

# THE POWER OF WORDS

July 27-31

TEACHER  
INSTITUTE 2020

*I only know that learning to believe in the power of my own words has been the most freeing experience of my life.*  
- Elizabeth Acevedo  
The Poet X

## The Power of Words The 12th Annual Habla Virtual Teacher Institute

# Itinerary

This year the institute will be led in English with materials in Spanish and English available. Please note that all listed times are in the **Central Time Zone (North America)**.

*Quotes throughout the itinerary are from this summer's core text, Elizabeth Acevedo's The Poet X. This text will be supplemented by a constellation of poems, songs, and books for every age group.*

### MONDAY, JULY 27

9:45am-10:00am

#### WELCOME

10:00am-12:00pm

#### FIRST WORDS

a building community/performance/writing workshop with Tommaso Iskra De Silvestri and Kurt Wootton

*"I sit wondering how writing can bring such strangers into the same room."*

12:30pm-1:30pm

#### OPTIONAL LUNCH AND LEARN

an in-depth training session on Google Drawings

2:00pm-4:15pm

#### FIRST WORDS WORKSHOP CONT.

## TUESDAY, JULY 28

9:45am-12:00pm

### **TWISTING AND TURNING LANGUAGE**

a poetry reading, discussion, and writing workshop with Patricia Sobral

*“The way the words say what I mean,  
how they twist and turn language,  
how they connect with people.  
How they build community.”*

2:00pm-4:15pm

### **LANTERNS GLOWING IN THE DARK**

a visual and textual arts workshop with Cynthia Weiss and Tommaso Iskra De Silvestri

*“I only know that learning to believe in the power of my own words has been the most freeing experience of my life. It has brought me the most light. And isn't that what a poem is? A lantern glowing in the dark.”*

## WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

9:45am-12:00pm

### **LEARNING TO FLY**

a visual arts workshop with Cynthia Weiss and Tommaso Iskra De Silvestri

*“And my heart is one of Darwin's finches learning to fly.”*

2:00pm-4:15pm

### **THE POWER OF A ROOM**

online presentations and conversations from Institute participants

## THURSDAY, JULY 30

9:45am-12:00pm

### **COMPOSING SOUND AND WORD SYMPHONIES**

a performance and music workshop with Darío Bernal Villegas, María del Mar Patrón Vázquez, and Kurt Wootton

*“And even that young I learned music can become a bridge between you and a total stranger.”*

12:30pm-1:30pm

### **OPTIONAL LUNCH AND LEARN**

an in-depth training session on Soundtrap

2:00pm-4:15pm

### **COMPOSING SOUND AND WORD SYMPHONIES CONT.**

## FRIDAY, JULY 31

10:00am-12:00pm

### **THE POWER OF WORDS: AN ONLINE EXHIBITION**

exhibition of the week's collective work and Institute reflection

## PRESENTERS 2020 VIRTUAL TEACHER INSTITUTE

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**María del Mar Patrón Vázquez** was born in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico where her family has lived for generations. She studied literature at Universidad de las Américas in Puebla, Mexico and then went on to a graduate degree in Hispanic Studies at Brown University in the United States. Her work is focused on how reading and literature can be part of the daily life of communities. At Brown she received the prestigious Presidential Teaching Award for her teaching of Spanish language classes to university students. Her unique approach to teaching involves the literature and culture of the language. Marimar has presented talks and workshops on language teaching in a variety of settings including Brown University, Florida Atlantic University, and for SmART Schools, an arts-integration organization. Perhaps the greatest lessons she’s learned about teaching are from her children, Luis and Sandra, who are growing up bilingual.

**Kurt Wootton** is a co-founder and director of Habla: The Center for Language and Culture and is one of the founding directors of the ArtsLiteracy Project in the Education Department at Brown University. He has piloted several lab schools in the United States, Brazil, and Mexico and has worked with Boston, Hartford, St. Paul, Providence, and Central Falls on multi-year, district-wide initiatives. He is the coauthor of *A Reason to Read: Linking Literacy and the Arts* published by Harvard Education Press. The New York Times writes, “Mr. Wootton remains every bit as convinced of education’s power to transform lives. He has changed his tool of choice, however, from a mirror in which students see only reflections of themselves to a window that opens onto the rest of the world.”

**Cynthia Weiss** is an award-winning artist and educator, and a national leader in creative youth development and arts integration. She was previously the Director of Education at Marwen, a program that provides free visual arts courses and career counselors for Chicago youth from low-income communities. Cynthia helped found and direct the AIMproject (Arts Integration Mentoring Project) at Columbia College in Chicago. She is part of the arts education team that creates and directs the summer institutes at Habla: The Center for Language and Culture in Merida, Mexico. She does consultations at the local and national levels to support educating artists in their professional development of arts learning and reading and writing. Cynthia has an MFA in painting from the University of Illinois at Chicago and has directed large-scale public projects around the city and is a member of the Chicago Public Art Group. She is co-editor, with Gail Burnaford and Arnold Aprill of *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning*, and co-editor with Amana Lichtenstein of *AIMprint: New Relations in the Arts and Learning*.

**Patricia Sobral** was educated in Brazil and the United States and has lived all her life between and in the midst of several cultures. She holds a Ph.D. in Portuguese and Brazilian Studies from Brown University, where she is currently a faculty member. She is the Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Portuguese and Brazilian Studies. Patricia teaches several courses in Portuguese via the arts, for example *Performing Brazil*, and three courses in English: a first-year seminar, *Belonging and Displacement*; a sophomore seminar, *Mapping Cross-Cultural Identities*, and *Artful Teaching*. Patricia Sobral is the recipient of the 2012 Harriet W. Sheridan Award for Distinguished Contribution to Teaching and Learning at Brown, and the Undergraduate Student Council Award for Teaching and Advising, and the recipient of the 2016 Karen T. Romer Prize for Excellence in Advising. She is a co-author of *Ponto de Encontro, Viajando através do alfabeto*, and *Mapeando o Português através das Artes*. She integrates the performing, visual, digital, and literary arts to enhance language acquisition, deepen cultural awareness, and demonstrate how the arts can promote change.

**Darío Bernal Villegas** is a drummer, composer, and improviser, originally from Mexico City, trained in Mexico and London. Improvisation is an essential part of his job as a music creator, both in his openly improvised pieces and his compositions. He seeks to create an intense and creative interaction between musicians and the score, fostering the conditions for a fruitful dialogue between performer and composer. He is known for helping students create original, modern compositions using a variety of instruments and found objects.

**Donald King** is a seasoned producer, cultural practitioner and community engagement specialist who is skilled in connecting people, places and perspectives. He develops successful cultural organizations, venues, and events nationally and internationally. He has twenty years of notable accomplishments and extensive expertise in the arts, arts education and literacy. King was the founder and Artistic Director of Providence Black Repertory Company where he produced thirteen seasons of award-winning theatre, education and public programs including Providence Sound Session, a genre-defying, multi-stage music festival and parade that hailed national and international audiences. He has served as a visiting professor at his alma mater, Brown University, where he concentrated in Africana, Modern Culture Media and Theatre. King's facilitation skills, creativity, leadership abilities, and engagement practices are sharpened through his work with The ArtsLiteracy Project at Brown University, The Habla Teacher Institute and his current work with The Learning Alliance (Moonshot Academy) in Vero Beach Florida, along with his ongoing role as an active alum of Leadership Rhode Island and previous LRI Program Co-Chair, wherein he received the "2018 Leader As Host" award for his work with The Providence Cultural Equity Initiative (PCEI) and Providence Sound Session. King divides his time between Austin, Texas, Portland, Oregon and Providence, RI, where he advises as a creative consultant for PCEI and Eco Arts, where he helps to facilitate local, regional, national and international cultural exchange and tourism initiatives. He continues to produce, present and advise on large scale, multi-stage festivals and place-making events and institutes.

**Arnold April** founded the Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) in 1993 and the Radical Compliance Arts and Learning Laboratory in 2012. He comes from a background in professional theater as an award-winning director, producer, and playwright. He has taught at the University of Chicago, National-Louis University, Columbia College, and the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He is one of the co-editors with Cynthia Weiss and Gail Burnaford of *Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning*. He consults nationally and internationally on the role of the arts in effective school improvement and has been recognized for exceptional leadership by the Chicago Community Trust and the Ford Foundation. The Fulbright Scholar's program has named him as an arts education Senior Specialist.

**Tommaso Iskra De Silvestri** was born in Milan, Italy and moved to Mexico at a very young age, when his passion for art blossomed. Tommaso studied Fine Arts at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Urbino in Italy. During his undergraduate studies, Tommaso found another passion: working with kids. In 2010, Tommaso moved to Merida and participated in the Habla Teacher Institute to further pursue his enthusiasm for early-childhood education. This opened the door for him to become a teacher at Habla, where today he is the Creative Director and continues to teach. He also works with EdúcaTE Yucatán A.C. as an arts literacy promotor for primary school students and PICIP (Comprehensive Participatory Community Intervention Program), where he collaborates with the people of Flamboyanes to create murals around the community. Whenever he can, Tommaso attends art and teaching workshops to enhance his creativity in his professional and personal work. His passions include painting, videography, photography, animation, music, and yoga. Watching the excitement his students express when creating art and exploring their own imagination is what drives his passion for teaching.

**Madeline Beath** grew up in Tennessee and has always had a passion for people. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Spanish before moving to Mérida in 2012. For the better part of a decade, Madeline has worked with mostly teens and pre-teens in diverse classroom settings in and around Mérida, which inspired her to pursue her Master of Science in Social Work with a concentration in Organizational Leadership from the University of Tennessee. Madeline is currently linked with EdúcaTE Yucatán, AC and PICIP (Comprehensive Participatory Community Intervention Program), where she works in project development and implementation for youth and parent programs. Madeline loves working with youth and is dedicated to violence prevention, community empowerment and trauma-informed practice. She strives to promote an interdisciplinary collaboration between educators and social workers to take on the challenges youth face in and out of the classroom. Madeline is the English and Community Projects Coordinator at Habla.