



TeachingEnglish

British Council: TeachingEnglish

A podcast series for teachers
of English



Episode 1: How can I integrate global issues into my teaching?

Show notes



Episode overview

The Teaching English with the British Council podcast launches as COP26, the crucial UN climate change conference, draws to an end. In our first episode, we explore how teachers can effectively integrate teaching global issues in the language classroom. Initially, we'll examine this question from the perspective of one of the most pressing global issues of our time, namely the climate crisis, in particular the British Council's podcast series The Climate Connection. We'll then interview Fadidac Jules Champrien, a young and dynamic Cameroonian educator, about how teachers in any context and any situation can use language teaching as a way of raising global issues.

In this episode

It's actually seeing direct behaviour change as a result of English language education

Young people are going to be the people who are going to be coming up with the solutions

We make each child name their plant, and there's something about it's *your* plant, you know, they get really excited when their spider plant's having babies

They were getting the children wild swimming, cooking food, digging gardens, lots of practical, engaged, and all of the whole upper school was involved in this

We try to integrate the nature education curriculum into indoor classes

They made declarations like 'we are aware the problem is real, we are conscious of our responsibility, we're fighting against it, we pledge to be part of the solution and not part of the problem.'

Creating awareness of local issues as trivial or as small as they may appear to be, is a starting point to engage the learners into thinking about what is happening around them

Classroom application

Think about how you could use the ideas in this episode in your own teaching.

Think about your own practice

- How often do you teach global issues in your classroom? Could you do it more?
- Do you have a good knowledge of global issues? Could you develop your own understanding?
- What would be some of the challenges teaching global issues more? How could you overcome these challenges?
- How can you link global issues to language learning?

Ask your students these questions

- Are there any local issues or campaigns which are directly affecting your community?
- Do you have any experience of campaigning on social issues?
- Are there any global issues or campaigns which you are interested in, or passionate about?
- What positive differences could your class – or school – make locally or globally?

Try this classroom activity

Ask students to look at the following list of global issues:

- Drug addiction
- The climate crisis
- Poverty
- Hunger
- Lack of clean drinking water
- Mental health
- Lack of education
- LGBTQIA+
- Refugees / migration
- Terrorism

You could then either:

1. Ask them to select the six which they are most interested in / think are most important; or
2. Ask them to rank the issues 1-10 in order of interest / importance.

You can use the *snowball* approach to get students to share their ideas, meaning:

1. They do the task by themselves and write their own list.
2. They share their list in pairs. The pair must reach a consensus / agreed list.
3. Combine two pairs. This group of 4 must now reach a consensus.
4. Continue to 'double up' each group until the discussion is at the whole-class level.

Social media

Please share your views about this episode, and the series as a whole, on social media using the hashtag #TEBC. Let us know your thoughts, reflections, comments and whether you have been able to use any of the ideas in your teaching.

Detailed notes

Use these notes to find out more about the contents of Episode 1.

Phrase	Explanation and Further Information
Field Report: The Climate Connection	
“The Climate Connection”	You can listen and download this podcast at https://www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection/get-involved/action-language-education/podcast and through usual podcast providers.
“We’ve made them put the plants in a white pot”	You can find out more about the Bring Your Own Plant initiative on Stephen Heppell’s website by clicking here .
“The desertification process in Sahel”	Discover more about this environmental problem in this region at this BBC page .
“Eco Awareness Day”	When an educational institution focuses all the lessons on one day on the environment.
“Wild swimming”	Outdoor swimming, for example in rivers, ponds and lakes.
“Scandinavian language learning in the wild”	You can discover more about this at https://languagelearninginthewild.com/ .
“Methodologies which are more immersive”	Scott talks more about teaching methodology at this Cambridge University Press blog .
“We’re following nature’s lifecycle and introducing the Content Language Learning based on the lifecycle of edible fruit and vegetable plants”	Angelica is talking about <i>the Garden Project</i> , the first Project Based Learning curriculum to apply the STEAM framework to study nature’s life cycles, from seed to table to seed again, in an innovative multidisciplinary exploration of nature, starting at age 3. This nature-inspired program is based on the principles of sustainability and encourages children to learn about their natural environment. Visit

	https://www.hooplaeducation.com/thegardenproject to discover more.
“See, Think, Wonder”	You can find out more about this project, based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education here .
“Learned helplessness”	Learned helplessness is a state that occurs after a person has experienced a stressful situation repeatedly. They come to believe that they are unable to control or change the situation, so they do not try — even when opportunities for change become available.

Interview with Fadidac Jules Champrien	
“From my findings, drug addiction is a crisis affecting every part of the world. So I decided to address the issue in a series of lessons with my students”	Fadidac has written an article about these lessons entitled <i>Weeding out the weed: How English language lesson can become a clarion call against drugs in school</i> . It can be accessed, for free, in “ Creating change – global ELT issues in Africa ”, created by GISIG. https://gisig.iatefl.org/wp-content/publications/GISIG_CREATING_CHANGE.pdf
“I thought this was a time to address this issue before we hear of another person dying in my own school, or because of drugs.”	In the article mentioned above, Fadidac explains this in more detail: “As I listened to the unfolding debate and the finger pointing between various stakeholders, I pondered over my role as an English language teacher in tackling this issue. How do I lend my voice to that of the entire education community to help learners navigate through the dangers of drug abuse in society? Is it really my business? Why should I care? Shouldn’t it be the responsibility of parents to teach their children about drugs?”
“And did you feel that your students were more willing to talk about these issues in a second language rather than in their first language?”	This article, How to address the effects of trauma in the English language classroom , on the Teaching English website talks more about this issue.
“Pidgin language”	Click here to find out more about Cameroonian Pidgin English,
“Lingua franca”	A language or dialect systematically used to make communication possible between groups of people who do not share a native language or dialect, particularly

	when it is a third language that is distinct from both of the speakers' native languages.
“Tsunami”	A tsunami is a series of ocean waves that sends surges of water, sometimes reaching heights of over 100 feet (30.5 meters), onto land. These walls of water can cause widespread destruction when they crash ashore. Find our more here .
“Bamenda”	Discover more about Bamenda here .
“The rains were supposed to come back”	Read more about how the climate in Cameroon is changing at this UN website .

Useful links

- [Integrating global issues in the creative English language classroom \(British Council Publication\)](#)
- [IATEFL Global Issues Special Interest Group](#)
- [Teaching Global Issues in the Classroom](#)
- [Why global awareness matters to schools \(newspaper article\)](#)
- [Global Issues in the ELT Classroom](#)
- [Why teach Global Issues in ELT? \(academic paper\)](#)

Glossary

The following words at the B2, C1 and C2 level (according to the [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages](#)) are used in this episode.

B2 level

absorbing
abuse
adapt
adapted
addiction
additional
affect
affecting
affects
agents
apparently
aspects
aware
basically
basis
beyond
came across
causing
climate change
cloth
come to
come up with
coming up with
communities
community
concern
conscious
consequences
constructing
container
content
context
contrary
council
counter
crisis
critically
crucial
currently
cut down
cut off
depressing
didn't
drug
eager
educate

educating
effective
effectively
emerged
ensure
episode
error
essentially
examined
expansion
express
extracts
feedback
first language
focusing
get out of
get to
getting to
global
global warming
globally
got to
graduate
highlight
host
ideal
identify
image
impact
incidents
inspire
interactive
learners
linked
listed
major
make a difference
management
masters
melting
mere
nations
official
open up
polar bear
positively
practical

primary
process
publication
reaction
reality
reflect
reflecting
reflections
relevant
researchers
resources
respond
response
responsibility
rights
scale
seek
specific
stabbed
statements
strategy
stretch
structures
substance
substitutes
successfully
survive
sweeping
task
theme
themes
throughout
to do with
traditionally
trivial
tropical
try out
uncertain
underestimate
unique
united
vast
visible

C1 level

addressed
angles

assumption
awareness
collaborate
component
declarations
duration
dwell on
edible
engage
engaging
evaluate
happen to
inclusive
indirectly
initiative
integrate
interactions
listeners
make it
overwhelmed
provider
related to
resolve
shortcomings
subsequently
when it came to

C2 level

backward
clinging
core
drought
frameworks
heritage
let go
parallel
peer pressure
practitioner
scarcity
so to speak
talking about
vow