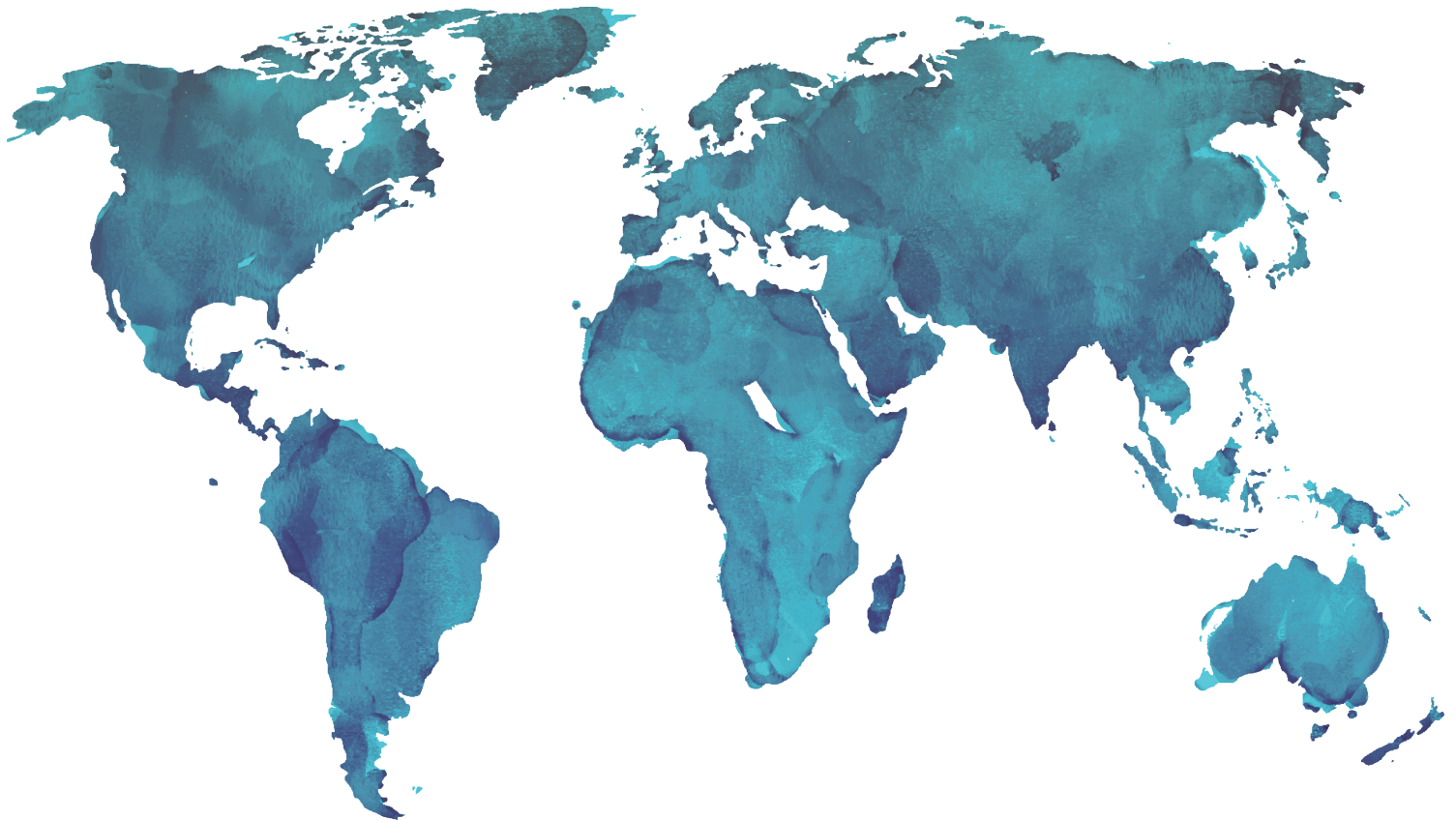


# Global Literacy Communities

## Creating Curriculum That Is Intercultural

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# Introduction

The Global Literacy Communities Grant project provides funding and support for educators seeking to build intercultural understanding through the use of global literature in PreK-12 classrooms. The goal of this grant program is to encourage educators across the United States and internationally to develop inquiry projects that broaden understandings about global cultures, explore new perspectives around intercultural values and beliefs, and recognize the importance of language diversity. These grants are funded by the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL) and the Worlds of Words Center for Global Literacies and Literature at the University of Arizona.

The Global Literacy Communities featured in this guide met for a period of one to three years between 2019 and 2022. These communities faced the unique challenge of adapting their global inquiry projects as their schools moved to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. These were and continue to be challenging times for educators and students. During this time of uncertainty, many of the Global Literacy Communities found valuable ways to use global and multicultural children's literature as a means of providing hope and interconnection.

In 2015, *Exploring International and Intercultural Understanding through Global Literature* (Corapi & Short, 2015) was published. This 2015 guide provided an overview and introduction to the Global Literacy Communities grant program and featured the work of 25 PreK to high school educator study groups from across the United States. These first Global Literacy Communities were funded through a grant from the Longview Foundation for International Affairs to the Worlds of Words Center for Global Literacies and Literature at the University of Arizona. This guide adds to the work started by these initial Global Literacy Communities. Featured throughout this guide are 15 Global Literacy Community groups including two groups that bridged international lines, one between the U.S. and Belize and another between the U.S. and China.

This guide is organized around the components of the framework for *A Curriculum That Is Intercultural* (See Figure 1, Short, 2009). Each chapter highlights ways the Global Literacy Community study groups sought to develop curriculum that addressed the components of this framework. Each chapter of the guide provides examples of the area of focus and links to the Global Literacy Community vignettes featured to provide readers with a more detailed description of the process and materials used in the work with children and teens in each context. The vignettes can also be accessed at this website: <https://wowlit.org/on-linepublications/stories/>.

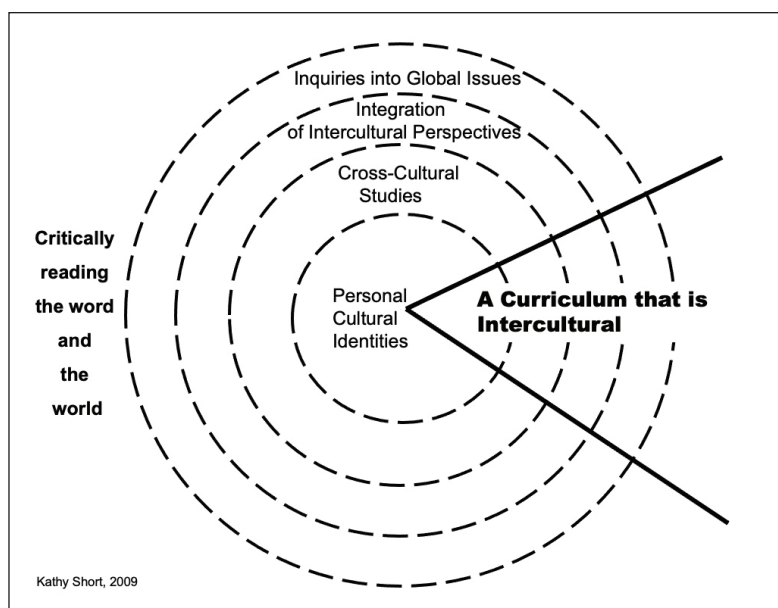


Figure 1. A Curriculum that is Intercultural (Short, 2009)

The first section of this guide highlights how various Global Literacy Communities sought to build awareness around personal cultural identities. In order to build intercultural understanding, students must first recognize the importance of culture in their own lives and see themselves as cultural beings. The second section highlights the work of Global Literacy Communities that invited cross-cultural inquiry to engage in an in-depth study of one global community. The focus on cross-cultural studies allows students to consider the complexity and diversity that exists within a specific global culture and examine similarities and differences within their own cultures. The third section looks at ways various Global Literacy Community groups integrated intercultural perspectives in their work. Their goal was to include multiple cultural perspectives and provide students with a wide variety of stories and learning experiences around a specific theme or topic. The fourth section turns to the consideration of global issues as a way of building intercultural understanding. The work of the communities highlighted in this section provide both a local and global perspective on complex issues as a way of building empathy and activism. The last section of the guide highlights the importance of critically reading the world and the word as the overarching stance guiding the questions and considerations across each component in a curriculum that is intercultural (Freire, 1970). Thinking critically and questioning the ways things are took on new meaning for these groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We want to thank each member of the Global Literacy Communities who are represented in this guide. We are also grateful for the students who participated in the projects and their parents for giving their permission to include their children's work as part of creating a curriculum that is intercultural.

# Personal Cultural Identity

When a student grows up as a member of the dominant group within a society, culture is often viewed as something that only others possess. An important beginning point in intercultural understanding is the recognition that culture is inherent to every society, community, and person. Culture consists of values, family history, language, religion, and one's location in the world. When students are able to grasp how their values and beliefs have shaped their worldview, they come to recognize their own biases and appreciate the importance of better understanding the cultural perspectives of others as a way to broaden their personal understanding of the world.

## Understanding Self in Order to Better Understand Others

The focus of the work within several Global Literacy Communities was to assist students in developing a better understanding of their personal cultural identity in order to better understand their own perspectives and loyalties. Teachers incorporated global books to provide a bridge from the student's personal experiences to similar experiences in another culture. These books provided a way for teachers to guide the students in understanding their own culture through the lens of the experiences of children from other cultures. The students responded to the literature and discussions with reflective writings and drawings. These creative responses included:

**Exploring the story of their names** after reading *My Name is Sangoel* (Williams, Mohammed, & Stock, 2009). [Vail Community] and *My Name is Elizabeth!* (Dunklee & Forsythe, 2011) [Vail Community]. Other books that invite students to develop a deeper appreciation for their cultural identity and uniqueness include *Alma and How She Got Her Name* (Martinez-Neil, 2018), *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001), and *My Name is Yoon* (Recorvits & Swiatkowska, 2003) [Vail Community].



**Creating cultural x-rays** after reading *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match* (Brown, 2011) [Vail Community]. The cultural x-ray encouraged students to consider the outside influences on their way of being as well as their beliefs and values.



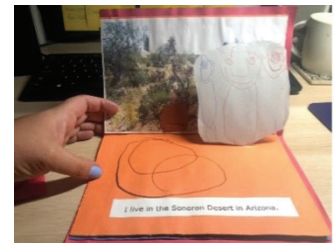
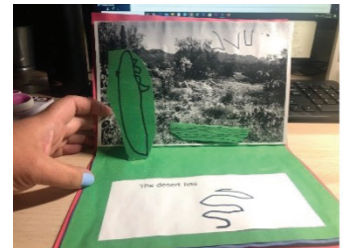
**Drawing heart and mind maps**, or Inside Out Maps after reading *Never Too Little to Love* (Willis, 2013). Students considered the values they hold in their heart and the values they hold in their head [Vail Community].

**Creating books to describe aspects of their own culture** after reading *Dear Primo: A Letter to My Cousin* (Tonatiuh, 2010) [Vail Community]. Students considered everyday practices, people, and events that shape their views of the world.



**Creating books about the significant aspects of the geographical location** where students live. One global community decided to have students research the Sonoran Desert where they live and connect informational texts related to the environment of the desert to the oral traditions and stories of the Indigenous nations who also call the Sonoran Desert their home [[Vail Community](#)]. Books used for this comparison include:

- *Desert Night Desert Day* (Fredericks & Spengler, 2011)
- *Cactus Hotel* (Guiberson & Lloyd, 1993)
- *Creatures of the Desert World* (National Geographic, 1987)
- *Desert Giant* (Bash, 1989)
- *The Seed and the Giant Saguaro* (Ward and Rangner, 2003)
- *Hip Hip Hooray, It's Monsoon Day!* (Rivera-Ashford & Johnsen, 2007)
- *Nana's Remedies/Los Remedios De Mi Nana* (Rivera-Ashford & Miguel, 2002)
- *Sing Down the Rain* (Moreillon & Chiago, 1997)



**Creating a playlist** after reading *The First Rule of Punk* (Pérez, 2018). One middle school teacher group read the realistic fiction novel, *The First Rule of Punk* with their middle school students. This novel is about a young Latina girl who finds ways to express her identity as the first rule of punk: Be yourself. As a way to connect with the character and their own identities the students added to the character's playlist with their own favorite songs [[Drachman Community](#)].

**Writing personal stories** to share the experiences and emotions students lived through and continue to process related to the COVID-19 pandemic after reading *Outside, Inside* by LeUyen Pham (2021). An important aspect to understanding identity is a recognition of one's historical context. One teacher reminded students that the COVID-19 shutdown is an historic event and encouraged them to carefully examine the illustrations in *Outside, Inside* and compare it to their own experiences. After dialoging about their connections to the text, she encouraged them to write their own historical stories [[JE Moss Community](#)].

**Drawing stories about favorite things.** While reading aloud global literature, one preschool teacher group encouraged the students to dialogue about what the characters were doing and what they might be thinking and feeling. This dialogue invited students to consider their own thinking and feelings. They encouraged students to draw stories about things that were important to them. Through these experiences with global literature, the students "met" new people and gained new "experiences" that provided an opportunity for them to consider the importance of their own stories [[Vail Community](#)].

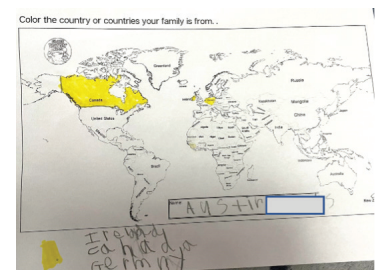


### Recognizing the difference between mirrors and windows.

The metaphor developed by Rudine Sims Bishop (1990) of literature serving as both a mirror to understanding self and a window to understanding others became the tangible framework for one preschool teacher's work in using global literature. This concept was made concrete by placing mirrors in the classroom and having students consider what they saw. Then she asked students to consider what they saw when they looked out the window. As she introduced various stories to students, she drew from this tangible experience to help them understand how stories function as means to better understanding self and others [Vail Community].



**Discovering family origins and mapping family trees.** After reading aloud *I'm an Immigrant Too!* (Fox & Ghosh, 2018), *Your Name Is a Song* (Thompkins-Bigelow & Uribe, 2020), and *This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World* (Lamothe, 2017), one teacher group had students investigate the various global locations from which their ancestors came. They marked these locations on a map of the world. Students then investigated their family trees and shared the diverse family structures and origins represented within their classroom. [Vail Community].



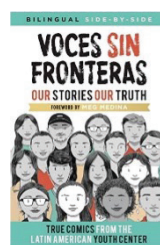
## Connecting through Experience and Language

The focus on personal cultural identity is especially important to culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms. A common concern for several Global Literacy Communities was a lack of literature in their curriculum that reflected the cultural and linguistic experiences of their students. Responding to this deficit, these communities worked diligently to locate books that would support their students' cultural identities and locations. They wanted to counter the dominant perspective that sees "the languages, literacies, and cultural ways of being of many students and communities of color as deficiencies to be overcome in learning the demanded and legitimized dominant language, literacy, and cultural ways of schooling" (Paris, 2012, p. 93). They believed that books should provide a way for students to make language and experience connections. These connections assisted students in better understanding how culture has shaped their lives and perspectives on the world. The following Global Literacy Communities highlight the importance of connecting books to the lives and languages of their students.

**Connecting to immigration experiences.** In one Global Literacy Community, many students had immigrated to the United States from Central America and the Caribbean. This group focused on locating Spanish language books that powerfully connected to students' lived experiences by reflecting on the complexity of situations that precipitate the need to immigrate. They found three books that met their criteria.

- *Voces sin frontera*. [Our Stories Our Truth] (Latin American Youth Center, 2018).

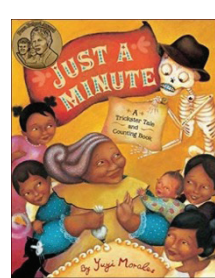
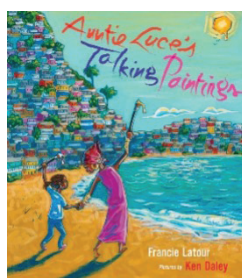
- *La travesía de Enrique. La historia real de un niño decidido a reunirse con su madre.* Edición adaptada para jóvenes lectores [Enrique's Journey. The true story of a boy determined to reunite with his mother] by Sonia Nazario (2015).
- *El único destino* [The Only Road] by Alexandra Diaz (2016).



An important consideration for this group related to trauma pedagogy. They wanted to establish a sense of safety and trustworthiness as they introduced these books and invite strong connections through peer, faculty, and staff support. They highly recommend other teachers interested in adopting texts related to difficult life experiences of their students read *The Vulnerable Heart of Literacy: Centering Trauma as Powerful Pedagogy* by Dutro (2019) [[AoA/BBE Community](#)].

**Locating books related to cultural location.** A Global Literacy Community located in Belize sought to locate books connected to the lives, language, and culture of Indigenous and minority students. They realized that curriculum is never neutral and often features only knowledge that is valued by those who develop it. One of the teachers commented, “It reminds me of the novels I read during my secondary education—none reflected my culture. I suspected it, felt ignored, voiceless, and on the brink of voice erasure. Many days, I felt as if I did not belong in school. I wanted to learn, but I also wanted to belong” (Erica). While it was clear to them that there is a desperate need for more Belizean authors, they found meaningful ways to connect the Belizean experiences to voices from cultures outside of Belize in global literature. The theme of being seen and valued was an important characteristic they discovered that connected to the Belizean experience. Global books that acknowledged the detrimental impact of colonialism and highlighted the importance of family also connected meaningfully to the cultural identity of their Belizean students. Some books that were particularly meaningful to the group included: *Auntie Luce’s Talking Paintings* (Latour, 2018), *I Am Every Good Thing* (Barnes, 2020), *Saturday* (Mora, 2019), *Digging for Words: José Alberto Guitérrez and the Library He Built* (Kunkel, 2020), and *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book* (Morales, 2016).

This work taught them the importance of teaching for justice by highlighting the experiences of their communities, featuring their language, and connecting literature to the diverse perspectives of their culture and heritage. They committed to “intentionally adopting practices that encourage readers to read with awareness of how books position them as culturally-situated readers in a global community” [[Belize Community](#)].



**Locating books that depict the diversity and richness of cultures within the Spanish-speaking world** was the key focus for a Global Literacy Community composed of Spanish-Immersion classroom teachers. They found that they had to work hard to research and locate organizations and publishing houses that provided access to children's literature from various locations within the Spanish-speaking world. One publishing house they found especially helpful was **El Fondo de Cultura Económica**. After locating the books, they classified them by genre, levels of language acquisition, ways to use the book in the classroom, and illustrative appeal [**Lakeside Community**].



# Cross-Cultural Studies

The in-depth study of specific global cultures helps students to recognize the complexity and diversity of the world around them. Students need to consider points of view beyond their own to come to recognize that their perspective is one of many ways to view the world, not the norm against which to measure other viewpoints. Through reflecting on their own values and being open to listening and learning from the diverse perspectives of others, students become more cognizant of their place in the world, more open to perspectives that differ from their own, and more aware of their potential to enact positive change.

Through literature, children have the opportunity to go beyond a tourist perspective of gaining surface-level information about another culture. They are invited to immerse themselves in story worlds, gaining insights into how people feel, live, and think around the world. They also come to recognize their common humanity as well as to value cultural differences.

Several Global Literacy Communities made intentional decisions to focus on a particular region of the world and global community. These decisions were made based upon their perceived need for deepened understanding and acceptance of groups within their communities and schools. They developed text sets and designed activities to support cross-cultural understanding.

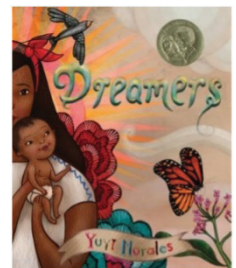
## Developing Cross-Cultural Understanding Through Visual Analysis

An innovative idea used by several of the Global Literacy Communities was to focus students' attention on the illustrations in global picturebooks to develop a deeper understanding and empathy of experience through visual analysis. The books and activities used to encourage deeper awareness of culture through an analysis of visual elements included:

**Exploring the codes of color** in *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna (2016). This critical analysis of the color used in illustrations invited discussions about how to attract the eye of the reader and connect the reader to emotions. Students developed a deeper understanding of the emotional journey taken by immigrants through the analysis of the illustrator's color choice [[JE Moss Community](#)].



**Exploring symbolism** in the illustrations of *Dreamers* by Yuyi Morales (2018). The illustrations in this picturebook are embedded with symbolism connected to Mexican culture, folklore, and the immigrant experience [[JE Moss Community](#)].



**Exploring line, shape, and size** in the illustrations of *Thank You, Omu* by Oge Mora (2018). Students discussed how the size of illustrations contribute to the significance of character or action. Other discussions focused on how the lines and shape of the illustrations direct the eye and aid in story meaning [[JE Moss Community](#)].



**Exploring the symbolism and significance of colors** associated with the Chinese Lunar New Year with the following books: [[Vail Community](#)]

- *Celebrate Chinese New Year* (Otto, 2015)
- *Dragon Dance: A Chinese New Year Lift-the-Flap Book* (Holub & Huang, 2003)
- *Bringing in the New Year* (Lin, 2013)
- *Lunar New Year* (Eliot & Chau, 2018)
- *Chinese New Year: A Celebration for Everyone* (Lee, 2017)

**Exploring students' initial reactions and connections** to book covers and illustrations. Several teachers invited students to examine book covers and illustrations and to make predictions on what the story is about and connections to what the characters are experiencing in the book. Some of the texts explored by students included: [[JE Moss Community](#)]

- *Outside, Inside* (Pham, 2021)
- *Tomorrow* (Kaadan, 2018)
- *Suwle* (Nyong'O, 2019)
- *Lubna and Pebble* (Meddour, 2019)
- *Story Boat* (Maclear, 2020)
- *Bilal Cooks Daal* (Saeed, 2019)

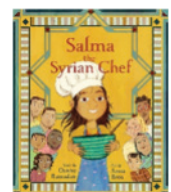
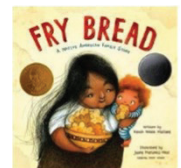
This exploration of book covers and illustrations revealed how student life experiences impacted connections to texts and provided a beginning point for expanding perspectives.

## Examining Culture through Text Sets and Inquiry Engagements

A text set is a collection of books organized around a particular theme or cultural group that provides a wide range of perspectives and experiences. A variety of texts are included within a text set to avoid stereotyping cultures as well as to encourage dialogic inquiry around the literature. Along with a text set, inquiry engagements that guide students' exploration of cultural experiences and perspectives provide avenues to increase student understanding and empathy. Several Global Literacy Communities developed text sets and engagements to invite students into meaningful explorations of cultures outside their own.

**Use of anchor texts.** One group of teachers began their exploration of Indigenous Southwest and Middle Eastern cultures with students through two anchor texts. They selected *Fry Bread: A Native American Family Story* (Maillard, 2019) and *Salma the Syrian Chef* (Ramadan, 2020). Along with these anchor texts, the following books were included in a larger text set: [[TUSD Community](#)]

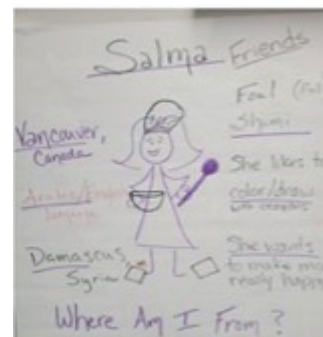
- *Salsa: Un poema para cocinar/A cooking poem* (Argueta, 2015)
- *Under My Hijab* (Khan, 2019)
- *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors* (Khan, 2012)



- *The Butter Man* (Letts & Alalou, 2008)
- *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* (Muhammad & Ali, 2020)
- *One* (Otoshi, 2008)
- *The Cat Man of Aleppo* (Shamsi-Basha & Latham, 2020)
- *Green is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors* (Thong, 2016)

**Use of inquiry engagements.** Teachers included several inquiry engagements to expand student thinking around the culture represented by the characters in the texts. Some of these engagements include: [**TUSD Community**]

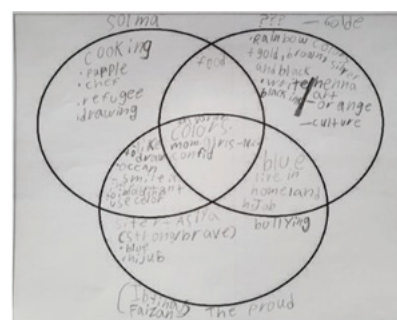
- **Where Am I From Character Web**—This activity invites students to web out the geographical and cultural location of the character in the global text.



- **Sketch to Stretch** (Short & Harste, 1996)—in order to think more deeply about the theme of the story, students create a symbolic visual representation.



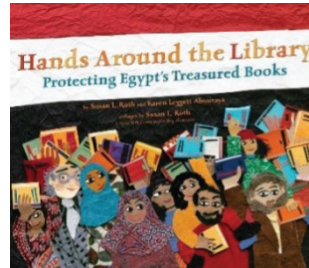
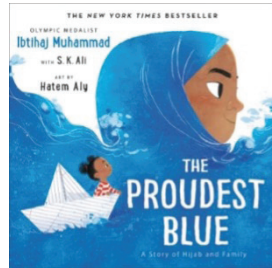
- **Venn Diagrams** provide opportunity to compare the characters from different stories reflecting on similarities and differences in cultures.
- **Text to self, text to text, and text to world connections:** To culminate their study, students select their two favorite books from the text set. They describe how they personally connect to the two texts, how the texts connect to each other, and how the texts broaden their perspective on the world.



**Text set themes.** The study of Middle Eastern culture was the focus of several teacher groups to develop intercultural understandings and global perspectives through children's books about Middle Eastern nations and Islamic culture from multiple perspectives [**TUSD Community**]. Text sets were selected based upon themes such as:

- **Acts of Kindness:** *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family* (Muhammad, Ali, & Aly, 2019), *King for a Day* (Khan & Kromer, 2019), *Thank You, Omu!* (Mora, 2018), *A Drop of the Sea* (Chabbert & Guridi, 2018), and *Salma the Syrian Chef* (Ramadan & Bron, 2020).
- **Taking Actions for Justice:** *The Librarian of Basra: The True Story from Iraq* (Winter, 2005), *Hands around the Library* (Abouraya, 2012), *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust* (Ruelle & Desaix, 2010), and *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* (Winter, 2009).

- **Pursuing Dreams with Courage, Hope, and Support from Others:** *The World is Not a Rectangle: A Portrait of Architect Zaha Hadid* (Winter, 2017), *Little People, Big Dreams: Zaha Hadid* (Vegara, 2019), *Muslim Girls Rise* (Nur, S., 2019), *Malala's Magic Pencil* (Yousafzai, 2017) and *Malala, A Brave Girl from Pakistan and Iqbal, A Brave Boy from Pakistan: Two Stories of Bravery* (Winter, 2014) [[TUSD Community](#)].

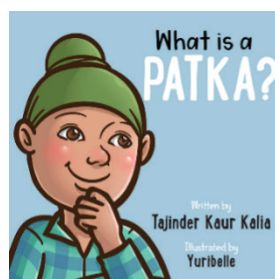
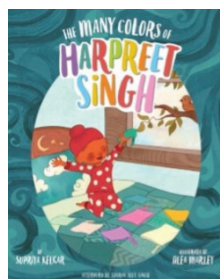


**Inquiry projects** invite students to make connections with the culture and perspectives in the global and multicultural texts that they read. Some of the projects one community used to connect students to cultural perspectives included:

- **Story rays:** Students are given a narrow, three-foot-long strip of paper. On this ray, they use colors, images, and words to represent the story's significance [[Tucson Community](#)].
- **Author/Illustrator research:** Students conduct research on the authors and illustrators of the books they have read to learn more about their lives and why they write and illustrate [[Tucson Community](#)].
- **Art response:** Students draw a picture of what the character in the book would see out their window [[Tucson Community](#)].
- **Math connection:** After reading *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns* (Khan, 2012), students study the geometric design and the cultural meaning of the fanoos (Egyptian traditional lantern). Students can then construct their own fanoos [[Tucson Community](#)].

**Recognition of a marginalized and misunderstood cultural group** inspired a cross-cultural inquiry for one Global Literacy Community. Concerned about the bullying of students from the Sikh religion and the Punjabi culture, one teacher located a text set to invite the students to better understand this culture and religious perspective. The text set included:

- *The Many Colors of Harpreet Singh* by Supriya Kelkar (2019)
- *What is a Patka?* by Tajinder Kalia (2019)
- *Vaisakhi* by Deep Kaur (2016)



During the study of these texts, there were many discussions about differences between cultures, why these differences occur, and the questions still unanswered. The teacher felt that these unanswered questions could best be addressed by a Punjabi guest speaker to the classroom. This guest speaker while addressing the questions of students provided an opportunity for the students to gain a deeper appreciation of the Punjabi culture and the Sikh religion through personal contact [[Whatcom Community](#)].

**Student and teacher interest in global cultures** is another great starting point for determining a cross-cultural study. One teacher started an afterschool club to study Japanese language and culture. The text set for this inquiry included:

- *My Japan* by Etsuko Watanabe (2009)
- *The Moon Princess* by Hazuki Kataoko and David Batinno (2008)
- *My First Book of Japanese Words* by Michelle Haney Brown (2013)
- *The Boring Book* by Shinsuke Yoshitake (2019)
- *Kenta and The Big Wave* by Ruth Ohi (2013)

Along with reading and discussing the text set books, the students had the opportunity to explore various forms of Japanese art including woodcut, origami, watercolor, collage, and manga. A special guest was invited to introduce Haiku and teach the students how to write their own Haiku poetry [[Whatcom Community](#)].

**Play during recess time** was the inspiration for a text set and cultural study in one Global Literacy Community. The teacher in this community decided to connect the water play she witnessed during recess to the study of the ancestral Indigenous people of the Sonoran Desert where they live. The inquiry projects grew out of student interest. The water play that the teacher had noticed changed to canal building in honor of what they learned about the Hohokam. They also considered the ball sports the Hohokam played and diagramed what their courts might have looked like. The students created clay pots and after studying the housing of the Hohokam, they integrated these ideas into their play by building Hohokam houses [[Vail Community](#)].



**Diversity of languages, experiences, and ways of celebrating** in different parts of the world inspired one teacher group to do a study of two global cultures. They started with a study of Mexico and read *Let's Explore Mexico* (Moon, 2017) and *If You Were Me and Lived in Mexico* (Roman, 2013). During this study the students identified both similarities and



differences from children growing up in Mexico to their own lives. A highlight of this study was a celebration of Las Posadas. In their cross-cultural study of China, they read *Welcome to China* (Jenner, 2008) and *The Pet Dragon* (Niemann, 2008) which explains Chinese characters. This study culminated with a celebration of Chinese New Year [[Vail Community](#)].

**The Lunar New Year** led one teacher group to do an in-depth look at China. They read aloud the following books:

- *Day of the Dragon King* (Osborne & Murdocca, 1998)
- *The Great Race: Story of the Chinese Zodiac* (Corr, 2018)
- *Kite Flying* (Lin, 2004)
- *Two of Everything* (Hong, 2017)

A Lunar New Year parade provided a way for the students to investigate and create culturally symbolic items [[Vail Community](#)].



# Integration of Intercultural Perspectives

In addition to inquiries into a specific global community, global perspectives need to be woven across the curriculum at all times so that students are constantly encouraged to consider multiple points of views no matter what topic or theme is being explored. A curriculum that is intercultural is not only occasional special unit on a global community, but integrates multiple global perspectives about whatever topics or themes are the focus of the curriculum, whether family, the moon, fractions, or revolution. The consideration of multiple points of views encourages students to bring a global orientation to all of their inquiries.

Several of the Global Literacy Communities focused on providing a wide range of cultural perspectives through integrating global literature across the curriculum. They recognized the need to integrate literature from diverse cultures to support the broadening of perspectives and developing greater insights into the themes they were exploring in the curriculum.

## Intercultural Inquires Around Selected Themes

One of the ways several teacher groups integrated diverse cultural perspectives into their curriculum was by selecting global literature focused on a broad theme. These themes allowed students to make meaningful connections to their own lives and begin to think more critically about other ways of perceiving the world. Some of the themes explored through global literature included:

**Folktales from Around the World.** Traditional stories from a variety of cultures provide an excellent tool for introducing intercultural understanding. One teacher decided to evaluate the current collection of folktales available in their school library and locate folktales from multiple cultures to purchase. Some of the folktales they read included: *How Grandmother Spider Got the Sun* (Park, Pearce, & Mays, 2007) from the Cherokee Nation, *The Lion's Share* (McElligott, 2012) from Somalia, and *Raisel's Riddle* (Silverman, 2003) from the Jewish tradition. The students participated in Reader's Theater, creating masks to represent the characters from the folktales and comparing key themes [[Barron Community](#)].

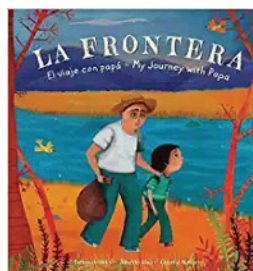


**Acts of Kindness:** Selecting books based on the theme of important character traits allows students to consider how their life experiences intersect with the experiences of children around the globe. One teacher invited students to find parallels with their own lives while building empathy for others. The texts selected included: *Thank You, Omu!* by Oge Mora (2018), *A Drop of the Sea* by Ingrid Chabbert and Raul Nieto Guridi (2018), and *Salma the Syrian Chef* by Danny Ramadan and Anna Bron (2020) [[TUSD Community](#)].

**Exploring Values and Beliefs.** Certain themes provide a way to discuss how people express their values and beliefs across cultures. One teacher explored the practice of Muslim women wearing head scarves across various global locations to invite students to dialogue about

this value and belief across cultures. Books included in the text set included: *Under My Hijab* (Khan, 2019), *Mommy's Khimar* (Thompkins-Bigelow, 2018), *Mommy Sayang* (Sullivan, 2019), *Deep in the Sahara* (Cunnane, 2018), and *My Grandma and Me* (Javaherbin, 2019) [[TUSD Community](#)].

**Relocation and Forced Journeys.** Providing a wide variety of human experiences related to relocation and forced journeys gives students the opportunity to better understand the complex experiences of immigrants around the globe and across time. Some of the books included in one teacher's study around this theme included: *Lost and Found Cat* (Kuntz & Shrodes, 2019), *Lubna and Pebble* (Meddour, 2019), *Migrants* (Watanabe, 2020), *La Frontera* (Mills, & Alva, 2018), *Stepping Stones* (Ruurs, 2016), *When Stars Are Scattered* (Mohamed & Jamieson (2020), and *Four Feet Two Sandals* (Williams, 2007) [[TUSD Community](#)].



**Music and Dance.** After discovering the students' love of music and dance, one teacher decided to locate books and videos from multiple cultures that featured the music and dance of cultures around the globe. She introduced stories like *When Clay Sings* (Baylor & Bahti, 2007), *I Got Rhythm* (Schofield-Morrison, & Morrison, F, 2014) and *The Little Band* (Sage, & Narahashi, 1991). They watched and learned the Zuni Pueblo Rainbow dance and the Zorba Greek line dance. Through music and story, the children were invited to experience multiple ways of knowing and viewing the world [[Vail Community](#)].



**An inquiry into the Olympic Games:** One teacher group studied the host countries of the Summer and Winter Olympic Games--Tokyo, Japan and Beijing, China. Along with a study of the cultures of Tokyo and Beijing, students learned about the various sporting events and how athletes from around the world come together for this sporting event [[Vail Community](#)].

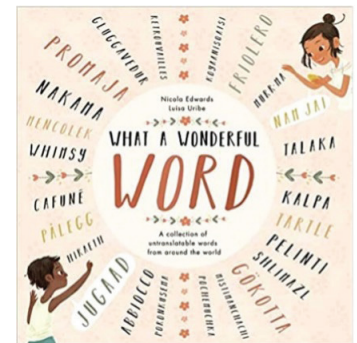


## Providing Increased Access and Resources for Intercultural Studies

The focus of several Global Literacy Communities was to provide greater access to global literature to support the diverse cultural identities represented in their schools and open the opportunity to broaden global and multicultural perspectives. Many of these projects developed teaching curriculum materials that provided a range of cultural perspectives within multicultural and global contexts and also supported the diverse languages spoken by members within their communities and student body. These projects took place within school systems, public libraries, and community centers.

**Supporting students and families through multicultural and global literature.** Schools are often faced with meeting the diverse needs of the students, families, and communities that they serve. One Global Literacy Community purchased a global literature collection to support their school's emphasis on global awareness. Due to the pandemic, many students and teachers could not get access to these books, so they posted recordings of the books being read aloud, as well as the lesson plans in a Google Drive for teachers to access. They also created a collection of traveling books in English and Spanish for their Spanish-speaking families and a collection of books that provided American Sign Language (ASL) guides for their Deaf and Hard of Hearing population [[Forest Hills Community](#)].

Literacy coaches have the opportunity to work with teachers from across the school district. One Global Literacy Community focused on providing training in incorporating global literature in lesson plans with a team of literacy coaches. They purchased eleven copies of each book so that each literacy coach had a copy to use in their schools. They carefully considered engagement strategies to use with each book selection to encourage the development of global perspectives. Their selections included: *What a Wonderful Word* (UK) by Nicola Edwards (2018), *Funny Bones: Posada and*



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### Confronting censorship and standardization through global book selections

One Global Literacy Community recognized the need to think together about the critical selection of global literature to confront censorship and a standardized curriculum that provided little space for honoring diverse cultural perspectives. Teachers learned how to evaluate and select global texts through three lenses. The first evaluative lens was focused on the reader. Through this lens they carefully considered the experiences of students within their community setting and how the text would resonate with student experiences. The second evaluative lens focused on the literary quality of the text, its cultural authenticity, and representation of diversity. Finally, teachers considered the instructional lens and evaluated the texts on how well the text aligned with curricular needs. Though using this three-lens framework, teachers learned powerful ways to strengthen their classroom curriculum and confidently confront any challenges to their selected texts [[JE Moss Community](#)].

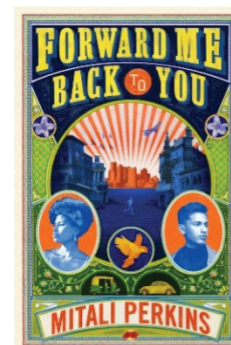
## Inquiries into Global Issues

A driving motivation for many teachers in the decisions they make around curricular focus and the selection of resources for instruction is the desire to create a better world. As the world becomes more interconnected, the need to address critical issues impacting lives both globally and locally has become more and more pressing. Teachers recognize the need to provide opportunities for students to gain a deeper understanding of the issues that impact their community and the world. These studies are essential in encouraging students to go beyond talk and inquiry to determine how to take action to create a better and more just world.

An important focus of several Global Literacy Community projects was encouraging intercultural understanding through inquiries into critical global issues. The issues addressed through these projects focused on the pandemic, human rights, immigration, and the refugee crisis. Each of these issues were carefully considered on both the local and global scale. The goal of these projects was to allow students to use literature as an entry point to discussing these difficult topics and to consider ways of taking action by considering their part in creating a healthy and inclusive society. These projects took place in Pre-K through high school settings and invited students to become ethical actors in their own communities and beyond.

### Engaging readers to learn, think and act with global literature

One Global Literacy Community decided to purchase global books dealing with issues related to immigration and human rights. They developed lesson plans that followed a format they termed Learn, Think, Act. In the “Learn” portion of the lesson, students read and discussed a book. In order to meet the diverse learning needs of students, various book formats were provided including large print books and audiobooks. The second part of the lesson encouraged students to “think.” After reading the literature, students researched the global issue presented in the book. Students considered the various perspectives and the differing values and voices found in the literature that held power as well as the voices that were marginalized or missing. In the final part of each lesson students were invited to act. Students used their thinking to consider actions they could take to address similar issues in their own community.



One of the books presented to students using the Learn, Think, Act lesson plan format was *Forward Me Back to You* (Perkins, 2019) which features two teens who participate in a summer service trip to India to work with survivors of human trafficking [[Civic Center Community](#)].

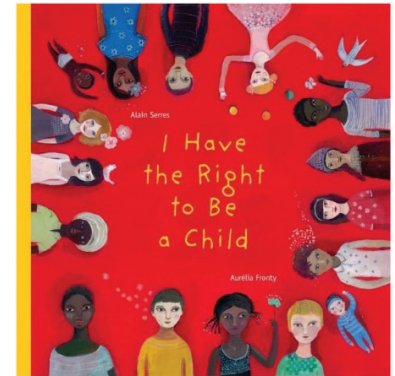
### Embracing cosmopolitan perspectives

In response to acts of racism and xenophobia that continue to plague the United States as well as their local community, one group of teachers decided to address these issues through projects that would facilitate intercultural understanding in their classrooms. In their teacher study group, they focused their discussions on the philosophy of cosmopolitanism. Cosmopolitan perspectives recognize the value of differences in perspectives and beliefs. They purchased books that would invite students to grapple with issues of racism and prejudice, begin to recognize their own biases, and develop a disposition of openness to learning from the perspectives of others.

One of the teachers created an immigration themed text set to guide students' inquiry into the reasons why people leave their home countries and how these experiences might impact their lives. It was important to these teachers that they avoid stereotypes, so they sought to include many resources along with the books they read. These resources included podcasts, TED talks, interviews, data compilations, movie clips, songs, and guest speakers to provide opportunity for students to interact with many different perspectives and experiences [[Whatcom Community](#)].

### Exploring children's rights through global literature

One teacher group selected the theme of children's rights for their project focus. This broad theme allowed teachers within the group to consider ways to connect the rights of children to their own communities and classrooms. They considered the sociopolitical landscape around them and identified issues including immigration, bilingual and biliteracy learning, inequality of community resources, and poverty. The teacher study group selected the anchor text, *I Have the Right to Be a Child* (Serres, 2012) to begin considering the subthemes for their text sets. Their inquiry themes and themes related to children's rights varied as they sought to expand their students' perspectives in considering issues related to children's rights both locally and globally [[Land of Enchantment Community](#)].



### Recognizing ableism and encouraging empathy

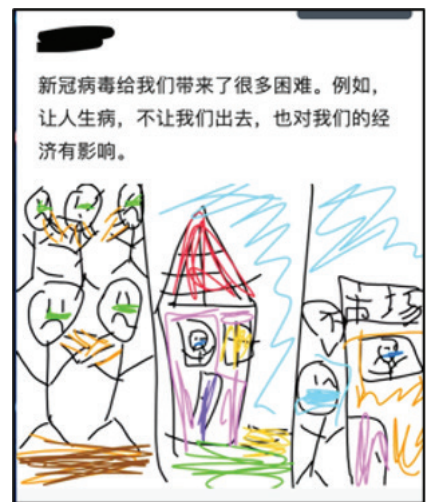
The focus of one teacher within her Global Literacy Community was to promote an awareness and acceptance of those with special needs both locally and globally. The selected theme for the text set she created was empathy across all cultures. The text set included *Look Up!* (Jin-Ho, 2018), *I Talk Like A River* (Scott, 2020), *Show Me a Sign* (LeZotte, 2020), and *When Stars Are Scattered* (Jamieson, 2020). She created interactive lessons to accompany her text set as a way to encourage students to gain an understanding of the perspectives of those with special needs and encourage empathy [[Land of Enchantment Community](#)].

### Examining local and global reactions to the pandemic

One issue that could not be ignored was the advent of the global pandemic in 2020. Several communities found ways to confront the issues raised both locally and globally by the pandemic through the use of literature in their classrooms. One teacher began a discussion on the pandemic through the analysis of images in *Outside, Inside* by LeUyen Pham (2021). This picturebook was used by another teacher in the same school to open a conversation with students on their own experiences during the pandemic and provided a space to recognize personal, community, and global difficulties. It provided space to consider how the pandemic impacted lives and to process the trauma in the experiences of students, families, communities, and the world [[JE Moss Community](#)].

Another Global Literacy Community focused their project on allowing their students to process the impact of the pandemic through a cross-cultural connection. Two teachers, one in the United States and one in China, collaborated to provide an opportunity for students to interact and learn

from each other's perspectives. They recognized that children were still trying to understand what the virus was, how it was impacting their families and communities, and how to stay safe. Students at both schools engaged in discussions prompted by the "The 3 Ys": 1) Why might this topic matter to me? 2) Why might it matter to people around me? and 3) Why might it matter to the world? (Boix Mansilla, et. al, 2017). Through interacting with peers in another country, the students realized that they shared similar feelings including anxiety, fear, and uncertainty and many of the same measures to deal with staying safe were the same in both countries. Students used their linguistic repertoire as well as drawings and clip art/pictures to make meaning and illustrate their ideas while interacting with their peers in online communication posts [[ICSA Community](#)].



## Critically Reading the World and the Word

Creating a curriculum that is intercultural must be permeated with critically reading the world and the word (Freire, 1970). The Global Literacy Communities featured in this guide faced an unprecedented challenge as they sought to engage their learners in a reading a world that they themselves had never encountered. For many, the pandemic became an important problem-posing opportunity in how to critically read this dramatically changing world. Each community responded in different ways. Some directly posed the problem of the pandemic to their students [JE Moss, ICSA Community]. Others read the challenge posed by the pandemic as a way to creatively reimagine how to connect and learn together [Land of Enchantment, Startown, TUSD].

The spread of COVID-19 across communities, cities, states, and nations proved that all are interconnected. The ethical dilemma of the pandemic opened critical avenues for introspection, connection, and action among the Global Literacy Communities. It also opened new avenues for empathy. This was seen through the responses of students from one Global Literacy Community after reading the picturebook, *Tomorrow* (Kaadan, 2018), about a young child living in a city torn apart by war and unable to leave his home. Students deeply empathized with this child, stating that they understood why he snuck out of his home without parental permission. They empathized with being bored, wanting to see friends, missing the park, and wondering why they couldn't go out during the lockdown. This critical reading of their world gave these students the ability to connect to the intense feelings of isolation experienced by the child in the picturebook [TUSD].

While there was much frustration among the Global Literacy Communities that not every planned activity or event was attainable due to the outbreak of COVID-19, each discovered the necessity of critically reading the world and the word in a whole new light. Critically reading the world as part of a globally interconnected community was not just part of the curriculum, it was their lived experiences. As we move forward, along with the emphasis on critically reading the world and the word, we hope future Global Literacy Communities will continue to find innovative ways to cultivate an ethical responsibility of caring for one another and embracing their role and social responsibility in bringing positive change to our interconnected global world.

With this in mind, we end this guide by introducing an updated framework (See figure 2). The new framework continues to emphasize the importance of critically reading the word and the world (Freire, 1970). However, in recognizing the critical need to respond and relate to the interconnected global society in which we live, the framework is now envisioned as curriculum of critical global inquiry. This emphasis infiltrates the study of personal cultural locations, specific global communities, multiple global perspectives, and critical issues that impact our communities and world. The framework invites deepening understandings of cultures, broadening of perspectives, and taking transformative action in the world.

Critically reading the world and the word is a lens across these curriculum components that involves taking a critical stance across all units of inquiry and engagements. This stance involves critique, hope, and action by asking what exists in the world and who benefits, what other possibilities might be considered, and what actions can be taken (Freire, 1970).

This critical stance also involves viewing ourselves and others from a perspective of dignity and empathy as we move toward deeper understanding. Hansen (2011) argues that this critical orientation to the world is focused around balancing reflective loyalty to the known with reflective openness to the new. We remain rooted in the loyalties that lie at the heart of our sense of belonging and becoming, while reaching out to understand new ways of living and thinking within

global communities. These understandings are essential to taking action that has the possibility of transforming, not merely reproducing, our current world.

We hope that this framework inspires the work of teachers seeking to expand their curriculum and broaden the perspectives of students to understand and embrace the diversity of experiences, beliefs, and practices in their local communities and around the globe.

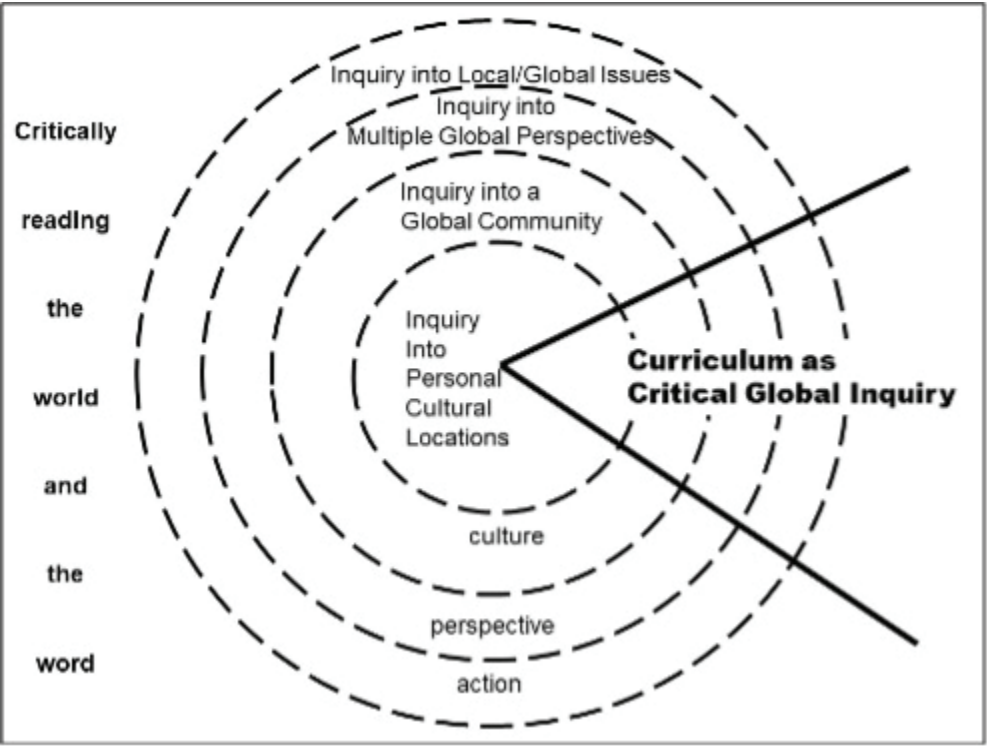


Figure 2. Curriculum as Critical Global Inquiry (Short, 2022).

# Resources

## Websites for Locating and Evaluating Multicultural and Global Literature

- Worlds of Words: Center of Global Literacies and Literature: Provides recommendations and resources for the use of global literature in the classroom [<https://wowlit.org/>]
  - Globalizing K-12 Reading Lists of Children and Young Adult Literature [<https://wowlit.org/links/globalizing-common-core-reading-list/>]
  - Thematic and Award Winning Booklists [<https://wowlit.org/links/booklists/>]
  - Language and Culture Book Kits and Global Story Boxes [<https://wowlit.org/links/language-and-culture-resource-kits/>]
  - WOW Review: Critical reviews on children's and adolescent literature that highlights intercultural understanding and global perspectives. [<https://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/review/>]
  - WOW Libros: Critical reviews on children's and adolescent literature originally published in Spanish. [<https://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/wow-libros/>]
- Diverse Book Finder [<https://diversebookfinder.org/books/>]
- International Board of Books for Young People Honor List [<https://www.ibby.org/awards-activities/awards/ibby-honour-list>]
- International Children's Digital Library: [<http://en.childrenslibrary.org/>]
- Middle East Book Awards: [<http://www.meoc.us/book-awards.html>]
- Mildred Batchelder Award [<https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/batchelder>]
- Social Justice Books [<https://socialjusticebooks.org/>]
- United States Board of Books for Young People Outstanding International Books List [<https://www.usbby.org/outstanding-international-books-list.html>]
- Words Without Borders [<https://wordswithoutborders.org/>]

## Publishers Who Focus on Global Books

- Albatros: Based in the Czech Republic includes 6 international publishers [<https://www.albatrosbooks.com/>]
- Blue Dot Kids Press: Publishes books by storytellers and illustrators from around the world. [<https://www.bluedotkidspress.com/>]
- Catalyst Press: Publishes books focused on African countries. [<https://www.catalystpress.org/>]
- Cicada Books: London based publisher [<https://www.cicadabooks.co.uk/>]
- Cuento de Luz: Based in Madrid, Spain with a focus on respect for difference and the environment. [<https://www.cuentodeluz.com/>]
- Enchanted Lion: Independent publisher of children's books from all over the world [<https://enchantedlion.com/>]
- Gecko Press: New Zealand based publisher of books from around the world. [<https://geckopress.com/>]
- House of Anansi-Groundwood Press: Based in Canada with a focus on Latin America and Canada. [<https://houseofanansi.com/>]
- Kids Can Press: Canadian books and informational global books. [<https://www.kidscanpress.com/>]
- Kinokuniya USA: international books in English, Japanese, and bilingual English/Japanese are available for purchase [<https://usa.kinokuniya.com/>]
- Levine Querido: U.S. based, focuses on diversity and translated books. [<https://www.levinequerido.com/>]

- Mango and Marigold Press: Focuses on books featuring the Indian culture [<https://mangoandmarigoldpress.com/pages/about-us>]
- NobeOCHO: Based in Spain with a global focus. [<https://www.nubeocho.com/en/>]
- NorthSouth Press: Based in Switzerland with a global focus. [<https://northsouth.com/>]
- Owlkids: Based in Canada with a focus on diversity. [<https://owlkidsbooks.com/>]
- Tiny Owl: Publishes books featuring Persian and Middle Eastern Culture [<https://tinyowl.co.uk/>]

## Recommended Professional Readings

### Articles

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### Books

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- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- Hansen, D. (2011). *The teacher and the world*. Teachers College Press.
- Laminack, L. & Kelly, K. (2019). *Reading to make a difference: Using literature to help students speak freely, think deeply, and take action*. Heinemann.
- Leland, C., Lewison, M., & Harste, J. (2018). *Teaching children's literature: It's critical!* (2nd edition). Routledge.
- Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2017). *Culturally sustaining pedagogies: Teaching and learning for justice in a changing world*. Teachers College Press.
- Short, K. Day, D. & Schroeder, J. (2016). *Teaching globally: Reading the world through literature*.
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- Barnes, D. (2020). *I am every good thing*. Illus. G.C. James, Illus. Nancy Paulsen.
- Bash, B. (1989). *Desert giant: The world of the saguaro cactus*. Sierra Club.
- Baylor, B., & Bahti, T. (2007). *When clay sings*. Aladdin Paperbacks.
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- Brown, H. M. (2013). *My first book of Japanese words*. Illus. A. Padron. Tuttle.
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## Global Literacy Community Groups

GROUP	GRADE LEVEL	LOCATION
AoA/BBE	Middle School, High School	Detroit, MI
Barron	2, 6-8, High School	Barron, WI
Belize	K-12, University	Stillwater, OK and Belize
Civic Center WOW Team	High School	San Francisco, CA
Drachman Montessori	Middle School	Tucson, AZ
Forest Hills	K-2 and 3-5	Wilmington, NC
Granite School District	Elementary	Taylorsville, UT
ICS Atlanta & CDES	3 <sup>RD</sup> Grade	Roswell, GA & Chengdu, China
J E Moss	Elementary, University	Antioch, TN
Lakeside	Elementary, Middle School	San Diego, CA
Land of Enchantment	K, Middle Grade, College	Albuquerque, NM
Startown	Elementary	Newton, NC
TUSD	Pre-K – 5 <sup>TH</sup> , Middle School	Tucson, AZ
Vail	Pre-K – 1 <sup>ST</sup>	Vail, AZ
Whatcom County	2, 6-8	Bellingham, WA