not voted for food! So we then had a very interesting discussion about democracy, even though none of them had voted to discuss democracy for the following week's topic: they democratically decided on a different method for voting!

Each class ended with lesson evaluation and feedback, which I found really useful, and which demonstrated to the students that they are equally involved in the decisions in class.

Whilst we're still experimenting with different tools and techniques, one thing all 20 of the students have taken away from these lessons has been that together we can collaborate on beautiful projects, debate interesting topics and create the change we seek to make more effectively when we work together.





I'm looking forward to trying out many of the other participatory tools and approaches from the Reflect for ESOL Resource Pack and the Reflection Action Toolbox.

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Toolbox at Reflection Action: http://www.reflectionaction.org/tools_and_methods/



Clare Solomon is a former President of the University of London Union (2010) and co-editor of *Springtime: The New Student Rebellions* (Verso 2011). Clare became an EFL teacher in 2019, teaching intermediate+ adults online, to be able to speak without limits and runs www.facebook.com/EnglishWithClareUK.

Teaching Sustainability: Our responsibility as teachers when teaching English through Environmental Days |

Stefanie Ritch

As busy teachers, we are often relieved to find a series of lessons ready-to-use, complete with teachers' notes. But a lesson on a 'one-off occurrence' also comes with responsibility for individuals. 'Earth Day' is not limited to the 22nd April. Lessons are about allowing students to engage with issues as they arise every day and to be conscious of those issues before crises arise. Another responsibility we have as teachers is checking that the information in that lesson plan is viable and accurate. In the era of fake news and deepfake technology, even with language teaching we have to be careful that the information is appropriately sourced and referenced, and not in any way tampered with. It also has to be appropriate to the class.

By June I was exhausted, having been teaching on Zoom full-time. I was therefore relieved to see the lesson produced on *ELT Sustainable* for children B1 level and above, on World Oceans Day, June 8th. Even better, it was officially World Oceans Week. Let's concentrate on that this week for my 7-9 year-olds (ESL and Bilingual), I thought. It involved predicting and watching short video clips to describe what people are doing using present and past continuous. We then would talk about what you should and shouldn't do to protect oceans, and for homework a nice poster activity to draw the ocean and give advice on how to protect it.

But when it came to the first lesson on a Tuesday morning I realised several things. The kids who had online lessons from their French schools were studying the same topic that same week, in French or in English. It's possible they had been talking about the same things year in year out. In one of my groups I had students showing me copies of National Geographic on the screen, telling me they had been talking to their parents about microplastics. That lesson spontaneously became a show and tell of amazing facts which I then used the next day with a different class. I found a video from ABC Australia which had been produced for World Water Day (22nd March), showing images of toothpaste made with microbeads, and plastic particles falling off a zip-up anorak as it was tossed rapidly around in the washing machine. The kids were fascinated, and perhaps traumatised.

"Does this mean that plastic is like the virus?" asked an 8-year-old Chinese student whose second language is French. "Does this mean we can breathe plastic in the air?"

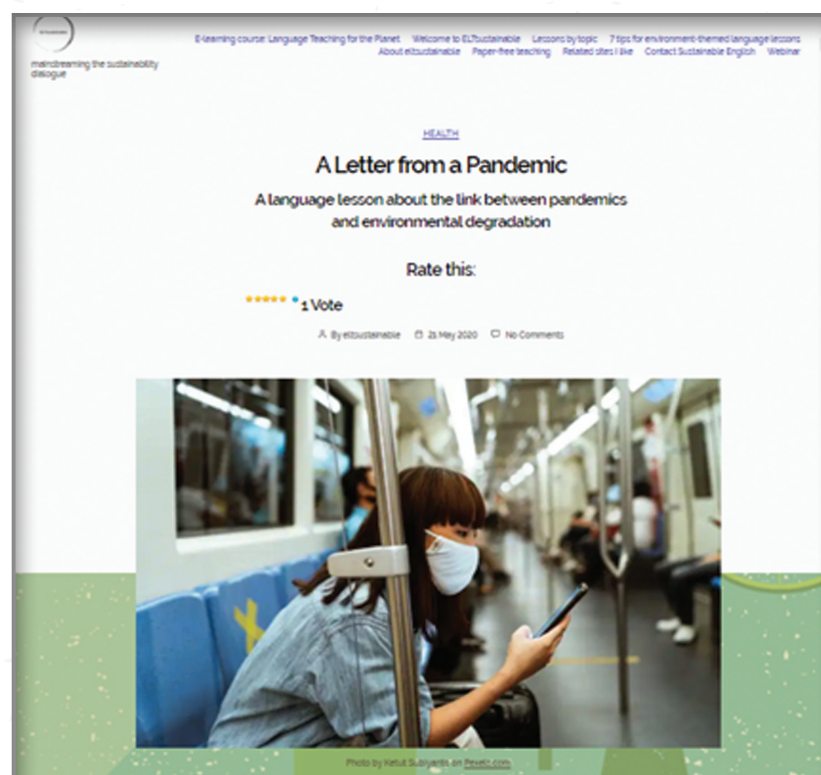
"Well, I hadn't thought about that", I replied. "But you are probably right..."

I think that lesson was memorable for that particular class. If teaching is about the difference we can make in one hour, how can it lead to changes outside the box, without washing over their heads?

France entered lockdown on the 16th March. I had just started a course run by *ELT Sustainable*, *Teaching for the Planet*, and decided to trial a lesson for Earth Hour which takes place globally in late March every year. I talked about it with students in Paris because there are lesson materials

prepared and updated for British Council Learn English Teens. The Eiffel Tower also features as a symbolic icon of our switching off the lights at home for an hour, in a world-wide effort to promote the reduction of our global use of electricity. When talking online with my B2 adult students, many were quite cynical, jokingly saying they wanted to kill me for bringing this up during lockdown. They had heard of World Earth Day, but not Earth Hour. Ironically, more electricity was needed for the Eiffel Tower at 8pm because we were clapping in support of the health service. On the actual night of Earth Hour it didn't turn off at all.

I had sent my adults a rap song, *Man vs Earth* by Prince Ea, to listen to before the lesson. Some commented that the video ended up becoming an advert for his StandForTrees organisation, arguing that enough tree planting is taking place; that trees take hundreds of years until they really make a real difference to saving the planet. This led to good debate and a meaningful conversation about what we should be doing much less of: cutting down trees and educating students about real crime stories, like the Wood Mafia who take away three hectares of forest an hour in Romania. But for the remainder of lockdown I realised that language learning through light-hearted lessons was what my adult students needed in that period.



In a similar vein to some adults' reactions to *Man vs Earth*, I found myself feeling nauseated as I watched the video released by Global Wildlife Conservation and Sea Legacy: *A Letter from the Pandemic#Extinction Ends Here*. For the global pandemic we're going through, the images and voice-over seemed all too sensationalist to me. Upon seeing the responses from friends and relatives and reading comments on YouTube forums however, I decided to use it for a lesson. For 16-year-old French teenagers studying English for their Baccalaureat, their task was

to compose a letter in response to the virus, or to President Macron as others opted for, using key vocabulary and modals from the lesson. The exaggerated sensationalism of the video I feared actually forced a response from students in breakout rooms in deciding what French citizens should do and should have already done to stop future pandemics from happening. This formed an important link to analysis of what makes great public speaking and world leaders who deliver words which lead to action, later transforming their letters into a speech recording. The exercise made them feel important in a context which was both real and suddenly realistic, and important globally.

As a result of the crisis, my timetable changed dramatically from secondary school language EFL students to mixed classes of ESL and bilingual students aged 7 to 9. I created two rounds of six lessons with a focus on storytelling, adapting material from Jamie Keddie's LessonStream and ELT Sustainable, as well as using storybooks: *Bee and Me* for World Bee Day, and the three-minute film clips of *There's a Rangan in my Bedroom*² and *The Gigantic Change*³. The best thing about online teaching was recognising how parents, though not on camera, were following everything the children were learning. Homework was completed 95%, and it was important they completed it in preparation for the next class. By staying at home, parents had the opportunity to speak English with their children and assist with the project-based tasks, as well as initially helping them to type up messages in the Zoom chatbox, recite their presentations on vocaroo.com, or follow the checklist of key phrases and vocabulary from the lesson. As a lot of stories and audiobooks were made available online due to the crisis, including J.K. Rowling's chapter-a-day of *The Ickabog* and illustration competition, many parents said students' reading skills had developed hugely thanks to being at home.

Improvement was also seen in students' writing, as they were able to gradually build their vocabulary and produce more interesting adjectives to talk about a wildlife animal; a character or person who inspired them; and finally they wrote their story about how people worked together in Paris to help in the event of an environmental crisis.

In the last weeks, many students could no longer attend virtual classes as they had to go back to school. We traced the journey of a cotton t-shirt from the dried up Aral Sea to the new price of a pair of cotton socks in their local supermarket. Students liked talking and presenting on environmental themes, such as testing which toilet paper dissolves quickest in water, or ways in which they remind their parents to reduce electricity, water or the need to buy plastic. Many had talked about recycling projects they were involved with at school, so it was advantageous to see the eco-friendly response across France.

With a culture of eating locally, France has a network of farmers' markets as well as organic food stores where it is easier for the shopper to bring their own packaging, and keep food miles low. The elections which were moved to the 26th June because of the March lockdown hopefully signal a change in mindset as France's *Europe Ecologie les Verts* have taken on new prominence in five major French cities. This is also the country where only months prior to lockdown there were nation-wide protests and strikes in response to a fuel tax rise. Sustainability for many is synonymous with those who can afford to be 'environmentalist'. As we enter the conversation about what is to be the 'new normal' in education with social distancing and paperless teaching, we should be asking ourselves how to get back to a 'new normal' economic lifestyle - without pulling the environment back to how it was before lockdown.

1. *Bee and Me*, Elle J. McGuiness, Accord Publishing 2014.

2. Greenpeace 'There's a Rangan in my Bedroom', a film narrated by Emma Thompson. 2018.

3. Extinction Rebellion 'The Gigantic Change', a film narrated by Whoopi Goldberg. 2020.

As it is, the rise of single-use plastic was a response to people's need for comfort with their six-pack of bottled water at home and rise in food deliveries. In Paris and elsewhere we question peoples' education and responsibility when we see the hygiene and environmental risks of discarded masks and gloves polluting the pavements. Upcycling, recycling and reusing is fun for arts and crafts in language teaching, but my question is: how do we go beyond recycling?

As teachers, we have been trained to create materials which meet different students' needs through visual, kinaesthetic stimulation and colourful cards to share between pairs and groups. We have been encouraged to get away from writing on a board and asking students to copy things down. And now as we have progressed from the classroom to teaching online we must also now question the sustainability of the heat produced from the internet and which is heating up the atmosphere. Maybe now really is the time to start reinventing the wheel.

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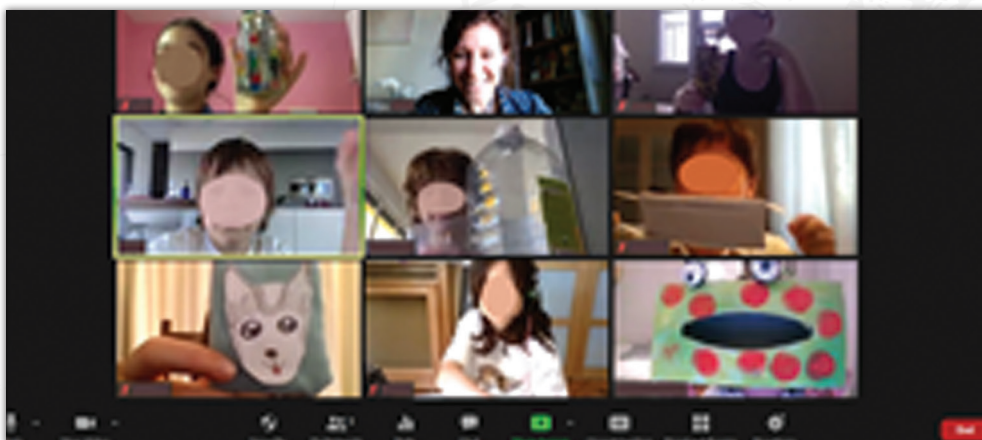
<https://eltsustainable.com/2020/05/21/a-letter-from-a-pandemic/>

<https://eltsustainable.com/category/dates-and-occasions/world-oceans-day-7th-june/>

Learn English Teens: <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/read-uk/earth-hour>

Wood Mafia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64OGY8SLztk>

Man vs Earth with call for support for Standfortrees.org: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VrzbRZn5Ed4>



Stefanie Ritch teaches English in Paris, while trying to give her students an interest in the arts and the environment

One step towards becoming responsible global citizens - or how I made my students read the news in eight months

| Rita Divéki

Four years ago, as a 25-year-old recent graduate, I was over the moon when I got my first teaching positions at two universities. I could not wait to start teaching and hopefully make some positive change.

In this first year, I had three language practice groups in parallel, and apart from developing students' overall language proficiency (from B2 to C1) in a year, I had to prepare them for their end-of-year exam. I was quite free to supplement the coursebook to prepare them for the oral component of their exam. I think I managed to make my lessons quite interesting dealing with various topics, but I will never forget my first lessons on the topic of the *news*.

I remember my initial shock after asking my students whether they follow the news or not. It would have been a big yes for me, having been quite a conscious and well-informed teenager... and I was not that much older than them. Nevertheless, there were quite a few students who said that they were simply not interested in the news or in what is going on around them. I heard way too many instances of *I don't know, I don't care, and I don't have an opinion* during the semester to know that I needed to do something.



So, the next year, I started my PhD in Language Pedagogy at ELTE in Budapest. I set out to read academic articles on some current issues in Hungary, like Hungarian youngsters' apathy about politics and their unwillingness to participate in public affairs, which is mostly the cause of low turnout rates in our national elections (Gáti, 2010; Integrity Lab, 2016). In 2018, only 69% of people entitled to vote cast their vote, and a quarter of those who abstained were under the age of 29, which clearly shows the passivity of the younger generation

(Boros & Laki, 2018). I must add that teachers are also strongly advised not to talk about politics or current public affairs in their lessons, so students are not required to talk about current issues in class either. Thus, what happens quite frequently is that students finish high school without ever being made to express their opinion on public affairs.

I started to ponder what to do as I could very easily relate to this phenomenon. Fortunately, I found some articles on *global citizenship* and *global competence development*, and after reading the definition of the latter, I immediately knew that I had found something to remedy this situation, my research topic and a new perspective to incorporate into my lessons: 'Global competence is the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures, and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development'

(PISA, 2017). I mean, who would not want to be surrounded by young people capable of all these things?

So, from 2017 on, I vowed to incorporate the global perspective into as many lessons as possible and it is not as difficult as I thought at the beginning. As I get a new group every semester, it is always a bit challenging at first. I hear those horrid phrases I mentioned earlier way too often, but the students usually come around by the end of the term.

I need to get them interested first. Having suffered through high school in Hungary (in a quite prestigious rural high school), I perceived that the problem lies in the fact that here, we still tend to emphasize rote learning very much and repress (or kill) students' creativity and natural curiosity. Many students are still passive recipients of knowledge, and they are not expected to think about the material too much. In most cases, it is perfectly okay to regurgitate whatever the teacher taught them in the previous lesson. Briefly, no critical thinking is expected of the students. This is what I saw in high school 11 years ago... and unfortunately, year after year, this is what my first year university students tell me when it comes to the topic of education and we talk about how we should reform secondary education in Hungary.



First, it is always very difficult to make them think and mostly to express their opinion. So how do they open up? We do lots of activities in which they are (kindly) forced to do this. I found opinion line activities and four corner activities very useful in doing this in a way that everyone has to take a stand at least kinaesthetically, and they can choose whether they would like to do so verbally. They also need to participate in some debates,

mostly in pairs and in small groups, and here, preparation time turned out to be essential in making my students more prepared and more confident. Also, I think that the atmosphere in the class is of the utmost importance, so I do my best to create a safe place for them – there are many playful activities to help them to get to know each other, they are encouraged to listen to each other and still, they are challenged – I would like to believe – just the right amount.

Personalising these heavier topics also helps a lot. Any time I announce that the lesson will revolve around politics, I can feel that the energy levels change, as if the word politics implies boredom. However, they usually get excited when they realise that we are not talking about forms of government or party politics, but we examine how politics affects their daily lives and the things they care about. We have debates on whether politicians should have some experience outside politics, or whether

it should be compulsory to vote. They also love imagining what they would do as politicians should they have the power to change something in Hungary. They usually use this opportunity to show that they have read the news, as they usually mention issues like: raising health care workers' and teachers' salaries, rebuilding hospitals and schools, eliminating corruption, lowering accommodation costs, and restoring democracy and free press.



One reason for not reading the news strikes me every year – and it is not about finding articles boring. Many students told me that the news makes them feel down and they just do not want more negativity in their lives. Being an anxious person myself, I could completely relate to their experience, so I designed a [class](#) for them on coping with bad news and on the [Happy Broadcast project](#), which aims at presenting only positive news to its readers. We did the latter in the midst of the COVID-19 situation and I was happy to see that their attitudes towards the news changed a lot.

Nevertheless, my attitude has also softened over these years. Of course, I want them to be interested in everything and open their eyes immediately, but even if I do my best, a semester (or two) is not always enough to effect change. So, I let them decide on some of the topics they would like to discuss, as I think it is essential to make them interested in the issues first. They need to create a joint presentation on a controversial current issue, presenting both sides of the argument by researching the issue (by reading articles, watching talks and news excerpts).

First, we learn how to discuss hot button topics in a mature way, how to present hot topics, how to avoid bias, how to check the sources and how to give a memorable presentation. Then, week by week, they present their chosen issues, such as legalising gay marriage and allowing LGBTQ+ couples to adopt children, legalising marijuana, bullying, transgender rights, abortion, gender inequality and wealth inequality. The presenters come up with their own discussion questions and we have civilised discussions and debates on these hot topics. And they do choose issues that are quite controversial at the moment in this country. In the polarised political climate we have here in Hungary, it is risky to open a can of worms (especially after a public call made by a youth organisation close to the

governing party to report politically active teachers), but I feel responsible for their education and for creating a place where it is safe to discuss important societal issues. When we delve into these issues, I also feel a bit of unease, but it energises me, and I know that great learning comes when we are outside our comfort zones, experiencing a bit of discomfort. I think they also sense that. This is one of my favourite projects during the semester, as I know that this approach is relatively safe, the students research important topics, learn about both sides of the argument, and learn to accept each other's views.

Non-binary

- a spectrum of gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine
- Identities outside the gender binary
- Falls under the transgender umbrella
- Not associated with gender expression
- Gender neutral pronouns
 - Singular they/them
 - We, instead of He, or She.



Transgender People and Discrimination

Transphobia is the act of mistreating a person emotionally, physically, sexually, or verbally because they are transgender.

- Often occurs due to **homophobia** or **biphobia**
- In many places, not legally protected from discrimination
- 41% of transgender people have attempted suicide



Pronouns

- English **gendered language**
- In third person, pronouns have a gender implied
- Assumptions based on appearance, name, not always accurate
- **potentially harmful**
- Using someone's correct pronoun: way to show respect
- If you're unsure: **ASK THEM!**



Sources used

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Discussion questions

1. Have you ever encountered a situation in which you did not know another person's gender? If so, what was this like for you? What internal reactions did you have?
2. Should gender identity education be taught in schools?

I do not think that there is a magic recipe to nurture responsible global citizens, though I do believe that the atmosphere you create helps a lot and listening to students attentively and openly is key. Taking a global perspective into a lesson by emphasising learning about the world and brainstorming and researching what students could do about some local and global problems does not require special training for teachers. I believe, however, considering oneself a global citizen and a global-minded teacher and being brave when it comes to topic choice, certainly helps.

I would like to close with a piece of feedback I received from a student, after dealing with the Happy Broadcast, which really gave me some strength during a quite burdensome Spring 2020:

“Every time you give us a task it's never just about vocab, you always add the element of learning about the world. Through your tasks I got to know many people and websites that made my life better. From political issues to environmental problems everything is connected, and the tasks help to recognise the matrix of information.”

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Rita's ELT Jukebox - <https://ritaseltjukebox.wixsite.com/index>

Global Competence Development in ELT - <https://gcdinelt.wixsite.com/mysite>



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'I've got an eco idea' - working with children creatively on environmental issues | Sylwia Zabor-Zakowska

"Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed." - Mahatma Gandhi

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." - Nelson Mandela

We owe our lives to Mother Earth. We live thanks to water, food and oxygen. We have homes, clothes, furniture, tools. Everything in our surroundings comes from the planet. At the same time we - the people - seeking comfort, exploit and destroy our own Mother Earth in an unstoppable way. What's more, sharing our home with other living creatures – animals, who we lack respect for - we devastate their habitats and kill them in order to exploit more and more.

What has the philosophy of materialism of Western civilization that rules the world brought us? Are we happier and healthier? Can we survive heading in this direction? How about our future and our children's future?

Our lives are threatened as a result of human action that has taken place in recent decades. In the worldwide discourse on education the urgent need for change is raised as one of the most important issues. Twenty-first century skills have been formulated. Recently more attention has been paid to critical thinking and 'Global Goals' (GG). Sometimes, in educational materials on GG for teachers, doubts appear - whether we should bring such heavy problems into a young learners' English classroom. Maybe it is too much of a burden for them.

Janusz Korczak - a Polish Jewish educator, pedagogue, children's author, and doctor, who committed his whole life to his work with children and set humanistic foundations of today's pedagogy said: 'There are no children, there are people.' In fact, children are people: sensitive, caring, loving, acting and thinking.

I personally have no hesitations that we - English teachers - should deal with environmental issues in young learners' English classrooms. It is our responsibility to pass basic and important knowledge to them so that they have enough time to develop habits that will prevent further destruction of the earth and will provide them with lives in sustainable environments.

Moreover, most children have innate, enormous capability for doing good: care, attention, tolerance, empathy, friendliness and love. They wish to do good deeds and to be good humans. Their personalities and souls thrive when they take care of their beloved pets, comfort their friends in need or say: 'I love you' to those closest to them. Children have the same attitude towards nature - Mother Earth - if we only let it grow.

It is only a matter of methodology that should be adapted to their developmental stage, should appeal to their interest and engage their senses, mind and body. My 20 years of teaching experience has shown that creativity is unbeatable to trigger children's interest and actions. When it comes to teaching a language, I have witnessed how whenever young learners create what they learn in

English with their own hands, their long-term memory is triggered. When I started working with this method I was immensely surprised with the results. Children remembered all the language we learnt this way. There was almost no need to repeat the vocabulary and language chunks. It was my great discovery and since that time I have developed and worked with this method.

I have taught these English classes throughout the school year in kindergartens and primary schools in Warsaw in Poland for more than 15 years. Earlier I used to teach regular English classes in a high school.

I made a decision to work in education, for the good of society, as my response to the carelessness of politicians I had observed with sorrow. I come from Poland, a country with a very long and complicated history, a country that I love mainly for its culture, people and nature. It is mainly thanks to enlightened, critically thinking Poles that the Polish society is developing now at a high speed. It is mainly active citizens who take action against climate change. In a few words I will describe the historical background that has influenced the current socio-political situation in Poland and the Polish curriculum as far as Global Goals are concerned.

According to Professor Norman Davies, a leading English historian of Welsh descent, who wrote the first history of Poland - 'God's playground' - Polish culture is one the richest and most original in the world. Nevertheless, Poland has a harsh and tragic history.

From 1772, when the first partition of Poland took place, to 1989, when the communist rule was ended at the helm of Lech Wałęsa, who then served as the first democratically-elected President of Poland and became Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Poland had a constant struggle to exist. The country survived three partitions, the two World Wars and the communist regime. The purge of Polish intelligentsia during World War II and the communist system among other factors have inevitably resulted in today's problems. Nowadays, after thirty-one years of democracy and after 16 years of being a member of the European Union, Polish society is divided in half: one half supports the President and the other half supports the liberal Civic Platform.

Global education has been part of the Polish curriculum for 20 years. For preschool and early school education the guidelines are formulated in such a way that let us introduce many aspects of global goals and ecology. There are foundations and organizations that deal with ecological and global education for these first stages of education. It also depends on each school how they introduce ecological awareness and other Global Goals into their teaching.

From the fourth grade more and more directives referring to GGs are introduced. They should be taught in an interdisciplinary manner linking different subjects.

To sum up, Polish citizens are becoming more aware and more active very quickly. It has become even fashionable in certain groups of society to live a healthy lifestyle, to act for animals' rights, to fight for the sake of the planet. There is a strong lobby of popular actors, musicians and other famous people who call for and promote these values.

In this article I will present a few simplified examples of creative English classes for young learners the aim of which, apart from teaching English, is to make children take action to protect the environment: use less plastic and paper. Using recyclables and natural materials, children make toys to play with at home. They also work on bigger, group projects developing their collaborative skills from a very young age.

'I've got an eco idea' - English classes with preschool children aged 3 - 6

We use:

Plastic: plastic bags, plastic bottles and tops, dairy tubs, candy wrappers, different kinds of foil, pasta bags.

Paper: food cardboard packages e.g rice, groats, tea boxes, used newspapers and magazines, used shoe and other boxes, cardboard and other types of used packaging paper.

Natural materials: twigs, leaves, stones, peas, beans, nuts, grain, linen or cotton string.

Others: skewers, ribbon, wire, fabric, felt, wool.

What we also need is: glue, scissors, crayons, brushes, paint, plasticine. In low resource environments you can make glue from flour, paint from spices and clay from flour, salt and water.

The language you teach:

'I've got an eco idea' English classes lets you teach vast areas of the language. With the youngest (aged 3-4) children listen, understand and speak. With older ones (5-6) you can introduce a little bit of global reading just to get used to 'seeing' the language.

You can teach:

- ▶ *Action verbs* in present continuous tense in a very natural way: I'm cutting, you're gluing, she's drawing, he's painting, we're creating, we're working together - children learn how to say what they are doing.
- ▶ *Nouns of the materials and tools they use*: I'm using: scissors, glue, paper, cardboard, ribbon, foil, fabric, a box, crayons, string
- ▶ *Material nouns and 'be made of' structure in singular and plural*: Newspapers and magazines are made of paper. This bottle is made of plastic. Scissors are made of plastic and metal. The brush is made of wood, metal and pigs' hair.
- ▶ *Classroom language*: Can I have some paper, please? Yes, of course. Here you are. Thank you. I need more skewers. Can I go to the toilet?
- ▶ *You can teach whatever language you need*: Animals, body parts, toys, nature, weather, food, classroom furniture, clothes, family members

Global Goals you deal with: Numbers 3, 12, 13, 14, 15

Teaching and developing creativity:

Creativity is thinking. The most important thing is letting children think as much as possible. Before making any toy, show children the materials you have and ask them how to make a musical penguin, a yo-yo, a playground or a caterpillar (these are example toys shown below). Don't present them with step by step instructions as the class would teach them how to copy things but let children discover the ways how to transform simple materials into 3D toys, which means finding solutions to set problems on their own. This is the best thing you can do for them - let them think by themselves, experience and discover. Interfere in their thinking process as little as possible.

Last but not least, what is essential is the atmosphere of joy. It helps creativity thrive to a great extent.

Example class: plastic bottle musical penguins

You need: plastic bottles, peas, beans or some grain, spare fabric or used magazines, scissors, glue, optionally: paint and brush.

Language focus: A penguin, a body, eyes, a beak, flippers, let's play music.

Chant:

Penguins can swim,

Penguins can dive.

But they can't fly.

They are beautiful.

They are white and black.

I call my penguin musical Jack (duck, attack, sack, knack)

While dealing with plastic there is a need to make children aware of the fact that plastic comes from inside the Earth and is produced from oil. It is also important to teach them what problems such a massive usage of plastic causes: an enormous amount of plastic waste and pollution leading to the death of animals, the invisible presence of microplastic in food and water and its danger to human health, greenhouse gas emissions and its effects on the climate such as global warming and melting glaciers. You can talk about it a little bit each time you do the 'plastic class'. It's good to use visuals so that children see with their own eyes what you are really discussing. You can use the [National Geographic Kids](#) website or my lesson plan '[Animals-Our Friends](#)' (published in HLT in April 2020), that can also help you expand the subject and find ideas.

Let children think and reflect on how many plastic objects everybody uses every day. Together decide what is a complete waste and how you can reduce plastic usage in your everyday lives. Make your young learners aware how much they help all living creatures, including themselves, by refusing to

use plastic. When making a penguin, talk about the present situation in Antarctica and the threat to penguins and other species that depend on ice. To illustrate the process of glaciers melting you can show this [video](#).

Make toys out of recyclable plastic. Not only do children develop their creativity and spatial imagination, but also experience the fact that they can design and make something out of nothing. They will buy fewer plastic toys. This penguin can make music — it is a rattle. The chant I wrote has a rhythm which you can find and 'rap' with the musical penguins.

The need to protect trees is another big issue to make children take action. Make young learners aware that paper is produced from trees and discuss what trees give people and animals: oxygen, wood to make furniture, houses and different useful objects, homes to various species of animals and insects. What's of the utmost importance is the fact that natural forests are essential and irreplaceable to keep balance on Earth and to preserve life. Children should also learn that precious rainforests are destroyed to obtain oil. You can see more examples of toys that you can make with children from plastic or paper [here](#) and [here](#).

When you start working creatively, which is often an alternative way to the constrained school system, discipline problems may appear. This happens due to the fact that children are allowed to express their own ideas they are full of, which releases lots of positive emotions and energy. It might be quite difficult to manage the classroom and you need to find the right balance between 'letting it go' and classroom rules and ordering your workshops. Children need a few classes to get used to a new method of working.

These classes need students to collect litter. You need some space to store clean garbage. When children start to collect litter they tend to make a mess and parents might complain about that. You need to find a practical solution, e.g. one big box or a rack to keep all the stuff in an acceptable order.

When it comes to the results of my English classes I can truly say my learners become responsible global citizens who are aware of the need to take care of the planet and take action against the earth's destruction in their everyday lives.

Young learners start taking notice of different forms of plastic and paper in their homes, they start thinking creatively what they can make out of them and they create in their free time at home. Sometimes they bring their 'productions' to the classes, sometimes their parents send photos of their children's creations like the cupboard made by a seven-year-old girl below.

I always encourage children to come up with their own ideas about what to make next. They respond to such encouragement very well and after several classes they give many different suggestions.

Quite often my students successfully take part in creative environmental contests organized by schools. From time to time somebody gets an award.

The teenagers I teach treat environmental awareness as an imperative. They recycle the waste, use fabric shopping bags, don't waste paper and stop buying bottled water.

The results also demonstrate students' creativity and the acquisition of English. Many of my students develop their fascination towards creativity and languages (sometimes more than just English). One of them, 14-year-old Karol, is keen on designing. One month ago he designed a vacuum-cleaner. The two most important features of it are:

- ▶ its minimalistic aesthetics as a response to a surrounding overflow of stuff
- ▶ its long-lasting endurance (used for at least 10 years, not to be thrown away at a dump after two or three years)

Older students I used to teach are now active citizens. They take part in many protests. Protests in Poland against destroying nature have taken place frequently since 2015, when PiS started to rule the country.

What I would like to stress here is the necessity of cooperating to reach such goals. The best results take place when the whole community works towards the same objective: kindergartens, schools and parents.

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Drama without borders | Efi Tzouri

Nowadays, more and more people are forcibly displaced and must seek shelter in other countries. Living in this turbulent world it is vital to reform the way we teach by turning our classrooms into safe spaces that are ready to welcome multicultural voices and cater for the diverse needs of our learners.

The summer of 2015 was seen as the start of the so-called refugee crisis, when refugees, mainly from the Middle East, Asia and Africa, sought access to Europe through Greece. This was when one of the first camps was created in Idomeni (Northern Greece) as well as the camps on the islands of Lesbos and Kos. Then, the following year, borders were closed and thousands of families were stuck in Greece. Asylum seekers would have to wait more than two years for their application to be approved.

Currently, at least in the area of Northern Greece, there are six large camps which host refugees from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Algeria, Afghanistan and Lebanon. One of the biggest camps in the area is in Serres, my hometown. It hosts around 1,000 of the Yazidi population, a Kurdish religious minority from Iraq, Syria and Iran. Independent NGOs like *Lifting Hands International* in Serres and *We are Here* in Nea Kavala, have been volunteering in the area for almost four years now and have created educational spaces both for adults and children. The Greek government set up refugee reception classes in public schools in 2017 when, according to UNHCR, 'the influx began increasing again, when the government began taking over full responsibility for Greece's refugee response.'



Volunteers teaching groups of refugees from the Serres camp under trees in the park.



Lifting Hands, Educational Space in Serres camp, Northern Greece, and drama with Greek, Iraqi and Roma students in Serres.

My article is based on my personal experience working with primary refugee learners in Greece and it is mainly focused on methodologies and teaching techniques that can be used in a refugee or migrant education programme, in order to give children the opportunity to express their feelings in the context of a safe classroom environment.

First and foremost, what is essential is to design a lesson with sensitivity and consideration. We should always give the opportunity to learners to use the language they have been learning through interaction and group work and value learners' experiences in the classroom. It is most effective to design tasks that follow simple instructions, introduce one thing at a time and involve a lot of practice either through repetition (especially for younger learners) or through role play and communicative activities. Also, it is very important to provide help and support when it is needed, to make sure that everyone is engaged in the activities and participates easily and naturally in communication.

Drama activities aim at fostering self-expression and self-awareness by providing the opportunity to the young refugee learners to introduce themselves to the classroom, to talk about their preferences and to create space for feeling and openness. Additionally, a bridge between personal and school life can be built, establishing a safe environment for teaching.

My desire to apply drama techniques in the English language classroom was a springboard for the idea to turn a typical learning process into a drama workshop, where my students would have the opportunity to be exposed to authentic context, and would feel more relaxed to express their thoughts and feelings through a combination of language and body movement. What I needed was a fundamental theory which would support this kind of practice and which would justify in the eyes of the language school owner I was working for that my teaching approach was going to be effective.

I had been acquainted with Augusto Boal's theories and ideas since my studies on Experimental Theatre and it was just then when I recalled his words: 'Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it.' (Boal, 1993). This memory was the stimulus to start further research into Boal's theatrical analysis and techniques. Founder of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*, he strongly supported the opinion that theatre is a 'force for change' (Boal, p.27), it fosters cooperation, dialogue and interaction among the participants and it is 'about acting rather than talking, questioning rather than giving answers, analyzing rather than accepting.' (Boal, p.27).

Augusto Boal's theories were deeply influenced by Paulo Freire's fundamental ideas on *Critical Pedagogy*. Freire introduced the word *praxis* to describe action in the educational process and his belief was that 'knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.' (Freire, 1996). His main concept lies in the radical notion that 'education is a practice of freedom' (Freire, p.27). For Freire, education raises consciousness and brings about empowerment and social justice. What learners should do is to respond to this challenge 'and gradually they come to regard themselves as committed.' (Freire, p.27).

After taking all these steps, I was able to support the notion that drama not only is considered to be an innovative teaching technique, but also enhances critical awareness and empowerment.

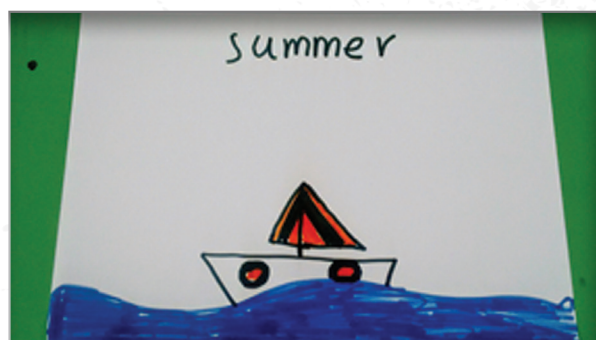
Referring to multilingual speakers, Janks (2010) talks about the decisions and choices that should be made as far as the grammar and structure of language is concerned. These selections create a meaning that is not separated from context. According to Janks, critical questions are raised on how and under what circumstances these choices are made and to what extent they 'are shaped by the ways of speaking, writing, believing, doing and valuing of the communities we live in' (Janks, p.46).

It is not only learners' behavior and qualities that determine the principles of a language activity. It is the attitude of the teacher that plays a significant role as well. Paraphrasing Pennycook in his study, Okazaki says that 'teachers need to engage with students at the level of investment in beliefs, desire, and identity' (Okazaki, 2005). Furthermore, Kabilan argues that teachers should not ignore the 'individuality of their students' and they should 'understand and appreciate the learners' own unique experiences, and concepts, notions and views of the world' (Creative and Critical Thinking in Language Classrooms, (n.d.)).

Putting theory into practice, drama activities based on improvisation techniques suggested by Augusto Boal in his book *Games for actors and non-actors* (1992) are selected as examples which will help the teacher to design a language lesson based on drama techniques. Here, Langston Hughes' poems *Snail*, *Dreams* and *Long Trip* have been selected as a source of inspiration.

► First of all, students should feel relaxed and ready to act. In order to put them in a relaxed mood we may ask them to close their eyes, to take some diaphragmatic breaths, to stretch their body arms and legs and make their head and their shoulders become loose.

► The first activity is called *Frozen Image*. Any text, poem or motto can work as a stimulus for this exercise. Participants are given a single word, *fly* or *dream* for example, and are asked to respond physically; to create a frozen image using their whole body. The teacher can use images as prompts in order to aid understanding and make lessons more inclusive.



► The next activity is called *Machine of rhythms*. The aim of this exercise is to reveal inner rhythms. It is a call for self-expression and body movement. The teacher can encourage the students to form groups, choose a line from the poems, for example 'weather and rose', and ask them to articulate the phrase by keeping a rhythm and decide how they would prefer to change the pace – making it slower or faster. Again, images can help students understand better and work on sound combinations in English.

► During the next stage students work in groups again and develop their *machine of rhythms* further. They could form a storyline with their voices and bodies using words or phrases from the lines.

The aim is to create three moving images: the past, the present and the future of a story, and they are asked to form a rhythmic sound combined with body movement which will work as a transition from one situation to another.

To conclude, if I was asked to select words in order to describe drama activities I would choose words like feelings, social justice, empowerment, freedom, diversity, judgement, experience, engagement, desire, awareness and resistance to oppression. Given the current situation of refugee learners, it is of great importance to address their needs and to explore ways of helping them become engaged and feel motivated during the learning process. Designing drama activities for children in multicultural classrooms not only 'encourages them to connect new information and skills to their background knowledge' (Cummins & Early, p.4) but also 'affirms students' identities as intelligent, imaginative and linguistically talented' (Cummins & Early, p.4).

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Human rights education: education of the heart |

Maria Vlachopoulou

It was 2014. That year I was teaching in a little village, near Amyntaio, West Macedonia, Greece. The classes were small, 5-10 students each. The interest in English was really low. The students had enough difficulties with L1 subjects already. I think this must have been one of my most difficult years. Struggling to motivate them without really succeeding. I thought and thought and decided I didn't want to spend my life teaching useless

grammar rules that few students cared for. I had to find something useful for their lives. After all, I am both an educator and a language teacher, so I could use the language as a means of making them aware of global issues!



I started searching for materials and in 2015 I managed to have what I would call 'awareness days'⁽¹⁾ taught throughout the school year with my 5th and 6th graders. I had *Safer Internet Day*⁽²⁾ in February, Day against Racism and Day against Bullying in March, Earth Day in April and later on I added *Universal Children's Day*⁽³⁾ in November. The students were excited and so was I.

On these special days we shared our knowledge of the world and learnt ways to become better citizens of the world. I also did something really bold with my 4th graders. I used 'Color It Rights', a book with pictures, each one representing an article of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* to teach them children's rights. They coloured them, learnt them in Greek and in English, and we participated in the end-of-the-year school performance against racism, with students presenting the rights in English and in Greek, while displaying their coloured pages to the audience. They also sang and danced to the children's song 'The more we get together'.



Universal Children's Day Poster

In 2016 I planned a project with my 5th graders for the Teachers4Europe programme. The title was ‘*Human Rights-Refugee Rights-Solidarity*’⁽⁴⁾ and we came second among many schools in West Macedonia. During the project we learnt about the basic aims and values of the European Union and discussed Europe’s policy towards refugees. It was very clear that a common policy towards refugees was essential at the time, since different European countries developed different strategies. The children learnt through playing, exchanged cards with other European countries, watched videos on human rights, did activities from *Compasito* and created digital posters. They also played an online simulation video game by UNHCR, called ‘Against all Odds’, in which students took on the role of a refugee and had to go through twelve stages from leaving the native country to seeking asylum in a new country. They created a [Padlet](#) with their advice to the European countries concerning the refugee crisis. Finally they had to do a drawing activity, with the title “[We draw our dreams](#)” based on the video ‘draw a dream’.

But what I consider to be the greatest achievement of this project is a collection of my students’ poems called ‘[I am a refugee calling out for rights](#)’. The poems were based on the poem ‘I am’, written by a 12-year-old refugee who won a poetry competition in Canada. The collection was also posted by Shelly Sanchez Terrell on her [website](#) in July 2016. [Here](#) is the worksheet they had to complete. For the [final presentation](#) the students made cards with messages for the refugees and also coloured paper boats which they threw in the air at the end of the presentation.



Final presentation, T4E, Florina 2016,

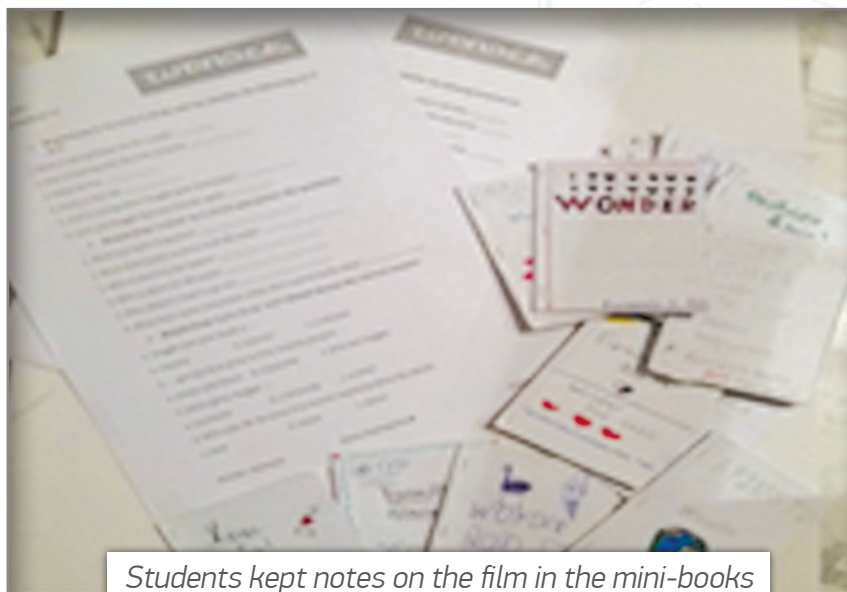


Handmade and digital posters on Human Rights

In 2017 I compiled another project for my 5th graders. It was about human rights, online rights and hate speech. Students watched videos on human rights, did activities on them, created posters, did activities on human rights online, internet safety and hate speech. Hate speech is an issue I am really interested in and I used Bookmarks for many of the activities. To display our work, we participated in an end-of-school event, open to the community, which took place in the central square of their town,

Amyntaio, and presented our project. On the day of the presentation, students were divided in groups and informed visitors about internet safety. An example of a lesson plan and a link to the video of the activity itself can be found [here](#).

In 2018 I chose the *Day against Racism* on March 21st to do a series of lesson plans on racism. We had a lesson on Martin Luther King based on the video MLK: The King and his dream and a lesson on Jane Elliott and her famous experiment on discrimination, A Class Divided. [Here](#) is the presentation and the worksheets I used with my students ([Worksheet1](#) , [Worksheet2](#)). Earlier this year I added a lesson on Ruby Bridges and one on Rosa Parks and I plan to add a lesson on George Floyd and rename my scenario “Black Lives Matter”.



Students kept notes on the film in the mini-books they made.

that our school was taking part in. The project was about diversity and inclusivity. [Here](#) is an indicative activity. The students really embraced the project which fostered their creativity. All students participated and were always looking forward to our next lesson.

Looking back I can see I have come a long way in teaching global issues. I am happy and proud of many of my students' accomplishments. I always get positive feedback on the projects. But there is always more to do. Every year is a new challenge for me and I can't wait to start planning for the next school year. Teaching global issues is the best thing I have ever decided to do for my students and for me!



Making posters to define our uniqueness and display diversity.

Notes

You can find more information on the following on my blog:

1. <https://vlachopouloumaria.blogspot.com/2015/08/raising-awareness-in-english-class.html> - issues to raise awareness in the English classroom: Safer Internet, Bullying, Racism and Environmental Conservation
2. <https://vlachopouloumaria.blogspot.com/2016/02/safer-internet-day-2016.html> - Safer Internet Day 2016 in my school in Amyntaio. (In Greek)
3. <https://vlachopouloumaria.blogspot.com/2018/11/universal-childrens-day-20-november.html> - ideas to celebrate Universal Children's Rights on November, 20.
4. <https://vlachopouloumaria.blogspot.com/2016/07/teachers-for-europe-2016-human-rights.html> - project for T4E, 2016. Human Rights-Refugee Rights-Solidarity
5. <https://vlachopouloumaria.blogspot.com/2016/07/teachers4europe-2016-human-rights.html> - collection of poems for refugee students written during T4E, 2016 project
6. <https://vlachopouloumaria.blogspot.com/2019/04/wonder-ideas-for-lesson-on-diversity.html> - how to use the film "Wonder" to teach diversity and kindness.

References and Resources

Color It Rights: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/color-it-rights-childs-introduction-nited-nations-convention-rights-child>

The more we get together, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lldmkrJXQ-E>

Compasito: <http://www.eycb.coe.int/compasito/>

Draw a dream, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwhB0NF38CY>

Bookmarks: <https://rm.coe.int/168065dac7>

MLK-The King and his dream, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k6Au81aHuSg>

Jane Elliott's A class divided, video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onKVeZaDzWg>



Maria Vlachopoulou is from Greece and has been an English teacher since 1998. For the last 14 years she has worked in primary schools and done projects on global issues, mostly related to human rights. She strongly believes we should teach our students to be citizens of the world.

CREATING GLOBAL CHANGE

The IATEFL Global Issues SIG (GISIG) is one of 16 Special Interest Groups who are part of IATEFL, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language. Comprising a diverse membership of English language teachers, teacher trainers and academic managers, working all around the world both in state educational systems and the private sector, GISIG aims to foreground global issues, such as human rights, equality, conflict resolution, consumerism, working conditions, sustainable development and social responsibility, within English as a second language education. We do this by challenging dominant narratives, giving voice to those who so often go unheard, and taking concrete action in pursuit of social and environmental justice, through what and how we teach. Through our presence at international conferences, including the annual IATEFL conference, as well as on our website, social media and in our publications, we advocate for an inclusive, dialogic, critical pedagogy that empowers and inspires both teachers and language learners to act, in their role as global citizens. If you are an English language teacher who is keen to bring real-world issues into the classroom and to develop your learners' critical literacy as well as their English, then please join us!

Rose Aylett, IATEFL Global Issues SIG

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