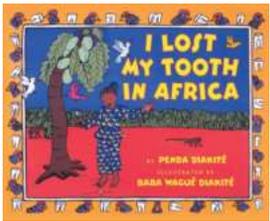


includes book lists of award winners, and interviews with authors and illustrators.

We supplemented our group meetings with email conversations and smaller groups of us met as needed to work on and discuss individual projects. Within the first month it became apparent that group members were interested in using universal concepts to help Maine students explore global cultures. Using universals helps children forge a connection between their cultures and diverse cultures. By nesting a familiar activity (going to school), theme (interacting with extreme weather), universal emotion (worry) or rite of passage (losing a tooth) within the context of a global culture, children can use the familiar as an entrance into the faraway. All of our individual projects used this approach. Our projects reflect our individual professional interests of teacher education, literacy support, and classroom interactions.

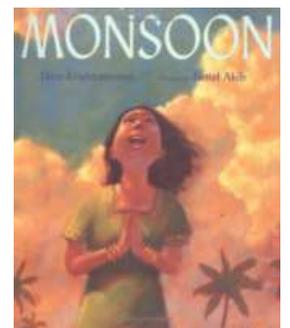
Teacher Education

Jane and Cynthia focused on supporting teacher education. Jane gave a workshop, “Recognizing the Familiar in the Faraway through Children’s Literature” at the 2012 Correll Early Literacy Conference at the University of Maine in Orono, Maine. The workshop provided early literacy professionals and early childhood students with access to over 100 global picture books.



Jane grouped the books into the themes of food, family, celebrations, school, concepts, children, home, relationships, and peace. Participants examined books and engaged in conversations about using them to teach early literacy learners about diverse cultures. Participants were particularly drawn to stories about childhood rites of passage, such as losing teeth, as encouraged by books such as [I Lost My Tooth in Africa](#) (Diakite, 2006).

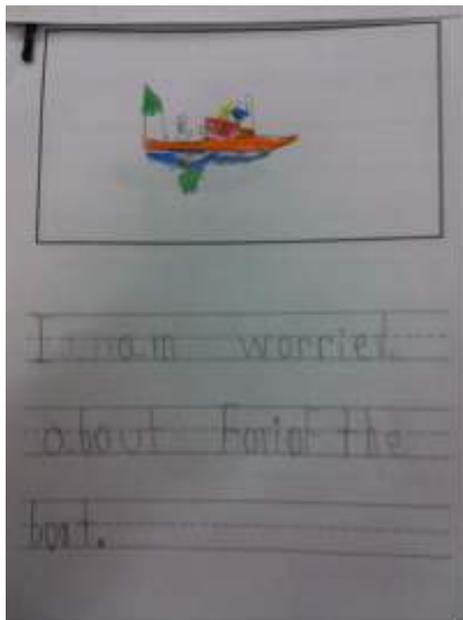
Cynthia assessed and expanded global children’s literature within the Learning Materials Collection (LMC) at the University of Maine which supports teacher education courses. Because children in Maine are familiar with extreme weather she decided to focus on families dealing with extreme weather in other countries. Picturebooks supporting the *National Curriculum for Standards for Social Studies* (Adler et al, 2010) were selected that realistically portray families and schools dealing with extreme weather in India ([Monsoon](#); [Monsoon Afternoon](#)), South Africa ([The Dove](#)), Zimbabwe ([Gugu’s House](#)), Mozambique ([Limpopo Lullaby](#)), Chad ([Rain School](#)), and an unspecified country in Latin American ([Papi’s Gift](#)). Professional books and web sites, including the *World of Words* database were used to select books. In addition to the extreme weather project, purchases were made of the Batchelder Award books (American Library Association/Association for Library Service to Children) as well as library association and government award books from Canada and Great Britain to improve the general collection of



global picture books. Over 60 global picturebooks were added to the Learning Materials Collection for teacher education.

Literacy Support

As a Title 1 teacher, Barbara Keene focused on literacy support. Barbara developed a collection of books about emotions which were donated to the guidance counselor at her school. The titles include *Silly Billy* (Browne, 2006), [*Little Mouse's Big Book of Fears*](#) (Gravett, 2008), [*How to Heal a Broken Wing*](#) (Graham, 2008), *Cherry and Olive* (Lacombe, 2007), and *The Gruffalo* (Donaldson, 1999). Barbara also implemented *Silly Billy* into a lesson plan for a class of kindergartners. The kindergartners engaged in a writing activity about the universal concept of worry, combining Common Core State Standards with global children's literature. Students began the lesson by brainstorming the reasons why people worry and then listened to a read-aloud of *Silly Billy* by British author, Anthony Browne. This book is particularly useful because it incorporates information about worry dolls from Guatemala into Billy's story about excessive worrying. After hearing the book the students wrote illustrated stories about their own worries. The stories varied from realistic stories about being lost in a store or falling off a boat to fantasy stories about zombies.



Falling Off a Boat



Lost in a Store



Zombies

Classroom Interactions

Jessica's project integrated global literature materials into the existing curriculum and was guided by Common Core State Standards and Maine State Learning Results: Parameters for Essential Instruction (Maine Department of Education, 2007). Jessica introduced her students to universal concepts through high-interest read-alouds of American and global children's literature. Jessica and her students worked at recognizing familiar activities (going to school, eating a meal, celebrating a birthday), rites of passage (losing a tooth), and familiar concepts (families) in settings that were familiar and unfamiliar. Concepts were identified as either a primary or secondary focuses in books so that students could make inter-textual connections regardless of whether the concept was the main theme of the book.

Students further developed their understanding of how universal concepts are expressed within global literature through discussions, art, and writing. Similarities and differences between cultures were explored as a natural consequence of examining universal concepts in different settings so that students explored both commonalities and differences across cultures. Students followed their own interests by selecting books from an extensive text set of global literature spanning different topics and reading levels. Books for the text set were purchased using WOW grant money and a grant of \$500 from donorschoose.org for her classroom project Go Global! (Dunton, 2012a). Students were also encouraged to bring in literature from home. Jessica recorded some of these lessons and posted them to YouTube (Dunton, 2012b) so that students could review them later and share what they had learned with their families.

Jessica concluded her project of including global literature by having students create a two-page



personal literary response related to the universal concepts that had been researched through global literature. Responses included pictures, drawings, paintings, models, poetry, jokes, and thoughts. Jessica photographed each response and put together a

classroom book called. *Universals Connect!* (Dunton, 2012c). Each student has a copy of the book which serves as a keepsake and a reminder of their explorations into other points of view. The classroom book can be purchased from Amazon.com so that relatives and friends can share in the children's project.

Conclusion

Everyone in the Orono Literacy Community explored global children's literature through universals set in other countries. Because of our diverse work backgrounds these projects involved teacher education, literacy support, and classroom interactions. Jane added to her collection of global literature books and used them in a workshop to assist early literacy teachers by engaging them in using accessible themes (celebrating a birthday) or rites of passage (losing a tooth) as a bridge to connect Maine children to global literature. Cynthia expanded the collection in the Learning Materials Collection through a focused text set on families dealing with extreme weather and increasing the global literature available to support teacher education. Barbara used the concept of childhood fears to connect her tangled readers to children in other countries who also worry. Jessica incorporated global children's literature into her existing curriculum and facilitated her students' research into universal themes (going to school) by providing them with an extensive text set that included numerous topics and different reading levels. Jessica and Barbara also worked with students to produce personal responses to a universal topic they had previously explored in another setting.

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Read Globally, Act Locally: A Global Environmental Literacy Community

Ernest Bond

Eight highly motivated teachers have been working on the Eastern Shore of Maryland to enhance transdisciplinary learning using global literature as a springboard for classroom investigations. The teachers who took part in our community exploring global environmental literature were also engaged in a Maryland State Department of Education funded STEM grant. As participants in that grant they were already exploring cross-curricular connections to STEM enriched instruction connected to Common Core State Standards. During the school year they met on a Saturday each month to discuss transdisciplinary curriculum in their classrooms with a group of twenty teachers. From the larger group eight of these teachers had the opportunity to internationalize their activities through participation in the WOW community.

So why were STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) teachers engaged with global literature? The theoretical foundation for this project builds on the understanding that, in providing windows and mirrors, literature can build bridges of international understanding (Bishop, 1994; Lepman, 2002). Narrative in particular has the potential to facilitate integrated learning across the curriculum by providing a rich personal context in which readers can construct meaning. STEM education in recent years has been conceived as transdisciplinary and Common Core State Standards are also generally interpreted as promoting learning across the curriculum. When broad themes and alternate perspectives on topics such as the earth's ecosystems are presented in ways that connect understandings across disciplines, our knowledge base becomes

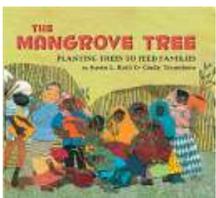
deeper and richer. (Lauritzen & Jaeger, 1997; Pappas, Kiefer, & Levstik, 2006) This is especially true when literature is used in thematic units that include a range of narratives, approaching the theme through different genres and formats from diverse social and cultural perspectives.

So the Global Environmental Literacy Community would stay on those Saturdays after the other STEM teachers left to discuss international children's books related to environmental stewardship. They talked about what fiction and nonfiction titles were available, why narratives from some regions of the world were absent in the U.S. market, and in particular the direct integration of these books into what they were trying to accomplish with transdisciplinary learning in their classrooms.

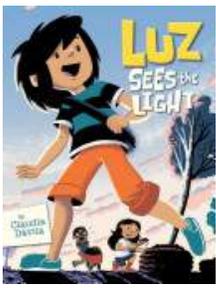
One of the first things the global environmental literature group did was to create a website collecting and disseminating the information about children's books from around the world that have a focus on environmental stewardship. We defined global literature as being international "either by topic or origin of publication or author" (Lehman et al, 2010). Effort was made to locate high quality books published in and/or set in diverse regions around the world. The website that resulted from this work can be found at [here](#).

Another connection was an annual children's and young adult literature festival in April at Salisbury University at which the Green Earth Book Awards are presented. The goal of the [Green Earth Book Award](#) is to "use the power of story to teach children about our natural environment and the responsibility we all have to protect it." All of the books that have been shortlisted for these youth book awards focusing on environmental stewardship are housed in an Environmental Literature Collection in the university's Curriculum Resource Center. Teachers in our community explored the collection for books that were originally published abroad or with an international setting. They then determined which of these books would best fit with the context of their classrooms. Some choose books specifically to enhance the range of available perspectives; others choose books based on appeal as whole class reads. The authors and illustrators who were recipients of the awards were in the region anyway so we were able to have some of them meet with children in the classes in which their books were being read.

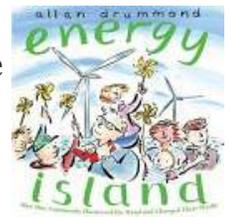
Maple Elementary: Environmental Stewardship



Cassie Wilson and Denise Gregarious, fifth-grade teachers at Maple Elementary, have been engaged in a year-long study of environmental stewardship and so would be able to integrate the books into their transdisciplinary approach to the curriculum. In their initial investigations into science, math, geography, and language arts they had explored books set in Eritrea ([The Mangrove Tree](#); Trumbore & Roth, 2011), Scotland ([Wild Wings](#); Lewis, 2011), and Denmark ([Energy Island](#); Drummond, 2011).



Their culminating activity involved a visit by author/illustrator Claudia Davila, originally from Chile and now residing in Canada. The kids had created questions for Davila about her book and about stewardship. Davila's graphic novel, [Luz Sees the Light](#) (Davila, 2011), has a protagonist who is a Latina child in a Canadian city. This was actually a very interesting concept for the children to consider because the character did not fit with their preconceptions about Canadians or Latinos. Despite cultural differences the protagonist has interests and concerns that were similar to many of the children. Despite a lack of interest at first in becoming an environmentalist, the character eventually galvanizes the community. Davila spoke, answered questions and drew images from the book. The kids even decided that they would cut out the part of the blackboard with the images drawn by Davila so that they could frame it! One of the reluctant readers in the class became proficient during the workshop at imitating Davila's cartoon style. He proudly demonstrated his skill for the rest of the class. All of this occurred on the same day that the forestry service provided a tree sapling for each child to take home and plant.



In addition to the set of books that will remain in the classroom, each of the children received a copy of *Luz Sees the Light*.



Claudia Davila demonstrates how she creates her character Luz

Salisbury Middle School: Dystopia and Youth Activism

Three teachers at Salisbury Middle School investigated infusing literature in a transdisciplinary manner focusing especially on the science concepts and the international aspects of the books. They chose one work of fiction, [The Carbon Diaries](#) (Lloyd, 2010), which envisions the possible impact of global warming and energy source depletion in a near future England, and one work of nonfiction, [Nowhere Else on Earth](#) (Vernon, 2011), about efforts to save the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia.

The seventh-grade teachers in the STEM academy created a plan to use *The Carbon Diaries* as part of direct instruction; however this was stalled as the book moved through the Board of Education's

approval process. The harsh realities in a near future England, ravaged by the social and environmental impact of global warming had excited the interests of students and the teachers, but getting a novel like this on the approved reading list for direct instruction can sometimes take over a year in local schools.

The teachers had great success with *Nowhere Else on Earth*. The entire seventh grade (over 150 students) came to hear Canadian author Caitlyn Vernon speak. Vernon is with the Sierra Club British Columbia and is involved in the efforts to protect the rain forest. One of her jobs is to oversee negotiations with First Nations people. The voices of the First Nations youth are infused throughout the book. The students were transfixed by the accounts of the Gitga'at people, the environmental issues, and the concept of youth activism. Each seventh-grade teacher received a copy of the book for their classroom library so that in every discipline at every level, students would have access to follow-up in terms of the science, geography, journalism, culture, and politics involved.

In the lessons conceived by the teachers, the sharp contrast between the dystopian futuristic fiction (including *The Carbon Diaries* and other popular titles such as *Ship Breaker*, and *Firestorm*) and youth activist oriented nonfiction (including *Nowhere Else on Earth* and [Gaia Warriors](#), and *Generation Green*) will enrich the learning opportunities already created by bringing global voices into classrooms on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. In terms of language arts, the teachers plan to deepen the understandings of how a theme can be explored in different formats, media, and genres.

Fruitland Intermediate: Connecting Art and Science

Gerrie Wiersberg at Fruitland Intermediate has been using a wide range of books in her fourth-grade class as read-alouds and independent reading connected to the classroom environmental science. The books added for this project fit perfectly with the general focus of the classroom but add an international dimension to their transdisciplinary focus, helping connect science, social studies, reading/language arts, and the creative arts. The class started by reading some of Bruce McMillan's books exploring the ecology of Iceland. They plotted locations on a world map and investigated the lives of puffins and humans in Iceland. With the new set of books they were able to compare ecological conditions in Iceland to what was happening in Kenya ([Mama Miti](#); Napoli, 2010 and [Seeds of Change](#); Johnson, 2010), Eritrea (*The Mangrove Tree*; Trumbore, 2011), Honduras (*The Good Garden*; Milway, 2010), and Denmark (*Energy Island*; Drummond, 2011). Contrasting metaphoric fictional narratives from Australia to nonfiction and fictionalized biography added a layer of literary understanding to the endeavor.

Every student in Gerrie's class received a copy of *The Mangrove Tree* through the combined efforts

of WOW and a donation from the Newton Marasco Foundation. The culminating activity involved reading this book and meeting with the co-author and illustrator Susan Roth for an art workshop. The global dimension is multifaceted in this final activity. *The Mangrove Tree* involves the community efforts in Eritrea, spearheaded by a Japanese American scientist, to promote sustainable agricultural change benefiting the people and environment of Eritrea. The story is told in two narratives, one a fictionalized biographical story and the other nonfiction about the efforts. The students came away with new understandings about the world.

Perhaps the greatest impact was created by the “Let’s Hold Hands” project with Susan Roth and the children. She demonstrated her style of collage art and had each child create an image of themselves reusing scrap materials, bits and pieces “that are readily available, that cost nothing, that are recycled from some other purpose, that now will have additional purpose” (Roth 2012). These self portraits were scanned and placed [here](#).

In a relevant, personal way the students applied the concepts they had investigated during this project.

The fourth graders were extremely excited to have their images linked to art by other children from around the world including Eritrea, the country portrayed in *The Mangrove Tree*. A real sense of self and connectedness to the world around them was created in this project. As Susan Roth suggests, “These hand-made collages will be symbols for the good will of today's children as they work towards being tomorrow's peaceful, accepting, respectful, adult friends” (Roth 2012). The concepts explored connected geography, environmental science, creative arts, and literature making the entire endeavor memorable and increasing comprehension exponentially because of the connections across disciplines and perspectives.





Children explore scrap materials to use in their self-portrait collages.

Text Sets of Books

Gerrie Wiersberg –Fourth grade, Fruitland Intermediate

The Mangrove Tree (Eritrea, classroom set)

The Good Garden (Honduras)

Wangari’s Trees of Peace (Kenya)

The Water Hole (Australia)

Mama Miti (Kenya)

Energy Island (Denmark)

Cassie Wilson and Denise Gregorius -- Fifth grade, Maple Elementary

Luz Sees the Light (Canada)

The Mangrove Tree (Eritrea)

Wild Wings (Scotland)

Gaia Warriors (England)

Energy Island (Denmark)

Jayne Malach, Jenny Bernardi, Chad Pavlekovich -- Seventh grade, Salisbury Middle School

The Carbon Diaries (England, classroom set)

Nowhere Else on Earth (Canada, multiple copies)

The Quest for the Tree Kangaroo (Papua New Guinea)

Energy Island (Denmark)

Sheree West -- First grade Pemberton Elementary

Wangari's Trees of Peace (Kenya)
Let's Save the Animals (England)
10 Things I Can Do to Help My World (England)
The Water Hole (Australia)
The Mangrove Tree (Eritrea)
Energy Island (Denmark)

Shaun Giudice -- Delmar Fifth/Sixth grade after school program

The Good Garden (Honduras)
The Mangrove Tree (Eritrea)
Not Your Typical Book About the Environment (Canada)
Planting the Trees of Kenya (Kenya)
Seeds of Change (Kenya)
Mama Miti (Kenya)

[Click here to download a list of global literature on environmental stewardship.](#)

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Learning about Latin America through Multiple Texts in Middle School Classrooms

By Anne Hawkinson and Lauren Freedman

The Martin Luther King Middle School Literacy Community came together in September to plan our school year. Our group consisted of a literacy coach, social studies teacher, math teacher, science teacher, language arts teacher, a district liaison, and a consultant from Western Michigan. During the year, we met twice monthly to discuss and continue our learning about using texts sets of multiple materials and inquiry as an instructional model. At these meetings, each teacher shared what was happening in his/her classroom and discussed successes and needs. We also discussed interdisciplinary connections. The literacy coach, the district liaison to MLK and the WMU consultant served as support for the content teachers especially when it came time to focus on building the text set for our focus study and planning our interdisciplinary unit.

As a community, we also reviewed student work with the group splitting into trios (two content teachers and one of the support people) to discuss the strengths and needs of individual student's products. The trios changed over the course of the year. These cross-disciplinary conversations led to deeper thinking as we worked toward the interdisciplinary unit. As we got to know each other better, we were also getting to know the sixth graders better within and across the content areas. We gained understanding of their strengths and needs regarding background knowledge, interest, and literacy development. We think this was a major factor contributing to the success of our unit on Central America, South America, and the Caribbean.

Background of Our Project: Anne Hawkinson, Literacy Coach

In 2008, WMU professors Lauren Freedman and Karen Thomas came to work with our staff at Hull Middle School. They proposed an exciting model for middle school learning: inquiry through engaging, multileveled, topic-centered text sets. With the financial support of the partnership between Benton Harbor Area Schools and Western Michigan University and the expertise of the librarian, Wayne Herman, we soon had our first "very heavy" tubs of nonfiction trade books that aligned with our units of study in science and social studies.

Over the next three years, as the building's literacy coach, I worked with teachers to develop units that made use of the text sets. Although professional development was limited and "buy-in" was not universal, the response was enthusiastic among teachers who tried the inquiry model. I noticed a few things in particular as use of the text sets increased.

First, from repeated exposure to the text sets in different courses, students began to accept that the development of reading skills could occur in any subject area. Reading stamina also improved, as

students spent more time with books. Background knowledge was increased as students were exposed to more far-ranging visuals and concepts than are typically offered by a textbook. Second, instructional efficacy increased as teachers began to plan units to include the building of reading and research skills. Teachers saw that in order for the text sets to be truly useful for student learning, reading and research skills needed to be explicitly taught. In social studies and science, categorization of information, note-taking, and expressing learning in original projects and prose came to be key objectives.

A good example of this growth in student skills and teacher expertise occurred in Ted Zahrt's sixth-grade social studies class at the beginning of this past school year. Ted had used text sets in previous years, and brought this experience to bear as he developed a strong inquiry unit on Aztec and Mayan civilizations. He began by posing the essential question: "What elements make a civilization?" Together, the class built a list of features that distinguish a civilization from other ways people can form social groups. After a "wander and wonder" in the Mayan and Aztec text set, students formed questions to pique interest.

Name _____ Date _____ 6th _____

What's My Inquiry?

My Topic: Aztecs

My top 5 questions:

1. Why did they put stones on their faces when they die?
2. What will happen if they don't follow their traditions?
3. Why do they say if you buried someone in an indian grave they will come back in their spirits?
4. Why do they have weird name as Menchi Tun?
5. What days did they play pok-a-tok?

The students were then asked, "What evidence can you discover to show that the Mayans or Aztecs had a civilization?" As they began independent research, the students practiced categorizing information as they recorded their findings on a graphic organizer. To build note-taking skills, Ted led the class in frequent practice sessions, using excerpts from the text set. The students used the information they had gathered and evaluated their notes when they were asked to select three important ideas write about and illustrate on a pyramid.

Name _____ Date _____

ANCIENT AZTEC OR MAYAN CIVILIZATION RESEARCH NOTES

Circle the civilization you are researching: Aztec Mayan

Directions: As you read, write notes that fit in the categories below.

<p>Government</p> <p>In Aztec we had a Great King, Jugglers, Poet, Queen, Princess, Prince, Embassadors, Prime Minister, Ambassadors, Astronomer, Farmer, Scribe, Royal Historian, Sorcerer, and a Cook.</p>	<p>Religion</p> <p>Aztecs believed that both women who died in childbirth became great warriors became gods. Made sacrifices to keep gods happy.</p> <p>The main god was Huitzilopochtli also Quetzalcoatl and Tlaloc.</p>
<p>Science and Technology</p> <p>They had 1200 medicinal plants to help people. They had counting calendar. The great sun of the sun is a calendar kept inside great temples.</p>	<p>Library (reading and writing)</p> <p>Aztecs used symbols in their writing. Hieroglyphic. Aztecs shows many different things. Folded books were called codex.</p>

In language arts, they explored persuasion, point of view, and audience by writing a letter to Cortez in the role of an Aztec or Mayan person. They wrote to convince Cortez not to destroy their civilization, using the text of their own notes as evidence.

Name _____

Write _____

rec 3 good details per paragraph 18

rec 4 descriptive adjectives 16

rec 3 topic sentences 12

Nov 27

Dear Hernan Cortez,

My name is Malinchi today I am writing you - by you should not destroy my town. We have a great building, trade of all things, and a great religion.

Our religion is special to us because we are worshiping 150 different gods, our main god is Huitzilopochtli he is the god of war, Quetzalcoatl is god of creation. Also we believe that the women who died in childbirth and great warriors become gods. We make sacrifices to keep our gods happy.

We have a great temple that is 82 feet tall. It has two openings on the top to worship Tlaloc and Huitzilopochtli. Also we have many great temples inside. Our great temple is built out of other temples.

Here we live to rules like malinchi's rule. Everyday there is over 6,000 people who want to become.

When I debriefed this unit with Ted, he expressed confidence that his increased expertise in

designing and managing the inquiry model had led to high engagement, increased reading stamina, and strengthened research skills among his students. He was also very pleased with the content learning that occurred.

The third major observation as we worked in the text sets had to do with their limitations. Our middle school student population contains a sizable amount of below-grade level readers. Most of these students fall in “just below”—at first glance, they may seem to be reading at close to grade level, but on closer inspection, lack of background and “think as you read” skills are prohibiting them from successfully analyzing more challenging texts. Others (perhaps 25% of the total population) are seriously struggling, being two or more grade levels behind in reading. Both these groups of readers do not handle complex informational texts well. They tend to flip through our text set books and look at the pictures. If they read, they have a hard time making meaningful notes. They are getting exposure, but not really experiencing the reading practice at their independent reading level that they need. I began to collect titles of books that would enhance the text sets and provide greater access for our struggling readers. The books with greater readability were dog-eared, while many of the texts were never touched. Our text sets needed revision.

Finally, higher-order thinking was increased if students were engaged in research projects that had a well-developed written component. This needed to occur more frequently, but when it did, as when Ted’s students wrote in language arts class about their Mayan and Aztec research, knowledge seemed to “stick”. This is not to say that posters made in science class about ecosystems are not a valuable learning experience. But to carry a topic to another class and really develop it through writing has no parallel in terms of guiding students to make big picture, real-world connections.

The MLK Learning Community Project: Lauren Freedman

We thought about this background this past spring as the sixth grade team embarked on the integrated research unit. We had previously developed a basic text set for the Caribbean, Central and South America, but it’s hard to get 30 sixth graders to do inquiry when there aren’t enough books they can actually read. An integrated unit using an enriched text set would help us bring our student researchers to the next level of meaning-making so we added new trade books to this text set. With the help of a local book store owner, we were able to add the missing pieces so that every student could engage with and learn through interesting and navigable texts. The teachers had experience with inquiry learning, which gave our planning a strong platform. We had experienced the way writing in language arts about social studies learning had enriched our students’ thinking. We were excited now to see how integration across all subjects, including science and math, would further deepen the experience.

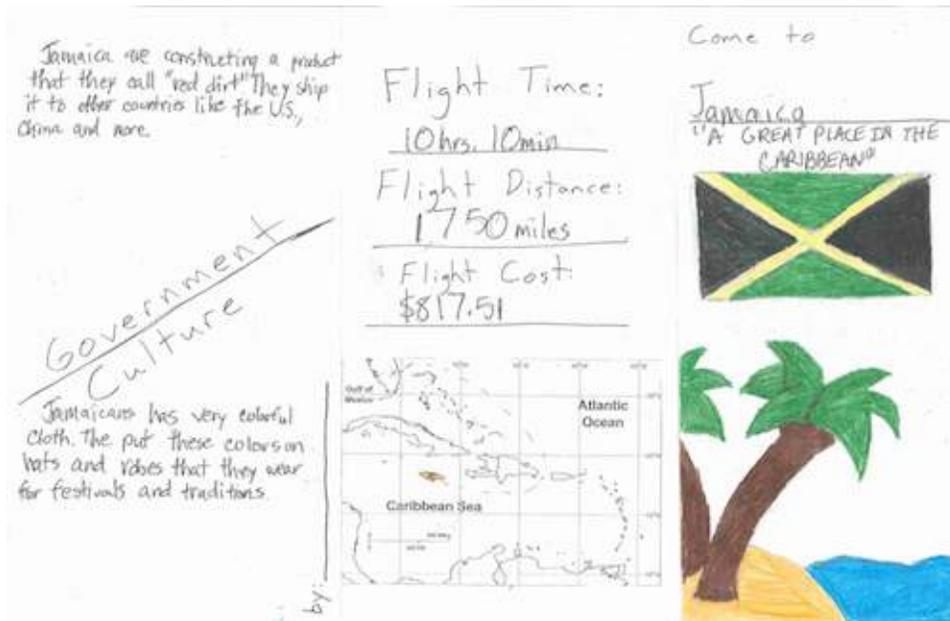
In our planning, the sixth grade team determined that organization was the key to the success of

the project. Therefore, we met weekly on Thursday mornings to brainstorm ways to integrate the four content areas using Social Studies as the cornerstone. This chart shows the organization we decided to follow.

**Proposed
6th grade Integrated Unit Planning Grid**

	Social Studies	ELA	Math	Science
APPENDIX D	Caribbean	Research & note taking Travel Brochure	Problem/Solution In country being researched Distances to countries Airline rates	Geology Plate Tectonics Earthquakes
	Central America	Research & note taking Power Point	Read Folk tales Folk Tale characteristics Write folk tale w/ authentic setting	Ratios/percents Population density Ecosystems/climate Continue geology and plate tectonics Karst
	South America	Research & note taking Poster	Compare/contrast paper (using all three countries researched)	Statistics (such as deforestation) Ecosystems River shed systems Deforestation/climate change

For the study of the Caribbean, the students began in Social Studies by wandering and wondering in the text set and asking questions. They then took notes. From these notes the students created a Travel brochure.



<p><u>Jamaica</u> at a glance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Total Population About 2,000,000 - There are many famous people from Jamaica including Rihanna, Bob Marley, and Porgy. - Jamaica's Jungles are filled with life and animals. - Most Jamaicans like to wear their hair in dreadlocks. - Some Jamaicans live in the Jungles and use natural resources. 	<p>Cool things see!</p>  <p>Jamaica's Waterfall is one of the world's most beautiful</p>	<p><u>Climate</u> Jamaica can get the most coldest in October. In the middle months, Jamaica is hot.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Economy</u> Jamaicans can make up to \$15,000 a year. In 2008, they made About \$15,000.</p> <hr/> <p><u>Natural Resources</u> Jamaicans cut down trees and use them to build projects and other things.</p>
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The students also gathered data that they used in Math to compare information about populations. In Science, the students began work on geological vocabulary and concepts. In Language Arts, the students discussed in small groups problems that were specific to Caribbean countries.

APPENDIX F
The People of the

Caribbean Islands



Directions: For this assignment work together with a person at your table. Each person chooses an island to research. Find the information in the book and fill in the table. Please fill the chart with as much information as possible. Don't limit yourselves.

		Partner A Name _____	Partner B Name _____	
Information to explore	Explain the information	Name of country is....	Name of country is....	Compare
Find the Population for each country. What does the \Rightarrow population tell us?	Population means... the total number of people..	Winward Islands 841,874	Dominican Republic 9,507,133	What was the difference in population? Show work What was the combined population? Show work
Find the life expectancy at birth. What does the life expectancy at \Rightarrow birth tell us?	Life expectancy tells us... how long the average person lives..	Winward Islands 72.98 years	Dominican Republic 73.39	Which country had people live the longest? What was the average of their age? Show work
Which ethnicity group is in the majority? What does \Rightarrow ethnicity mean?	Ethnicity means... The percent of race	Winward Islands black or mixed black majority	Dominican Republic 73%	What was the highest percent? What was the lowest percent?
Partner A: What is something you learned from this research? Life expectancy		Partner B: What is something you learned from this research?		

APPENDIX G
Words to know
Fault or breaks in earth crust slip past each other
reverse
Normal
Strike-slip
Earthquake
Magnitude
Richter-scale
shearing-causes rock to slip apart.
tension stretches rock so that it gets thin in the middle.

During the student of Central America, the students browsed, asked questions and took notes on Government, Culture, Economics, Population, History, Climate, Natural Resources, Landforms. Data on land area was taken to Math to compare the size of the Central American Countries. In Science, they used their notes on climate and landforms and continued the study of geological concepts.

APPENDIX I

Research Notes

<p><u>Guatemala</u> <u>Government</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Services Tourism and government services 2. Guatemala swore in a new government on January 14, 2000 3. President Cerezo's Civilian government pledged that 4. Its top priorities would be to end the 5. political violence and to establish the rule of law. 	<p><u>Belize</u> <u>Culture</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Speak English, Spanish, Mayan, 2. Honduras Spanish and American dialects 3. Guatemala Clothing and art - read about 4. In the literature, and heard in the speech and music 5. Children in school and predominates in the media
<p><u>Nicaragua</u> <u>Economics</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The economy is \$2,600 Guatemala 2. the economy is 4,700 3. Guatemala's economy is improving 4. Guatemala's - arabel land 13.22 percent 5. Guatemala's - Permanent Crops 5.6 Percent 	<p><u>Population</u> <u>Costa Rica</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 4,195,914 2. 92 percent white / mestizo 3. 3 percent black 4. 1 percent Black American 5. 1 percent Chinese 1 percent other.

El Salvador	
<p><u>History</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to plot against the government 2. The FMLN pledged to take over the country and end poverty and government corruption 3. A soldier fighting during the civil war carries his wounded friend to safer ground. 4. Throughout the 1800's wealthy Salvadorans families controlled El Salvador. 	<p><u>Climate</u> Nicaragua</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. tropical in lowlands 2. cooler in the highlands. 3. Guatemala - tropical hot humid in lowland 4. cooler in highland 5. In general has a tropical climate. The higher valleys even have frost at time
<p><u>Natural Resources</u> Nicaragua</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gold silver copper tungsten lead, zinc, timber fish 2. Guatemala - Fish, petroleum, wood Chicle, hydro power mined minerals 3. Guatemala - gold, nickel, and lead. 4. Guatemala - land use other 80,82 5. Guatemala Irrigated land: 1,300 sq. km 	<p><u>Landforms</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guatemala - by the blackened cones of more than 30 volcanoes 2. In 1974 an earthquake killed 23,000 people and injured 10,000 3. The active volcano is one of 36 that make up the Guatemalan volcanic chain 4. the rainforest of Guatemala interior lowlands.

APPENDIX H

I wonder.....

Why do people traffic drugs through panama?

Why did they make the panama canal?

Why is panama poor?

Are panamanian police bad cops.

Why are panamanians growing cash crops? Who is the richest person in panama?

Who makes favelas?

Why is panama a farming place? Who is the panama police chief? Is all of panama poor?

APPENDIX J

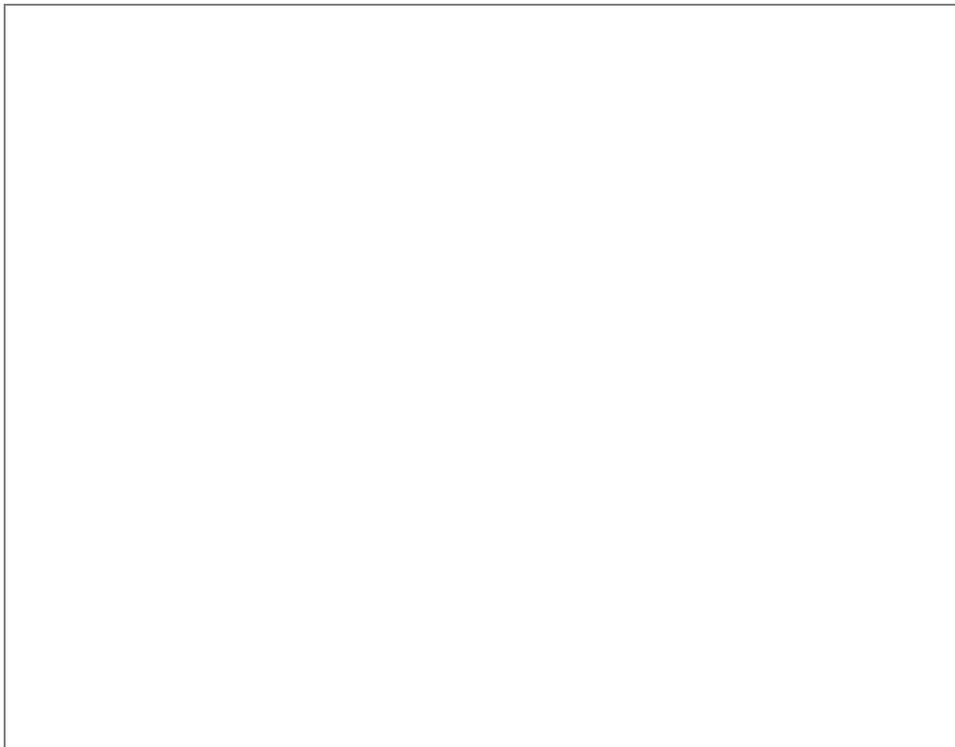
Land Area -

1. Nicaragua - 109,800 sq. mi: 282,269 sq. km
2. Honduras - 112,492 sq. mi: 291,830 sq. km
3. Guatemala - 109,800 sq. mi: 282,269 sq. km
4. Panama - 50,764 sq. mi: 131,987 sq. km
5. Costa Rica - 51,060 sq. mi: 132,460 sq. km
6. Panama - 50,764 sq. mi: 131,987 sq. km
7. Belize - 28,868 sq. mi: 74,836 sq. km

The study of South American countries was cut short as the school year ended. So while our community's plans did not all come to fruition, it was an important learning experience for us as educators. We observed the value of the students working independently and then sharing their findings. They demonstrated more interest in discussing the content they were learning as they

were able to make connections across subject areas and were using the information gathered to think about life in this region as compared to their own in the United States.

Before the year ended, we were able to interview several trios of students about their experiences with the text sets and the notebooks and their observations about the integration across subject areas. In this video below, students express their enthusiasm about the project and discuss what they learned. They especially appreciated the ways in which the notebooks helped them organize and keep their papers from getting lost in the bottom of their backpacks. They could readily find the information they needed and could revisit their work by turning to the section of their notebook for a given content area.



After school year ended, we asked for volunteers to speak to the School Board at their meeting in June. Four boys agreed to speak to the board. The board meeting was at 6:00 p.m. At 4:45, the four boys came to MLK to talk about what they wanted to share at the meeting. These boys were not “ringers.” In other words, they were not the compliant, straight A students. Rather, they could easily get off topic in class, but could also be engaged if interested. At 6:00, we went to the meeting. Each of the four boys expressed some nervousness, but did extremely well. They talked about reading in the text set books (we brought about 10 with us and set them up on a table behind where the boys spoke) and taking notes in their notebooks. They brought their notebooks with them and showed the board each section and what the focus was for that section. They also talked about creating a bibliography of the materials they used. Then they shared their culminating brochures. It was quite impressive! In fact, the board and the audience gave them a standing ovation.

Anne Hawkinson is the Literacy Coach at Martin Luther King Middle School in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

Lauren Freedman is Professor of Literacy Studies at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Michigan and a consultant with Benton Harbor Area Schools.

MLK Learning Community members: Anne Hawkinson, Literacy Coach; Ted Zahrt, Social Studies; Joe Elsheikhi, Math; M'Shannon Rockette, Science; Matthew Walker, Language Arts; Don Pearson, District Liaison to MLK; Lauren Freedman, Western Michigan University Consultant

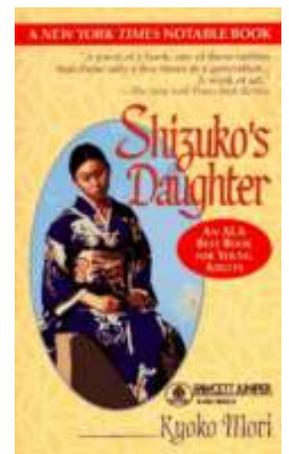
The Formation of Global Citizens

Christiana Succar

“There is brown, green, black and white rice. Before you cook rice you wash it two times and put clean water with the rice and then put it in the rice-cooker. The different types of rice symbolize how Yuki tries to look at life as she makes sense of her mother’s suicide as an adolescent growing up motherless in Japan in the 1970’s.”

This brief description, a word vignette, was written by a sixth-grade student in my Language Arts class while reading [*Shizuko’s Daughter*](#) by Kyoko Mori (1994). This student demonstrates a connection to the main character, Yuki, and the symbolism of rice in the novel. As a way to bridge cultures and subject areas at Harllee Middle School in Bradenton, Florida, I used multicultural novels and banded together with three teachers from different disciplines to build cross-cultural literacy.

Our team consisted of Math teacher Miss. Walsh, Science teacher Mr. Soles and Social Studies teacher Mr. Myers, in addition to me as the Language Arts teacher. We met once a week to review the curriculum, the pacing and our interdisciplinary approach to cultural literacy. We each built subject area curriculum around the novel being taught in the Language Arts classroom. We found that because of the cross-curricular approach, students not only easily identified with the concepts in specific content areas, but they also synthesized the information and applied it to other subject areas and real life.



My sixth-grade Language Arts class took the lead and read *Shizuko’s Daughter* by Kyoko Mori (1994), a coming of age novel about a twelve-year-old Japanese girl, Yuki, whose mother commits suicide leaving her to be raised by an uncaring father and a resentful stepmother. In addition, banned from the customs of her mother’s family, she struggles to find her own identity

without the direction of her mother's cultural guidance.

As the students read the novel they took a theme or topic from the novel and related it to their own identity or culture. The sixth grader who wrote the above piece chose the theme of rice and discussed how rice was a staple in her Vietnamese culture. Moreover, she added that she had not thought about the relationship of the process of making rice to anything in her life. However, in this exercise she realized rice is a social aspect of her culture, and that different types of rice and their preparation represent some sort of facet in her family household.

Culture Matters

This lesson created a pathway for students to relate the novel to something culturally relevant in their life. Culturally relevant pedagogy is not only about an individual student's identification. According to Ladson-Billings (1995), culturally relevant pedagogy "is specifically committed to collective, not merely individual empowerment" (p. 160). As students shared their vignettes with the class, their fellow classmates chimed in with their own relationships to various topics from the novel (rice, tea, incense, rituals, love). When the sixth grader read her vignette on rice, other students said, "Oh, we eat rice in our house too" and proceeded to talk about the significance in their culture. Several students asked the Vietnamese student if her family had similar rituals to those found in the novel when Shizuko's grandmother placed tea, rice and incense on a table to signify the spirit of her dead daughter's birthday.

The students' experience with this exercise is one example of how minority students can feel empowered within a majority culture. In addition, it created a teachable moment for all students to expand and relate their knowledge to, not only their own culture, but internationally. Though our school has a diverse population consisting of African American, Hispanic, Anglo, and Asian students, most pupils do not inquire about other cultures and tend to stereotype certain cultures.

Literacy across the Curriculum

As a way to bridge literacy across the curriculum our cross-curricular team developed lessons that combined what the students learned in their Language Arts class to their other subject areas. Johnson and Mongo (2008) point out that "proficient reading skills are essential to learning mathematics, science, and social studies concepts" and that "experiences that focus on content and relevancy will actively engage and empower students" (p. 1). Prior to reading the novel, our science teacher conducted a unit on earthquakes and tsunamis, focusing on the devastating 1995 Kobe, Japan, earthquake, which is the setting of the novel. In Social Studies, the students discussed the geography of Japan, focusing on the two main settings in the novel: Kobe and Tokyo. Finally, as we read the novel, the Math instructor dealt with distance and measurement through Shizuko's travels of visiting her grandmother and aunt.

Covering the history, geography, science and mathematical aspects of the novel allowed our Language Arts class to delve not only into the plot, but theme, symbolism and characterization. Students questioned theme, cultural traditions, and adolescence in other cultures. A sixth-grade student composed her word vignette on love, stating, “When you love someone you have to have feelings or one may feel loss.” Throughout the novel this student constantly questioned why Yuki’s father Hideki did not mourn his wife’s death and why he seemed so absent from Yuki’s life and was convinced that Hideki did not love his daughter. The student felt that Yuki felt out of place because, without her father’s love, Yuki suffered loss. This student’s father had left her when she was very young and she also suffered from her own feelings of abandonment.

Students also questioned the cultural tradition that Yuki’s grandmother followed yearly on the birthday of her daughter Shizuko. Yuki’s grandmother honored her daughter’s spirit by placing brewed tea, cooked rice and incense on a makeshift altar. Some of the Mexican students in the class said “Mrs. Succar that is the same thing we do for “Dia de Muertos.” This prompted a discussion on how different cultures honor their loved ones after they die. Surprisingly, there were many similarities between cultures in the manner in which they remember the dead.

Finally, students questioned why Yuki was so submissive to her father’s demands and why she put up with abuse from her stepmother. We discussed differences between Western views of raising children and that of Japanese culture. Moreover, we discussed nationalism and how Japan culture has been conducive to traditions that are adhered to from generation to generation. Students questioned why Yuki did not seem to get into much trouble when she did defy her elders. We wondered if maybe she was given allowances because of her mother’s death, and whether paternal discipline differs from maternal in other countries.

Conclusion

Overall by combining cross-curricular learning with a novel set in an unfamiliar culture, both my students and I walked away with enriched experiences about Japanese culture within our classroom environment. Seeing students light up when we discussed something they learned in another subject area reinforced the connections they were making between courses. Moreover, encouraging in-depth discussions about themes, symbolism and characterization gave cause for less vocal students to open up. The power of culturally relevant pedagogy opens many doors of learning that are necessary for students to become thoughtful global citizens.

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Journey on the Silk Road: Creating a Google Lit Trip

Sue Corbin

In an essay about a musical piece based on the Silk Road, cellist Yo-Yo Ma wrote:

For me, the Silk Road has always been fundamentally a story about people, and how their lives were enriched and transformed through meeting other people who were at first strangers.

Our collaborative team consisted of one reading teacher (Sue Corbin), one English teacher (John Koppitch), two social studies teachers (Maureen Carroll and Jessica O'Brien), a science teacher (Paul Repasy) and a math teacher (Jennifer Weisbarth), all in seventh grade classrooms at Shaker Heights Middle School. In our group meetings, we talked a lot about how integral traditional literature is to an understanding of cultures, and how such tales could be foundation pieces for learning across the curriculum. In seventh grade, students study the Silk Road nearly all year in social studies, so this was a natural theme to incorporate into every core subject. We met weekly to choose stories we thought students would relate to, and to plan lessons that built on their growing knowledge of the Silk Road.

We wanted to create a product that would be interactive, high tech, global in scope, and literature-based, and found exactly what we were looking for in [Google Lit Trips](#). These trips are multimedia journeys through fiction and nonfiction literature that allow students to experience a story as if through a prism of information. A Lit Trip uses Google Earth to navigate the places in a book, look at them from a myriad of perspectives, and consider the interactions between the places and the characters and plot of a story.

Jerome Burg developed the idea and created the first Lit Trips. He wanted students to be able to “see” the places they were reading about without having to leave home. The approach is a brilliant way to help students make connections between the text and the world.

Most Lit Trips involve stopping along a journey by zooming in on a particular place using Google Earth protocols. Students can read and answer questions at each site and reflect on the book they are reading. There are links to websites about the place, embedded photographs and videos showing particular aspects that are in the book, and different ways to view the landscape. All of the possibilities that are available on Google Earth are also available on a Lit Trip, so that students can check the weather or see borders and roads. They can virtually fly from place to place along the route, following the numbered stops, in or out of sequence.

We knew that our middle school students were interested in finding places on Google Earth from watching them during their spare time on computers. They are digital natives who are usually more motivated to read from a screen than from a book. They are diverse learners who need to participate in multisensory lessons that appeal to their visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles.

One of the recurring themes in the seventh-grade World History curriculum is the history and culture of the Silk Road, so we chose this as a natural basis for a Lit Trip. We wanted our trip to show historical and current information about the places, people, inventions, knowledge, art, literature, and cultures that made the Silk Road such an important route. We wanted students to better understand how the past influences the present and the future, and to see how human experiences from faraway places and times can affect people everywhere.

We had some difficulty determining an appropriate book that could provide authenticity of the Silk Road's history, and, at the same time, be appealing and accessible to all of our students. It was crucial to find a "reader friendly" text that could be read by struggling readers and be challenging for the more advanced readers in our classrooms. We found that while there are many historical fiction books about places along the Silk Road for adolescents, many of them provide perspectives that are uniquely Western. So, we thought of using traditional literature to offer clues about the cultures, knowledge, and beliefs of the ancient Asian and Middle Eastern inhabitants along the road.

We were concerned about the use of traditional literature with seventh-grade students in that they might view these stories as "baby" stories, especially in a picture book format. However, we believe that traditional literature is rich with information, and that these stories beg to be read by readers of all ages. Jane Yolen (1981) called the dissemination of folk tales "mouth to mouth resuscitation" (p. 22). In *Touch Magic*, she says,

Folklore is, of course, imperfect history because it is history constantly transforming and being transformed, putting on, chameleonlike, the colors of its background. But while it is imperfect history, it is the perfect guidebook to the human psyche; it leads us to the

What better reason to use ancient tales as the foundation for the Silk Road project?

Our literature search led us to Cherry Gilchrist's (1999) *Stories from the Silk Road*, illustrated by Nilesh Mistry. In her introduction, Gilchrist provides background about the trade route that linked the East to the West, possibly even into Western Europe. One of the more important points that she makes is that the road "was also an important route for the exchange of ideas. Knowledge of astronomy, medicine and science passed along it, and religions were spread via it...Art too changed and developed because of this exchange" (p. 6). The stories themselves are simply told and can be explored on many levels. We felt that this was a "just right" book for our purpose of using global literature for a cross-curricular study that would explore the interconnectedness of people across time and place.

Gilchrist uses the voice of the "Spirit of the Silk Road" to guide readers from Changan to Samarkand, listening in on storytellers as they relate the mysteries of silk, mischievous monkeys, demons and dragons, and the foibles of human nature. Each story has a two-page introduction to the trading stop told in a "you are there" format that draws readers into the city or town. Mistry's masterful use of border illustrations reveals the presence of the guiding Spirit as he shows the splendors of the trading stops. Readers can spend a long time looking for clues about the people, places, and stories in the colorful drawings. A common thread within the images for each story is a caravan of traders as they work their ways across mountains, rivers, and deserts by camel and on foot.

We also chose a companion nonfiction picture book, *The Silk Route: 7,000 Miles of History* by John S. Major and illustrated by Stephen Fieser. This book served as a quick review of places and topics for students who had already completed studies about the Silk Road in their social studies classes.

We wanted to engage students as much as possible so that they could contribute to the Lit Trip with their written questions about the stories, information and websites on the Internet, and content area activities that could be included on the stops. An excellent way to keep students actively engaged is to use learning stations that allow students to explore in their own ways. There was no time limit for the length of a visit to a learning station, but all students were expected to complete all stations by the end of the unit.

Our learning stations included:

- **Tiles and mosaics** (exploring mathematical geometric patterns through reading articles, examining illustrations, and coloring copies of mosaics)

- **Confessional or Diary Entry** (planning and composing a confessional or diary entry of a traveler along the Silk Road)
- **Music of the Silk Road** (listening to samples of music from the Silk Road on selected internet sites)
- **Time line** (creating a time line banner in words and pictures about the history of the Silk Road)
- **Mapping** (locating and coloring in maps depicting stops along the Silk Road)
- **Folk Tales** (reading *Stories from the Silk Road* by Cherry Gilchrist individually or in pairs or small groups)
- **Web quests** on the Silk Road and Stanford University virtual lab and on Marco Polo (students work at computers to explore websites based on Silk Road adventures of travelers, particularly Marco Polo)
- **Video of Genghis Khan** (students watch an internet video of Genghis Khan and take notes on his biography and contributions to the Silk Road)
- **Artifact Walk** (students explore illustrated posters of objects found along the Silk Road, predict and study their uses)
- **Children’s Book** (students write a children’s picture book about a traveler along the Silk Road)
- **Silk Worm Lab** (students view actual silk worms under microscopes, read articles about silk worm biology and life cycle, and take lab notes; an optional addition is the opportunity to write a haiku about silk worms)
- **Silk Road Math** (students work on word problems based on length, distance, and time for a Silk Road traveler)

The stations were intentionally designed to invite students into ancient cultures by engaging them in literature, music, art, math, science, and history. We wanted students to attempt to transform themselves and enter the ancient or current environment of the Silk Road, to use the four major academic content areas to submerge themselves into the Silk Road cultures, and to think of themselves as citizens from this particular geography. Materials needed for the learning stations were:

- Computers (about 20)
- Microscopes
- Silk worms (containers)
- Large pieces of paper and colored pencils
- Copies of *Stories from the Silk Road* and *The Silk Route: 7,000 Miles of History*
- Calculators
- Handouts

In English, John led students in a study of Chinese folk tales. Students read and studied five traditional tales from *Stories from the Silk Road* and researched five characteristics of Chinese folk literature. They had to identify each of these traits in one of the tales from the book. Students were asked to create their own character following the structures and characteristics of one of the stories, and participate in “mock” conversations or interactions with other students’ creative characters. After three such interactions, they completed a short children’s story with a moral or lesson, either by writing their own story or collaborating with a partner. The following images illustrate two such self-published books:

☐ [Story 1](#) (in appendix below)

☐ [Story 2](#) (in appendix below)

☐ One student shared her vision of a young girl’s longing to travel the Silk Road as a merchant. A girl had little hope of realizing her dream until her parents consented to letting her go with her brother’s caravan. A [diary](#) (in appendix below) entries show the connection to a character from a long ago time in a faraway place.

To explore the history of the Silk Road so that students could add to their understandings of the cultural traditions, Jessica led students in social studies to create a life-size historical timeline (big enough to wrap around a classroom). It also displayed visually how the cultures overlapped each other. Students also completed a web quest concerning current and historical aspects of the Silk Road.

Maureen’s social studies classes, among many other cross curricular activities, used a website about [Marco Polo](#) to discover facts about Polo’s journeys and to explore and infer the purposes and significance of Marco Polo’s contributions through his travels. Maureen also found a wealth of information at [Stanford University’s](#) site, enabling students to involve themselves with maps, timelines, music and sights along the Silk Road. Students also created a large timeline that was color-coded to represent different countries. The students chose one interesting fact, printed it, and pasted it to the timeline so that it resembled a collage of information.

Jennifer’s math students determined distances of cities using the Pythagorean Theorem, which was known by the Babylonians, Indians, and Chinese. They read about the differences in the theorems between cultures, further illustrating the many ways that art, literature, and even mathematical formulas can hold secrets of people’s ways of thinking and seeing the world. As in Maureen’s classes, Jennifer’s students used formulas and logic to determine which route along the Silk Road they would take, considering the distance and the terrain that would need to be covered.

☐ Both Jennifer’s and Maureen’s classes created symmetrical patterns (rotation and line of symmetry) using Islamic tiles as examples. Websites provided information on the [history](#) of mosaic

tile practices enabled students to [create a mosaic online](#). Students read about how the [symmetrical designs](#) (in appendix below) that came to be associated with Islamic art may have represented Islamic beliefs about order and balance.

One of the more popular learning stations involved the study of real silk worms along with an exploration of Islamic science. Students got first-hand looks at the underlying reason for the Silk Road coming to pass – silk. For Paul’s science classes, there were three distinct parts to this activity.

The first was an observation of living silkworms. Approximately 50-60 living silkworms were purchased from [The Silkworm Shop](#). Using dissecting microscopes, hand lenses and blunt probes, students observed the anatomy and behavior of silkworms. Students were asked to sketch and label the anatomy of the silkworm, as well as record in words a description of their behavior, including both feeding and their response to being touched by a blunt probe. Because this packet was designed as a discovery activity, with the students having no prior knowledge or lessons regarding silkworms, poster-sized pictures of labeled silkworm anatomy and labeled silkworm life-cycle were provided for students to reference while they were observing and to help them label their drawings.

The second was a [website](#) excerpt reading/writing station. Students sat in a separate area of tables to read a handout containing information about the history of silk and silkworms, as well as interesting facts about silkworms that would appeal to middle school students. Students were also asked to write a haiku about silkworms. A poster explaining the structure of a haiku as well as several examples of haikus were provided at this station to help guide the students in this endeavor.

The third was a video viewing station. Students were provided with a table, chairs, and a laptop with several headphones attached to a listening station to view a YouTube video related to silk production and manufacturing. There are several excellent YouTube videos on this topic from which to choose. Paul used one titled "Dream Ribbon" which shows an artisan creating a silk bookmark out of silk harvested from silkworm cocoons in his own kitchen. Of course, the highlight of this station was the observation of the living silkworms. Give middle school students the opportunity to observe anything that's unique, weird and alive, and you have yourself a winning lesson!



The purpose of Paul's second science activity was to provide students with a general overview of Islamic science during the time frame of the Silk Road, more specifically the 13th - 14th centuries. Once provided with some background information, students interacted with a series of images of scientific artifacts found at the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford, England, in an attempt to discern what each artifact or instrument was made of, its purpose or function, and by whom, when or where the artifact was made. This discovery portion of the lesson was completed in pairs to allow for discussion and exchange of ideas, after which students immediately self-checked and corrected their ideas so they were not left wondering about the accuracy of their ideas. Checking their answers related to the artifacts also provided each student with the knowledge that, while every artifact or piece of "technology" had a scientific purpose or function, many were often originally developed and used for religious purposes related to Islam, such as measuring the time of day or the direction of Mecca, both essential for daily prayer. Students gained an understanding of the contributions and ideas provided by the Islamic world to science, as well as an appreciation for the interaction between science and religion.



Finally, Sue's reading classes focused on reading *Stories from the Silk Road*, and composing "thinking" questions for each story. Previous to beginning the book, Sue had introduced the students to patterns of story structures in folk literature and her classes investigated several Cinderella stories to compare characters, problems, solutions, and themes. Similarities and differences were recorded on a semantic features chart.

5/5
Dr. John Luffell

Folk Tale Story Grammar

Story	Characters	Culture	Conflict	Plot Events	Resolution	Theme/Moral
Golden Sandal	Man, fisherman, fishwife	Middle Eastern	She should marry her (looks out for)	talking fish (helping her)	Prince found the sandalwood	Karma
The Korean Cinderella	Old father, wife, daughter, helper, prince	Korean	She is not allowed to go to the festival	Frog	The helper helped her with her task	be good
Ashpot	Helper, step sisters, step mom, prince	Hill billy	She is not allowed to go to the dance	Helper is put down by her step sister	Helper helped her with her task	Karma

Students read the stories in literature circles. Reciprocal teaching helped students to model and practice examples of good questions, and these became the focal points for the book study on the Google Lit Trip. Examples of the questions are:

“The Bride with the Horse’s Head”

1. Why did the father kill the horse? Why did he regret his decision?
2. Who was the silkworm?
3. The trouble in this story happened because the parents were not happy with the promise they had made. What happened to the horse because of a broken promise? Have you ever broken a promise? If so, what were the consequences?

“The Jade Gate”

1. How did Monkey find a way to get a horse for his friend?
2. What did you learn about Buddhist beliefs from reading this story?
3. Why is enlightenment so important?

“White Cloud Fairy”

1. How can you tell that the White Cloud Fairy has sympathy for people?
2. Why was the Sand God jealous?
3. What do people who live near Dunhuang still believe about the Sand God?

Conclusion.

The Google Lit Trip is still a work in progress at the time of this writing. It takes time to gather so much information, and still more time to decide what to include and what to leave out. According to exit interviews with students at the end of the unit, the Silk Road project was a success. Students revealed that they loved the interactive learning stations. They even suggested that they liked reading the stories, albeit in picture book form. We hope that this experience will encourage them to explore the traditional literature of other cultures and to become more consciously aware of the wealth of information and understanding that these tales offer. We believe that in order to appreciate who you are, you must also understand and empathize with other people. Our Silk Road journey and the forthcoming Google Lit Trip have and will continue to be our passports to global perspectives.

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Appendix



Silk Road Story One

Keeping Promises

Year
Name of Publishing Co.
City and State
Name of Author 3/2/22
By Amelia Gingras

Silk road project journey

By Amelia Gingras

Main Character, setting, quest or problem

Akilah is from Turkey. She is a Buddhist and meditates every day. She is very superstitious about broken mirrors, black cats and such. She is respectful of others and is never nosy. She is well educated but hostile and at age 17 this is a good value to have when you have to trade.



Akilah has to travel the sea trading route to find the medicine that she needs for her father who is sick. She promised her family she would get the medicine and does not want to break that promise.



Character interactions

Akilah is in the market trading with Wu Ji. Wu Ji is a mean and greedy merchant who trades silk and jade. Akilah needs some silk so she starts a conversation with Wu Ji.
"I'll give you 5 apples for one roll of silk," she offers.
"No!" Wu Ji exclaims "10 apples!"
"No way" she retorts "7 apples."
"8" he says.
"7" she replies bristly.
"9" he insists with a grin.
"7.25" she negotiates, persistent.
"Fine." Wu Ji finally gives in.



Moral

K

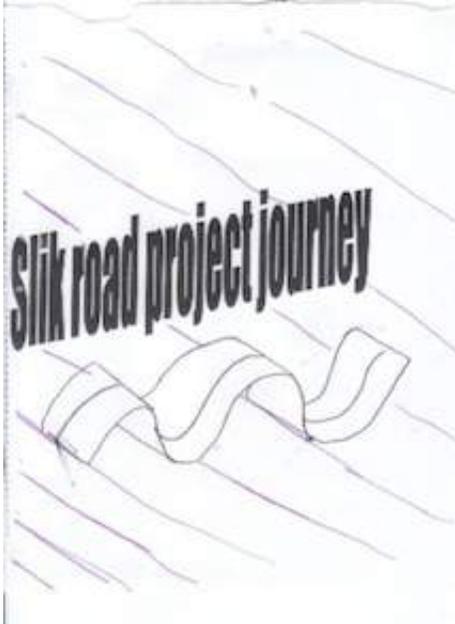
Keeping

P

Promises



Silk Road Story 2



Silk road project journey

Main Character, setting, quest or problem

Main character: Ida
Setting: Traveling along the silk road from Arabia
Quest: To prove that a girl can do just as much as a boy



Character interactions

Akila (Amalia)

- Turkey: Hometown
- A first time trader
- She is with her father's caravan

Our caravans stopped at ~~both~~ ^{the same} Oasis. I met her and we have a lot in common. She gave me her address so I can write to her



Amman (Iraq)

- General goodsman
- Brown hair
- From Arabia

We met Amin at the second trading station we stopped at. He was kind and he gave me an eating bowl for some noodles.



Character interactions

Character interactions

Nomads:

- Very dirty
- Kind
- Had many animals (sheeps, goats and camels)
- Very heavy accents

They allowed us to join them for a meal consisting of goats milk and lamb soup! Yummy!

Character interactions

Fox named Fideo

- Can talk
- Magical
- Helps those who need and deserve it.

A fox comes up to our caravan hungry.

The travelers ignore him but I give him a little meat. Then he ran away and left a glass of water that's always full.

Achmed

- Buff
- No schooling
- A trader
- Believes he is the best

Achmed claims he gets the best deals because he is the best. He was quite stupid though and I was easily able to trick him into giving more than the usual.

Character interactions

Moral

- The importance of Education

This story shows that you don't have to be strong. If you are smart you could do anything.



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Ida's Diary

February 27th, 220 A.D.

Dear diary,

In three days I will be thirteen. As I have said before, all I want is to travel the Silk Road and be a successful trader. I have been waiting for 5 years only to be turned down by my parents. By the power of Allah! They won't let me do anything! "You're just a fragile girl and your brother is a strong boy," they say.

Isn't that so nice. Sure, I'm not as strong as Sheesk but I am so much smarter than him! I bet I could make more of a profit in one trip than he could in 5! My parents are yelling at me to blow

out the candle and go to sleep.

Goodnight, Ida

February 28th, 220 A.D.

Dear diary,

I am the luckiest girl in the whole world. Momma and Poppa have considered what I said and how important it is to me and decided to let me y\go! YAYAYAYAYAYAYA! I do have to go with my brother's caravan but it's better than nothing! I leave the night of the full moon so I must hurry and pack. I can't wait! Yours Truly,

Ida

March 3rd, 220 A.D.

Dear Diary,

I am leaving tonight. I have packed and can't wait. Now that I am going, I realize how dangerous it will be. The bandits, sandstorms, and the possibility of getting lost. It's really frightening, but I am determined to show I can do anything. I have prayed extra and I am itching to embark on my journey.

Ida

April 2nd, 220 A.D.

Dear diary,

It is almost a month inot our journey and there have been some difficulties and pleasant surprises along the way. We met a group of nomads who were nice enough but they had a very heavy accent. We have stopped at one trading city and it was so cramped. I was to watch my brother and learn but I think I cam up with more tips for him than he gave me. We haven't had any trouble food or water wise but it is very hard work. We walk and ride our camels about 17 hours and sleep for 7. I can do it though. I am just as good as any boy.

Wish me luck,

Ida

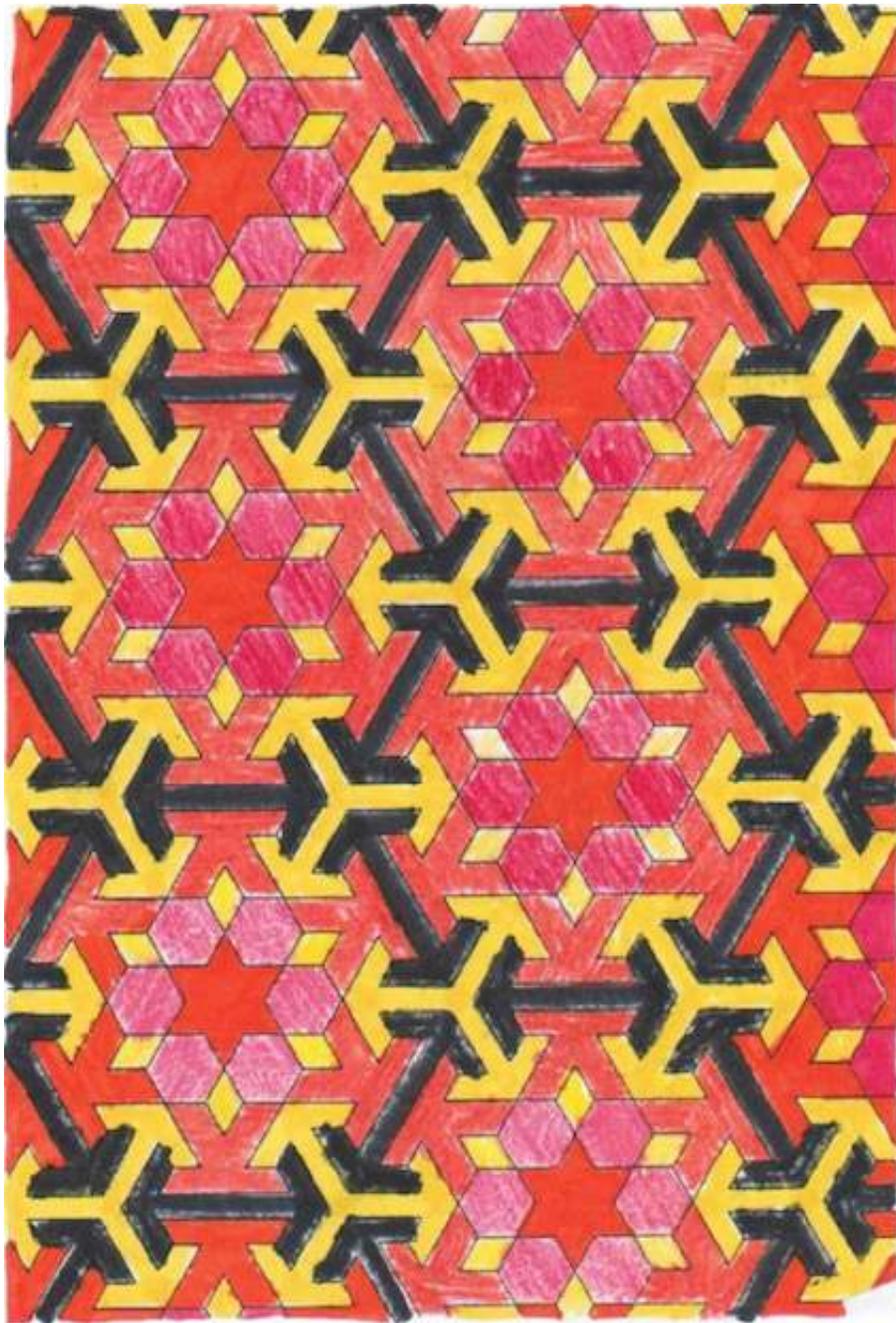
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Mosaic Tiles



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A Community Exploration of Global Literature and Social Justice

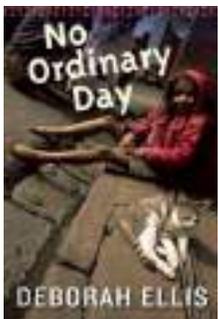
Merna Hecht

Our Vashon Island Literacy Community is located on a small island between two major cities in Washington and included members from public schools and a non-denominational private school. The group included a middle-school librarian, two middle school humanities teachers, (one

public school, one private school), the Family Link/Student Link teacher, a Family Link Program parent and an arts educator who teaches arts and social justice at the university level and works with immigrant and refugee high school students.

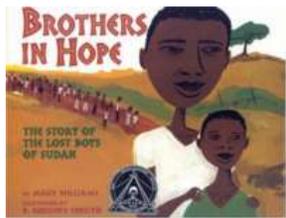
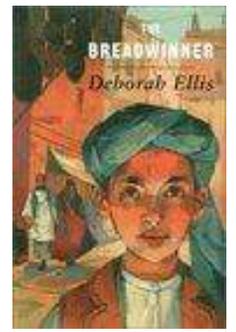
Our group wanted to explore global literature with middle school students to focus on social justice issues and oppressive social and political situations. We wanted our students to develop empathy for others and a vision of how to participate to change things for the better. We also wanted to create connections across a range of social agencies and educational contexts for middle schools students on Vashon Island. One outreach of the group was to create an exhibit of student work for the local community.

The study group meetings involved discussions of at least five new books at each monthly meeting. We discovered many new titles for our projects that we intend to use to create integrated humanities, literature, social studies and art projects. Our discussions were engaged, lively, and intellectually satisfying. When some or all of us read the same title, we relished exchanging our different opinions, insights and review styles. We used our meeting times to address many aspects of each book we reviewed including the reading level of the book, issues to which parents might object, age appropriateness, the kind of readers who might benefit from the book, where it might best fit into an existing curriculum, how much additional context, background information and other reading and research might be required for the students to fully understand the book, how it could be used as a mentor text for classroom projects and possible connections to community resources. We also made decisions as to which titles would be added to library collections and which to designate for classroom projects or classroom sets.



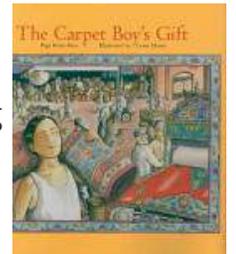
Our classroom work included a focus on widening perceptions of the world and expanding a world view in order to become informed global citizens. The focus for this was on modern India. Tim Heryford, the seventh-grade humanities teacher in our group, wanted to provide students with an introduction to realistic aspects of India while at the same time focus on issues of poverty, human rights, and discrimination based on bias, fear, and incorrect or inadequate information. He used Deborah Ellis's [*No Ordinary Day*](#) (2011) as a mentor text. He read it aloud and followed the reading with a study of human rights, including the UN Commission on Human Rights and Children's Rights, a study of leprosy, and a focus on Gandhi using *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* by Anne Sibley O'Brien and Perry Edmond O'Brien (2009). Classroom work included bringing in a guest artist for several sessions and using many techniques of layering in visual learning which resulted in a mandala project. Students also created short graphic novel-like books about the main character's experience in *No Ordinary Day* when she had to come to terms with her fears and misconceptions about leprosy.

We also developed a project around the goal of working toward a more humane world through a focus on lesser known heroes and heroines who have made significant contributions to the cause of peace and human rights. Lauretta Hyde, a social studies/humanities teacher with seventh and eighth graders at the Harbor School implemented an integrated arts, creative writing and humanities project using this topic as her broad umbrella. Activities in her seventh grade classroom were inspired by a read aloud of [*The Breadwinner*](#) by Deborah Ellis (2002) and by in-depth use of several picture books. These included [*Brothers in Hope: the Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*](#) by Mary Williams (2005); *One Peace: True Stories of Young Activists* by Janet Wilson (2009); [*The Carpet Boy's Gift*](#) by Pegi Deitz Shea (2003) and *Peaceful Heroes* by Jonah Winters (2009). *Peaceful Heroes* pays tribute to fourteen people who risked their lives to help make the



world a more peaceful place. Although some major figures are included, the book honors lesser known heroes and heroines such as Oscar Romero; Ginetta Fagan a young Italian woman who helped build Amnesty International; Marla Rizicka, a 24-year-old Californian who in 2001 began her travels to Afghanistan and eventually to Iraq to raise money for and give direct aid to innocent victims

of war; Meena Keshwar Kamal, an Afghani woman, who at the age of 20, started an organization to help women in her country and in Pakistan find education and health care; and other unsung and lesser known figures. From these diverse, rich resources Lauretta's students wrote poetry, created large Venn diagrams comparing their lives on Vashon Island with Parvana's life in Kabul. Parvana, the main character in *The Breadwinner*, is a young girl who must disguise herself as a boy to keep her family alive under siege of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Lauretta's students also created illustrated books for younger children about "Peaceful Heroes."



The student work generated from our projects provided evidence that the students expanded their views of the larger world. Their work reflected new insights, awareness and compassion. The students were stretched in their thinking about global social and political situations and in their abilities to respond in visual images, poetry, creative writing, and synthesizing ideas as they looked at the world through the lens of the struggles of others in places and situations that are much different than their own. They were engaged in thinking about how others, young and old, all around the globe have contributed to peace and expressed their own ideas about bringing a vision of peace into the world in real and concrete ways.

Vashon's members included: Nan Hammett-Student Link/Family Link teacher, Merna Ann Hecht, social justice/ literary arts educator, Tim Heryford, 7th grade Humanities teacher McMurray Middle School, Lauretta Hyde-Harbor School-Social Studies/Humanities teacher, Julie Jaffe-Librarian, McMurray Middle School, and Wintry Sheehan, parent educator for Student

Link/Family Link program.

■ Explorations of India and Gandhi: Tim Heryford

Through my work with our study group, I learned of excellent contemporary literature about regions in the world that we study in my seventh grade humanities course. Throughout the year, I want students to connect with literature as both a mirror to their own life and a window into the lives of others. By reading realistic fiction, students can see how people all around the world live with the same universal needs and fears. I wanted to find books that would not represent India as “stuck in the past;” instead I wanted to find a book or books that would characterize modern day India. My students have a fairly superficial view of big world events--conflict, poverty, and disease—and I wanted to find literature that would dispel stereotypes and broaden their understanding of these topics.

No Ordinary Day by Deborah Ellis and *After Gandhi* by Anne and Perry O’Brien enriched my teaching of the history of India, as well as modern Indian culture, leprosy, and Gandhi’s influence on history. Students were deeply engaged in *No Ordinary Day* which tells the story of Valli, an orphaned girl dealing with extreme poverty and leprosy and of how she eventually comes to understand her disease and finds help and hope with a compassionate woman’s mentorship. As I read the story, students reflected on their privileges and the challenges Valli had to overcome to grow up as an impoverished teen in India. They also had misunderstandings about leprosy and this book encouraged a number of the students to do additional research and educate the rest of the class. Students made mini-graphic novels of the book with other activities and discussions occurring throughout my reading. The students were inspired by the book’s hopeful but realistic ending.

In conjunction with reading *No Ordinary Day*, students also learned the history of the independence of India and how Gandhi managed to accomplish this with nonviolent resistance. The class then used *After Gandhi* as a resource to connect to how other leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Cesar Chavez won the rights of their people after Gandhi had paved the way. Students created a word mandala with a Gandhi quote and then explained how it pertained to Gandhi’s actions, the actions of another famous figure, and their actions in school.

I was motivated and inspired throughout the process due to the positive pressure from the group members and leader to read widely and create interesting projects. This was a great opportunity and even as it required extra work I would not have wanted to pass on it. I know it is this collaboration that deeply enriched my teaching of India and Gandhi.

[Mandalas.pdf](#)

[No Ordinary Day graphic novel 1 pdf](#)

[No Ordinary Day graphic novel 2 pdf](#)

▣ **Becoming a World Citizen: Laretta Hyde**

I teach in an independent school on an island in the Puget Sound. I am the entire middle school social studies department instructing all three grade levels (6th, 7th and 8th). While the sixth-grade year is a fairly traditional examination of ancient cultures, the seventh and eighth grade years are more unique. We study topics that come under the umbrella of "Becoming a World Citizen." We examine world religions, human rights, peace makers, the disenfranchised in America, etc. In seventh grade we also examine the Middle East, beginning the unit with the following essential question: "Why is this region of the world so full of violent conflict?" One of the projects for this unit was inspired by our literacy group and proved both easy to implement and engaging to students.

In order to pique students' interest in the Middle East, I began the unit by reading aloud Deborah Ellis's (2002) book, *The Breadwinner*. This book is a wonderfully told story of a courageous eleven-year-old girl who pretends to be a boy in Taliban-controlled Kabul, Afghanistan. She disguises herself in order to find work when her father is taken from their home and imprisoned on false charges. Typically, I would read for half the period and then students would work on researching general information about the geography, demographics, and economic health of the different Middle Eastern countries.

Upon completing both their research and *The Breadwinner*, students were asked to take a large piece of poster board and create a Venn diagram comparing their own personality traits with those of Parvana, the story's protagonist. Where the diagram intersected the student would list traits he/she shared with Parvana. Surrounding the actual diagram were images of the student's lifestyle and culture on one side, and images of life in the Middle East on the other. The poster paper was to be filled with images to push the students into thinking beyond obvious differences. The diagrams hung in the school's main hallway, were later shared at our study group meeting, and eight were put on display in a well-used public hallway/gallery space adjacent to our local independent book shop. The students were able to find compelling images that depicted the difficulties of life in Afghanistan including images of the presence of war and its destructive influences as well as many other visual images that portrayed complexities of life in Afghanistan in a respectful but realistic manner,

Our other global project under the broad umbrella of "Becoming a World Citizen" focused on Human Rights and Peace Makers. Our four main texts were *The Carpet Boy's Gift* (Shea, 2003), *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* (O'Brien, 2009), *One Peace: True*

Stories of Young Activists (Wilson, 2009), and *Peaceful Heroes* (Winter, 2009).

After an extensive study of both well known and unsung human rights activists around the world (including young human rights activists/peace-makers) I asked each student to help bring this information to students younger than themselves (grades 2 and 3) in order to both inform and inspire them. The assignment was quite extensive. First each student had to choose a hero or heroine to research. After handing in their research, they were asked to make an illustrated, age appropriate picture book for a younger reader. A book about Aung San Suu Kyi is included here as an example of this project. Other heroes and heroines from this picture book project included Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Jane Goodall, and Nelson Mandela.

[Picture Book of Aung San Suu Kyi](#)

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Lauretta Hyde is a Middle School Social Studies Teacher, Harbor School, Vashon Island in Washington.