



Fall 2025 Newsletter

Letter from the Executive Director



Dear Conflict Transformation Collaborative at Middlebury partners,

What change(s) are you experiencing? What conflicts are you experiencing? What change(s) do you want to build towards? How might conflict be an impetus for meaningful change?

I frequently ask my students these questions during classes and workshops, and they can always share a range of examples from personal and interpersonal to institutional, structural, and cultural spheres. In my first few months as Executive Director of the Middlebury Conflict Transformation Collaborative, it has been fulfilling to learn with students, faculty, staff, and community partners engaged in the conflict-change nexus across a range of contexts and cultures. This work involves a simultaneous orientation to

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

priorities, integrating across the pillars, refreshing [learning goals](#), fostering partnerships, building individual and collective capacity, and deepening our impact across contexts. In so doing, we are recognizing the central importance of creating space for *proactive and responsive dialogue* alongside *ethical action*. And we are identifying the *evergreen* topics, issues, and interests in this sphere, and those specific to *this moment*, in local, domestic, and global communities. In this newsletter, you'll see stories from all CT Collaborative [pillars](#) that highlight **cohorts** as meaningful spaces for critical engagement, relationship-building, and complexity.

I would like to share with you this quote from Haruki Murakami (*Kafka on the Shore*), which demonstrates in a compelling way how experience, change, reflection, power, and conflict are so intertwined: "And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about."

Ultimately, the CT Collaborative is designed to create spaces for partnership and community in an ever-changing world. We look forward to connecting with you, as we all discover our purpose and meaning in a time deeply shaped by the conflict-change nexus. To follow us on Instagram, attend an event or email us, keep scrolling!

My best,

Netta Avineri

Middlebury Conflict Transformation Collaborative Executive Director

Conflict and Change in Cohorts

Pillar One: High School Education

Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change Cohort

Once again in 2025, the Bread Loaf School of English (BLSE) provided fellowships to support high school teachers with their commitments to making positive change through learning across difference. [The Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change Fellows](#) each completed a course in BLSE's [Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change](#) sequence, and through the [Bread Loaf Teacher Network \(BLTN\)](#) designed collaborative projects to connect classrooms during the school year.

Meet the 2025-26 BLSE Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change Fellows



Bread Loaf Teacher Network
Middlebury Bread Loaf School of English

Nik Bergill

Gould Academy – Bethel, ME



"My greatest English teachers used literature and film as windows beyond my New Hampshire boarding school and I am grateful for the opportunity to now do the same. In the coming years I will keep striving to question my own biases and assumptions and to model justice-centered learning in my classroom. While some students will write this work off as 'critical race theory,' I must remember to offer them the same empathy and dedication that I give to students who naturally buy into my course material. It would be all too easy to recreate national divisions within my classroom but I hope that, instead, my demonstrated patience and care can encourage even my most skeptical students to feel safe confronting challenging material with their peers."

Bread Loaf Teacher Network
Middlebury Bread Loaf School of English

Meet the [2025-26 Teaching, Writing, and Acting for Change Fellows](#).

As one example of the many projects planned for this year, high schoolers in Bethel, Maine and Columbia, South Carolina will inform one another about issues they identify as important in their local communities. They will then equip their partner classrooms with research sources on those local issues, and prompt their distant partners to compose "synthesis essays" that propose solutions to the distant community's issues.

Emily Masters, the teacher from South Carolina, brings a deepened cultural awareness to her collaboration, thanks in part to her experience in Dr. David Wandera's course, Teaching Literacies Across Difference. "We discussed transgressive, student-centered education that frames students' cultures and personal experiences as integral parts of a high quality education, particularly in terms of turning students into active citizens who will fight for social justice."



Pillar Two: Undergraduate Campus Life

Peer Conflict Coaches

In March 2025, we launched the selection process for a new Peer Conflict Coaching program, inviting applications from students already connected to CT through workshops, courses, or events. We were most interested in candidates' ability to decenter themselves, demonstrate strong self-awareness, and hold complexity, and we selected 11 Peer conflict coaches for this academic year.

This paid position includes an initial three-day training, followed by up to six hours per week during the Fall semester for each peer facilitator. Responsibilities include weekly cohort meetings, ongoing training, office hours, and program outreach. Our goal is to equip students to respond to low-level harms and conflicts among their peers.

The initial three-day cohort training took place in mid- September. The Peer Conflict Coaches are sophomores through seniors with many different majors, interests, and backgrounds. In addition to building community, we highlighted the skills and dispositions of listening, questions of curiosity, body language and decentering yourself when supporting others. It was a rich weekend, and we look forward to engaging with the cohort through the coming year!



2025-2026 Peer Conflict Coaches

Pillar Three: Undergraduate Experiential Learning

Service Translation



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Service Translation is an international collaboration with students from Middlebury and International Christian University (Mitaka, Japan) team-translating oral histories and other historical documents related to the experiences of Japanese Americans impacted by Executive Order 9066. Over the course of a year, students from the ICU Time Travelers program and Middlebury College's Service Translation group gathered to translate documents.

The spring/summer 2025 project was the translation (Japanese to English) of haiku written by incarcerated at the Sharp Park Internment Camp. These primary materials are housed at the Hoover Institute of Stanford University. The students from both institutions culminated their year as a cohort with a summer trip to San Francisco to meet with the collaborating professor at Stanford and to join an event on the history of Sharp Park, in partnership with the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California.

Participant Karen Ito '27 reflected on the power of the cohort experience: "*Each person brought different interpretations and forms of awareness, which expanded my understanding and showed me how their thinking stems from their different backgrounds while still grounding themselves in shared values.*"

Pillar Four: Graduate Training and Research

New Skills-Based Workshops at Annual Seminar

At the 2025 Conflict Transformation Annual Seminar, 40 CT Cohort Fellows shared in-person and online about their interdisciplinary projects focused on global security, environmental, and intercultural communication. A new feature of this year's Seminar were 4 skills-based workshops, facilitated by practitioners from a range of domains:

- Emmy-award winning composer John Wineglass facilitated a workshop about creativity and conflict, highlighting tensions involved in creative choices when crafting music, compositions, and language.
- Monterey-based court mediator Scott Dick shared about the principles of mediation, including a range of examples from his ongoing practice in legal settings.
- Senior Equal Opportunity Analyst for the Monterey County Civil Rights Office Natalie Alfaro Frazier shared about restorative practices and integrated its uses across contexts and communities in the region.
- Middlebury Assistant Professor of Dance/Restorative Practices Partner Lida Winfield facilitated an online workshop about the role of art in conflict and change.



The range of workshop topics and speakers provided the Cohort Fellows and other Seminar participants with multiple lenses for exploring conflict and change for the issues that are most compelling to them. It was a dynamic day full of meaningful learning and engagement!

Pillar Five: Global Engagement

Education Abroad Convening in Denver

In August 2025, The Forum on Education Abroad hosted a [“Beyond Polarization”](#) Residency focused on “Transforming Conflict into Collaboration”. The residency included over 30 participants from a range of universities focused on global learning, co-sponsored by WorldStrides and the CT Collaborative. The residency focused on “frameworks and tools for productive engagement across differences... [empowering] mid-career professionals to senior international officers to lead conflict transformation in their institutions and communities”. The intensive format allowed participants to “explore and apply models and frameworks, learn strategies, explore approaches from multiple fields, develop skills for navigating conflict, design an action plan, and create a trusting network of colleagues”. Residency faculty included educators and practitioners from Syracuse University, Lehigh University, CEA CAPA, and Middlebury, and sessions were facilitated by colleagues, scholars, and conflict/change practitioners from a range of sectors and regions.

Mary Choi Robinson (Robbins College) noted that “The Resident Faculty built a scaffolded program grounded in research, practice, and creativity. My immediate takeaways are the importance of storytelling for connection and understanding, the power of ‘yet’ when trying to understand differences,

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.



RECENT AND UPCOMING EVENTS



[Subscribe](#) to our email list.



The CT Collaborative continued its tradition of sponsoring a community conversation over dinner on the second night of the [Clifford Symposium](#). The conversation represented the Collaborative's strength in convening Middlebury's students, staff, faculty, and neighbors about urgent issues with the goal of preparing all of us for productive engagement if and when deeper challenges emerge.

At MIIS welcome week, CT Executive Director, Graduate Pillar Lead, and Pedagogy Fellows facilitated the workshop "Navigating Culture, Conflict and Change." Over 150 students engaged around conflict styles, case studies, and learned about CT resources for their ongoing development.



- Oct. 1 - [Faculty Research Grants Information Session](#), Middlebury
- Oct. 3 - [Open House at Bowker Barn](#), Middlebury
- Oct. 9 - [Faculty Research Grants Information Session](#), Monterey/Zoom
- Oct. 10 - [Pedagogy & Practice — Social Structure: Relationships, Representations, and Rules](#), zoom
- Oct. 16 - [Protest and Policy with David Cortright](#), Middlebury
- Oct. 23 - [Restorative Justice and Lived Religion](#), Middlebury
- Oct. 24 - [From the Andes to Afghanistan: Conflict, Cuisine, and Change](#), Monterey

That's all... for now!

Follow~Contact~Engage



Kathryn Wasserman Davis Collaborative in Conflict Transformation
161 Adirondack view, Middlebury, VT 05753
ConflictTransformation@middlebury.edu



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt Out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

152 Mapel Road Suite 203 | Middlebury, VT 05753 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.