Episode 4: How can I teach refugees, migrants and internally displaced people effectively?

Show notes
Episode overview

There are more than 85 million displaced people in the world, with children under the age of 18 constituting around half this total. Whether a refugee, migrant, or internally-displaced person, developing language skills can play a huge role for these individuals – and the host communities in which they live – to withstand challenges, recover from crisis and overcome barriers. We'll explore the British Council work on *Language for Resilience* to understand this further. Following on from this, we'll speak to teacher and trainer Brian Lally about his work and research in Lebanon with Syrian refugees and identify some core principles which teachers working in these challenging situations can use.

In this episode

- 42% of the world’s forcibly displaced people are children which obviously has huge implications for education.
- Language classes give people the opportunity to come and share, talk about their experience in a safe space, and also to engage with other communities.
- A Sudanese participant, he took the training … and it gave him many chances to be part of the community and even to develop his language proficiency.
- My concern is really that the terminology might actually displace some of the responsibility.
- Just the very existence of education in these contexts is itself a statement of hope.
Classroom application

Think about how you could use the ideas in this episode in your own teaching. The questions below focus particularly on refugees, IDPs, migrants and asylum seekers (RIMA). If you don’t teach these groups, you could ask yourself:

- How do you make your teaching relevant and inclusive for students from different backgrounds?
- What teaching practices / skills mentioned in the podcast would you like to improve? How could you achieve this?

Think about your own practice

In terms of learning, what are the particular needs and requirements of asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and IDPs (ARMI)? How can you create a positive learning space for these groups?

Why do ARMI want to learn language(s)? What are the opportunities? What is the motivation?

What are the challenges faced by ARMI in terms of learning language(s)?

When teaching ARMI, are there any particular issues which you might need to omit, or manage?

Try this classroom activity

1. Invite people from the local community into your classroom. Ask them to talk about the past. Encourage the speakers to discuss a wide range of topics (e.g. culture, society, technology, politics).

2. Make the discussion interactive. Encourage students to ask questions. It might be helpful to prompt students with questions such as:
   - How have things changed in the last (30) years?
   - What did this area used to look like?
   - Are there any festivals which aren’t celebrated anymore?

3. Some students should be taking notes. You could also record or video what is said (if possible). If you do, make sure you ask for and receive permission from everyone who is going to appear in the video.

4. Students create a poster / play / short video about what they have heard. From a language perspective, encourage students to use both L1 and L2. For example:
   - the poster could be labelled in L1 and L2
   - the play’s dialogue could be in L1 and the narration in L2
   - the play’s dialogue could be in L2 and the narration in L1
   - the video could be in L1, but with subtitles created in L2 (but if this is difficult technically, subtitles could be written on paper – they do not have to appear on
5. Students share what they have created with the wider community, e.g. performing the play, reading the story or displaying the poster.

6. If you have time, students could do a range of follow-up written activities in L2, like producing a summary, news report, newsletter, and so on.

Highly mobile settings, where people have physically moved between many different places, can be used positively with students. Students could interview people and create a map which physically represents their journeys (see an example of an oral history map below). This could then be labelled in L2 and/or L1.

From Chris Sowton (2021), Teaching in Challenging Circumstances

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 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Explanation and Further Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Field Report: Language for Resilience</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</table>
| Terminology | There is often confusion about the descriptions of people who have left the place where they were living. The different terms are used as follows:  
  - A **refugee** is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country due to a conflict or a credible fear of persecution based on reasons of race, religion, political opinion, membership of a social group in that country and is seeking refuge in another state.  
  - An **asylum-seeker** is someone who applies for protection as a refugee in another country and his or her request for refugee status has not been assessed or is yet to be processed.  
  - Internally displaced people are people seeking refuge from conflict or disasters but within the borders of their own country.  
  - A **migrant** is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. |
| Language for Resilience | As the British Council’s website for [Language for Resilience](https://www.britishcouncil.org/language-for-resilience) says, “Language learning is absolutely essential. It helps refugees and their host communities to withstand challenges, to recover from crisis, to overcome barriers – to build resilience.”  

The original language for resilience report can be downloaded [here](https://www.britishcouncil.org/language-for-resilience). The follow-up report, *Cross-disciplinary perspectives on the role of language in enhancing the resilience of refugees and host communities*, can be downloaded [here](https://www.britishcouncil.org/language-for-resilience). |
<p>| Jordan | The Language for Resilience Programme helps community centres in Jordan deliver high-quality English language |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Language Support (CLS)</td>
<td>Programmes to marginalized and displaced youth through Community Language Support (CLS). Discover more about this programme <a href="#">here</a>. You can also <a href="#">click here</a> to read about a recent piece of research on language for resilience in Jordan commissioned by the British Council.</td>
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<tr>
<td>English for Interfaith Dialogue</td>
<td>English for Interfaith Dialogue is a continuation of The British Council partnership with Al-Azhar, which started back in 2007, to help building the English Language, communication and leadership skills of teachers and students. Discover more about this programme <a href="#">here</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ Palestine programme</td>
<td><a href="#">Click here</a> to discover more about the work of the British Council in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and <a href="#">click here</a> for more specific information about the @Palestine programme.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaza Sky Geeks</td>
<td>Gaza Sky Geeks is an initiative born out of Mercy Corps’ desire to extend its work beyond traditional humanitarian programs, and Google’s interest in the Gazan tech community. Find out more at <a href="https://gazaskygeeks.com/">https://gazaskygeeks.com/</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview with Brian Lally</td>
<td>Find out more about Brian’s research <a href="#">here</a>. Brian has been working with a Syrian-led NGO MAPS in Lebanon. You can discover more about their work <a href="#">here</a>.</td>
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<td>Education in Emergencies</td>
<td>Education in emergencies means providing schooling in humanitarian emergencies including conflicts or wars, natural disasters and health-related crises. A useful website with more details about this form of education is the <a href="#">INEE</a>.</td>
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<td>Often, I’m seeing children responding normally to bad teaching</td>
<td>As the psychologist Madge Bray says, “A child’s current behaviour often reflects an essentially sane response to an untenable set of life circumstances.”</td>
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<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a condition that affects people’s behaviour. People with ADHD can seem restless, may have trouble concentrating and may act on impulse. Symptoms of ADHD tend to be noticed at an early age and may become more noticeable when a child's circumstances change, such as when they start school.</td>
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<td>Trauma</td>
<td>The language classroom can be a space in which students can learn to manage their own feelings and behaviour. There is also...</td>
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<td>Good evidence of ...</td>
<td>good evidence that the ability to switch between languages can help people manage their trauma – either to distance themselves from the traumatic event, or else to focus in on it, allowing them to self-regulate.</td>
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<td>A safe space</td>
<td>A ‘safe space’ is somewhere that students feel they can speak and act freely, without being judged unfairly by the teacher or their fellow students.</td>
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**Useful links**

- [Language for Resilience Facebook Group](#)
- [Language for Resilience LinkedIn Group](#)
- [Migrants and Refugees in Education: A toolkit for teachers](#)
- [“What I wish I'd known when I began teaching English to refugees” – an article in the British Council’s ‘Voices’ magazine](#)
- [University of Kent free resources for teaching ARMI](#)
- [Education and Training Foundation – free ESOL materials](#)
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**
- abandoned
- academic
- actual
- adapt
- additional
- affected
- ambitious
- anxiety
- appropriate
- artificial
- barely
- barrier
- basically
- beyond
- capacity
- cause
- circumstances
- commerce
- commitment
- communicative
- community
- compares to
- concern
- confidently
- conflict
- context
- contrary
- contribute
- cope
- council
- crisis
- critically
- culturally
- currently
- data
- denied
- dialogue
- dimension
- diverse
- economy
- effectively
- enable
- eventually
- existence
- express
- extension
- extreme
- factors
- faiths
- feature
- feedback
- focus
- formal
- global
- graduates
- highlight
- hints
- host
- human rights
- identified
- illustrated
- images
- immediate
- individuals
- inspiration
- institutions
- key in
- management
- massive
- master
- meaningful
- media
- misunderstanding
- nations
- necessarily
- networks
- occupied
- opposed
- overall
- overseas
- partnership
- plugged
- practical
- present
- pressure on
- primarily
- process
- prospects
- protection
- psychological
- publication
- put up with
- rate
- realities
- reality
- recommendation
- reflections
- refugee
- regarded
- regional
- relevant
- researchers
- resource
- response
- responsibility
- scale
- seek
- specific
- statement
- stood out
- strengthening
- stressing
- sudden
- sum up
- symbol
- territories
- tied up
- tradition
- truly
- united
- unlocks
- version
- violence
- vision
- working at / on
- worldwide

**C1 Words**
- acknowledge
- addressing
- attendance
- broaden
- broadly
- competent
- completion
- constitutes
- constructive
- displacement
- displacing
- diversity
- duration
- engage
- evaluate
- flee
- grand
- implications

**C2 Words**
- advocate
- aspiration
- diagnosing
- echo
- engage in
- entity
- hostility
- margins
- narrative
- novelty
- observer
- optimism
- persistence
- practitioner
- resentment
- resilience
- resilient
- rigid
- scenarios
- schooling
- striving
- trauma
- underlying
- vulnerable