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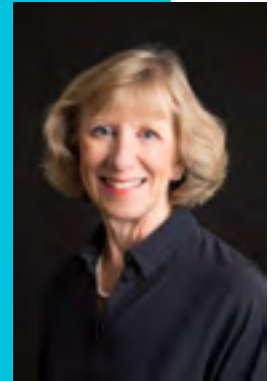
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INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES FOR PROMOTING CRITICAL GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

By **Bogum Yoon**, *Binghamton University, Binghamton, NY* and **Anne Simpson**, *Texas Woman's University, Denton, Texas*



WHEN we look into our classrooms today, we see students who come from all over the world. These students bring with them a wealth of knowledge that reflect differences among cultural, linguistic, religious, political, economic, and social experiences. Yet, our standard English language arts curricula often ignore critical global perspectives that could create a welcoming environment and a place to grow our understanding of each other. Teachers and teacher educators play a significant role in bridging traditional curricula with what is relevant and meaningful for students.

In this column over the last two years, educators have provided exemplary ways to bring critical global literacies into instructional practice. As the column's editor, I (Bogum) want to thank them for pioneering efforts to broaden our curricula and grow students' understanding of each other and the global societies in which we currently live. In this final column, Anne Simpson and I synthesize what has been shared with the hope of encouraging others to expand this important work.

The purpose of this final column is to highlight the key instructional guidelines based on an analysis of the essays on critical global literacies published in this column between September 2018 and July 2020.

Although teachers may recognize the importance of critical global literacies, implementation of this fairly new concept into practice may feel daunting for some. This column intended to serve these teachers. Below are the brief findings of our collaborative analysis of the earlier columns. We encourage readers to visit each column for more details. The analysis suggests that teachers promote critical global perspectives by (1) using existing English curricula, (2) connecting the local context to the world context, and (3) promoting a way of thinking about the world through routine activities.

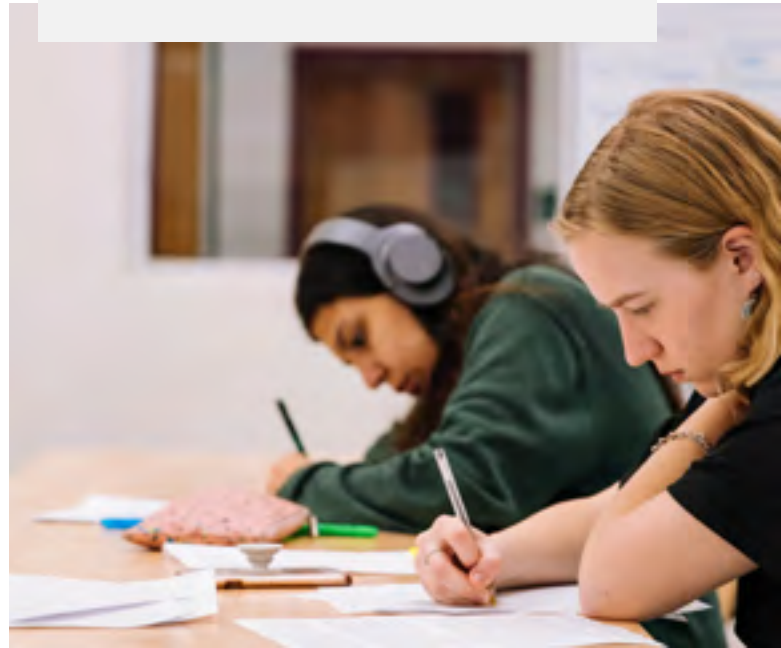


THEME 1: USING EXISTING ENGLISH CURRICULA

One of the consistent themes across the columns is that teachers use existing curriculum to expand students' understanding of the world. For instance, Kathy G. Short suggested how to use global literacies by connecting "texts with classic texts" (109). Short explains how connecting classic texts with world literature promotes students' understanding about the world. Sylvia Vardell, Janelle Mathis, and Amanda Brewer reminded us that critical global literacy works across genres. Vardell suggests that teachers invite students to reinterpret classic poems with digital images of people of color (101). Mathis describes how global picture books can be paired with classics such as Gill Lewis's *A Story Like the Wind* to discuss immigrant journeys with a critical lens. Brewer shares how she used autobiography (e.g., *Lost Boy, Lost Girl: Escaping Civil War in Sudan* [Dau and Akech]) as a way to show students another region of the world and reflects on how to challenge ourselves to engage in teaching from critical global perspectives.

The authors' examples in the columns support the idea that it is not necessary to abandon classic texts or other genres of literature to implement critical global literacies. Existing curricula provide a foundation to build students' deeper understanding of the world.

Connecting classic texts with world literature promotes students' understanding about the world.



THEME 2: CONNECTING THE LOCAL CONTEXT TO THE WORLD CONTEXT

Another common theme is that teachers can start with local contexts to help students connect to world contexts. Teachers might assume that critical global literacies are only concerned about world issues, as separate from local issues. However, our analysis indicates that critical global literacies value local knowledge. For example, Amy P. Azano emphasized local placebased readings (e.g., George Ella Lyon's "*Where I'm From*") to help students understand their relationship with place as "an entry point to access critical global literacies" (108). In their column, Lisa Roof and Mary McVee also suggested that critical global literacies can begin from local contexts.

Through a pen pal project between youth in rural areas and refugee youth in urban areas in New York, students had opportunities to develop crosscultural understanding (105). Crystal C. Lee and Kimberly Dickstein provided examples of how tenth grade students developed global responsibility for social action. After reading a memoir about a child soldier in Sierra Leone (Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone*), students created an advocacy campaign to support a survivor of the South Sudanese Civil War (114).

These findings imply that students do not need to go to other countries to gain global understanding. Students who have local knowledge and understand local contexts are in a better position to understand and critique global issues.



Through daily routines, students learn to problematize “notions of nation and culture.”

THEME 3: PROMOTING A WAY OF THINKING THROUGH ROUTINE ACTIVITIES

Teachers can promote a way of thinking about the world through routine activities, ways in which we value social, cultural, critical, and ethical practices every day in our classrooms. For example, Suzanne S. Choo suggested that, when students are involved in literary discussions, teachers can offer them opportunities to compare cultural perspectives on issues to build the habit of challenging norms while expanding their understanding of other cultures.

In a similar vein, Robert J. Tierney proposed that “global meaning making should be integral to all reading” (94). Jacquelyn Chappel also suggested that readings be involved with cosmopolitan curricula, which invites students to reflect on their personal opinions and to practice cultural relativism. Through daily routines, students learn to problematize “notions of nation and culture” (98).

The implementation of critical global literacies is not accomplished only through “bigger” global projects, but through daily routines. Promoting students’ critical global literacies starts from everyday conversation, activity, and reading.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A prerequisite to helping students expand their understandings about the world requires adopting a critical stance. By first engaging in critical global conversations, teachers may find it easier to invite students into the practice. Exploring critical global literacies has the power to influence students’ thinking and to assist them in developing agency as leaders in a complex world. As decision makers, teachers can pioneer these practices that support students’ learning in our increasingly interconnected world.

Bogum Yoon is an associate professor of literacy education at Binghamton University. Her research areas include critical global literacies, cultural pluralism, and positional identities. Dr. Yoon can be contacted at byoon@binghamton.edu

Anne Simpson is a Cornaro professor and professor emeritus at Texas Woman’s University. Dr. Simpson can be contacted at asimpson@twu.edu

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TEACHER BURNOUT: THE 3M CURE APPROACH

By **Christopher Merrifield**, *Burnout Fighter Ltd*
Southampton, United Kingdom



THE PROBLEM WITH THE DATED CONCEPT OF BURNOUT

Burnout is one of the most confusing mental health issues caused by deeply pervasive stress and an underlying loss of purpose today. Burnout, therefore, is often an invisible but highly devastating problem that because of often confused, limited definitions and incomplete solutions it means that information surrounding it is a cause for concern. Lack of clarity about burnout makes it difficult for leaders to support staff and staff to support students although there is a consensus that it exists.

The most trusted institutions describe burnout as “an occupational phenomenon” (WHO, 2019), “A state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by stress” (NHS, 2019) and even a comprehensive list of articles from the American Psychological Association (APA, 2020) still limit burnout only to work issues. What is implied here is that merely changing a job or career would be the ultimate cure but it is not. If COVID-19 has highlighted anything it is that being without work or career commitments is also a formula for burnout. Therefore, burnout is more than these highly limited definitions.

SO WHAT IS IT?

Burnout is a “loss of identity”, “panic” “despair and crash” (Burnoutfighter, 2020). If you have known or experienced burnout yourself you will know that these key symptoms make it far more serious than simply being stressed or in need of a career shift. Once we have lost our identity we feel our world and all our roles no longer make sense. Things do not fit right for us and we suffer a complex array of negative emotions causing panic. Panic is where we are trying to frantically piece together how our past, present, and future direction make sense. What should motivate us and why? When we experience burnout we cannot feel a strong sense of purpose. Finally, as the duration provides us with no answers we suffer a psychological and emotional crash, which can lead to clinical depression, suicidal tendencies, escapism, etc. A personal narrative for people who are burning out is “Why am I doing this? Why did I even start doing this? I’m unsure where I fit in this world”. During my research, I discovered three main milestones, the 3M’s that are Misconception, Maladaptation, and Mishandling. Knowing these milestones allows you to confirm if you have burnout, use them as indicators that can allow you to break off and reverse your situation, while anticipating future issues.



In short, Misconception is the core of it all, where the world you live in no longer fits with your perceived identity therefore causing havoc with your personal and professional roles in life. Maladaptation is our incorrect psycho-emotional response to burnout. Since we are out of synch with the reality we adapt incorrectly since we do not understand our overall situation. Mishandling does not know how to control our stress reactions. As educators, we should be particularly sensitive to this as we fully know the effects of too much, poor quality, incorrect or wrongly applied knowledge. Mishandling is the result of poor technology use in an interconnected world. In the past have you ever wondered why mindfulness techniques didn't work or were limited in effect? It is because of this issue and it is one of the most key points that fuel burnout. Once we have tried so many sources of advice, mindfulness techniques, etc. to no avail we begin to despair.

HOW BURNOUT AFFECTS TEACHERS

Teachers and students are affected by a serious loss of purpose and work overload. For the student is often in a non-negotiable situation. When we think about it the students' predicament is extremely similar to that of the teacher! The only critical difference is that students may not have a calling to be in school. But rather it is something legally in, which they must adhere. The educator; however, is in a far more precarious position: professionals are in their careers due to a deep moral conviction. The professionals' deep conviction is the reason why we endure long periods of study, training as well as go through the emotional labour required.

SO WHAT INSIGHTS CAN THE 3MS GIVE ME?

Misconception in the 3Ms of Burnout is when our roles are not what we assume them to be. Nor manifest as we believe they should. We can note one thing, in that the world has changed significantly in the last year. Think about this point. How has the role of the teacher changed? How has your contractual role description and expectations changed? What parts of that role are now unclear, dynamic or likely to change in the future? I will give you a clue about this thought. Teachers currently have been perceived as able to adapt the ways in which we learn, the curriculum and school life to fit comply with COVID19 measures.

Here is a suggested activity. Take a piece of paper and cut it into two halves. List in the top half your teaching role's duties, as they were when you started. Now in the second half do this with your teaching role's duties as they have changed. Now repeat this step with your roles in society, taking into account how changes as a teacher have impacted your societal role. Do this with as many of your roles as possible. Notice anything? I bet the cascading impact of one-role changes is far deeper than you think.

See how your perception of your roles and how society views your roles have changed? Give yourself a moment to think this over. Then once you have thought this over you now need to think about Maladaptation. How has this incorrect self-concept forced you to use methods that are limited or ineffectual?

If we do not understand our role correctly then we are destined to choose the wrong paths. Or see solutions that exist and then choose the wrong strategies to adapt. As educators, we know how this can be devastating for students looking to pass their exams, but how many of us believe this does not apply to us when dealing with our burnout?

Therefore what we need to do is take a quick appraisal of how, and more importantly why, we use the methods we do. Is what your doing working? If not, why? Has it worked in the past and been a proven way to get through? Do you think of combining your techniques? Perhaps you can help yourself by taking a multifaceted approach to your stress rather than relying on a one solution, relieves all approach. Think how much more effective taking what investors call “the long and short”. Having a mild stress-relieving daily activity, followed by a greater stress relieving activity at the end of the week or month. Can you do that?



Perhaps you can help yourself by taking a multifaceted approach to your stress rather than relying on a one solution, relieves all approach.

Try this Maladaptation activity to help you. First, turn over that first piece of paper and again divide it in half, at the top put your favourite way to relieve stress, note when you use it, how it makes you feel, how long it is effective for, and why you use it. Then below write down an alternative method or think of a method that may work to prolong or enhance your current method's effect. Now you may come across feelings that you do not have a solution for, this then is the time to take note of an experience of burnout that you need to research. You may have also discovered that some of your solutions are very short term or low impact. This is also an indication for you to do some research. Work through this using all of your stress-busting practices and your Maladaptation issue will become clearer.

Finally, think about Mishandling, the most elusive and the most relevant in contemporary society as Alexander the Great said “I am dying from the treatment of too many physicians”. Are you burning out because although you are active in the above two, you are bombarded with too many options, and therefore absorbing information in an uncontrolled way? Let's think this over. A common way to find an answer to a problem is to use Google, social media, or check some e-zine to see what is popular around that topic. The significance of this issue is because at the start of your search you have no criteria for controlling your selection. Who to listen to, how to filter, and how to know it is time to reject information.

Even if we know how to keep it, what is our testing strategy? In my book the 3Ms I suggest you use no more than three tick boxes that determine if you keep or reject information. Now for many of us, such criteria will look like this: ‘can use immediately’, ‘easy to use anywhere’, ‘works when I feel _____’. This is a good way to start. Why? For it keeps the information focused and allows you to categorize it. As a teacher I need this because I do not have time or the mental energy to invest in learning complex systems. Try this exercise to make your time efficient, filter out sources that you trust/are effective, and avoid burnout due to using poor quality information.

Think and list four sources of information and keep them different. One should be a trusted person (not always an expert field), a professional you admire (a senior teacher, master teacher, or good mentor, etc.), one social media source, and one dedicated web source. Cross these over when you have found a site that seems good. You can gain good verification that it is useful once you have crossed checked the information with your other sources. Then you can be sure that (a) you have confirmed its authenticity and (b) confirmed it makes sense. Then you can be sure it worthy of testing against your criteria.

THE FUTURE

As disruptions are mainly caused by the world becoming more interconnected, burnout is going to increase exponentially. The true key to dealing with this is in the educators' hands. Lifestyle, attitudes and contemporary approaches to burnout such as the 3Ms Approach will equip us with a lifelong toolkit. It is my personal belief that this issue needs to be taken seriously if we are to curb the current trend of a global burnout health disaster.

TO KNOW MORE

If you are interested in knowing more about burnout or the 3M's Approach please visit www.burnoutfighter.com or contact me directly at director@burnoutfighter.com

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Christopher Terrence Merrifield is an experienced leader in education and author of *The 3Ms of Burnout Approach* (Available on Amazon in e-book or paperback). Christopher Terrence Merrifield founded Burnout Fighter Ltd in 2019. Based in the United Kingdom, Christopher Terrence Merrifield continues to educate thousands across the globe on social media, YouTube, and podcasts via storytelling, memorable passages and Webinars. He explains in depth what burnout means in the 21st century, its dangers and provides solutions that are affordable as well as accessible to everyone. Chris can be contacted on director@burnoutfighter.com on his website www.burnoutfighter.com or by connecting on LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/chrismerrifield2017/>

'WHO'S THERE?'

By **Adrian Tilley**, *Devon, United Kingdom*



'WHO'S THERE?' is the first line of 'Hamlet'. It sums up what I was doing when I embarked on the career of English teaching. Who was I, to go amongst young people claiming to know anything, let alone anything about English, that would be of any use to them? A head full of 'great literature', the tenets of Sociology, a vague grasp of Psychology – was this enough? Some vague sense of the 'civilising' nature of literature? Perhaps even a belief that teaching English could bring about social change in a palpably unfair, class-ridden society?



No. It wasn't within the grand ideals that progress was made. It was in the joy of shared laughter, reading Spike Milligan to a class of forty twelve-year-olds with tears rolling down my cheeks. In patience, letting a

deeply unhappy lad work that anger out kicking the class furniture over. Perhaps more profoundly, discovering how a domestic film camera could transform students' thinking about 'Animal Farm' in making a three-minute film about student revolution to the soundtrack of Alice Cooper's 'School's Out'.

A year later, I had produced one of the first exam courses in Film Studies in the UK, fed by my love of cinema and too many hours spent in the picture house darkness, beguiled by the flickering images created by Ford, Hitchcock, Truffaut et al. Film Studies, or Media Studies as it became, offered a theoretical framework that underpinned the pedagogy and made some sense, at last, of the relationship between text and reader and the process of reading. Denotation, connotation, representation, auteur theory, narrative – here were the concepts that placed the reader as the producer of meaning, not the recipient, and this fundamentally alters the relationship between teacher and learner.

I had not forsaken English teaching as such for this 'upstart crow', Media Studies. Dickens became a teaching favourite. Who cannot be spell-bound by the opening chapter of 'Great Expectations'? Students, thirty years on, re-met casually, enthuse about their memories of that opening. What larks! And of course, Shakespeare was at the centre

of much teaching. Rex Gibson's work in the 80's produced huge enthusiasm among English teachers to make 'difficult texts' like Shakespeare available and accessible to all students. Active learning became the touchstone for all kinds of learning activities which opened up those plays heretofore regarded as 'for bright kids only'.

Media Studies and its bed-mate, Communication Studies, however, took up more of my time and energy. A move, finally, to a large, rural comprehensive, brought the chance of more 'professional development', or advancement as some might have it.

A county-wide English initiative in Devon (UK) to broaden the remit of English Studies to include Media Education, saw me incorporated into a small team of advisory teachers working in classrooms (a dozen schools each a year), teaching, creating work schemes with teachers, offering in-service training. Some of the work took us, not only nationally, but internationally, to Russia and the USA. Media Studies had become an international project.

Thus, I suppose, began my international teaching. The chance arose for a post in Hong Kong and my wife and I cast off the shackles of our rural life (our various children had flown the nest) for one of the most populous cities in the world.

The vast majority of the students at the school were Chinese. This was not an expat 'ghetto' as some sister schools were. The students were mostly fluent in English, Cantonese and some in Mandarin. I soon discovered how 'linguistic intelligence' offered them inroads into the complexities of challenging texts. Their 'natural' facility with language made Shakespeare, again, a joy to teach.

The International Baccalaureate allowed a freedom of text choice and approach which had been somewhat lost in the UK (and was to disappear entirely with the more recent nationalistic English curriculum, foregrounding British writers before all others). A rather random, 'non-academic' (really?) bunch of sixteen-year-olds could laugh uproariously at the gender antics of 'Twelfth Night'. A whole cohort of seventeen-year-olds

could spend a fruitful day enacting elements of 'Othello'. Elsewhere, Film Studies students were honing their filming and editing skills as the subject grew within IB.

Four years later, another change of course. I was a NET in the neighbourhood state school and, again, at my prompting, Shakespeare was there as 'enrichment'. A musical version of 'Romeo and Juliet' set in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. A 'Midsummer Night's Dream' weaving a strange Chinese magic. 'Macbeth' in a modern Hong Kong (how prescient!). And again, the poetry and the drama found an accord in the minds and the mouths of these young students.



I soon discovered how 'linguistic intelligence' offered them inroads into the complexities of challenging texts. Their 'natural' facility with language made Shakespeare, again, a joy to teach.

I had become aware that the texts these young Hong Kongers were expected to absorb as their English Studies were mostly relics of an old English curriculum stretching back fifty years. There was nothing they studied that spoke to them about their lives and their culture and their ethnicity. They didn't see themselves in any of the stories they read. I called a group of students together and asked them, 'What would be in stories about you?' Falling in love. Bullying. Suicide. Loneliness. And, interestingly, brothers and sisters. By the end it was a substantial list.

So I took to the task of writing about young Hong Kongers and "Cheung Chau Paradise" and other stories' emerged. I had a ready-formed group of editors to guide and correct the stories. In Hong Kong it was easy to self-publish: easy and cheap. A colleague had produced a fine set of accompanying black and white photos. It was a start, or perhaps the culmination, of years of writing as an English teacher (plays, poems, stories to supplement the students' reading diet).

The morning that I formally retired, a dawn celebrated with Prosecco and bacon sandwiches in the back garden at home, I received an offer from a publisher in Hong Kong. Before leaving, I had posted a manuscript for a YA novel to all publishers in the region – a tactic generally regarded as pointless. And here was an offer to publish *The Spider's Web*, a YA political thriller set in the city. A new element in my professional life had developed. A year later, the book was out. A second followed.

Along with that, came offers of extra work in Hong Kong, running creative writing classes in schools and academies. At the same time, a three-act play I'd written about the Japanese take-over of Hong Kong in 1941, was put on at the Lyric Theatre there. I was suddenly visiting Hong Kong regularly in various roles: as a writing tutor, writer-in-residence, video-making tutor, English tutor, university teacher. Three more books followed, "Cheung Chau Paradise", now professionally produced, and two other sets of short stories aimed at the English exam curriculum.

At the same time, in England, I was working with a Danish school. Shakespeare was, once more, the source for students' English enrichment. 'Hamlet' was a constant, given its Danish provenance. In ensuing years, 'Macbeth' and 'Romeo and Juliet' joined the roster as student numbers increased. By the end, we were three drama staff delivering three plays in two weeks. Throughout, the fascinating feature was how second-language students accessed and assimilated Shakespeare's language, a form native-English speakers find so difficult.

'Who's there?' I'm still not sure what sort of English teacher I've been. Perhaps a case of 'The Divided Self', an identity formed from many facets of function. Oh, and it wasn't all roses and gasps, believe me. There were plenty of moments of despair, frustration, profound and gagging anger, disappointment – all the usual ingredients of being a teacher. Forty years into the task and 'Who's there?' still can't be answered. I'm just waiting for the next project to turn up. How about a punk, country and western version of 'Love's Labour's Lost'? Filmed in the style of Hitchcock? Anyone?

Adrian Tilley currently lives in Devon in the UK and has spent the last twelve years writing YA fiction, adult drama, running creative writing classes and tutoring classes in aspects of English. He is currently working on a proposed TV drama series set in Hong Kong during the 1967 riots, on a radio drama and also contributes regularly to a satirical on-line website, *the-spreader.co.uk*. He is currently working on three novellas set in Hong Kong: 'Heat', 'Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee' and 'Tomorrow Will Be Mine'. Adrian Tilley can be contacted via email: atilley_meejah@hotmail.com.



A Hyperlinked Agenda For The Weary, Disorganized Teacher In All Of Us

By **Jessica Lee**, *TASIS The American School in Surrey, United Kingdom*

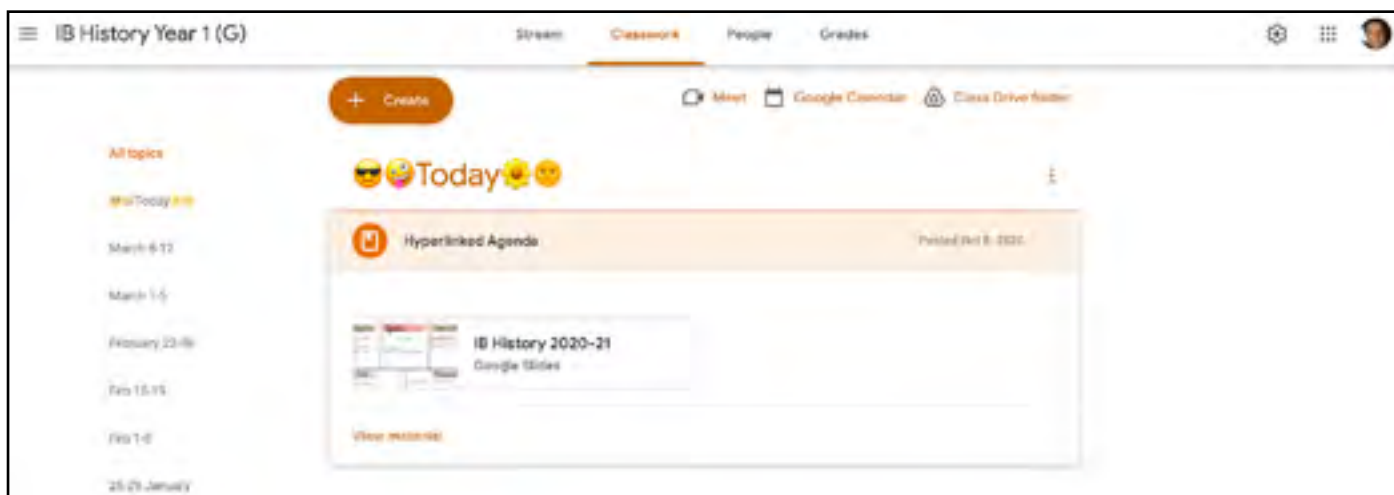
SIX YEARS AGO in Bedford, New Hampshire I was running up and down three flights of stairs on opposite sides of a large school building, carrying all of my books, papers, and necessary supplies and getting 15,000 steps per day. I barely managed to fly into my classroom within our five minute passing time through the jammed hallways. I would walk into the room with 60 students chatting, asking tons of questions, and I found myself completely forgetting what I was about to teach and how to effectively get the class started at the sound of the bell. I realized that if I was going to make it through the year, I needed to be much more organized than my usual quick agenda scribbled on the board. Thus, the hyperlinked agenda entered my life.

Five years later, I find myself isolated at home, sitting at my dining room table in London maybe walking 150 steps each day. I'm now hopping on Zoom, getting my son settled with iffy Wi-Fi, and changing rooms with my husband multiple times per day depending on who needs the better connection. I find myself even more overwhelmed than I was six years ago. My solution here was the same: The hyperlinked agenda.

My simple agenda solved two massive problems whilst online this year: organization and communication. Let's begin with organization.

The hyperlinked agenda kept my students and me organized in an online classroom setting. At the top of Google Classroom page lived my annoying emoji hyperlinked agenda. If students are in a face-to-face classroom or increasingly synchronous, or asynchronous, they always knew that everything they needed for the day was on the agenda. I have hyperlinks, divided into categories that show the objective, essential question, agenda for the day with hyperlinks, a look ahead, the date, and their homework. I realized that if I filled out each of these categories ahead of time, the lesson would typically be well planned and well paced.

Each category was chosen to reinforce my development of effective lessons. The essential question keeps me focused to work my way up Bloom's taxonomy throughout the lesson. I typically go over the question at the start of class, so my students understand the structure and purpose for the day, and I almost always end with the essential question as a formative assessment at the end of class. The agenda portion helps me to remember the flow of the lesson and helps the students know what to expect. I added the "look ahead" section so that students know how their lesson that day fits into the larger unit. This section helps the students understand where they are in the unit's sequence.



Sample Agenda Slide

Now we will explore how communication is improved through a hyperlinked agenda. About two weeks after my students at TASIS flew to their homes multiple time zones away during Christmas break, I asked them what was and was not working with their online learning experience. The overwhelming reply was that it's really tough to know what is actually due and how to access everything for seven different classes. Our school has done a great job utilizing Google Classroom, but the way teachers push out work can vary. Students appreciate the simplicity of the hyperlinked agenda. It not only organizes me, but also when working synchronously or asynchronously, the students never wonder where to go. All links are in one place and the agenda is static on my site. Best of all, this feature alleviates the additional issue of way too many emails from Google Classroom.

Have your students turned off notifications due to excessive emails each day? Do they get three to four daily messages with assignments, handouts, and announcements in every class? If so, the hyperlinked agenda solves most of these annoyances. Only once in the year do I push out the assignment to the students. I set up the slide

show on the first day of class and add to it each day. All I do is duplicate the top slide and change it for that day. Students are never emailed when I add a slide because this feature is there as a static link. Additionally, there is no need for Google Classroom to perform this function. My previous school had teacher websites and I did the same thing. It helped cut down on students asking what the homework was and what they missed. After the second week of school, they always knew to go to the agenda. For me, it was less stressful than organizing papers in the classroom and remembering who was absent and checking in with them when they returned. It put the onus on the student instead of me.

If you are looking for a template, check out the link below the agenda image. You may be more tech savvy than me and easily create this yourself, but for a few dollars, I bought a bundle of agendas that will last me ages. Anything that makes my life easier right now is worth it. Just like the agenda itself.

Jessica Lee is a history teacher and professional development coordinator for the upper school at TASIS The American School in England. She also taught history in New Hampshire, Maryland, and Virginia. Jessica Lee can be contacted at jlee@tasisengland.org

References:

Template - Pink Watercolor Glitter Agenda
 Template - Teachers Pay Teachers by Miss G
 Hyperlinked Agenda category on Classroom
 Cute/annoying emojis - Emoji Keyboard by JoyPixels® Chrome Extension

<p>EQ</p> <p>Should European powers have feared Germany in 1900?</p>	<p>Agenda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Click here for Warm-Up -Categorize ideas into long-term, short-term, and immediate -Chart activity (make a copy) -Break -Discuss chart and EQ Exit 	<p>A look ahead</p> <p>Monday - Imperialism and Alliances of WWI Post-break - Essay on long & short term causes of WWI</p>
<p>Date</p> <p>Thursday 21 January</p>	<p>Homework</p> <p>Read bottom of 17-20 in Perusall - take notes and submit (by hand or type)</p>	



Young Men on the Move: Two Global Stories at the Intersection of Migration, Race, and Class

By **Nadia Kalman**, *Words Without Borders*,
New York City

“AND TO THINK I SWORE I’d stay out of trouble on this side of the world,” reflects Liberio, the wry, profane teenage narrator of Aura Xilonen’s prize-winning Mexican novel “The Gringo Champion.” Liberio, an undocumented migrant farm worker, has the honesty and desperation of J.D. Salinger’s Holden Caulfield in *The Catcher in the Rye*, but without Holden’s aura of privilege. Although the entire novel is not yet available in English, a self-contained excerpt is published on the literary website Words Without Borders Campus (wwwb-campus.org).

In the published excerpt, we follow Liberio and his singular narrative voice, which ranges from the expansive and vernacular to the poetic and

compressed – as he picks cotton, bonds with his fellow workers – and barely survives a violent encounter with the U.S. Border Patrol:

“The Border Patrol agents are ranchers armed to the teeth with rifles and nunchucks, chains and tonfas . . . wearing Kevlar helmets and gas masks and bulletproof vests; they’re dressed as if they were going to space war against the Martians.

“Fuck you, you sonofabitch, illegal beaner.”

And they subtract me right there. They pistol-whip the air out of me. . . “

There are moments of hope and connection in Liberio’s story, which is based on the experiences of the author’s own family members. After spending a night on a city sidewalk, Liberio awakens to an unexpected helper: a girl his age bearing coffee, whose “smile is the most beautiful cataclysm I’ve ever seen.” Her appearance is almost like a magical intervention, and we celebrate it alongside Liberio, even as he asks himself: “What would I have wanted to be if I could have fucking been something else?”



Mexican author Aura Xilonen, who wrote The Gringo Champion when she was only nineteen years old. By Whyilovethisbook, CC BY 3.0 license, <https://bit.ly/3qOq6GF>



Brighton Beach, Brooklyn.

“The Gringo Champion” with Context tab open: <https://www.wwb-campus.org/literature/the-gringo-champion>.



Liberio's experience seems worlds away from that of another young immigrant to the United States, the unnamed Russian Jewish protagonist of Vladimir Vertlib's "The Bed," whose story also appears on WWB Campus in English translation (<https://www.wwb-campus.org/literature/the-bed>; trans. by David Burnet.) For one thing, the boy in "The Bed" wakes up not on a street but in – as the reader may have guessed – a bed. After arriving in the U.S., he and his family were placed in a subsidized apartment in New York City's Brighton Beach.

Vertlib's protagonist, whom the author based on himself, struggles with identity and belonging, but also benefits from a safety net: he is together with his family, he has (temporary) legal status, he does not have to work to support himself. Perhaps most importantly, Vertlib's protagonist has some time and space to discover himself. This time and space is necessarily limited, as it is for every immigrant (who always "has to paddle with his hands and feet just to stay above swampy water," in the words of the narrator's father) – but it is much more than Liberio has received.

What makes the difference in the boys' stories? As the contextualizing resources posted alongside the stories suggest, some answers may be found in the vicissitudes of the American immigration policy, which has often, unfortunately, both reflected and

reinforced structural racism.

(A few recent examples include former President Trump administration's "Stay in Mexico" and "family separation" policies.)

A chilling consequence of unequal policies is that that people who benefit from them begin to erroneously believe that they are more deserving than those who do not. We see this in "The Bed's" last passage, infused with dramatic irony that foreshadows a coming fall:

America is for the strong and fit. Like us. Especially Mother. We made it into the country despite all the red tape and legal hurdles. If you believe in something strongly enough, it will come true.

And yet, it is also possible to imagine that the fictional protagonists of the two stories might have forged a connection if they had ever met. They both experience a similar sense of disorientation in the United States, and a similar sense of disconnection between the myth of "the most beautiful, democratic, and richest country in the world" (as Vertlib puts it) and its realities.

Stories like "The Gringo Champion" and "The Bed" can give students a sense of the complexity of immigration as experienced by different people – something difficult to explain or internalize if we rely solely on factual reports and abstract terms such as "intersectionality." A study on the psychological impact of reading fiction at



Iranian author / translators Salar Abdoh and Habibe Jafarian in Tehran. <https://www.wwb-campus.org/literature/hunger>, <https://www.wwb-campus.org/literature/how-to-be-a-woman-in-tehran>

the University of Toronto (2005) found that “comprehending characters in a narrative fiction appears to parallel the comprehension of peers in the actual world, while the comprehension of expository non-fiction shares no such parallels.” Stories offer students an emotionally resonant path to understanding global issues.

On WWB Campus, we publish these stories alongside contextual materials, teaching ideas, and a “Playlist” of possibilities for further exploration. Our goal is to activate students’ imaginative empathy and inspire them to read further, for reasons that are not only literary in nature. According to UNESCO’s World Report, Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue, “ongoing discovery, a perpetual wondering” is one of the three keys to intercultural competence.

Although the two stories above are among my personal favorites, I hope that your journey through online global literature doesn’t end there. On WWB Campus ([wwb-campus.org](http://www.wwb-campus.org)), “The Bed” and “The Gringo Champion” are part of a large collection of international stories, poems, and graphic fiction on the theme of “[Leaving Home](#)”

In fact, next month, we will be hosting a live virtual event with two Iranian authors whose work also engages questions about immigration: Salar Abdoh, whose memoir “Hunger” tells his own story of leaving Iran as a teenage boy, and Habibe Jafarian, a woman journalist whose essay “How to be a Woman in Tehran” explains her courageous decision to stay.

For invitations to this and future events, please sign up for our newsletter at: <https://www.wwb-campus.org/subscribe/>.

*Nadia Kalman is the editor and curriculum designer for Words Without Borders Campus ([wwb-campus.org](http://www.wwb-campus.org)), a website that introduces students to eye-opening writing from around the world and provides educators with the resources to incorporate international literature into their curriculums. A former teacher of English and English for Speakers of Other Languages at the secondary level, Nadia is also the author of the novel, *The Cosmopolitans*. Nadia Kalman can be contacted at nadia@wordswithoutborders.org.*

ENDNOTES

1. Raymond A. Mar, Keith Oatley, Jacob Hirsh, Jennifer del a Paz, Jordan B. Peterson. “Bookworms versus nerds: Exposure to Fiction versus non-Fiction, divergent associations with social ability, and the simulation of Fictional social worlds.” *Journal of Research in Personality* 40 (2006) 694–712.
2. UNESCO. “Investing in Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue: UNESCO World Report.” <https://en.unesco.org/interculturaldialogue/resources/130>

Both resources were recommended by Yolanda Padilla, the director of one of WWB Campus’s organizational partners, the CSWE Center for Diversity and Social & Economic Justice at the University of Texas at Austin.

PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE GUIDE PANDEMIC JOB SEARCH

By **Peter Smyth**, *Search Associates, Surrey, United Kingdom*



In a typical recruitment year March would be the time when we start to see a slowing down of the recruitment cycle. This year it is completely different!

COVID-19 has made it exceedingly difficult for schools to complete their hiring by early spring. There are simply too many variables in place for schools to make accurate hiring decisions. Will enrolment be up or down? Will we have to hire only within country due to visa restrictions? Are there countries that are not permitted to travel to possible new school job destinations? Once a teacher arrives what will the quarantine procedures entail? Can we get visas for those planning to come? All these variables make it extremely hard for schools to accurately finalize their recruitment plans. As countries continue to make progress with their vaccine rollout programs there does seem to be some light at the end of this long, dark tunnel.

A quick scan through some of the social media posts and forums will confirm that this has been a difficult recruitment year for everyone. It just seems harder than ever to secure a post this year. The reason for this is actually fairly simple in that there are fewer jobs available for the international school job seeking community to apply.

Roughly speaking, across all international schools worldwide, we have seen a 30% decrease in

jobs being posted. That makes the market itself incredibly competitive and many teachers have been frustrated this year. Many applicants have faced some of the fiercest competition we have seen in the hiring process.

There is good news though for English teachers still looking to secure a post for the 2021-22 school year. All the turmoil and uncertainty that still exists around travel, visas, borders, quarantine lengths, testing and flight availability (to name a few) means that the hiring season will most likely continue all the way through to the start of the new school year. For those teachers that are patient and looking for adventure; there is still a good chance of securing a position at an international school for next year. Patience and perseverance are two words I have used a lot this year.

Peter Smyth is a Senior Associate at Search Associates UK South including the areas of London, the South East, the South West, the East of England, and the West Midlands in the United Kingdom. He has taught in international schools in the US, Middle East, Panama and started his teaching journey in the UK. Peter Smyth can be contacted at psmyth@searchassociates.com.

FOOD: THE PERFECT LITERARY INGREDIENT

By Ann Neary, Staples High School, Westport, Connecticut



A manju bun. The Wizard Bakery in the story sells a “forget-me-not” manju.

I AM, AT HEART, A FOODIE. I think about my next meal as I am eating the one in front of me. I cannot imagine not spending time to find the best Pink Lady apples in the overflowing apple bin at the market. So, when it comes to getting to know my students when a semester begins, one of the survey questions I ask them is, “What is a food you cannot live without?”. The results provide conversation starters and connections for the length of a semester and beyond.



Making connections and building relationships is particularly important during this unusual teaching year when I have 12 students physically in front of me and another 14 behind me on a Zoom screen. It is always important when teaching literature from diverse cultures such as those we visit in World Literature.

As I prepare for my class, I wonder what potential pitfalls might my students face when analyzing text? What sort of questions might I ask to challenge their thinking about literature and culture? How might I support student inquiry? My guiding and compelling “why” for offering selections of literature from around the world, is how do we value the “tapestry of the human condition”? How do we reduce prejudice and bias? How do I make literature the passport to the world?

Essential questions for all units of study ask: what are the points of commonality we notice between different works of literature and people? Where does it diverge? How do we honor all voices and cultures?

One of the points of commonality is food. We all eat. We all have foods we like and love. Writers write about food, students talk about food. One of my go-to sources of literature for easy student access (especially in a hybrid setting) is [WordsWithoutBordersCampus](#). There I found a marvelous YA fantasy story from South Korea

called *Wizard Bakery*, written by Koo Byung-Mo and translated from Korean by Jamie Chang. It opens like so:

THE DEVIL'S CINNAMON COOKIES

2 per serving.

9000 won.

INGREDIENTS: flour, cinnamon, brown sugar, raisins, and a secret extract. The essence of the extract will not be revealed, as certain ingredients may be found revolting. (Baker's note: Extract contains no known allergens, so not to worry. Besides, you're not going to eat it yourself!)

PRODUCT DETAILS: Give the cookie to someone you don't like. The cookie will mentally incapacitate the recipient for an average of two hours so that the person will fail in all endeavors, no matter what they may be. If recipient is giving an important presentation or making a speech, subjects and predicates will not match. Recipient will ramble and appear idiotic to anyone present. If consumed on a full stomach, recipient may fail to control a bowel movement. If consumed on an empty stomach, recipient will experience continuous vomiting. Legends say that one infamous lawyer who ate this cookie during court recess was thrown out of court and disbarred!

Students are hooked immediately. A few paragraphs in, students read about the other best-selling food items offered such as the Broken-heart Pineapple Madeleine that helps heal broken hearts faster but might not be a good choice because it may cause you to get into a meaningless rebound relationship. This point gives rise to a wonderful writing prompt where students can mimic the style and concepts themselves.

My favorites included:

Cookie Crumbles: a cookie made with all sorts of cookie dough jumbled in one delicious, gigantic cookie. It will take so long to eat such deliciousness that students will forget all about college acceptances and rejections.

COVID Custard: present this creamy delight to your grannie or anyone without teeth or over the

age of 65. It will protect them from contracting COVID-19 and allow them visitation rights to your house so they can make some real desserts.

Food brought them into the conversation about literature from another country. But their thinking as they read expanded into recognition that there are many commonalities across the human experience that unite us more than separates us. And that was as I hoped it would be.

Click here to watch Ann's *Wizard Bakery* workshop.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBwHPnXv_TU



Ann Neary is a National Board Certified Teacher, 16 year educator and teacher leader, currently teaching AP Literature, World Literature, Children's Literature, Contemporary Literature and Journalism while shaking up the book room and curriculum at Staples High School in Westport, CT for equity and justice. She is a teacher and student advocate, always sharing, always optimistic. When not teaching, she can be found outdoors in the forest or baking magical cookies. Ann Neary can be contacted at aneary@westportps.org.

ACCESSING EXPERTISE AND CONTENT TO MEET CLASSROOM CHALLENGES

By **Andy Mink**, *National Humanities Center,
Research Triangle Park, NC*



WHERE can you find resources to help your students improve their digital media literacy, learn to think like Shakespeare, or contextualize the global Movement for Black Lives? Where can you go to update your poetry syllabus and learn how to incorporate visual culture into your literature classes?

Last year nearly 3.5 million educators across the United States found those things and more by visiting the National Humanities Center's (NHC) online resources for teachers.

Nowadays educators feel compelled to create digital collections of instructional materials to meet expanding curricular demands and the needs of their students. However, recent research reports that a large majority of teachers simply use Google to identify and select resources for their classroom, followed closely by those who rely on Pinterest collections to find instructional materials. The value of vetted, high quality online content has never been higher, particularly when these resources reflect emerging understandings and best practices around important topics.

CONTENT, CREATIVITY, COLLABORATION

The National Humanities Center's Humanities in Class catalog of lesson plans, source materials,

media-based tutorials, and pedagogical essays connect educators to scholarly experts and support research-to-practice curricular design. The Center also offers professional development webinars, online courses, and face-to-face workshops and institutes that provide opportunities for in-depth exploration of complex themes and topics with an eye toward translating new understandings into effective teaching. And, with its primary focus on translating emerging humanities scholarship, NHC materials are relevant to teachers at all grade levels and school types including community college instructors, and college faculty.

In June 2020, the Center launched the [Humanities in Class Digital Library](#) (HICDL), an Open Education Resource (OER) platform that collects and combines the best in humanities scholarship and education from the Center and nearly 100 content partners for use in the K-12 and collegiate classroom. In this platform, scholars share research in a variety of digital forms, including video lectures, primary source collections, essays, and articles. The open environment allows users to modify and remix content, adapting these resources to achieve specific curricular goals.

Within the HICDL, collections sort resources by theme for easy discoverability around topics like [Medieval Africa and Africans](#) and [The Language of Protest](#). HICDL Groups allow any user to create [a private workspace](#) by theme, class, or interest and to share materials with others at their discretion.

The HICDL connects seamlessly with Google Classroom and most Learning Management Systems. The HICDL is quickly becoming a makerspace for humanities education innovation with new members and resources being added daily. More than a repository, the HICDL also allows members to publish lessons, activities, assessments, essays, and syllabi that integrate scholarly content and research. Teachers and students are eligible to register for a free Library Card to access these openly licensed resources.

INNOVATION FORTY YEARS IN THE MAKING

The Humanities in Class Digital Library is just the latest in the National Humanities Center's effort to help teachers extend their content knowledge and enhance their classroom teaching.

Founded in 1978, the Center is an independent nonprofit dedicated to advancing humanistic study and reflection and to making those insights available both inside and outside the academic world. Over the past four decades the Center has supported the work of nearly 1,500 imminent scholars whose research has helped shape current thinking in the fields of history, literature, philosophy, and other humanities disciplines and whose expertise is incorporated in the Center's resources for teachers.

At the heart of the NHC's educational programs is a commitment to encouraging the growth of education professionals in ways that directly impact the classroom. In addition to the Humanities in Class Digital Library, the Center hosts a robust series of [live, online webinars](#), connecting teachers from across the United States with leading scholars exploring a wide variety of compelling topics and themes. Meanwhile, [Humanities in Class Online Courses](#) offer more immersive inquiry into topics in history, literature, civics, geography, music, and art.



Through partnerships and in collaboration with professional organizations, educational institutions, and scholarly experts, NHC Education Programs leverage the Center's resources to strengthen the role of the humanities within the cultural landscape. We invite educators at all levels to join this conversation about how the humanities offer unique and powerful ways to view our complex world.

Andy Mink is vice president for education programs at the National Humanities Center. An award-winning educator, Andy has devoted his career to innovative professional development, integrating technology into the classroom, and encouraging teachers to see themselves as creative leaders. Learn more about the National Humanities Center and its education programs at nationalhumanitiescenter.org. Andy Mink can be contacted at amink@nationalhumanitiescenter.org.



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President and NCTE Liaison Officer
TASIS The American School in England
Surrey, UK

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NET Section, Education Bureau
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Stephanie Feo-Hughes

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Treasurer
China World Academy
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