

Webinar

Climate change in English Language Education

Speakers:

Andreas Collados



Works as a teacher with adult learners, and has been making use of some of the materials from the Climate Connection website with her learners. She reports on her experiences.



Cristiana Osan



Lives and works in Romania. She teaches online and has worked with the British Council designing learning materials for the Climate Connection website and the accompanying MOOC:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection>

She is a moderator on the Climate Action in Language Education MOOC.



Harry Waters

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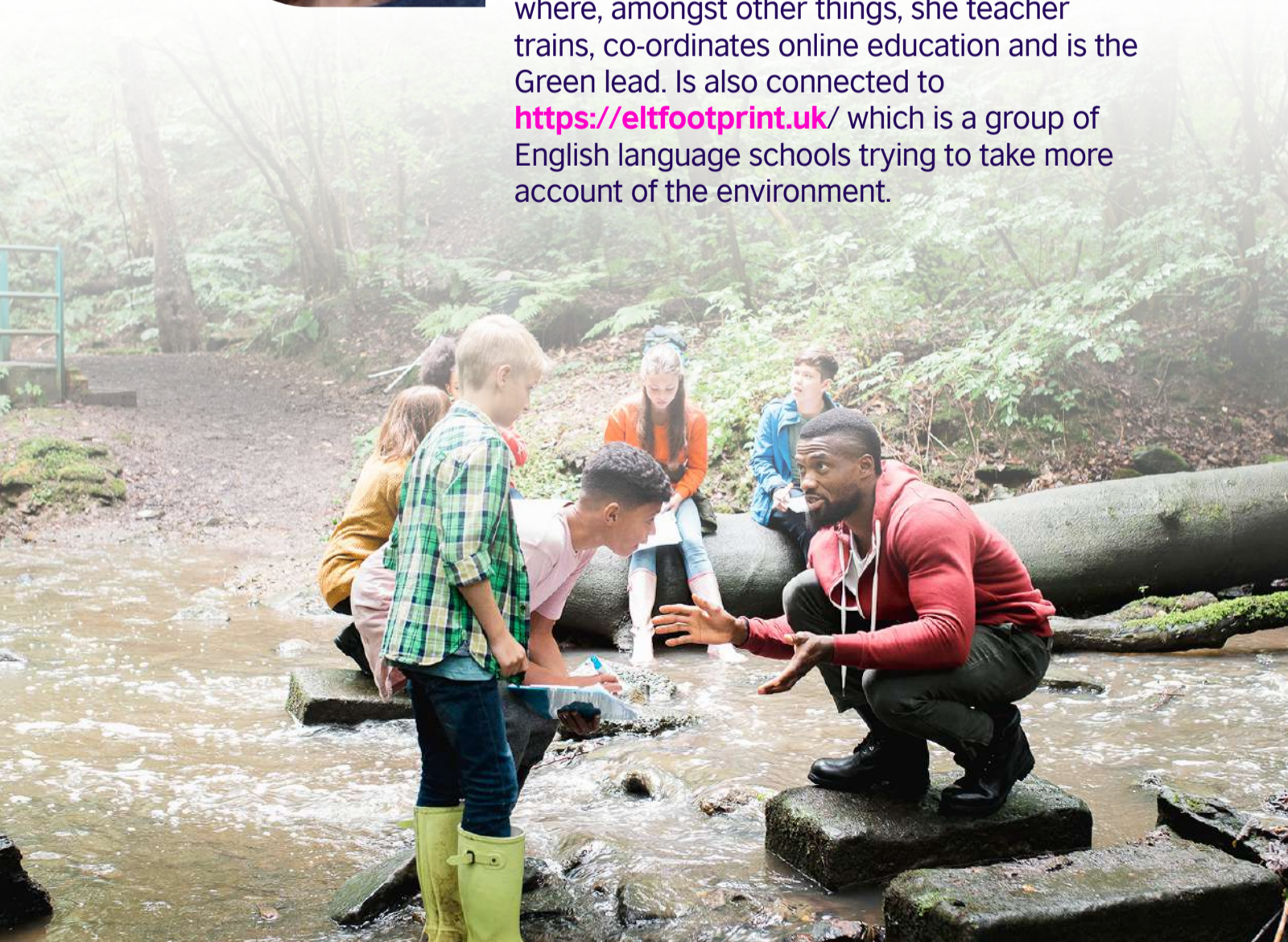
Is the creator of language learning materials for sustainable language learning and the website “Renewable English” where you can find his award winning materials (<https://renewableenglish.com/home>). Offers free online courses for teachers who are interested in sustainability.



Joanna Sterling

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Works for NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education -- <https://www.nile-elt.com/>) where, amongst other things, she teacher trains, co-ordinates online education and is the Green lead. Is also connected to <https://eltfootprint.uk/> which is a group of English language schools trying to take more account of the environment.





Why sustainability should be central to language classes



Joanna said that we don't have a choice now, because it is something that everyone needs to be talking about and so we need to give our learners the language and skills to talk about sustainability. We are not simply teachers of language, but educators and sustainability is the most important topic of all. Harry agreed, but added that it shouldn't just be a focus of English lessons, but in all subjects. An advantage of doing this in English classes is that we can reach the whole world. Cristina pointed out that this was a topic from real life that learners want to engage in, but often don't in school.

How can students be engaged with sustainability in the classroom



Christina said we shouldn't approach green issues in a generalised way, but find out about local issues and emphasise them. Support the children with projects that interested them, make it a part of children's lives and follow their lead on ideas they want to pursue.



Harry suggested that we could both bring nature into the classroom by growing plants with the children and observing how they grow, but also going out into nature to promote health and well-being (Sustainable Development Goal 3).



Joanna said that you can start with topics in a typical course book and see how these can be adapted to teach about the environment and sustainability.

Typical coursebook topics

Sport and Leisure
Work and Studies
Food
Travel
Money
Energy and Weather
City Life



Things
Feelings
Getting Organized
Houses and Homes
People and Places
Technology
Opinions

Take **‘Work and Studies’**, for example, look at your digital environment footprint as a student, or think about good careers to follow to protect the planet. Again, we can localise these topics and personalise them. We might focus on typical food the students eat and consider packaging, food miles and CO2 in the production of food. As adults, don’t tell the students about the environment, get the students talking about it.



Andrea talked about how she works with adult students who work for a chemical company. She works online and picked the topic of future work

(<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/21st-century-jobs>).

She works online because the students live in different parts of the city. She adapted the materials to suit the learners, but used typical classroom activities, like group research and group writing. She split the lesson across three sessions.

One group took the **topic of work/life** balance and they produced this piece of writing together:

A 4-day working week



will probably become standard because this new concept has proved to be beneficial for employees. **They maintain the same productivity level and the also showed improvements in job satisfaction, teamwork, work/life balance and company loyalty.** According to some studies, there was a decrease in the level of stress. A 4-day work week would promote an equal workplace as employees would be able to spend more time with their families and better juggle care and work commitments. **On the other hand, reducing work week from 5 to 4 days could have an environmental benefit too because employees don't need to commute as much and large office buildings are only in use four days a week.** However, a big problem may arise if the concept of a 4-day work week is confused with compressed hours. Employees who are expected to still work 35 hours in 4 days will actually show decreased levels of productivity and it can also impact employees' engagement, work-life balance and overall happiness.

Students: Julian, Franciso & Paula.



Here are some general tips for teachers to think about when planning lessons:



Let the students do research before the lesson and/ or during the lesson



Teachers should keep their minds open to new ideas from the students



Be aware of the context they live in, e.g. these students were based in the capital city so their views of the world would be different to students living in the countryside



Listen and learn from the students



Be creative and flexible

Other example lessons

Fast fashion

Context: secondary school students from a poor area near a river. Most parents are fishermen.

What worked: students loved the lesson and found useful ideas. They completed a worksheet and produced a video or audio’.

Challenges adapting the lesson: vocabulary and resources. Ss share cellphones to do activities in class.



Verónica, Perú

Water for All

Context: small language school which is located in Güines, Mayabeque. Students are aged 20-45 who live in a southern area where there’s a large river and some creeks.

What worked: students were engaged because the preservation of water is important in their town as it is gradually disappearing.’

David, Cuba



Some final questions answered

Before the Climate Connections materials were created, a large survey was conducted. Teachers said they were concerned about not being experts on sustainability, which is why the MOOC was created to help the teachers become more familiar with the issues. It was suggested that teachers could start with students concerns and try to deal with any eco-anxiety by taking positive action, doing something, giving students agency, but also by bringing positive articles to class; finding materials where success stories are discussed.



How can we engage the students to make real environmental change?

- Avoid preaching to students and adapt materials so they don't either
- Consider social media as your ally, students can connect to others about the topic of the environment and then bring the ideas into class
- Go for local practical projects where they can get involved
- Be passionate about the environment, but make sure you listen to the student voice, too



Useful follow-up links

- <https://www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection>
- <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/learning-for-sustainable-future>
- <https://www.nile-elt.com/>
- <https://renewableenglish.com/home>

For further information on all aspects of NWOT see:

<https://americas.britishcouncil.org/new-ways-of-teaching>

Or, click on the QR code

