

# Developing mediation skills with creative texts

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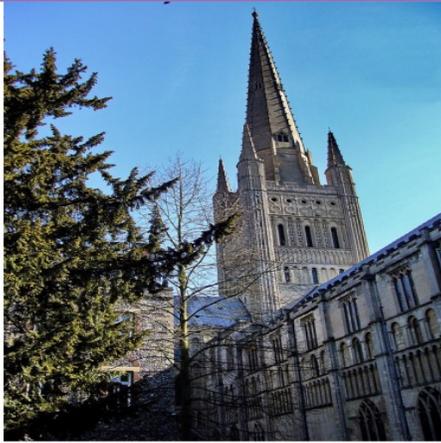
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# I'm here: Buenos Aires, Argentina



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# Culture Clash

All of a sudden,  
you stopped the car  
and I saw you leap out  
just to pick up a conker  
from the road.

# Conker

the hard, shiny dark brown nut of a horse chestnut tree



# Conkers

A traditional children's game in Great Britain and Ireland played using the seeds of horse chestnut trees—the name 'conker' is also applied to the seed and to the tree itself.

The game is played by two players, each with a conker threaded onto a piece of string: they take turns striking each other's conker until one breaks.



All of a sudden,  
you stopped the car  
and I saw you leap out  
just to pick up a conker  
from the road.



A conker!

Round, rough and spiky.

Held between your thumb and middle finger  
as if you'd found a pearl.

It was obvious to you,  
(but I didn't know then)  
that a conker meant childhood,  
that there were stories in it,  
that you could play a game that you could win  
if you soaked it in vinegar...  
although that would be cheating.



It was indeed a treasure  
that you had found for me.  
I accepted your gift  
as I've been taught to do:  
smiling politely.

I have found it years later in a drawer,  
split into two.

It's been years since I failed to make you see  
that where I come from we play other games  
or bend the rules,  
that rules don't travel well,  
that a conker will crack inside a drawer  
(a sad dry carcass torn hopelessly into two)  
so far from where you live,  
from where it fell.

James Clifford (*Roots*, 1997):

translation



# Travelling cultures

‘Everyone more or less permanently in transit...  
Not so much “Where are you from?” as “Where  
are you between?”’

(Clifford 1997: 37)

Clifford (1997: 39)

“Traduttore, traduttore. In the kind of translation that interests me most, you learn a lot about peoples, cultures, and histories different from your own, enough to begin to know what you’re missing”

# Lockdown: online mediation



<https://theconversation.com/lockdown-schooling-research-from-around-the-world-shows-reasons-to-be-hopeful-174714>

# What do we mean by mediation?



Source: Knowledge hub

- intervention in a dispute in order to resolve it; arbitration
- intervention in a process or relationship



Hunter Valley News

Developing mediation skills with creative texts

# Mediation in ELT

Instances when “a learner/user acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning”.



*Common European Framework for Reference  
for Languages Companion Volume (2020)*

# Ourselves as mediators

- Linguistic
- Cultural
- Social
- Pedagogic



# Central Aim of Language Education

to address “the problem of wanting to express one world view through the language normally used to express another society’s world views”

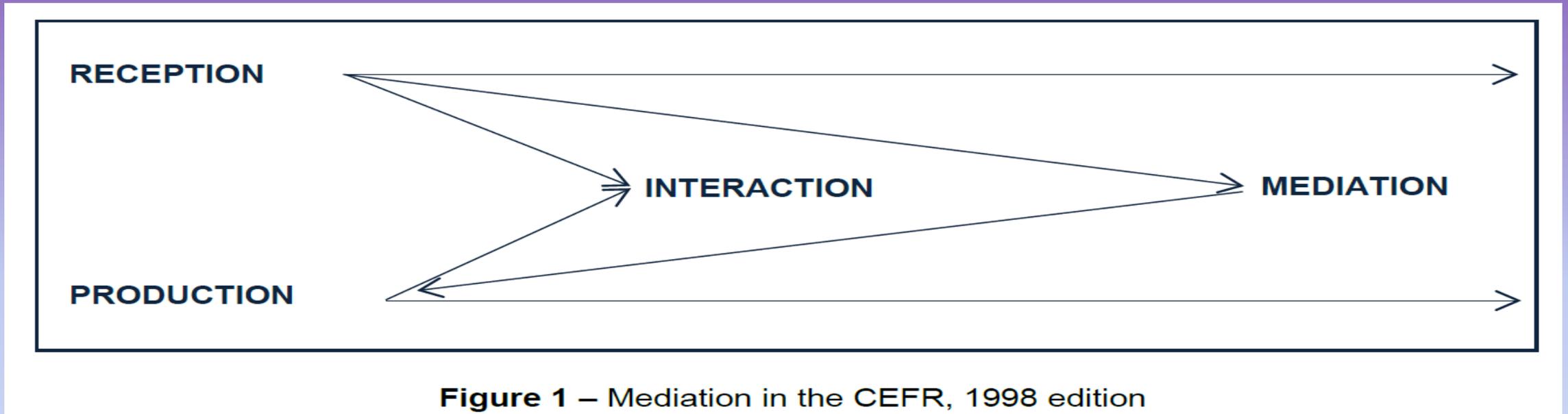
Claire Kramersch,

*Content and Culture in Language Teaching.*

Oxford University Press, 1993: 20



# Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001)



**from 4 skills to 4 modes of communication  
plurilingual and pluricultural competences  
learner as social agent**

# Sample descriptors

**B1**

Can collaborate with people from other backgrounds, showing interest and empathy by asking and answering simple questions, formulating and responding to suggestions, asking whether people agree, and proposing alternative approaches. Can convey the main points made in long texts expressed in uncomplicated language on topics of personal interest, provided they can check the meaning of certain expressions.

Can introduce people from different backgrounds, showing awareness that some questions may be perceived differently, and invite other people to contribute their expertise and experience as well as their views. Can convey information given in clear, well-structured informational texts on subjects that are familiar or of personal or current interest, although lexical limitations cause difficulty with formulation at times.

# mediating

- text

- concepts

- communication

# Mediating a text

involves passing on to another person the content of a text to which they do not have access, often because of linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical barriers. This is the main sense in which the 2001 CEFR text uses the term mediation.

The notion has been further developed to include mediating a text for oneself (for example in **taking notes during a lecture**) or in **expressing reactions to texts**, particularly creative and literary ones.

# Mediating concepts

refers to the process of **facilitating access to knowledge and concepts for others, particularly if they may be unable to access this directly on their own.** This is a fundamental aspect of parenting, mentoring, teaching and training.

# Mediating communication

to facilitate understanding and to **shape successful communication between users/learners who may have individual, sociocultural, sociolinguistic or intellectual differences in standpoint.**

The skills involved are relevant to **diplomacy, negotiation, pedagogy and dispute resolution**, but also to everyday social and/or workplace interactions.

# Some mediation strategies

- mediate a text:  
**translate, interpret, summarise, explain data / graphics in speech, take down notes**
- mediate concepts and collaborate with others to facilitate the conversation as a member of a group:  
**foster respectful agreement, bridge cultural gaps**
- manage communication:  
**rephrase, simplify, clarify, break down complex information**

# Mediation and 21st century skills

- **Personalisation**

explain in your own words / summarise / reporting what you have learnt

- **Collaborative learning**

problem solving in pairs or groups, brainstorming to ask probing questions

- **Effective communication**

finding ways to communicate in simpler language / in translation / across cultures / in different registers and styles

- **Building empathy and mutual respect**

intercultural communication/awareness-raising activities

# How can we develop tasks that focus on mediation ?

- If you already encourage real-life communication in your lessons, then you are probably already teaching mediation skills: think around existing tasks
- You can look at the CEFR mediation descriptors, identify activities relevant to each CEFR level and adapt these to suit your context
- Find its potential in mixed-level classes: encourage collaborative support
- Encourage reflection on communicative success in self/peer assessment
- Hand over your role (students' presentations, project work, get students to design tasks, choose topics, explain what others don't understand)
- Choose/design/adapt suitable materials

# Harmonise- Level 1- Unit 6 -Oxford University Press

30



Personalisation  
and collaboration

# Translation

**5 THINK** Discuss the questions.

- 1 Describe Franz's feelings when they left the dogs.
- 2 What do you think happens next in the story?

**LIFE SKILLS** In good teams every member has a job and they work well together. What jobs do the members of the Swiss Family Robinson have?

**6**  **MEDIATION** Your friend doesn't speak English. Use your own language to tell them the story and what you like about it.

# Transmediation: skills integration

## 6 PROJECT

### Make a video diary of your experience of living on a remote island

#### SHARE AND REVIEW

**1** Look back at your Project Builders 1-5 for this unit. Check that you have:

- 1** a name for your island, where it is and how you get there.
- 2** some sentences about the weather on the island.
- 3** some sentences about the activities you did on the island.
- 4** information about an animal you saw on the island.
- 5** a diary of a day on your island.

Use your Project Log p24-26





#### DECIDE

**2** Discuss the questions.

- 1** What equipment do you need to make your video diary?
- 2** Is it better to make the video in portrait or landscape format? Why?
- 3** What can you use as interesting backgrounds?
- 4** Your diary is in three parts, one for each day. Does each person in your group want to be in the video? Who wants to film? What other roles are there?



landscape



portrait

#### CREATE

**4** Read the Project skills. Can you think of any other tips for making a video presentation?

**PROJECT SKILLS** Making a video presentation

- Practise speaking before you start making the video.
- Try to speak without reading from a piece of paper.
- Look directly at the camera.
- Stay close to the microphone.
- Try to include some interesting backgrounds, photos, video clips and sounds.

**5** Make your video diary. Remember the tips in the Project skills.

#### PREPARE

**3** Write the script for your video diary. Use this guide to help you. Remember to use the past simple.

- 1** Talk about the geography of your island. Can you include a map or photo?
- 2** Talk about your first day. How did you travel there? What were your first impressions and feelings?
- 3** Describe the weather, the food you ate, the place you slept.
- 4** Describe the main events.



Day 1

Today we arrived at the island. We travelled by boat. First, we explored ...

Day 2

Today we looked for food on the island. We found a lot of ...

#### PRESENT

**6** Show your video to the rest of the class. Be ready to answer some questions from other groups.

**7** Ask some questions about each group's diary at the end of the presentation.

What was the best thing about your stay on the island?

How did you feel when you left?

**8** Write sentences about the other groups' video diaries. Use the Key phrases to help you.

**KEY PHRASES**

**Giving feedback**

- I really enjoyed the video diary by ... because it was ...
- Their presentation was clear / exciting / interesting / funny ...
- Their video skills were good because they (included interesting backgrounds).
- The best part of the video diary was ...

#### REFLECT

**9** Think about your project work in this unit. Read the statements and choose your reaction.

DIGITAL	CREATIVITY	COLLABORATION
<p><b>1</b> Our group can make an interesting video diary using a camera or phone.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">☹️ 😐 😊 😄 😁</p>	<p><b>2</b> Our group had some good and original ideas.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">☹️ 😐 😊 😄 😁</p>	<p><b>3</b> Our group took turns and divided up the tasks well.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">☹️ 😐 😊 😄 😁</p>

**10** Complete these sentences for you.

- 1** Our video diary was good because \_\_\_\_\_
- 2** Next time I do a video diary, I want to \_\_\_\_\_

📖 Workbook Project Log p27

# Life Vision, OUP, unit 1, p. 11

6  Work in pairs. Discuss and decide on the five most useful tips for starting a blog from the listening and from the tips in Ex 2.

7 **MEDIATION** Write a short presentation for a group of people who are new to blogging. Include the five best tips that you chose. Consider ...

- what knowledge your audience may have about blogging and what they may not know.
- what words and phrases may need explaining.
- how to present the information and what examples to use to make it relevant.

8  Give your presentation to the class. Then vote on whose presentation is the most suitable for people new to blogging. Explain your choice.



Identify different speakers in a discussion about blogging.

1.3 LISTENING

## Blogging

- 1  **THINK & SHARE** Do you read any blogs? If yes, which ones? If not, why not?
- 2 **VOCABULARY** Read the tips for writing an effective blog. Pay attention to the collocations in **bold**. Then match 1-4 to A-D to create tips about a successful blog.

### TOP TIPS for blogging success

- 1 **Be original** and don't follow others.
- 2 Write with passion and **create content** about topics you know about and which others will relate to.
- 3 **Get to the point**.
- 4 Address the negatives but **focus on the positives** when you read people's comments.
- A Remember, people will get bored quickly if your text is too long.
- B Instead, **use your imagination to come up with new ideas**.
- C Not everyone will like what you do, so pay more attention to those who do!
- D It's the best way to **connect with your audience**.

### STRATEGY Identifying different speakers

When you listen to a radio show or podcast, you will need to understand which person is speaking to be able to follow a discussion. Pay attention to the accent, the speed and the tone of voice of the different speakers.

- 3  **1.04** Read the strategy. Then listen to three people talking about their experiences with blogging. Match tips 1-4 in Ex 2 to the speakers who talk about them.  
1 Sarah  2 Katie  3 Hannah
- 4  **1.04** Listen to the discussion again and complete the phrases that each speaker used. Then match each phrase to a collocation in Ex 2.  
1 Write about what you   
2 People will  to you and your blog much better.  
3 Do something , something  from other people.  
4 Quickly  what you want to  and don't  too much.
- 5  **1.05** Listen to the rest of the discussion and choose the correct answer: A, B or C.  
1 What does Hannah suggest doing to help her come up with ideas?  
A Read lots of other blogs.  
B Think about what you enjoy reading about.  
C Start writing as soon as you can.  
2 What did Sarah find out by looking at other blogs?  
A That funny blogs were more popular.  
B That most blogs were very similar.  
C That there weren't many blogs that made you laugh.  
3 What helped Katie connect with her readers?  
A Writing about who she was.  
B Making her readers laugh.  
C Telling the truth.  
4 What advice does Sarah give about stories?  
A Everyone likes to read them.  
B Keep them short.  
C They can help illustrate what you want to say.
- 6  Work in pairs. Discuss and decide on the five most useful tips for starting a blog from the listening and from the tips in Ex 2.
- 7 **MEDIATION** Write a short presentation for a group of people who are new to blogging. Include the five best tips that you chose. Consider ...
  - what knowledge your audience may have about blogging and what they may not know.
  - what words and phrases may need explaining.
  - how to present the information and what examples to use to make it relevant.
- 8  Give your presentation to the class. Then vote on whose presentation is the most suitable for people new to blogging. Explain your choice.
- 9  **THINK & SHARE** Discuss the questions.  
1 Why do you think writing and reading blogs are so popular?  
2 What benefits do readers and writers get from them?  
3 If you wanted to write a blog, what subject would you write about? Which tips from this lesson would you follow?

# What if AI fulfills the task for our students?



Hello everyone, and welcome to this introduction to blogging! For those of you who are new to blogging, it can be an exciting and rewarding way to express your thoughts and ideas online. Today, we will cover some basic concepts and tools to help you get started with your own blog.



First, let's define what a blog is. A blog is a type of website or online platform where an individual or group of individuals can post their thoughts, opinions, and experiences on a variety of topics. It can be personal, professional, or used for marketing purposes.

To start your own blog, there are a few steps you'll need to take. The first step is to choose a blogging platform, which is the software or service that allows you to create and publish your blog posts. Some popular blogging platforms include WordPress, Blogger, and Medium.

Once you've chosen your platform, you'll need to create an account and choose a domain name for your blog. Your domain name is the unique web address that will direct readers to your blog.

 Regenerate response



Now, it's time to start creating content for your blog. This is where you'll write and publish posts on a regular basis. Your posts can be about anything you're passionate about, whether it's your hobbies, personal experiences, or your professional expertise.

As you begin blogging, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, it's important to be consistent in your posting schedule. Regularly publishing new content will keep your readers engaged and coming back for more.

Secondly, it's important to make your posts visually appealing and easy to read. Using images, bullet points, and headings can help break up your text and make your posts more engaging.

Finally, promoting your blog is key to building an audience. You can share your blog posts on social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, and engage with other bloggers in your niche to increase your reach.

In conclusion, blogging can be a great way to express your thoughts and ideas online, connect with others who share your interests, and build your online presence. By following these basic steps and tips, you can create a successful blog that will help you achieve your goals.

# Using CHAT GPT for HOTs (higher order thinking skills)

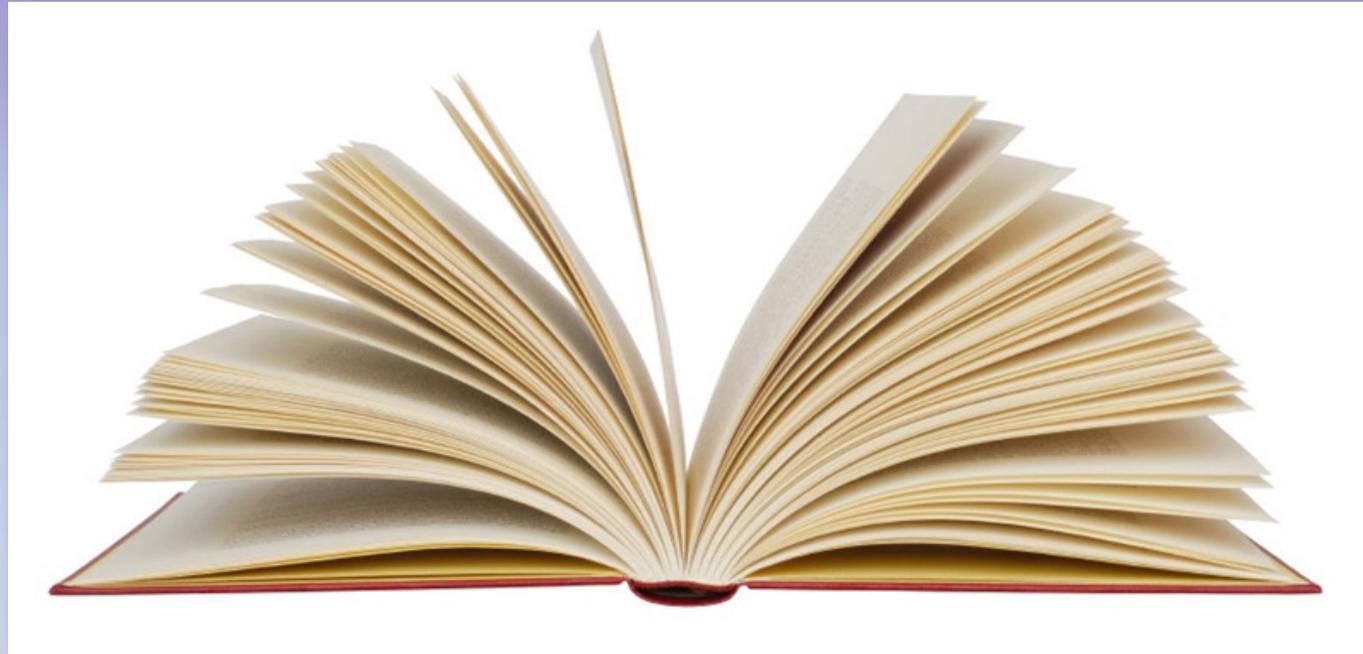
- **Evaluation:**

- Does the advice given by ChatGPT cover all the points required in the task?
- How does the information compare with the tips in exercise 2 and in the listening?
- Which do you think is better and why?

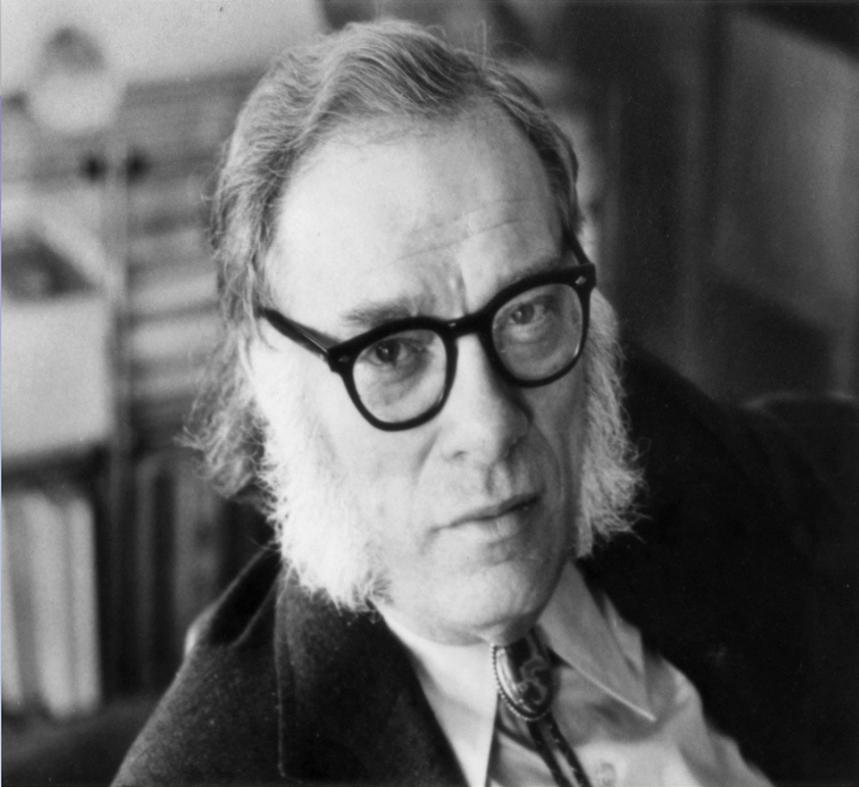
- **Extension:**

- What tips does Chat GPT provide if given a more general prompt?

Now, explain what this is  
to a child in the year 2155



# Isaac Asimov “The Fun they Had”



# Craig Raine, A Martian Sends a Postcard Home (1979)

Caxtons are mechanical birds with many wings  
and some are treasured for their markings –

they cause the eyes to melt  
or the body to shriek without pain.

I have never seen one fly, but  
sometimes they perch on the hand.



# How to prepare a good mate



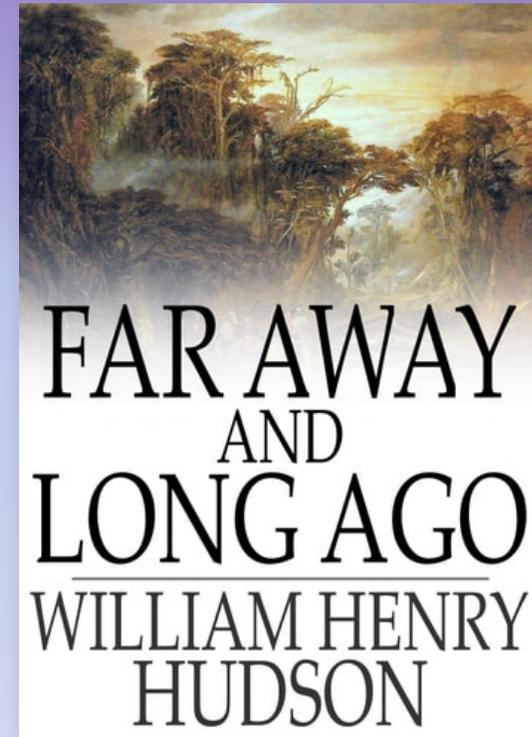
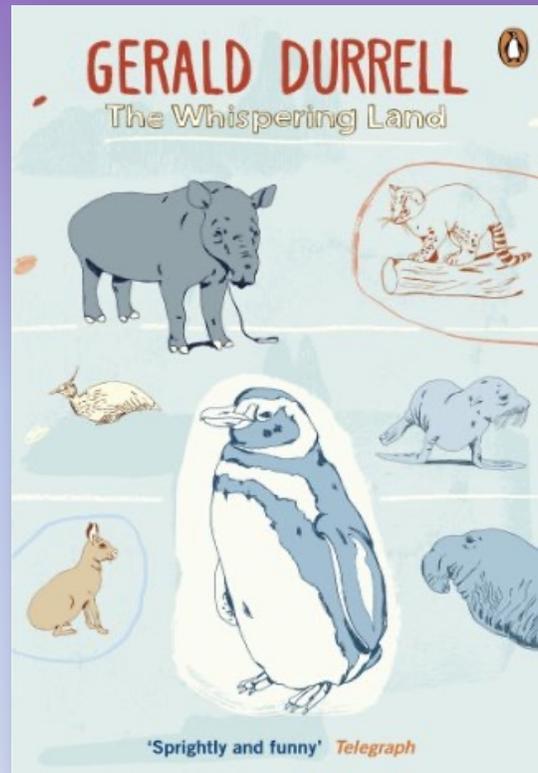
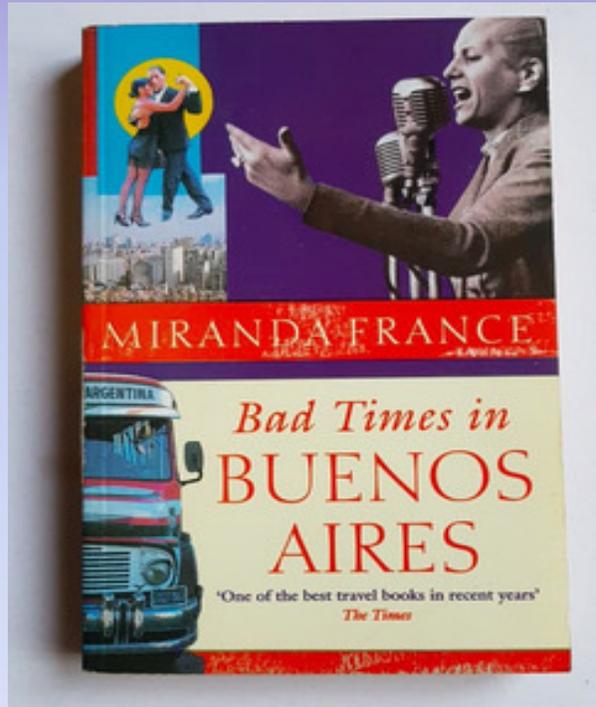
But do students have the words to mediate in a foreign language?



# Choose / adapt / design materials that lead to mediation skills and showcase the necessary language for personalisation

- Let me explain...
- What do you mean by...?
- I'll give you an example (to show what I have in mind).
- OK, I'll make it more precise / give you further details.

# World literatures in English(es) about the local context



# kola nuts



A kola nut ceremony is briefly described in Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel *Things Fall Apart*.

The eating of kola nuts is referred to at least a further ten times in the novel showing the significance of the kola nut in pre-colonial 1890s Igbo culture in Nigeria. One of these sayings on kola nut in *Things Fall Apart* is: "He who brings kola brings life."

The kola nut is repeatedly mentioned in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, which also features the phrase: "He who brings the Kola nut brings life."

# the kola nut ceremony

- In Igbo culture, the kola nut is a crucial part of many ceremonies, gatherings, and welcoming of visitors to one's home. As a mark of respect, the kola nut is broken with a knife and then followed immediately by prayers.
- In West Africa where it is cultivated on large scale, its value varies from one community to another. For instance, in predominantly Muslim Hausa as well as Yoruba communities, kola nut is offered as a symbol of hospitality; but without elaborate ceremonies like the Igbo.

The Historical Significance and Role of the Kola Nut among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria  
Ikenna Ukpabi Unya, *Journal of Religion and Human Relations*, (13,1) 2021

Video poetry  
Raymond Antrobus  
“Two Guns in the Sky”  
for Daniel Harris



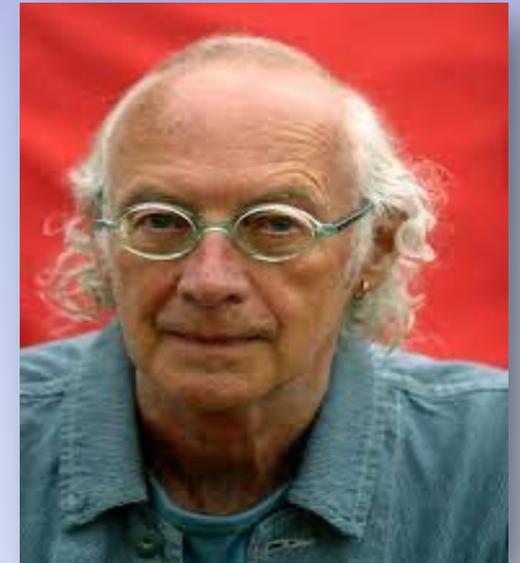
# Roger McGough, You and I

I explain quietly. You  
hear me shouting. You  
try a new tack. I  
feel old wounds reopen.

You see both sides. I  
see your blinkers. I  
am placatory. You  
sense a new selfishness.

I am a dove. You  
recognize the hawk. You  
offer an olive branch. I  
feel the thorns.

You bleed. I  
see crocodile tears. I  
withdraw. You  
reel from the impact.



# Thank you!



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