

EXPLORING INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING
THROUGH GLOBAL CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND EDUCATOR STUDY GROUPS

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF TEACHING, LEARNING & SOCIOCULTURAL STUDIES

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WITH A MAJOR IN LEARNING, READING & CULTURE

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

2014

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
GRADUATE COLLEGE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Though dissertations have a single author, they represent the communal efforts of many people. Kathy Short provided the ideal dissertation project that joined my interest in online learning with my passion for using children's literature to support the development of intercultural understanding. She supported it both financially through the Longview Foundation grant and academically through our conversations. She critiqued, guided, encouraged and challenged my thinking. She gave me the freedom to ask hard questions. At the same time she demonstrated the joy and power of children's literature. Not only am I a different educator, I am a different thinker because of working alongside her.

The professors at the University of Arizona were the first to introduce me to socio-cultural theory and what that means for educators today. They have revolutionized the way I teach and think about education. Norma Gonzalez, Sheilah Nicholas, and Lin Waugh taught some of the courses that changed my thinking the most about social theory, bilingualism, ways of knowing, and text analysis. They modeled dialogue. They cared. They also figuratively sat on my shoulder as I wrote. Their own superb scholarship challenged me to keep digging, and to dig in an excellent manner. Each one has added an important dimension to this project.

The 203 members of the WOW communities allowed me to think alongside them as they interacted with global books among themselves and in their classrooms. They graciously answered my emails, talked with me for hours, and allowed me to dig into the backstory of what happened in their study groups. Thank you for letting me tell your stories. I have tried to tell them well.

Sylvia Vardell was my advisor for my Masters in Library Science at Texas Woman's University. She introduced me to USBBY, which led to this PhD. As an international citizen who has lived in multiple countries, she was the first person who supported my interest in international children's literature. She was also the first person who ever told me to "dig deep," and I have kept on digging ever since.

Jella Lepman was a dreamer and she gave me a big dream—world peace. Through *A Bridge of Children's Books* she also gave me a means to work toward peace through sharing books across cultural borders.

I thought the PhD process would be lonely, but the community of people who studied and worked in the World of Words library became my friends and thinking partners: Richard Clift, Maria Acevedo, Desiree Cueto, Megan McCaffrey, Mi-Kyoung Chang, Ke Huang and my children's literature students. They made the process joyful.

I would not be where I am today without my family. My parents, Randall and Alice Mathews, moved me across an ocean as a ten-year-old and set in motion the tension, the thinking, and the exploration that has kept me learning about crossing borders. They have been my cheerleaders as I have sat writing for what seemed like forever.

Words are inadequate to describe my husband's role and support through this process. From challenging me to be my own self, to being willing to live 1,000 miles apart for two years, Wayne has gently and lovingly pushed me to keep thinking and become all I am meant to be as a scholar, a wife, a mother to our four sons, a teacher, a librarian, and a person who desires peace.

DEDICATION

To my family:

To Wayne, who has demonstrated the sacrificial love that supports peace.

To my sons, daughters-in law and parents,
with a grateful heart for all the work you do to promote peace.

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ABSTRACT

Engagement with global children's literature is an effective way to introduce multiple perspectives into the classroom dialogue. Yet teachers are often unfamiliar with ways of helping students understand diverse cultural practices and beliefs. The result is that global children's literature continues to be an underused resource.

This action research study looked at 25 highly diverse educator study groups as they used global literature with pre-K - 12 students. The goal was to support the development of intercultural understanding. The study groups received \$1,000 grants from Worlds of Words (wowlit.org) to fund their yearlong inquiry. The groups met face-to-face throughout the year to reflect on the interactions taking place in their classrooms. All groups met online on a members-only site. Data collected included proposals, reports, teacher vignettes, and interviews. The data was used to document range of study group structures and interactions with global literature. The study groups and online forum were supported by a grant from the Longview Foundation.

Through constant comparative analysis, new transformative understandings were identified. Key elements in the development of intercultural understanding included open inquiry, recognition of complexity and multiple perspectives, thinking about culture at a conceptual level, and engaging in open dialogue. Teachers reported an increased understanding of their competence as professionals, their student's competence as problem-posers and thinkers, and the parents' competence as important contributors to intercultural understanding.

The study concludes with implications for practitioners wanting to engage in

classroom inquiries using global literature to support developing intercultural understanding. A second set of implications suggests ways in which the study group process can be made more effective. New questions are proposed for future research related to the use of global literature in various contexts, including classrooms, online professional development, and libraries.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The overarching goal of this dissertation is to document the development of intercultural understanding of educators participating in study groups focused on integrating global literature into their curriculum. Two primary understandings are foundational to this study. The first is that because of the growth of diversity in the classroom and the globalization of politics, economies and social issues, the teaching of multicultural and intercultural understanding is a necessity, not a luxury. The second is that a productive way to engage in thinking about global issues is through engagements with multicultural and global books and the multiple perspectives they introduce. Tied to the latter point is a belief in the effectual power of stories to inform ways of being and doing.

Developing intercultural understanding has become increasingly important as American society becomes more diverse through immigration and the population growth of culturally diverse groups. According to the Pew Research Center's analysis of the 2010 census, Hispanics make up 16.3% of the U.S. population and account for 56% of the total population growth from 2000-2010. Racial and ethnic minorities accounted for 91.7% of the nation's growth (<http://www.pewhispanic.org/2011/03/24/hispanics-account-for-more-than-half-of-nations-growth-in-past-decade/>).

These statistics underscore the need for teachers to change their own perceptions of diversity and support the same change in their students. Educators can no longer just choose curricular engagements and books that fit a white middle class American-European worldview and approach. The population norm is shifting,

and the predominantly white teaching population (Crouch, 2012) should acknowledge that shift and begin to adjust their own perceptions of diversity in order to help their students do the same. This is not an easy task. Changing a person's perceptions takes time, interaction and support. As human beings, we gravitate toward those who share similar worldviews. But in the United States today, teachers, whatever their racial or ethnic background, no longer have the luxury of focusing on a single worldview that is comfortable. Because of the diversity in the classroom, a diversity of worldviews needs to be part of the curriculum.

Along with developing a knowledge of diversity, teachers also need to foster a willingness to interact with diversity, understand it, and embrace it, becoming what Hoopes (1979) calls multicultural people. These are people who have learned how to learn about each other and their cultures. They are teachers and students who have the communicative competence to interact with people from different communities, ethnicities and even countries without experiencing mystification and confusion when confronted with something different (Allan, 2003).

Thomas Collins, the director of Project LINKS in the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University, was concerned about creating leaders who could understand global issues and foster international dialogue. In 1998, he collaborated on a paper with Fred Czarra, the Director of International Relations at the non-profit Council of Chief State School Officers, and Andrew Smith, President of the American Forum for Global Education. They stated:

Our students must be prepared to function in an increasingly interdependent

and conflict-prone world. Moreover, schools bear the major responsibility for assuring that the American electorate is both well informed and willing to act responsibly on matters of international significance. Ignoring the global dimensions of education would be a grave mistake (p. 311).

If their assessment of the world was true in 1998, it is even more so now. However, their challenge is difficult to implement for teachers who have grown up hearing and believing that the American way is the norm, and that the U.S. brand of democracy is the best form of government—the ideal that every country should aim for. Before educators can think globally with their students, they need to wrestle with multiple perspectives themselves; they need to be challenged in their pre-service training and in-service professional development to consider more complex and diverse ways of thinking and acting, including the use of multiple semiotic systems to support dialogue.

The word *function* as used by Collins, Czarra and Smith highlights the depth of intercultural understanding educators should aim for. It implies more than just understanding or knowing. Today's global issues require a deep understanding of cultural differences that allow peace negotiators and problem solvers to see past the obvious and point out commonly held values and beliefs that allow differing factions to work together. Surface-level understandings are not adequate for that task. Negotiators need to have practiced critical thinking skills and developed the ability to question. Problem-solvers need the imagination to go beyond what already exists, imagining, developing and proposing unique solutions.

As one way of addressing this need to develop citizens able to function

effectively in a global context, this project brought together over 200 educators who were concerned about the worldviews of their students and wished to develop their intercultural understanding. Pre-K through university educators discussed what they were learning about the use of global literature in the growth of intercultural understanding. This was done in two contexts. The first was among themselves in local study groups, and the second was on an online forum, which I facilitated. The groups were known as WOW communities, and their online interaction was on the wowlit.org/communities website.

Background of Researcher

Corbin and Strauss (2008), in their classic text on qualitative analysis, acknowledge that objective researchers are a myth and that their "perspectives, training, knowledge, and biases . . . become woven into all aspects of the research process" (p. 32). So it is important to discuss my experiences and history of interacting with cultures and the theoretical beliefs I bring to the study.

Experiences and History

My own interest in this project stems from my many different international experiences with intercultural relations. I spent eight years living in France as an adolescent, a university student, and as a wife and mother. When I graduated from college, I taught in a boarding school in the Cote d'Ivoire for 19 months. I lived in the Vancouver, BC area for 11 years, eventually becoming a dual American-Canadian citizen. While I was there, I worked as an International Student Coordinator at Regent College, a graduate school with a highly diverse student population. My responsibilities included cross-cultural training as students arrived and again as

they left. The college has a philosophy of not only acknowledging its diverse student body (with 30+ countries represented among 500-700 students) but also tapping into its wealth of cultural knowledge and resources. Later, I taught kindergarten and grade 1 in the French Immersion public school system. Following my years in Canada, a country that celebrates diversity due to the politics that have made it officially bilingual, I moved to Texas, which, I discovered, has its own unique culture due to its size. While teaching in the public school system, I learned that many of my kindergarten educator colleagues had never lived outside of Texas and did not recognize the need to engage their students in looking at the world beyond the exploration in the *Flat Stanley* (Brown, 1964) unit.

While working on my Masters in Library Science at Texas Woman's University I was introduced to the U.S. section of the Board on Books for Young People (USBBY) and the work of Jella Lepman, founder of Munich's Internationale Jugendbibliothek (International Youth Library) and IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People). Lepman (2002) was a creative and energetic Jewish woman who had a radio show in Berlin in the early 1930's. She had the foresight to leave Germany in 1936, and she spent the war years working in London. After the war she returned to Germany as a major in the U.S. Army. Her task was to determine what needed to be done to repair the cultural gap that Nazi-inspired practices had created. She concluded that children needed books from around the world so that they could become acquainted with other people through stories. She thought that if children became friends through books, it would be more difficult to be enemies as adults. She wrote to consulates around the world, asking them to donate the best of

their children's books and children's drawings. From the generous response of over 20 countries, she organized a traveling book exhibition, which drew over a million visitors during the two years it made its way through various German cities. This then became the seed collection of the International Youth Library and the impetus for the foundation of IBBY, an organization that supports the development of literacy for children around the world. Through the various national sections of IBBY, publication and dissemination of quality children's literature takes place through grants, award lists, and traveling exhibitions.

Members of USBBY and IBBY have continued Lepman's vision and are dedicated to advancing intercultural understanding through interaction with global children's literature. In 2007 I had the opportunity to hear a presentation at the Tucson USBBY conference on the work of Kathy Short, Lisa Thomas, and many of the teachers at Van Horne Elementary. Their students engaged in an in-depth study of Korean culture and finished the year with a deeper understanding of themselves as cultural beings and of both historical and contemporary Korean culture. This happened through interactions and rich discussions around many picture books and novels. This USBBY presentation captured my attention and prompted my PhD studies as well as my involvement with this project.

My Foundational Beliefs

There are two important beliefs that were foundational to my thinking about story and therefore had an impact on the way this study was shaped and the data analyzed. The first is my belief in the power of story to inform readers and create empathy and understanding. The second is my belief in Louise Rosenblatt's theory

of reader response. The two work together. As readers listen to a narrative, they respond out of their own experience and worldview. They engage with the multiple perspectives that are part of the story, which stretches their understanding, stimulates their imagination, and helps them develop empathy with characters. Their new insights can prompt action on their part on issues that are relevant to their own lives.

Power of story. Stories have been around since the advent of human life. They have been told through words, song, dance, and even mathematical formulas. Much of what is considered traditional literature today consists of stories that record and explain creation, the arrival of humans and animals on earth, natural reoccurring phenomena, and discord among animals and humans. They have been used to help listeners understand, organize, manage, and make meaning of their world.

In contrast to this use of stories, contemporary North American society often regards stories as simple entertainment and not as a vital component of life. Time for reading stories is being reduced or even eliminated in many classrooms in order to make time for academic skill development in language arts and mathematics. Many librarian positions have been cut and school libraries closed. It is not surprising that stories are relegated to an unimportant role and used or enjoyed only when time permits. Yet in spite of the American educational system's emphasis on testing that limits time for interaction with stories, children and teens are still telling their own stories, albeit in short bytes with tweets, wall posts, and text messages. This would not surprise psychologist Susan Engel (1995) who believes

that we think through stories, learn about the social world through stories, and create a sense of self by telling stories. Stories are a natural part of human life, since life is a story, and we are all part of larger interconnected stories involving families and communities.

Stories have also been an important part of my own life. From the early years of hearing my parents reading to me, to my own years of reading to my four sons, stories have allowed me to imagine other worlds and scenarios. They have given me an escape from stressful situations, calmed down my sons or my students, and in the last eight years, given me a career and a focus for graduate studies. Yet I have felt tension between the roles of stories as entertainment and stories as thinking tools. I loved immersing myself in stories, but I only thought of them as tools for exploring new worlds or new situations. I considered only briefly the way stories help listeners think, make meaning of situations, and potentially inform their values and beliefs.

I was not alone in the way I looked at stories. Walter Ong (2002) maintains that when Aristotle analyzed and wrote the *Art of Rhetoric*, the sequential and organized patterns of Greek (and then Western) thought were elevated to a higher and more valued status over oral traditions, which were the original stories. This hierarchy of knowledge means that educators tend to relegate stories to the storyworld and not consider them as tools to think about the world. They also analyze the stories according to their own ideas of what a story should look like, with a beginning, middle and end. This makes it difficult to read, value and understand stories coming from another culture or worldview, because the value of

stories and the way they are shaped can be different. The challenge is to understand the beginning frame of reference for the story.

There are other influences that have shaped current American or Western attitude toward stories, relegating them to simple entertainment. In 1986 Neil Postman (2006) published an insightful book entitled *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. His concern was the effect that television was having on the American public's ability to think about their world. In the preface of his book, he compares our fascination with the media to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* in which control was exercised through mind-numbing pleasure. He points out the similar outcome of TV on Americans with its ability to drown truth in a sea of irrelevance, and its authoritative presentation of decontextualized info bytes, all moving us toward trivialities. One look at daily TV offerings shows how trivial our interests have become. When garnering a date, daily life with a particular family, or singing competitions are hit reality shows, it is no wonder that our minds have become numb from entertainment. The Internet has added yet another layer of entertainment and info bytes. Native American TV producer Lurline Wailena McGregor agrees with Postman but with a different twist when she states, "I work in television, which on one hand is nothing more than a modern way to tell stories, but in the larger realm is the modern-day colonizer" (Mankiller, 2004, p. 163). Postman would add that we have been colonized to expect everything to be fun.

Postman's critique does not end with television. Postman (1990) makes the argument that because we are handicapping ourselves with so much information that is irrelevant to life, we can no longer think effectively about life. His theory,

which he describes as the information-action ratio, is that the greater the saturation of information, the less people know how to use the information to inform action.

Postman's insights are relevant to this discussion for two reasons. The first is that he gives a historical basis for our societal focus on entertainment and the resulting frame of reference that suggests stories are primarily entertainment instead of tools to inform and think with. A remedy would be to convince people of the importance and effectual nature of story. The second reason Postman's comments are relevant is because they speak of our increasing inability to think deeply about the world due to the abundance of decontextualized information we receive that has no importance for day-to-day decisions. We have become receivers of sensational information, not thoughtful interactors. Postman was a colleague of Louise Rosenblatt at NYU Steinhardt, and one can hear their shared concerns about the need for people to think critically about their world. That is difficult to do when "we are glutted with information, drowning in information, have no control over it, [and] don't know what to do with it" (Postman, 1990, paragraph 27).

Stories can be effectual tools for shaping a particular worldview through informing, promoting critical thought about a situation, and developing the ability to imagine what is beyond the visual field. Stories are therefore natural stepping-stones to understanding another worldview. French Jesuit scholar Michel de Certeau wrote, "What the map cuts up, the story cuts across" (Cruikshank, 1998, p. 1). Maps create divisions, but stories bring people back together.

Stories are told to build bridges of understanding. This begins with an understanding of the frame of reference of the teller. Susan Engel (1995) explains,

"By telling stories that are engaging and informative in a way that the community deems appropriate, one can more easily and successfully enter into the culture" (p. 47). This respect for the originating community means several things for librarians and teachers. Stories need to be part of a context, not treated as sterile random works of art on display in a museum. We need to interact with stories so that they become the living breathing cultural conveyors that they once were in oral form. Walter Benjamin says that the traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel (Cruikshank, 1998). The challenge is to see those handprints and point them out to children.

Reader response. Louise Rosenblatt first published her theory of reader-response in 1938. It was largely ignored until the 1980's when educational theorists "rediscovered" John Dewey's call for reflective thinking (Palmisano, 2013, p. 11). Dewey had a strong influence on Rosenblatt's work, and introduced her to the word *transaction* (<http://www.education.miami.edu/ep/rosenblatt/>) as a way of describing the dynamic event that takes place when a reader engages with a text. Her theory states that readers come to a text with a host of life experiences that inform their transaction with a text. No two transactions will be alike because readers all have different experiences and personal cultures that shape their connections and interpretations of the text. Meaning is not static, embodied in a text, but rather generated as text and reader transact. She calls *the poem* the result of a particular text coming together with a particular reader at a particular moment in time.

Rosenblatt also states that the reader's stance will have an impact on the

meaning generated by the transaction. An efferent stance places the focus on the information readers are gaining whereas an aesthetic stance places attention on the readers' experiences of immersion in the text. Readers do not approach text in an either-or way, but from somewhere along a continuum between efferent and aesthetic. She believed that the reader's foundational knowledge has an important place in the reading event. She cites psycholinguistic research that supports the need of the reader to have "sufficient experience and cultural background to feed the reading process so that [one] can make sense out of what [one] is reading" (Rosenblatt, 1978, p. 88). This is a critical point for this study because of the cultural knowledge needed when reading many global texts.

Rosenblatt (1995) viewed stories as conveyers of human values. She observed that good literature delves into the range of human emotions and situations, offered in a very digestible form, and "presented with all the sharpness and intensity of art" (p. 5). She acknowledged the simple truth that adults and children like stories and easily engage with narrative. Consequently, a student may be "more deeply influenced by what he absorbs through literature than by what he learns through the theoretical materials of the usual social science course" (p. 21).

Rosenblatt (1978) also saw stories as tools that engage readers with multiple perspectives, enabling them to develop an imagination that can support democracy. She encouraged dialogue in her classes because she valued the diverse viewpoints that surfaced. "Through such interchange [readers] can discover how people bringing different temperaments, different literary and life experiences, to the text have engaged in very different transactions with it" (p. 146).

Rosenblatt (1995) believed that educators need to help students develop their imagination by envisioning worlds through books and then imagining a democratic world toward which they can work. One of the important results of intercultural understanding is taking action to make the world more just and equitable. The ability to think of creative solutions to social problems is dependent on many things, but one of them is the power to imagine the "other."

Imagination, empathy and taking action. The imagining of other worlds has been one of the primary roles attributed to children's literature in Western society. Readers can explore distant lands and new cultures. They can survive a hurricane with Phillip in *The Cay* (Taylor, 1969), solve the mystery of the pirate Rackham le Rouge with Tintin (Hergé, 1991), or immigrate to the US with Ha (*Inside Out and Back Again*, Lai, 2011), all without having to experience the real dangers or difficulties. The imaginative powers of the reader and listener are engaged through the rich descriptions of scenery, situations and emotions. Former professor Eugene Peterson (2008), in his book on Jesus' stories, describes how the imagination is energized through story; flat cardboard figures gain depth, texture, and an interior life. Storytellers invite listeners to participate through their imaginations. However, understanding a story does not end with empathetic participation. It also spurs action geared toward solving problems.

Author J. K. Rowling (2008) made a similar point in her commencement address to Harvard graduates by drawing a connection between the development of imagination and taking action to make a society more just and equitable. Early in her post-graduate days, she worked in the London office of Amnesty International

and heard stories of mind- and body-breaking oppression in many parts of the world. But she also witnessed the way those stories fostered human empathy and lead to collective action as people worked to save lives and free prisoners. She pointed out that refusing to imagine can lead to silent oppression. People "choose to remain comfortably within the bounds of their own experience, never troubling to wonder how it would feel to have been born other than they are" (paragraph 36). And in choosing to close one's mind to the suffering of others, one not only risks living in what Rowling calls, "narrow spaces" but enabling evil to exist. "For without ever committing an act of outright evil ourselves, we collude with it, through our own apathy" (paragraph 38).

Rosenblatt would have agreed with Rowling. As a Jewish-American living in France in pre-World War II Europe, she witnessed the way a single viewpoint can lead to oppression. As a result, she understood the importance of listening attentively to multiple perspectives. This developed into an important theme in her reader response theory—the role that dialogue and imagination play in supporting the development of democracy. One of her students, Gordon Pradl, (1996) described the connection between story and democracy when he wrote: "democracy whispers in my ear, telling me to be patient or the story of the other will be lost" (p. 6).

If stories are to do their transformative work, they need to be viewed as more than simply entertainment. They give us a window into another culture. Characters, settings and situations should all be examined and thought about in order to foster imagination, empathy, and the motivation to take action.

Research Context

My experiences and beliefs about story and reader response led to my interest in discovering ways in which children might engage with stories that would help them think about the world. I knew I wanted to use children's literature to help people understand each other—in a way, contributing to world peace—but I had little knowledge on how to do that besides using a globe and artifacts to grasp the narrative. As I began to understand the role that stories plays in people's lives and the way they respond and begin to think critically about the world, I found out that I wanted to study the process more so I could support the development of intercultural understanding.

At the same time, Worlds of Words partnered with the Longview Foundation For Education in World Affairs and International Understanding. The goal was to support educators in their attempts to enlarge and diversify their student's worldviews through children's and adolescent literature, hopefully impacting their own worldviews in the process. The Longview Foundation has supported groups since 1966 in developing knowledge of other peoples, economies, languages and international affairs. The foundation seeks to prepare children and youth in the United States for facing issues that require international knowledge and cooperation as well as strengthen democracy in a society with increasingly diverse communities (www.longviewfdn.org/).

Proposals for year-long inquiries were submitted to Worlds of Words by groups of educators describing the target student population, the configuration of the study group, their goals for the year and an anticipated budget. The proposals

were reviewed, and grants of \$1,000 were awarded to selected educator study groups. Preference was given to schools located in lower socioeconomic areas. The Foundation was interested in supporting a range of communities and models of interaction, so the selection criteria were flexible with regard to how groups were configured. The one stipulation was that the groups had to be located in the United States.

Palmisano (2013), in his book *Taking Inquiry to Scale*, has noted that while study groups based in single schools have been documented, this is less true for groups involving “teachers from multiple schools, including those participating in online professional learning experiences” (p. 13). The present study tries to fill some of that gap.

Four groups were selected as the pilot group, and they interacted on the WOWlit.org/communities site from February-May 2011. The following year twelve groups interacted from September 2011 through August 2012. Longview renewed the grant, and thirteen communities were funded from September 2012-August 2013. A total of 25 different groups of educators met online between February 2011 and May 2013. Their students ranged in age from pre-K through high school. The groups of educators were school-based, community-based or school/university-based. Each group met together to discuss their interactions with global literature, both as readers themselves and as educators interacting with children around the literature. They posted their discussions, minutes, and questions on the WOW community site.

As the on-line facilitator, I had several roles, both on and offline. I was part of

the review committee, so I read the proposals and helped select the communities that would receive funding. I sent out letters to leaders and members with invitations and instructions on how to join the members-only site. I did much of the technical trouble-shooting and helped people join the site, post their messages and upload files.

Encouraging interaction was one of my primary goals as facilitator. I moderated the discussion, responded to posts and asked probing questions. I gathered the posts and sent out discussion digests to keep people up to date on what was happening across the groups. I shaped the digests to prompt deeper thinking, especially with the groups that were new to global literature and were aiming for cultural awareness. I posted all-member questions in the general forum to stimulate thinking and discussion. I collected and posted resources contributed by group members. I also searched for book titles when a group was looking for titles for a specific purpose. My role as on-line facilitator also included analysis. I gathered data from the submitted grant proposals, online discussions, mid-term reports, final reports, and vignettes.

This dissertation looks at the journey toward intercultural understanding of over 200 educators and librarians. The cultural travelers ranged from teachers who had lived and worked in a single area of the United States to teachers who were multilingual or multicultural and had lived and worked in multiple cultural milieus. The same range of cultural experience was reflected in their students. Some were from impoverished areas, so their mobility, apart from their imaginations, was limited. Others were monocultural in their experience and outlooks. Still others had

crossed significant borders of a geographic, linguistic, or cultural nature. While the focus of this study is on changes in the WOW community members, the insights gained naturally include some from the hundreds of children and teens they worked with.

The role of the study groups was to create a safe place for cultural encounters to take place. The teachers could then, in turn, create safe places for their students. For everyone involved, the journey toward intercultural understanding meant encountering the unknown. It was in this messy space of being uncomfortable, of feeling fear, or thinking that something is "too weird," that great strides took place for both teachers and students.

Research Questions

The goal of the project was to support educator study groups and their interaction with each other and children around global literature. In the process of analyzing the teachers' interactions, my goal was to identify key elements that supported teachers and students in developing their global and intercultural understanding through their work in their study groups and in their classrooms. The first research questions, which were more conceptual in nature, were:

- 1. What are the key elements that influenced the development of intercultural understanding?*
- 2. What intercultural understandings developed through the interactions around global literature?*

One goal of the project was to document the range of models in which intercultural understanding can develop by looking at the different ways the study groups were

structured and functioned, and the various insights that developed through the educator's interaction. Because I believe that culture is dynamic and in constant flux, I do not see the development of intercultural understanding as a linear process. It can take place in many different ways. Therefore, additional, more practical research questions were:

3. What are the different ways that educators incorporated global literature into their curriculum?

4. What structures and processes did the study groups use to support their use of global literature?

Although listed last, questions three and four are addressed first in chapter four as a way of understanding the context of the groups and their work with global literature. The answers became part of the data used to answer the two conceptual questions.

Overview of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I have noted the importance of incorporating the development of intercultural understanding in school curricula. I introduced the WOW communities research project, including my research questions. I have discussed reader response theory and the value of stories as a way to clarify my foundational beliefs that influenced the project,

In chapter two I present the literature that is germane to this study. I begin with the literature around the notion of intercultural understanding, followed by literature discussing key elements for intercultural growth. A critical frame was important for intercultural understanding, so the chapter continues with a

discussion of critical pedagogy, particularly the work of Paulo Freire (2002) and his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. I describe his educational theory with its emphasis on dialogue. A discussion of literature in the field of critical literacy follows. Another important element was open inquiry, so the chapter concludes with a discussion of literature regarding teacher inquiry in professional learning communities, or, as they are referred to in this dissertation, educator study groups.

Chapter three presents the methodology used in this study, which was an action research project with both a descriptive and constant comparative qualitative analysis.

Chapter four is the descriptive analysis that responds to research questions three and four. It begins with a description of the demographics of the 25 groups. It also explores the different ways the study groups were structured and the various ways they engaged with global literature in their classrooms. The chapter includes an analysis of the online interaction followed by suggestions for a similar online study in the future.

Chapters five, six and seven are a constant comparative analysis that responds to research questions one and two. The chapters tell the individual stories of the groups. They identify the key elements in the groups' interactions with global literature that prompted growth in intercultural understanding. The narratives are organized by the cultural model (or orientation) they belonged to as deduced from their individual grant proposals. There were four cultural model clusters in the study: (1) cultural awareness, (2) critical thinking, (3) social justice and (4) embedded intercultural perspective. Each chapter describes the cultural model of

that cluster and the shifts in understanding of each group. The insights that went across that cluster are then summarized. Chapter seven also includes a review of literature and a discussion about taking action, an important tenet of intercultural understanding.

Chapter eight concludes the study with a discussion about taking action. It then presents the transformational understandings of the analysis in terms of intercultural understanding, pedagogy and the function of study groups. The chapter includes implications for practitioners supporting inquiries in two areas. The first area includes classroom inquiries about the development of intercultural understanding through global literature. The second area includes inquiries with teacher study groups. Several questions are listed as possible directions for future research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The literature that shaped and informed the analysis of this study spans many different areas of scholarship. This review is not exhaustive; it includes the literature that was foundational in seeking to understand what happened in the 25 WOW communities. It begins with definitions of important terms, moves into a short look at the way story shapes readers, then discusses the literature centered on the development of intercultural understanding. Freire's work in critical pedagogy is discussed because it was important for understanding the group interactions, particularly around the notion of dialogue. Critical pedagogy is foundational for the literature regarding critical literacy. Concluding the chapter is a review of the literature regarding teacher study groups.

Following the literature on intercultural understanding, I have included the framework I developed as a result of immersing myself in the literature. A revised framework is discussed in chapter eight, taking into account the findings from this study.

Terminology

The literature on intercultural understanding includes a variety of terms to indicate the ability to understand and interact with people from another culture. This ability has been called intercultural communicative competence, intercultural communication, intercultural competence, or intercultural understanding. Competence encompasses both the notion of understanding other cultural viewpoints and the ability to communicate between cultural beings. However, educational terminology today often uses the word competence to denote a finite

set of skills that can be easily assessed. The skills involved in understanding and communicating with people from another culture are not finite; they are constantly evolving. Therefore, I use the term intercultural understanding as the goal toward which the study group members were working, acknowledging that it is a developmental process that does not have a finite end. One is always gaining further understanding.

I define multicultural literature as texts depicting one of the underrepresented groups in the United States, or written or illustrated by a person belonging to one of those groups. The status of "underrepresented" could be based on ethnicity (African Americans, Native American, Asian American), culture (Latinos or Hispanics), religious affiliations (Jewish Americans, Muslim Americans), or some other reason that sets a person apart (disability or LGBTQ). While this is a very broad definition of multicultural, the common denominator is that the characters are all Americans.

I do not differentiate between the terms *global literature* and *international literature*. Both terms are used to indicate books that fall into five categories outlined by Lehman, Freeman and Scharer (2010): (1) books written by authors in other countries and originally published abroad, (2) literature written by immigrants to the United States and set in their home countries, (3) books written by authors in other countries but published in the United States, (4) books written by American authors with settings in other countries, and (5) books written in other languages or bilingual texts. I differentiate between countries, not continents, because I include Canadian authors, illustrators and settings in the

global/international category.

Impact of Literature on the Reader

What children read is important. Literature has the potential of transforming readers, encouraging them to think critically about their world, developing their imagination so they can see possibilities and take action to improve society. Rudine Sims (1982) sums it up well when she calls authors image-makers and acknowledges that they have the power to transform the reader's thinking. Ernie Bond (2006), in his article on global children's literature, acknowledges that the opposite can happen, that adults can be gatekeepers for children, limiting their access to global literature and thus limiting the potential development of their intercultural understanding.

Not only does literature impact the reader, but readers all love stories. We are naturally born to story (Engel, 1995; Short, 2012), thus stories grip us, capture our interest, and potentially push our understanding of other viewpoints. In contrast, a textbook approach is often a rendering of facts presented as a list or an argument. This is not the natural way we like to interact. While we are open to story, we may become bored with a list, resist an argument that challenges our viewpoint, or ignore an approach that is more didactic. The potential for story to engage our emotions and thinking is immense. It should be used to its greatest potential.

This dissertation supports the need to use all genres of literature in the development of intercultural understanding. It also provides a balance to the emphasis on informational text and argumentative writing that is part of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). While those may have been lacking in

classrooms in the past, an over-emphasis on those forms of thinking and writing in the CCSS leaves out the rich tradition of story that speaks to the way humans have communicated and passed down traditions for thousands of years. The work of the WOW communities strikes a balance between the study of global facts and engaging in dialogue around the rich stories of the world.

The Development of Intercultural Understanding

Many theorists, educators and business people have written books and articles that have contributed to the surge in interest in global awareness and fueled the global discourse in the media. Robert Hanvey (1976, 1982) was one of the early U.S. educators who called for an education that developed what he called a *State of the Planet Awareness and Cross-Cultural Awareness*. He advocated a global perspective that comes from being aware of global issues on a global scale (1982). Additional calls for global awareness came from the fields of anthropology, international education, business and second language learning. Theorists and practitioners from those areas tried to define culture and intercultural understanding and then describe how it develops. Some theorists viewed it as a linear or developmental process, while others held to a more messy view, where culture and intercultural understanding were described as more dynamic and in constant flux.

What is just beginning to be part of the dialogue is the role that literature might have in the development of intercultural understanding. Scholars in the area of education and children's literature are publishing articles on the topic. Books on the subject have just started appearing, but it is an area of scholarship that is still in

its infancy. This particular study adds to the dialogue because of the fact that it is grounded in action research. It also represents a range of community models using global literature and identifies common features that contribute to the development of intercultural understanding.

One of the major goals of multicultural or intercultural education is to promote the acceptance and support of diversity. The ultimate goal is to help students move beyond accepting diversity to a point where they can welcome diversity and embrace multiple perspectives in their own thinking. Michael Allan (2003) and Hoopes (1979) name these students "multicultural people" and describe them as individuals who can encounter other cultures without experiencing the mystification and confusion common when confronting something different. The focus of the WOW communities was to use multicultural and global literature to nudge readers down the path of knowing about diverse cultures, and understanding their beliefs and values. The expectation was that this process would help them move toward becoming the multicultural people Allan and Hoopes describe.

One of the important elements in the development of intercultural understanding is moving beyond a basic look at the 4F's or 5F's (food, festivals, fashion, flags, and famous people) in order to dig down to the below-surface ideas that are part of Fennes and Hapgood's (1997) iceberg of culture (Figure 2.1). One theorist and educator who has provided a practical scaffold for doing this is James Banks (1993). He has outlined four stages of multicultural education, the first one being a basic awareness of culture shaped by the F's. His last two stages, transformative and social action, ask students to wrestle with deeper social issues

and transform their new understandings into some sort of action. As an African American who was well aware of the way culture and race have often been linked, his stages help students see the many cultures or thought collectives (communities of thought, Fleck, 1935) apart from race that inform beliefs, values and actions.

Merry Merryfield (2000) has looked at significant life experiences that help teachers move beyond a simplistic four-F view of culture. In her work with teacher educators recognized for their success as multicultural and global educators she relates different ways the teachers encountered culture. Successful encounters resulted in increased cultural sensitivity to their students that made their teaching and curriculum more culturally broad. This in turn fostered a larger worldview in their students. The teachers in her study experienced cultural encounters that ranged from being multicultural themselves due to immigration, being biracial, living overseas for an extended period of time, or having multicultural and international parents in their classroom who challenged their views. Interestingly, each type of cultural encounter described by Merryfield was represented in at least one of the WOW communities. Merryfield's encounter descriptions help explain why

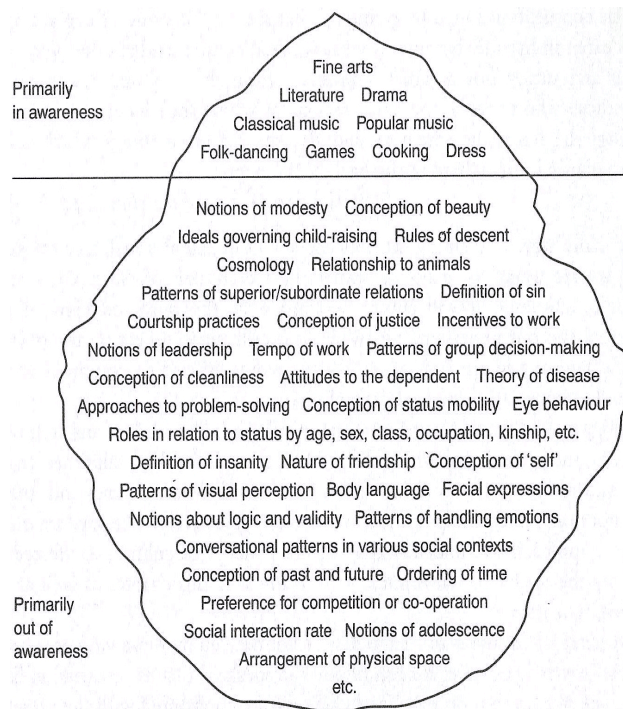


Figure 2.1. Iceberg of culture (Fennes & Haggood, 1997).

each type challenged the thinking of WOW community members.

A Model of the Development of Intercultural Understanding

While several well-known models of the development of intercultural understanding follow a more linear pattern (Bennett, 1986; Fennes & Hapgood, 1997), the model from international school educator Michael Allan (2003) is dynamic and recursive (Figure 2.2). Students arrive with their own set of concrete experiences and promptly meet

dissonance due to cultural misunderstandings and unmet expectations. Given the chance to reflect, this may lead them to modify their behavior and expectations, which are then used in more interactions with fellow students. At this junction, several outcomes are possible. The student may enter into

another cycle of dissonance and reflection, moving toward developing intercultural understanding, or make some fundamental misinterpretations, leading off the spiral into learning that does not generate greater intercultural understanding. In the latter case the student could adopt a form of (a) ethnocentrism, i.e., remaining isolated or forming monocultural enclaves, (b) adaptation, developing coping strategies with no real change, or (c) assimilation, where the student absorbs the dominant culture and abdicates original cultural characteristics.

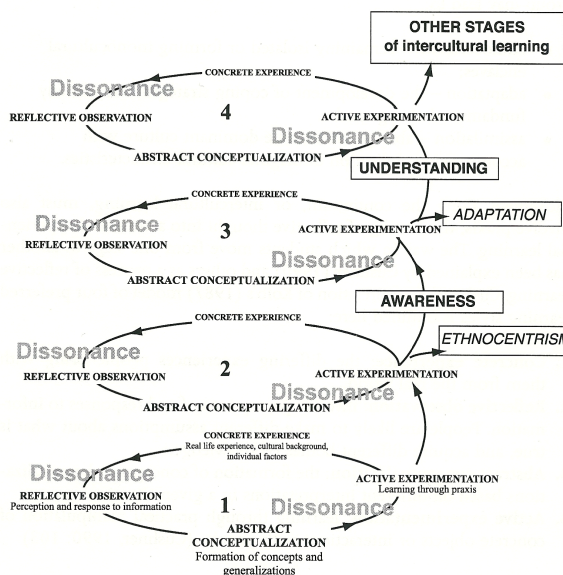


Figure 2.2. Intercultural learning spiral (Allan, 2003).

The attractive feature about this model is that it reflects the recursive nature of learning. As students engage with new data, they draw conclusions that are then supported or challenged by new experiences. One additional reason for interest in this model is the way it resembles the idea of Louise Rosenblatt's (1995) theory of reader response. Allan's dynamic process reflects Rosenblatt's idea of the reader's different experiences while engaging with a text multiple times. The reader returns to a text as a different person, changed from the first encounter.

Intercultural Beliefs that Inform the Dissertation

There are several elements about intercultural understanding that are foundational to this dissertation. The first is that people who understand interculturalism view cultural encounters as an asset, something to seek after. They see diversity as a positive thing, as wealth, something to acknowledge, draw on and celebrate. The expectation of multiple viewpoints is also an asset and something to seek after. The New London group stated that a pluralistic perspective needs to become so engrained in educators that they value and celebrate the pluralism of their students (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, Kalantzis, Kress, Luke, Luke, Michaels, Nakata, 1996). Peter Spier's *People* (1980) or Monica Brown's *Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match* (2011) illustrate that diverse cultural groups are valuable and worth the celebration called for by the New London Group. A focus on diversity acts as a counter-narrative to the melting pot view in which people blend together in "American-ness."

A second element is that once diversity is seen as a positive characteristic, people can become more comfortable living in what Homi Bhabha (2004) calls the

interstitial places. When one's own culture is no longer seen as the norm or the measuring stick and change can be embraced, living in the “in-between spaces” becomes more comfortable. This space is also described as the borderlands (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005, p. 37), or living on the margins. It entails the ability to look at events and issues through the perspective of both the dominant culture and that of less-dominant cultures. As people move toward being interculturally understanding, they become less ethno-centric and more ethno-relative (Bennett, 1986). Robert Case (1993) describes this as a stance of open-mindedness with an anticipation of complexity. Hanvey (1982) calls it perspective consciousness.

Eventually a viewpoint of self as a multicultural personality develops. Human beings are born wired for community, yet gravitate toward people who are likeminded, eventually settling into “our culture,” the space in which we feel comfortable. This home feels comfortable because the people around us have similar views on many of the “below-surface” elements that make up Fennes and Hapgood's (1997) iceberg of culture (see Figure 2.1). The longer we are in that comfortable space, the more difficult it becomes to take on DuBois' double consciousness in which we can look at ourselves and our section of the world through the eyes of others (Merryfield, 2000). The ability to see multiple viewpoints involves a change at our core rather than a simple change in surface knowledge. Byram (2000) adds further to the description by stating that the interculturally understanding person can see relationships between cultures and can mediate between cultures for themselves and others.

A product of this change is our ability to see that perspectives and thinking

are culturally determined (Byram, 2000). This includes an understanding that we ourselves are culturally shaped (Short, 2009a; 2011a) and that our personalities and values come from many different cultures. One natural way for educators to work against the reifying tendency that comes from living in a large country is to listen to the stories of the lives of their students, to pay attention to the rich culture and funds of knowledge that students bring to the classroom mix (Gonzalez et al., 2005).

Many of the writers cited above believe that intercultural understanding is necessary because of the global issues facing us. Social and economic crises are multiplying around the globe. Not only are there multiple armed conflicts occurring at any point in time, but economic, environmental and social issues are nearing the crisis stage. As students become aware of issues and think through them, they need to be challenged to take action at some level. Paulo Freire (2002) called for a pedagogy that leads to action. This may be a small thing such as a reflection, or it could be larger such as organizing donations, volunteering, or starting an initiative. The critical point is that the action needs to come from the values and beliefs of the person rather than be imposed from the outside (Short, 2011b).

Framework for the Development of Intercultural Understanding

Developing intercultural understanding is not a linear process and so cannot be easily diagrammed with a step-by-step process. While some theorists would hold to a developmental process that occurs in stages, much like Piaget's theory of development, this paper views the development of intercultural understanding as a messy process. Geertz views culture as a web (Gonzalez et al., 2005), which fits the

recursive process of encountering culture, reflecting on it, and gaining understanding only to be challenged by something that does not fit the pattern.

Following an immersion into the literature, coupled with the analysis done up to that point, the figure below illustrates my view of intercultural understanding at an early stage of the research process. After interacting with the data and engaging in deeper analysis, my view of the way in which intercultural understanding develops made some shifts. The modified framework is discussed in chapter eight.

Figure 2.3 illustrates how two different streams of influences are directed into the “mix” that describes the characteristics of a person who has developed intercultural understanding. The first group of influences is categorized as *cultural encounters that eventually move beyond facts*. This begins at an informational level focused on facts but moves toward an understanding of values. The following influences can be added in any order:

- *A curiosity about the world and how it works*. This curiosity can be triggered and fostered by exposure to global literature.
- *An awareness of other cultures*. This awareness can be stimulated and supported by reading global literature.
- *Knowledge of the world and how it works*. This often involves a systems view of the world, in which an event in one country can and usually does have an impact on neighboring countries and even the world.
- *Cultural encounters involving more than facts*. Global literature takes readers beyond the 4F's (fashion, food, festivals, flags or famous people) and can

expose them to cultural values from other parts of the world. Understanding *why* people do what they do goes beyond facts and moves readers toward intercultural understanding.

The second group of influences is described as *seeing the world as diverse* and involves a shift in perspective rather than absorbing a body of facts. When readers are versed in other cultures (as described above), the following characteristics develop:

- *An awareness of other perspectives.* This is one of the first manifestations of intercultural understanding and can be fostered by reading several books dealing with the same issue or event. The various viewpoints presented in literature demonstrate that there can be multiple ways of understanding an issue or event.
- *A respect and appreciation of others.* As readers begin to understand and accept the validity of other viewpoints, respect and appreciation of diversity develop.
- *A burgeoning awareness that we are all shaped by multiple cultural influences.* This is a movement away from seeing one's own life as the product of a single culture, realizing that each person is from multiple cultures that inform behavior and beliefs.

Three characteristics that are present in a person considered to have intercultural understanding are placed inside the funnel:

- *Sees self with a multicultural identity.* People who have developed intercultural understanding realize that they are the product of multiple

cultural influences.

- *Comfortable in interstitial spaces.* People who are interculturally understanding are comfortable with change and with the “in-between-ness” of living as a member of multiple cultural circles that are in flux.
- *Values diversity.* People who are interculturally understanding value diversity.

Social action is at the bottom. This is an important product of being interculturally understanding and describes a person who will interact at various levels with global issues.

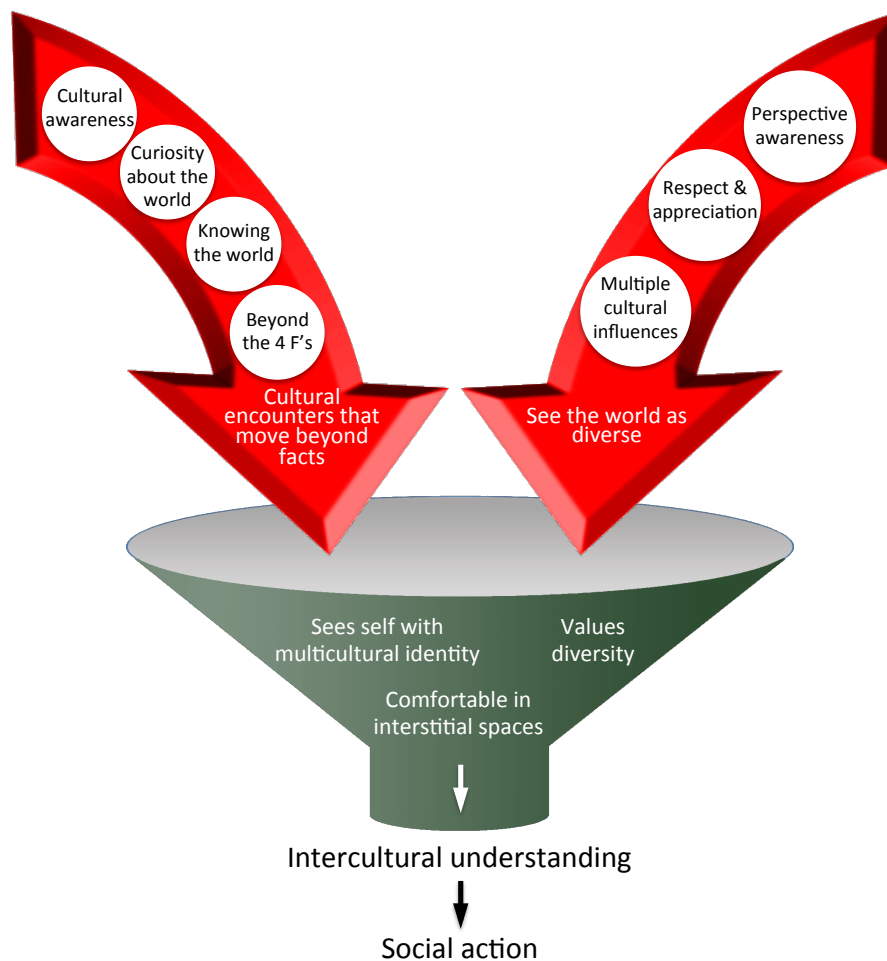


Figure 2.3. Initial framework for the development of intercultural understanding.

Paulo Freire, Dialogue and Critical Pedagogy

There are several aspects of Paulo Freire's work that were significant in the analysis of the data. Many of the models for intercultural understanding do not incorporate critically thinking about issues and eventually taking action. However, there have been educators like Lee Anderson (1968), Robert G. Hanvey (1976) and Roland Case (1993) who have pointed out the need to not only learn to understand and communicate with people from other cultures, but also to think critically about the world so that people can take action on social and global issues.

Freire's (2002) book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* describes a dialogic model of education that incorporates thinking critically as part of the educational process. His work has influenced the thinking of many scholars and educators who are concerned about the top-down "banking" education that is prevalent around the world. They see critical thinking as necessary for the support of democracy. In the banking model, students may be gaining lots of information, but they are not growing as thinkers, able to problematize the world and do the imaginative and creative thinking to solve local and global issues.

Freire developed his educational theory while working in literacy classes for peasants in his native Brazil. Through the process of naming their world, his adult students began to read words, gaining the vocabulary with which they could describe and problematize their experiences with oppressive practices. Freire called this *conscientization*—becoming conscious to the point that one can begin to question the realities of the world and work to take action for change. This process leads to an interior liberation, a new reality or a "humanization." Freire called *praxis*

the process of becoming conscious of one's world, reflecting on it and taking action to improve it. Praxis is continuous and reflexive; learners take action, reflect on what happened, then take new informed action in order to transform their world.

Freire describes the banking model as contributing to the oppression or dehumanization of learners. Students are robotic depositories of knowledge, with the teacher as the expert transmitter of knowledge. Instead, Freire proposes a dialogic education, where students and teachers are co-creators of knowledge, dealing with a problem connected to their reality that is of mutual concern (problem posing). Together they critically think about the problem, becoming more aware but also thinking about how they might change the reality. Durakoglu (2013) explains that Freire's notion of dialogic education is democratic by nature, and is supported by a love (of humanity), humility (that does not project ignorance onto others), faith (in human strength to do and create), hope (as humans continuously search), and courage (thinking without fearing the dangers of action).

Two of Freire's concepts were particularly important for this study. His concept of dialogue in education was important because of the many types of interactions in school that were called dialogue but did not include dialogic reciprocity. Because of the lack of dialogue, the teacher and student were not co-learners and co-creators of knowledge. They were not transformers of their world. The second important concept was critical literacy.

Critical Literacy

There are many books and articles discussing the notion of critical literacy, making it impossible to read and review the entire literature. In order to clarify

what critical literacy involves, this review is limited to three articles in the May 2002 issue of the *Language Arts* journal that were focused on critical literacy. Prominent thinkers and educators introduced and reflected on the main concepts in critical literacy.

Like many theories that are popular in education, the definition of critical literacy has become blurred and watered down to the point that pre-service teachers see it more as thinking about something or critiquing a text (personal classroom discussion, 10.1.2013). Consequently, one of the first tasks of the journal was to carefully define the roots of critical literacy and what reading a text critically means.

The concept of critical literacy is rooted in the work of Freire. Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002), in their article *Taking on Critical Literacy: The Journey of Newcomers and Novices*, define critical literacy as reading a text while:

- *disrupting the commonplace*—seeing everyday events through new lenses; problematizing texts and asking how these texts position the reader.
- *interrogating multiple viewpoints*—reflecting on the text with multiple and contradictory viewpoints; asking whose voice is heard and whose is silenced.
- *focusing on sociopolitical issues*—examining the sociopolitical systems to which people belong; looking at power relationships.
- *taking action and promoting social justice*—engaging in reflection and action in order to transform the world (praxis).

Lewison et al. (2002) used children's literature involving social issues in workshops in critical literacy. They described the professional journey of two

teachers in particular, one of whom was a complete newcomer and the other a novice to teaching with a critical literacy framework. The teachers represented two of the different definitions of critical literacy held by the workshop participants. Several insights regarding the use of children's literature emerged, one of which is important for this dissertation. Teachers realized that their notions of the appropriateness of literature that includes violence were in conflict with the level of interest and engagement students demonstrated when reading social issues texts. This created a tension for the teachers. In a participant survey at the same workshop, the teachers reported that the components that were the most helpful in understanding the concept of critical literacy were the stories the experienced teachers told of the ways they implemented critical practices in their classrooms. Also listed as important were learning about aspects of critical literacy, participating in literature circles with social issues books, and being able to discuss difficult issues that came up with teaching colleagues.

Karen Cadiero-Kaplan's (2002) *Literacy Ideologies: Critically Engaging the Language Arts Curriculum*, sifts through ways in which schools have understood and taught literacy and, in some cases, added a critical aspect. The first two of four ideologies she describes are more in line with a banking model, whereas the last two are more in line with Freire's critical pedagogy.

Functional literacy ideology, as described by Cadiero-Kaplan is focused on the skills needed to function in the workplace. It gained support through standardized tests and the back-to-basics movement. *Cultural literacy ideology* is focused on the teaching of morals and values through classic texts. It is based on Western traditions

and draws on content that "all Americans need to know" in order to be competent citizens. *Progressive literacy ideology* uses curricula based on children's interests. It uses constructivist approaches to learning, where literacy is developed out of the interaction of children and their physical and social environment. Finally, *critical literacy as a schooled ideology* views knowledge, culture, schooling, and identity-making as political. It sees texts as written from one perspective that can be examined with other perspectives.

Cadiero-Kaplan also looks at critical literacy and classroom practice. She describes classrooms where teachers have adopted Freire's notion of *conscientization*. According to Freire, teachers co-construct knowledge with their students, all the while valuing student voices, histories and experiences. Through dialogue, in a community where inquirers feel safe, teachers and students engage with texts that ask questions about historical, political, cultural and economic structures. Teachers become agents of change.

The article by Patrick Shannon (2002), *Critical Literacy in Everyday Life*, relates the *praxis* that he and his family have carried out in an effort to influence and transform their realities. In an act similar to Freire's culture classes, when his students named their world, Shannon and his family sought to represent their worlds through naming. The process gave them power to negotiate social processes and contest prior namings they felt were limiting. While they may not have defeated ideologies they disagreed with, the naming gave each member hope. The naming took many forms: commentaries on an education that is heavily influenced by business practices; a puppet show about Susan B. Anthony's arrest; storytelling

through cartoons and music; and social commentary through documentaries, remixes, and art projects. Like Freire's students, the Shannon family engaged in critique, praxis and projects of possibility, and experienced the hope of transforming their part of the world. Both teachers and students in the WOW communities experienced the same power through naming. Through dialogue about global books, they gained the words to describe, discuss, understand and eventually transform their contexts.

Teacher Study Groups

When Barb Birchak and her Tucson colleagues published *Teacher Study Groups: Building Community through Dialogue and Reflection* (Birchak, B., Connor, C., Crawford, K. M., Kahn, L. H., Kaser, S., Turner, S., & Short, K. G., 1998), it was one of the first pieces of literature to focus on the process of educators taking charge of their own professional development. That same year two other books were published on the same subject (Collay, Dunlap, Enloe & Gagnon, 1998; Murphy & Lick, 1998), demonstrating that this was a hot issue at a time when standards-based education was becoming synonymous with high-stakes testing and accountability systems. There was a growing consensus that the value placed on teachers was being eroded, their theoretical and professional knowledge was being discredited, and their ability to decide on best teaching practices was disappearing. The teacher study groups formed by Birchak et al. (1998) provided a way for teachers to value their own thinking and reclaim their profession.

While all three books discussed the formation of study groups, Murphy and Lick (1998) focused on whole-faculty study groups where participation was not

optional. The agenda was data-driven, designed to improve student learning and decrease negative student behaviors. This did not describe the WOW study groups. Michelle Collay (Collay et al., 1998) and her Hamline University colleagues described "learning circles" as small groups of people who come together to support each other in their learning. The four authors, employed as education directors, professors and consultants, reflected on their own study group process, using various theories to understand what took place as they thought and learned together. They listed six critical conditions for optimal learning to take place and the theory that supports the condition: (1) building community (living organisms), (2) constructing knowledge (constructivist learning), (3) supporting learners (group process), (4) documenting reflection (complex systems), (5) assessing expectations (optimal experiences), and (6) changing cultures (independent networks). The authors felt that these six conditions were indicative of healthy learning communities. While some of the conditions were important factors in the study group process for the WOW communities, the book that best described the organic flexible structure of the WOW communities was *Teacher Study Groups: Building Community through Dialogue and Reflection* (Birchak et al., 1998). The tone of the book was markedly different from the other two. It was written by teachers instead of administrators or education professors, and they told the stories of their study group experience,

Birchak et al. (1998) recorded the process of the creation, shaping and metamorphosis of their study groups. They described a study group as a voluntary group of educators who meet to share and push their thinking deeper about

practice. The book is very practical, describing how subjects were decided on, roles were rotated, and field notes shared. What is unique about the book is the way it acknowledges a range of structures, subjects for study, and types of meetings. Because the book describes the reasons why they shaped the studies differently over the seven years covered by the narrative, the reader is left with the idea that a study group can rise up, function, and then disband when the inquiry is complete. The inherent flexibility was striking; the same flexibility was a characteristic of the WOW study groups. Birchak et al. (1998) and Short (2009b) both emphasize that study group inquiry is based on teacher's questions. So it was important to the present study that the WOW communities each owned their inquiry; each group "looked" different.

Study groups, as a form of professional development, have received recent increases in support. In 2013 the National Center for Literacy Education (NCLE) partnered with the National Council of Teachers of English and published the results of a large nationwide survey of educators of all roles, grade levels and subject areas. There were five major findings, several pertaining to the professional development of teachers. The pertinent findings were that (a) working together is working smarter, (b) schools are not structured to facilitate educators working together, and (c) effective collaboration needs systemic support. Educators felt that their most powerful learning experiences came from collaborative work with colleagues. However, schools were not providing the time or the support for that kind of professional learning. Teachers who were able to engage in more collaborative work reported higher levels of trust in the school and faster spread of new learning about

effective practice. A critical part of that process was administrators supporting the work with time, tools and training.

Michael Palmisano (2013), in his book *Taking Inquiry to Scale*, makes a strong case for teacher-directed inquiry. He describes the limits of the transmission model of stand-alone workshops, and points out the strengths of collaborative work: teachers have a common question and purpose and develop shared understandings. Teachers then support each other as they learn about, try out, and refine new practices. He calls for bringing education reform to scale, which he defines as lasting reform that is widespread, deep, and permeates instruction. In order for this pervasive change to take place, educators need to engage in building their own capacity for change, adaptation and innovation. They become the change agents who build the reforms needed to fit their own students.

Palmisano (2013) points out that we all learn through inquiry. He describes the characteristics of teacher inquiry that can generate and support lasting reform: (a) it involves collaborative thinking, situated in actual work and grounded in cycles of practice and reflection, (b) it includes educators from multiple sites, roles and levels sharing a common purpose and learning together, and (c) there is a supportive infrastructure so teachers can engage in collaborative work and learning.

Kathy Short (2009b), in her article on inquiry in the classroom, describes the inquiry process in some of the same ways. She defines it as "a collaborative process of connecting to and reaching beyond current understandings to explore tensions significant to learners" (p. 12). Inquiry goes beyond collecting information to asking deeper questions of *why*, and leads to creative thinking around *what if*. Important in

her article and to this study was the role that tension plays, putting the inquirer out of balance and propelling movement forward to reshape understandings. As teachers and students try to understand the *why*, they begin to think more conceptually, digging down to essential understandings that cross contexts. Collaborative in nature, and centered on questions and problems that are significant to the inquirers, the investigation eventually leads to the *what if* and *so what* that prompts authentic action.

These descriptions of teacher inquiry became important in the analysis of the data. Though the mechanics of study groups were not the primary focus of this dissertation, the structure and interaction of the WOW communities necessitated reading the literature that was focused on the creation and actions of teacher study groups. The inquiry process of the WOW study groups became increasingly important during the analysis because it had a bearing on the degree of intercultural understanding that was gained by the members.

Summary

While not exhaustive, this literature review describes the professional books and articles that informed the analysis across all the WOW study groups. This included literature on the development of intercultural understanding, critical pedagogy, the role of dialogue in education, critical literacy and teacher study groups. The literature used in the discussion of the work of a particular cluster of study groups is included in the respective chapter analysis for that cluster.

Presented in the chapter is a framework for the development of intercultural understanding that I designed based on the literature. Following the analysis of the

data, I revised the framework to reflect the developmental process that took place in the WOW communities. The revised framework is discussed in chapter eight.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This dissertation is primarily descriptive, seeking to chronicle what took place in the inquiries of the 25 WOW communities. The research process used two kinds of qualitative research methodology, action research as the primary way to gather and analyze data, and case studies for the in-depth look at the educator study groups. Constant comparative analysis (Corbin and Strauss, 2008) was used to look for similarities, differences and broad themes across the WOW study groups, identifying key elements that led to increased intercultural understanding.

Herr and Anderson (2005) define action research as inquiry that is done by or with insiders within the community. It is not research done objectively to or on research subjects. The research for this dissertation fits with Herr and Anderson's definition because the setting for the data collection and research is a natural setting as opposed to an artificial one, set-up specifically to collect data. The participants were researchers themselves, socially engaged with their students, study groups, and the larger WOW community. They were not subjects of research nor were they simply informants. They were taking action and reflecting on it, both in terms of what their students were learning and in terms of what they were realizing about their own understandings. The project goal of all participants was both personal and professional growth. It was meant to encourage teachers to empower themselves as they seek to encourage their own students to understand and therefore work across cultures. My role in the project was as a participant-observer. I acted as the on-line facilitator and coordinator, not just as a collector of data.

Mirriam (2002) defines a case study as an analysis of a bounded system or a

single unit of study. The purpose of a case study is to describe a phenomenon or a social unit in depth. In writing this thick description, I used all the data gathered for the action research, but I gathered additional data using semi-structured interviews done in person, through email, Skype or the telephone. The interviews with selected WOW communities added another layer in the description of the development of intercultural understanding of the participants, both through the global literature they read or used and through the interactions with their colleagues and students.

Research Context

Worlds of Words partnered with the Longview Foundation to support educators in their attempts to enlarge their students' worldviews. The funding was used for website design and support, \$1000 grants to study groups to use for books, supplies/expenses, or teacher stipends while writing up their vignettes, and for support of a graduate student. The planned product was a guide for developing intercultural understanding through literature, to be posted on the Longview website. One of the goals of the project was to document the range in group formats and literature engagements that support the development of intercultural understanding, so the Foundation was flexible in how groups might be configured, as long as they were located in the United States. The focus of the Longview Foundation is the development of international relations, so the proposals needed to have a global focus rather than a focus on multiculturalism in the United States.

The Request for Proposals (see appendix) was sent out on various organizational listservs (CLA, NCTE, and USBBY). It was also posted on the Worlds of Words website (wowlit.org). Proposals were submitted by groups of educators

describing their context, their goals for the inquiry and a budget. The administrative committee selected proposals so that there was representation from a range of student age groups, combinations of study group structures (single or multiple grades, single or multiple schools, and community or university partnerships) and geographic locations. Preference was given to schools with Title I funding. A total of 25 different groups of educators met online between February 2011 and May 2013. In order to look at the increase in intercultural understanding over time, the ART community was funded for three grant cycles, and the Spokane and Teacher Talk communities were funded for two grant cycles.

In the grant proposals, each study group identified a similar issue, the need for their students to develop more of a global worldview. Each group varied in the design of their research or the structure of their inquiry. The grant administrators intentionally left the project design open so that it could fit with many different contexts and questions. This was due to the desire to document range, but also due to beliefs that in order for inquiry to be meaningful, it needs to be rooted in tensions significant to the group members, and connected to their own experiences and current understandings (Short, 2009b).

As an action researcher I was engaged in looking at the development of the intercultural understanding in the different group contexts. I looked for elements common across the groups and thus critical for the development of intercultural understanding. I also looked for elements unique to various groups. Of particular interest were the groups that were part of the project for more than one cycle. This allowed the group to reflect on their findings and refine their understandings and

approach for the subsequent year.

As the on-line facilitator I had several roles, both on and offline. I monitored the postings, responded to questions, researched resources, asked questions to prompt thinking or discussion, and sent out digests of the posts to all the community members. My role also included doing preliminary analysis, so I actively gathered data throughout the two years I was involved with the on-line discussion (2011-2012, 2012-2013). Retrospectively, I gathered data from the 2011 pilot group.

IRB approval was granted for this research study. The teacher participants gave permission for their work to be analyzed and their vignettes published on the WOW Stories website (<http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/>). They also received permission from parents for any children's work to be posted on the site.

Research Questions

The project had a two-pronged goal. The first was to give groups of educators the opportunity to engage with students in reading and interacting with global literature. The goal was to document the teachers' growth in intercultural understanding. Thus the primary research questions were:

- 1. What are the key elements that influenced the development of intercultural understanding?*
- 2. What intercultural understandings developed through the interactions around global literature?*

The second part of the project goal was to document the many ways global literature can be incorporated into a curriculum and used in the classroom.

Therefore additional research questions were:

3. What are the different ways that educators incorporated global literature into their curriculum?

4. What structures and processes did the study groups use to support their use of global literature?

The answers to questions three and four became part of the content of chapter four. It also became part of the data that was used in the analysis to answer the first two research questions.

Data Sources and Collection

Several data sources were used, listed below with a short description of the content. While the original intent was to use some as primary and others as secondary pieces of data, I ended up using all sources. Some were richer sources of teachers' thinking than others, but that depended more on the group thinking process than on the type of data.

- Grant proposals (questions are listed in the appendix): Each group submitted a grant proposal outlining the nature of the group and the study context, names of participants, proposed goals and activities, and a proposed timeline and budget. Besides providing basic demographical information, the proposals, and particularly the goals of each group, were used to identify each group's cultural model for the development of intercultural understanding. The models identified were then used to cluster groups.
- Discussion postings: Each group was asked to post at least once a month on the [wowlit.org/communities](http://www.wowlit.org/communities) website. Most of the posts were summaries of

their group meetings, but the data gathered also included responses to posts and resources used in the study group and in classrooms. I gathered all this interaction from the website and included it in my analysis. The discussion posts gave a sense of what the group was discussing among themselves and in their classrooms. Particularly valuable were the entries of several teachers who documented and posted their inquiry process.

- Mid-term reports (questions are listed in the appendix): Group leaders usually wrote the reports. The structured questions asked about the focus of the study group meetings, any changes in the group goals, ways in which global literature had been integrated into the classroom, use of the wowlit.org community website, insights gained so far, and any suggestions the group had for the administrators. The reports were valuable sources of early insights gained by group members. They also gave an idea of how the groups were structuring their study group meetings.
- Final reports (questions are listed in the appendix): Group leaders usually wrote the reports. The largest portion of the report related to ways in which the group met their goals. The structured questions also asked about the impact of Common Core on their inquiry, the ways in which they used the online forum, any member changes, suggestions for the next group of grants, a final budget, and (if applicable) how the project impacted their teaching in a university. In many cases the leaders were professors or graduate students, so they had the theoretical knowledge to be able to interpret what took place in study groups and classrooms. These findings were important because they

reflected the theoretically informed interpretation of the learning that took place from an insider's perspective.

- Vignettes: The vignettes were the classroom stories written either as group or individual teacher reflections. They were published as WOW Stories (<http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/>). Some vignettes reflected on the entire year of learning, while others focused on specific engagements done with the students. With most groups, the vignettes were the richest source of new understandings because they were written in the summer away from the daily grind of the classroom, and were composed after the teachers had taken some time to think about what they had learned. The process of reflection and writing (instead of just reporting) enabled them to develop more complex notions of intercultural understanding.
- Interviews: 20 in-depth interviews were conducted in person, through email, or via telephone or Skype. The purpose of the interviews was to discover more of the backstory of what took place in the study group interaction. 15 groups were selected for interviews, based on the need for additional information, which became apparent during the deeper analysis. The interviews were semi-structured, using the same set of questions to guide the conversation, but also using unstructured questions, asked in response to what was said. The interviews were recorded and I took field notes. I interviewed only one person from most groups; however, in three cases I conducted interviews with multiple members from the same group. The interviews gave me a chance to access parts of the study group and

classroom interaction that were not recorded in the other sources of data.

- **Miscellaneous electronic sources:** While facilitating the online interaction, I collected emails, which clarified questions about proposals, discussion postings, vignettes, and the group process. I also collected information from websites in order to understand the school contexts of the groups and the professional and personal journey of some of the group leaders and members. These emails and websites were used to provide context and clarification in the analysis of the groups.
- **Resources:** The groups referenced many picture books, novels and professional materials in their postings, reports and vignettes. I collected and read many of the pieces of literature in order to help me understand the material they engaged with in the classroom. I also read all or large portions of the professional articles and books in order to understand the theories the groups used in thinking about their interaction with global literature

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis took place from 2011-2014. During that time I was facilitating the online interaction, doing both preliminary and in-depth analysis, and writing my findings. Each time the groups turned in a document, I created charts to summarize the data and look for patterns that indicated key elements in the development of intercultural understanding. Because I was collecting data that the teachers wrote, the focus of the analysis was on their shifts in understanding rather than on changes in their students' thinking. One of the additional purposes of the charts was to document range in a number of areas for the Longview report.

Organizing the Data

Listed below are the data sources and the information gathered from each one.

Proposals:

- The first chart summarized the demographics of the group. This included the profession of each member (professor, teacher, librarian, parent, community worker), age level of students/ discipline, and pertinent information about the school (Title 1 funding, demographics of school population, languages represented, special education population, and any other information that made the school unique).
- An additional chart summarized the group goals and how the group planned to reach the goals. The chart included their plans for the frequency and structure of their study group meetings, any theoretical framework they were using in the inquiry, their book selection process, and their plans for incorporating global literature in the classroom.

Mid term reports:

- The chart summarized the frequency and focus of the group meetings, recorded their methods for integrating global literature into the classroom, and made note of any changes in their goals, their use of the online format, any insights gained so far, and suggestions for the administrative team.

Final reports/vignettes/online posting:

- The first chart summarized the use of the online forum, the structure of their meetings, the final budget, and any group membership changes. Also collected were any final words or suggestions, reflections on the impact of

Common Core on the inquiry, and, if applicable, the impact of the inquiry on university instruction.

- The second chart was more reflective in nature, and included data gathered from the vignettes and online postings. The chart gathered quotes or paraphrased text that demonstrated that they had met their inquiry goals. In order to document range, I gathered their methods of incorporating global literature in the classroom.

Online discussion posts:

- I coded each post by the type of message posted and who posted it. As part of this analysis I looked at the number of members in the group, the number who actually became members of the site, and how many members posted on the site. I also noted any cross-group posting that occurred. As I analyzed the online discussion, I noticed ways in which I could have fostered richer online interaction. Those ideas are included in chapter four.

Analyzing the Data

Early in the data analysis process, I looked at the proposed goals from each group and lined them up with evidence that the groups reached their goals. Across the groups all agreed that the project was a resounding success and that they were happy with what they and their students learned. However this type of analysis did not give me a picture of their success in developing intercultural understanding. So while the success rate of the inquiries in the group's minds was 100%, the success rate in the development of intercultural understanding was less evident.

It was while I was trying to analyze what made the difference in various

groups' intercultural understanding that I sorted the groups into clusters. I realized that their beginning orientation, their cultural model (Gee, 2008), had a large impact on how they shaped their goals and the depth of intercultural understanding they gained over the course of their inquiries. As I began to re-read and reflect on the story of each group, four orientations or cultural models began to emerge from their proposals that I then used to cluster the groups: cultural awareness, critical thinking, social justice, and embedded intercultural perspective. The cultural models are explained in detail in chapters five through seven. I wondered if there would be a correlation in the understandings that would emerge with different clusters.

It was as I began to write the first analysis chapter that I also made a significant addition to my data collection and analysis. As I wrote about the range in the study group processes, I realized I could not state my hunches, and that I needed further data, specifically on the group processes. I began to conduct interviews over the phone and Skype, in person or via email in order to understand the 'backstory' and their group processes. I eventually interviewed 20 people, each interview lasting between 35 and 75 minutes. During the interviews, I heard their enthusiasm for what they learned and the rich insights they gained that were not discussed in the other data sources. I had originally intended to do an in-depth analysis of three groups, but I realized that I needed to take a close look at all 25 groups or the analysis would have significant gaps.

After I conducted most of the interviews and began to understand the deeper story of many of the groups, my strategy for analysis shifted. Instead of reading across document types to discover patterns, I read all the data sources for a

particular group (proposal, mid and final reports, discussion posts, significant emails, vignettes, and field notes from interviews), documenting shifts in their intercultural and pedagogical understandings and the study group processes that contributed to transforming their practice. I then wrote a narrative for each group.

After completing the narratives for the groups in a cluster, I re-read them again, this time collecting findings that indicated growth in three areas: intercultural understanding, pedagogical insights, and study group processes that supported transformative practice. After finishing a cluster I had to go back and re-read various theories in order to help me understand what had taken place in the group thinking. My earlier reading of the theory was sufficient to help me notice details, but re-reading the theory helped me precisely identify and name what went on. I could then write up the summary for the cluster and move on to the next cluster. When I had completed the charts for all four clusters, I re-read them, looking for the common new understandings and processes that transformed their practice. The transformative insights and practices are the focus of chapter eight.

The process of looking across 25 groups was arduous and reflexive. I did not understand the power of the group work while I was in the middle of the grant cycles. It was as I analyzed and reflected on each group, that I understood the shifts in their understanding both for the group I was considering and the groups I had already described. The last group I analyzed was the ART community, and I do not think that I would have understood what they accomplished without looking at the work of the other 24 groups first.

Anonymity and Citations of the Data

Names of the schools and the participants were not changed because the real names are published on the Worlds of Words website as WOW Stories (<http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/>). Throughout the analysis process, I was conscious I was telling the personal stories of other people. For this reason I sent some of the narratives to group leaders to make sure I was telling the story accurately.

I developed a three-tiered method of citing the various pieces of data.

- Field 1: The group, written out
- Field 2: the initials of the writer or the speaker
- Field 3: the piece of data abbreviated. V-vignette, D-discussion post with date of post, MR-midterm report, FR-final report, P-proposal, I-interview, PC-personal communication

For example, Tri-Cities/KW/I indicates the data source was an interview with Kelly Wissman from the Tri-Cities group. Not all citations used all three fields. If there was no author indicated on the data source, that field was left blank. An example is Vashon Island/P, indicating that the data source was the Vashon Island proposal.

Summary

Over the course of 30 months, 25 groups of educators and community members met face-to-face to use global children's literature as a way to develop intercultural understanding. The groups also interacted online on the members-only WOW communities website. The groups represented many different locations, study group structures, populations served, and types of engagements. The data

generated was used to document the possible range within study group structures and interactions, and the range of engagements that were used to foster intercultural understanding. The data analysis identified elements in the interactions and processes of the groups that were transformative for their intercultural understanding, their classroom practice and future professional development through study groups.

CHAPTER 4: DIVERSE COMMUNITIES AND DIVERSE WAYS

Global literature was only one of the forms of diversity highlighted in this project. Diversity was also evident in the variety of WOW communities that were part of the study and in the way they engaged with literature. One of the goals of the project was to document both the range of study group structures and processes and the diverse ways the group members engaged with literature with their students. This chapter is a broad overview of the diverse ways the groups were formed, how they organized themselves, and the varied way they interacted with global literature and in their classrooms. The final section of the chapter looks at the online interaction that was part of the research project.

Diversity within the Communities

Over the course of the 32 months the 25 groups were active, they met both in their individual study groups and online at wowlit.org/communities. No two groups were alike. They were from different geographic locations, had unique structures and affiliations, varied demographically and professionally, and interacted with diverse types of student bodies.

Geographic Locations

One of the most obvious ways the WOW communities were diverse was in their geographic location. Study group members lived and worked in 19 different states spread from Washington to Florida, Arizona to Maine and including Hawaii. Most groups met face to face, but the Teacher Talk group on Long Island, NY, included a member from the Hawaiian Islands who joined the monthly meetings via Skype. The Tri-Cities group in Albany, NY, had a member in Montana who joined the

group via wiki. The funding organization (Longview Foundation) stipulated that the groups had to be physically located in the United States, but the A to Z Literacy group was able to stretch that geographic limit with their partnership with teachers in a school in Zambia.

Group Structure

The WOW administrative team purposefully selected grant proposals from groups that represented many different organizational structures and ways of functioning. The groups were formed in 25 different ways, but basically followed three patterns. Some were school/university-based, some school-based and some were hybrid groups (without a specific university or K-12 school that functioned as the hub for the group).

School-university. 64% of the groups (16 out of 25 groups) had a connection to a university professor. This indicates that professors act as conduits for discovering sources of grant funding as well as attracting educators and other professionals who want to be part of a thinking community.

The impetus to begin a community varied within this group. The four initial pilot groups were formed because the group leaders were connected to the Worlds of Words work, whether serving as an editor or on the WOW Advisory Board. However following the initial pilot effort, the WOW administrative team made concerted efforts to select grant proposals that were not led by board members.

Some groups were formed because a university professor heard about the study opportunity through a listserv such as the one for Children's Literature Assembly. The idea of looking at interaction around children's literature sounded

intriguing or fit the research interests of the professors, so they contacted a school or former students to determine whether there was interest in pursuing the grant opportunity. Some professors had students currently pursuing graduate degrees, so this became a natural place to begin forming a study group. Other groups were formed because a professor was already working with a school on a research project or on professional development.

The school-university groups were supported and partially energized by a professor's own desire for continued growth through inquiry and the desire to support teachers in creating a healthy learning environment. Their role in the group differed. While professors may have been the instigators of the group, they did not act as leaders. The group energy often took a turn and became more collaborative, respecting each person's expertise and voice as the group worked together discussing global books and teacher practice. This professional empowerment was an unexpected and a very significant finding for the members of several groups.

The ART community was part of the WOW communities project for all three cycles, so the change in the group dynamics was most apparent among those group members. The school-university group began with the teachers looking to the professors for a lot of direction. Gradually across the three years the teachers took increasing ownership both for their inquiry and their practice (ART/PM/I). The shift for the ART teachers happened over the course of the first two years; however the same kind of shift can happen very quickly. Teachers in the Tri-Cities group looked to Kelly Wissman as the leader at the beginning of the year, but as the group read articles and discussed teacher practice, they quickly realized that each group

member had insights to share. This was particularly significant for this group who were facing mandated changes in curriculum and stressful teacher evaluations based on student performance. Common Core was being integrated into the curriculum, so the teachers struggled with what they historically knew to be best practice and what the New York mandated curriculum was now telling them to do. The validation of their professional knowledge and practice happened through the process of discussing and studying together.

Authors and researchers writing in the area of professional development noticed the same kind of shift happening when teachers come together to study, discuss and plan practice. Heather Lotherington (2011) documented the way teachers needed direction in the beginning of the study project, but as their group discussed and thought together, teachers needed that direct support less and less. Barb Birchak and her co-authors (1998) documented several years of studying together. They described how they felt increasingly empowered to plan and decide what was best for their students. This was also an important finding recently published by the National Center for Literacy Education (NCLE, 2013). As educators begin to think together, they take increasing responsibility for their own creative practice in their classrooms and no longer look for the same amount of top-down direction. The educators concluded that study groups were one of the most powerful forms of professional development they experienced. It was so valuable that teachers were willing to conduct this kind of development on their own time if school time was not available or supported by the administration. This is a strong affirmation of the power of collaborative study groups.

There were two significant findings in the school-university groups. First, professional readings were intentionally included in the agenda as a way to give a frame or add other perspectives to the discussion and therefore tended to play a larger part in their discussion than groups that did not have members involved in higher education. Second, the groups with members who were professors were also more intentional about thinking as a study group about big issues and ideas. This would be a natural product of the research mindset that is inherently part of a university. In contrast the school-based groups placed the focus on teaching practice, the mechanics of including global literature in the curriculum, and assessing learning.

Single school. The second most frequent group formation was one based in a single school, often a natural grouping of teachers by grade level or subject area. The WOW community members were frequently part of an existing teaching team that had decided to try to incorporate global literature into their classroom. The motivation was often a sense that their students were isolated and needed to gain a more global focus. Another impetus was a program requiring added rigor. Several schools were working toward certification in the International Baccalaureate program or were participating in the AVID program. Lithia Springs High School had a mandated school improvement plan due to school AYP (adequate yearly progress) scores, so the English department faculty decided to join their efforts in increasing reading and writing with a focus on global books.

The fact that school-based groups applied for this type of grant is significant. It demonstrates that teachers are concerned about their practice and want to do

something that improves what happens in the classroom both for themselves and for their students. This is particularly significant in light of the current trend on class performance-based teacher evaluation. In an environment where teachers seem to have less creative control over their classrooms, these teachers took the initiative to apply for this grant in hopes of pushing their practice in new directions. They were willing to make the effort to see that happen by using their time to meet in a study group. Madeira was a good example of teachers carving out time for this inquiry. They were a group who had worked together for several years, and were in a small school district that encouraged the creativity of teachers. While they did have team meetings focused on lesson plans, they also intentionally scheduled a meeting every two weeks that was devoted to discussing global literature and what was happening in their classrooms around global books. In other words, they created discussion space dedicated to this project.

Hybrid group. The third type of group formation was one that drew on various community organizations besides a school, and was composed of two different subgroups. The first of the subgroups was formed by a professor but not necessarily for purposes of scholarly research. Saturday Book Group was originally formed to write book reviews for the column 'Talking About Books' (*Language Arts*). When the column folded, the group continued meeting, reviewing books for members of the larger community of Columbia, Missouri. Teacher Talk is another example. The group was formed in 2000 as a professional learning community of professors and teachers who were concerned about their practice. Both of the groups have roots and continued ties to TAWL (Teachers Applying Whole

Language). TAWL has a strong philosophy of supporting teachers through study and resources, so TAWL groups fit very easily into the goals of a WOW project. Both the Saturday Book Group and Teacher Talk had open memberships that drew on multiple professional areas in education. Saturday Book Group had professors, teachers, school administrators, graduate students and volunteers, all connected to multiple schools. The same was true for Teacher Talk. Vashon Island was also a diverse group, made up of a professor, teachers and a librarian from public schools and private schools, and a community liaison member who worked with homeschooling families. All members were located on an island near Seattle WA.

The second subgroup was unique partnerships. The A to Z Literacy Movement was a group of literacy coaches from several schools who were members of a non-profit created to support education in several schools in Lusaka, Zambia. The members tried out teaching methods in their classrooms, then would offer professional development for Zambian teachers during summer trips. The WC ReaderLeaders was a partnership between the Washington County public library and two kindergarten classes in rural Alabama. The isolated town of Leroy had one school named Leroy High School even though it serves children K-12. Kindergarten teacher Kandace Dearmon was working on a master's degree in library science and did her practicum at the Washington County Library. Jessica Ross, the director of the library, was always looking for outside funding that would support the cross-cultural classes the library does for various schools and groups. The WOW grant worked to support both Dearmon's goals for her kindergartners and the library's goals.

Study Group Sessions

Because of the variety of organizational structures, the groups met in a variety of formats. If the WOW study group was in a single school, there were several ways the meetings were scheduled. Some groups met as part of regular departmental meetings (LSHS English Lions, MLK, Shaker Heights, Chinle, Harllee, Aveson, Cunningham Colts). Others scheduled special study group meetings apart from departmental meetings (Madeira, A to Z). Some groups acknowledged the value of informal hallway and lunchroom meetings, which became important times to share the excitement of what just took place in a classroom or share with teachers who were not formally part of the group. When an outside person was involved in a school-based group, the members met separately from regular departmental meetings (Garden Hills, Eastern Oregon, ART, WC ReaderLeaders). One group was able to schedule release time for their meetings (Hobgood).

When members went across schools, they met in the evening, after school or on Saturdays. They met in homes, at universities, in classrooms, school libraries, restaurants and coffee shops. Some added a "global meeting" to a monthly STEM workshop (Global Environment)

The study group members engaged in several different kinds of activities during their meetings:

Sharing

- "Check-in" to update fellow group members about individual projects
- Share books and related activities or strategies for using books
- Share the excitement of classroom experiences, the student responses

- Report on conversations with schools so that strategies can be planned (Saturday Book Group).

Book discussion and selection

- Booktalk and browse books
- Discuss book titles; make decisions about which titles to purchase and use; search for books and consult book review sites and journals
- Discuss specific titles – age levels, problems with parents, background needed for comprehension, own connections and how book challenged thinking. (Vashon Island)

Brainstorming and creative activities

- Create assessments (Harlee)
- Brainstorm ideas and create lesson plans
- Brainstorm other sources of funding to support inquiry
- Create cross-curricular units (Teacher Talk, Harlee, Douglass, Shaker Heights, MLK)
- Plan activities (WC ReaderLeaders) and future projects (A to Z)

Discussions

- Discuss professional literature and how it applied to what was happening in the classrooms. Professional literature included articles and books.
- Discuss classroom experiences in order to understand and make sense of what happened
- Evaluate lesson and discuss improvements

- Discuss their own ignorance or prejudices
- Discuss ideas for creating professional development from the inquiry (A to Z)
- Discuss writing of vignettes – write vignettes
- Discuss needs of students (Aveson)

Gathering information

- Demonstrate strategies with books (Hobgood)
- Learn from special guests: authors (Orono), cultural experts (Garden Hills)

Planning future meetings and inquiries

- Respond to the current interests or questions of the group members (Teacher Talk)

Member Demographics

Across the three grant cycles, 203 educators, librarians, professors and community members participated in the project. In order to demonstrate the range of the demographics, I organized the members in terms of their affiliation. The age range of students served by group members was spread from early childhood through university: Pre-K through grade two (61), grades three through five (24), grades six through eight (41), grades nine through twelve (23), university/college (27). The final group of members (27) included a wide variety of professionals working as program coordinators, artists, adult ESL instructors and university or public librarians. This final group also included graduate students and volunteers.

Members engaged in a variety of professional activities. There were 61

classroom teachers, responsible for a single group of students. Understandably for a project involving literature, there were 30 professionals focused on reading and literacy and 25 in secondary English language arts. Seven members were involved with ESL and bilingual instruction and three taught exceptional students (special education and gifted). Also included were five librarians from schools and two librarians from a public county library. Ten administrators at the school and district level also participated.

Many of the study groups were working hard to incorporate either the Common Core State Standards or certification as an International Baccalaureate school or AVID school. This necessitated working across the curriculum, so many groups included content specialists: eleven in social sciences, seven in science and math, one in technology, seven in art and music, and one in physical education.

School Populations

The original WOW grant proposal to the Longview Foundation stipulated that high-needs student populations in the schools would be given preference over other school populations. The range within the communities went from a free lunch rate of 81% (Tri-Cities, HL, V) to 5% (Tri-cities, ST, V); however the bulk of the schools had high rates of free lunches. The students in the more rural locations tended to be less mobile due to finances and therefore had less exposure through travel to other parts of their county, state, country and world. It is logical that teachers of this population would be interested in using global books to expand student horizons.

What was significant for many of the classrooms was the diversity in

population due to immigration. While some schools tended to be monochromatic, even those schools had surprising diversity in family origins. An example is Madeira, a predominantly white school in the Cincinnati area. Once teachers started using global literature the children self-identified as speakers of languages used in the books. There was more linguistic diversity in the school than the teachers had realized.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, Pot Spring Elementary (ART) in the Baltimore area had wide ethnic and cultural diversity. The teachers made a concerted effort to look at where families were from, whether through recent immigration in the last year, immigration within the last decade, or immigration generations ago. Teachers also tried to gather the reasons that prompted the immigration. The diverse reasons acted as a counter-narrative that all people come to the United States for improved opportunities.

Some of the benefits of the influx of students via immigration were the rich linguistic and cultural resources that existed in classrooms. When the ART community wanted to study India in depth, they had ready-made resources in the students and parents who could share about the cultural diversity in India, the cultural elements (dance, art, food, religion, etc.) and also acted as resources for evaluating the cultural authenticity of books. Students shared spontaneously in classroom discussions, and parents brought in authentic artifacts for children to see, handle, hear and taste.

An important benefit to using global literature was the support it gave students who were bi-cultural and bilingual. This was particularly true in bilingual

classes (Eastern Oregon/AV/V) and ESL classes (Tri-Cities/HO/V; Saturday Book Group/CW/FR). A sense of identity is a critical component in human development, and can be challenged as children are forced to function in a language and culture that does not feel comfortable. The chance to hear literature that supported and celebrated different languages and cultural practices was significant for many children coming from other countries or diverse linguistic backgrounds. The stories often opened up dialogue with these students, and developed connections with parents. Teachers related how wonderful it was to see a child light up as they recognized something in a book that was from their country or their cultural background (Tri-Cities/HO/V; ART; Sat Book Club/CG/FR). As more research becomes available on the critical link between self-image and language, global books that portray other cultures can be powerful tools to help children navigate their identity while learning new cultures and languages.

Group methodology

The rich diversity within the membership and in the structure of the groups meant that there would be diversity in the ways they engaged with literature. This section on group methodology contributed answers for two of the research questions presented in chapters one and three. It addresses both the study group processes that supported the exploration of global literature and the use of global books in supporting intercultural understanding. This section also lists the many ways that group members engaged with literature with their students.

Cooperative or Collaborative Processes

One of the main tenets of a study group is collaborative work where the

members come together as equal partners, focused on a shared goal of mutual interest (Birchak et al., 1998). Collay (1998) also points out that a healthy study community is a balance of common goals and work with a degree of autonomy. How this balance of collaboration and autonomy played out differed across the WOW community groups. It is important to note that the groups were not mandated by an administration. Membership in the project was voluntary. While some groups may have been structured around teaching teams, the leaders indicated in the interviews that participation was not required. Each team had ownership of the inquiry as they wrote the grant proposal. How they functioned together differed. Some were more collaborative in nature; others were more cooperative where the leaders set the agenda and the members willingly cooperated in working on the project plans.

The terms *cooperative* and *collaborative* are often used synonymously when in fact they are quite different. The agenda for both collaborative and cooperative groups is of mutual interest, but in a cooperative group it is usually set by a single person. Members work toward a common goal but each person has defined tasks. It represents the divide-and-conquer mentality that is very useful when there is a task to be accomplished. School groups like Shaker Heights had a common goal that fit with a cooperative approach. Shaker Heights teachers each taught about the Silk Road using global literature; however the way it played out in each class was up to the individual content teacher. The Saturday Book Group also had a goal that fit with a cooperative approach. Different members were assigned a country that was represented by recent immigrants in their community. Each member then searched titles and information to create a text set of books and materials about that country

that would circulate in classrooms.

A collaborative approach, on the other hand, is a recursive process where two or more people work together to realize a shared goal, co-creating new meanings and building consensus. Reflection and collaborative problem solving are often part of the process. New knowledge is co-constructed. Engaging in professional reading supports and challenges their collaborative thinking.

The reports did not specifically ask about group processes; however, it was possible to surmise how the group functioned based on some of the comments in the various pieces of data collected. The approach they selected depended a lot on their goal. If their goal was defined and was more task-oriented, then the group tended to use a cooperative approach. If the goal was more philosophical or open-ended, then the group adopted a more collaborative approach because the goal entailed doing a lot of thinking together. Sometimes the variety in the members contributed toward making the group a more cooperative or collaborative one. Vashon Island members held a wide range of religious views, so they had to listen to each other in order to discuss a book and co-construct guidelines for the use of a book in schools.

What was significant was the change in the groups who may have started their study together in a cooperative manner with the agenda being set by the leader. They ended up with more collaboration as each began to value what each person had to contribute. The instigator or leader of the group effaced into much more of a co-participant, allowing collaborative construction of new understandings (Tri-Cities/KW/I; Douglass/LS/I). As the teachers became more confident in their

own professional knowledge, the dialogue became more collaborative where teachers saw themselves on an equal par with all members (including professors) and contributed in discovering new insights that would direct the inquiry.

Some groups were more collaborative from the beginning. Teacher Talk was one such group. The group had been meeting since 2000, and the members set the focus for the inquiry each year with each person contributing to the dialogue. Across the two years that Teacher Talk participated in the WOW project, the inquiry changed from defining a global book to expanding the Common Core State Standards Text Complexity Exemplar list to include global books. The first year the inquiry was more philosophical, the following year more practical. Across both years all members were thinking about global books in their own contexts. Together they co-constructed the insights that they then took back to their classrooms.

One of the important elements in both cooperative and collaborative groups is the creation of a space that feels safe for asking questions, sharing thoughts, and discussing classroom successes and failures. This is especially true for collaborative groups who were working at resolving a tension that surfaced in their inquiry. Jennifer Carey (Aveson, JC, I) noted how important the safe place was in their discussions. They could display their own ignorance about cultures and collaboratively explore answers to their questions. The Aveson group had a student make a stereotypical comment about Muslims and terrorists, which then fueled questions both in the study group of teachers and in their dialogue with students. As the teachers explored Islam and the variety of Muslims around the world, they were able to ask questions of each other without risking feelings of censure.

By the very nature of the WOW groups' interest in using global literature to help expand worldviews, it would make sense that members were already predisposed to understanding each other. It is therefore not surprising that creating a safe environment for collaborative meaning-making was successful. What surprised people more was a significant result of working in a collaborative manner, that of teachers feeling empowered as professionals.

Professional Reading

Teachers, librarians, professors and community members became active in these study groups for two main reasons. The first was a concern for the education of children, which implies that the teachers recognized that they needed to be learning and growing in their own teaching practices. The second was an understanding that children need to be exposed to the wider world around them. Teachers from homogenous schools realized that their students lived in bounded areas that did not allow them the chance to see and interact with people from other cultural groups. Teachers from schools with very diverse student populations realized they needed to capitalize on that diversity to think with students about cultural diversity.

Whether the felt need of the educators was their desire to expand horizons or think about diversity, the groups used various professional tools to jumpstart their inquiry. Several of the school-university groups had members who were professionally involved in the work of Worlds of Words, while other groups had members who were professionally involved in the field of children's literature. Because these members knew of Kathy Short's interest and focus on global

literature, her published articles and books were cited on discussion boards and reports and became part of their theoretical thinking. In the case of the ART and Spokane groups, the international curricular framework (Short, 2003, 2009a, 2011a) became the guide for shaping the lessons the teachers used in their classrooms.

Several groups used a book to shape their inquiry. The Cunningham Colts group read Randy and Katherine Bomer's (2001) book *For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action*. The Garden Hills group members had all been given a copy of *Growing Up Global: Raising Children to Be at Home in the World* (Tavangar, 2009), so the group decided to use that book as their professional reading. A to Z Literacy used selections from Dana Fox and Kathy Short's (2003) book *Stories Matter: The Complexity of Cultural Authenticity in Children's Literature*.

One issue that became a focus of discussion in several groups and therefore became a focus of the professional reading was the lack of diversity in the Common Core State Standards Text Complexity Exemplar lists (Appendix B). Rather than view this as a problem, teachers actively looked for additional global titles that would align with the standards for text complexity. In order to inform their discussion the Teacher Talk read *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* (Calkins, Ehrenworth & Lehman, 2012).

The groups also used articles to supplement their study. This was especially true if the groups had leaders who were involved in higher education; however, some school-based groups also used articles to inform their inquiry. Madeira members used articles from *Reading Teacher* to re-shape their inquiry goals. Aveson

members used articles about various theoretical frameworks to think about what was happening in their classrooms. School-based groups were very conscious of the time constraints put on members due to mandated meetings, testing, and imposed lesson plan structures. Teachers were swamped with work, so whether the group used outside reading or not seemed more related to the individuals in the group and their openness to adding professional reading into their busy lives.

Expenditures

Each group received a \$1,000 grant that they could spend in the way they thought would best support their inquiry. The two biggest expenditures for the grant monies were on books and stipends. This demonstrates two things. The first is the value that teachers put on resources. Many teachers thought long and hard about the titles that they wanted to purchase. Some decided to buy a group of texts that would be kept in a central location, accessible to all teachers. Some groups spent their funds on multiple copies of novels and picture books so that groups of students could read the books together in literature circles. Some teachers targeted a specific theme and used the funds to purchase print resources for the unit study (e.g. the silk route in Shaker Heights, westward expansion in Eastern Oregon). The WC ReaderLeaders, a public library-kindergarten partnership, were concerned about having books in homes and spent some of their monies on multiple copies of books to send home with students. Even groups that allocated funds for stipends changed their minds and used their funds to buy more books.

The other high expense was on stipends: funds to pay teachers for their time in the summer to sit back and think about their experiences with global literature

and how the books had impacted themselves as well as their students. This indicates the value group leaders put on teacher time and also the necessity of taking the time to reflect.

Presentation of Group Findings

Sharing teacher stories is one of the most powerful forms of professional development (Lewison, Flint & Van Sluys, 2002). This understanding was built into the WOW project through the online posting and publishing the vignettes as WOW stories. There were also other ways that groups presented their work.

Conference presentations took place at three different NCTE conferences in November 2011, 2012 and 2013. What was particularly stunning about the 2012 conference is that members from eleven of the twelve communities attended and presented their work. This demonstrates how excited they all were about their inquiries. The general format in 2012 and 2013 WOW presentation was a quick introduction, a chance for the audience to walk around and see the displays and talk to community members, and a panel presentation from community members. The act of presenting to fellow teachers and librarians was a powerful reinforcement that the thinking, reflection and practice they had worked on over the year was valuable and worth sharing (ART/PM/I). This was a tremendous benefit because, in today's educational climate, teachers are more scrutinized than lauded.

One of the successful aspects of the 2011 and 2012 conferences was having a gathering space for the communities. Having a place to meet, talk and share verbally with other WOW communities was invaluable. People made connections across groups and stayed after the meeting and talked.

I wanted to find out about the sustainability of the project, so I asked leaders if the groups had had a chance to share with others in their larger communities. All of the leaders indicated that sharing the work happened informally in the hallways and the lunchroom. Some groups shared with grade level meetings, school boards, other schools in the districts, content area or specialty meetings, or regional conferences. One of the benefits of sharing the work was group expansion. As Prisca Martens (ART), Ernie Bond (Global Environment) and Jeanne Fain (Hobgood) noted, a good thing happening breeds interest, and these groups grew as people heard about the inquiry and wanted to join in on the learning.

The Focus of the Group Exploration

Each group was unique in the focus of their inquiry. The Global Environment group looked at international literature around the issue of the environment due to that emphasis at Salisbury University and their partnership in the Green Earth Book Awards. The focus was narrow and it stayed narrow. Other groups like Madeira had a more general idea. They knew they wanted to explore global literature with students and they started with a list of countries they wanted to explore, but the plan morphed into something more flexible as the educators gained new understandings about dialogue and open inquiry. The conversation around a book opened up as the teachers realized that their students were capable of discovering big insights if given the time to think and discuss.

The foci of the global literature explorations can be loosely grouped into several categories: cultural identity, cultural explorations, topical or thematic explorations, cross-curricular explorations, book studies, and author visits. Though

virtual travel and electronic connections are more methods than foci, they are included here because they represent one of the diverse ways teachers used to engage their students with the world. Examples from WOW communities are listed under each category.

Cultural identity. The ART and Spokane groups used the international curriculum framework (Short, 2009a, 2011a), which calls for beginning the inquiry with a look at one's own cultural identity. Other groups focused on identity as a natural avenue to discuss cultural diversity.

- ART - Cultural identity eventually became an integral part of the entire curriculum framework.
- Spokane - Exploring cultural identity was supported by the interactions with families through the Family Story Backpacks.
- Stillwater - Several teachers built on an earlier unit on American immigration and tied cultural identity with a look at the origins of the students' names and their cultural heritage.
- Saturday Book Group focused on the cultural backgrounds of several groups of students at the elementary school with which they partnered: Russia, Myanmar (Burma), Somalia, Pacific Islands and Cuba.
- Through persona dolls, Aveson students looked at various cultural identities of book characters.

Cultural explorations. Students looked at one or several countries, as opposed to generally exploring the world.

- Harllee - Students explored contemporary Japanese culture and the 2011

tsunami through a Japanese thriller.

- MLK - Students explored Mexico and created a travel brochure.
- ART - The first graders studied India and authored their own books about the country. Kindergartners studied Mexico.
- Saturday Book Group created text sets focused on Russia, Myanmar (Burma), Somalia, Pacific Islands and Cuba.
- Stillwater - Members created and used a text set focused on Arab culture.
- A to Z focused on cultural explorations with first graders, facilitated by middle school students. Three cultures were chosen based on the cultures represented in their school district: South African, Mexican-American, and Arab-American.
- ACLIP students worked on an in-depth exploration of South Korean culture, creating a Korean museum to showcase their new understandings.
- Eastern Oregon - Missy Rinker looked at a range of cultures from the US and the world, with a food tasting event as the culmination of the unit.
- WC ReaderLeaders looked at holidays and their cultural origins.
- Spokane - After exploring the notion of culture and one's own personal culture, students looked carefully at Japan or Mexico.

Topical or thematic explorations.

- Shaker Heights - Students explored the impact on history, science, literature and mathematics of cultures crossed by the ancient Silk Road.
- Global Environment - Students explored the environmental issues of

deforestation and electric power.

- Willamette Valley - Jenny Davis looked at water use and conservation around the world, tying it to the middle school science curriculum.
- Hobgood teachers used family story backpacks with a range of literature and artifacts to encourage family storytelling.
- Teacher Talk began their exploration around the question "What is global literature?" The second year they focused on the CCSS Text Complexity Exemplar lists and tried to match titles on the lists with comparable global titles.
- Vashon Island looked at issues of war, resistance, and forced migration.
- Chinle focused on the theme of global citizenship with their Navajo middle schoolers.
- Eastern Oregon- Kate Dunlap looked at the presence of diverse cultures in the North American Westward Expansion, particularly Chinese immigrants and their role in the construction of the transcontinental railroads.
- WC ReaderLeaders looked at cultural celebrations (Christmas, Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras, Easter, a Choctaw powwow and Cinco de Mayo) and their cultural origins.
- Madeira - The teachers originally planned systematic cultural explorations but changed their strategy to rich discussions of the themes in books.

Cross curricular. These groups were often working toward certification as an IB or AVID school and needed to emphasize cross-curricular units of study. This focus was very timely with the adoption of the Common Core State Standards and its emphasis on inter-disciplinary studies.

- Shaker Heights - Students explored the Silk Road history, the science of silk worms, cultural folk tales, and the influence of cultures on the Pythagorean theorem.
- ART - Teachers tied art and artistic expression into studies of how people in other cultures think, believe and act. The country studies on India and Mexico involved the technology, PE and music teachers.
- Harllee - the English, Science, Geography and Math teachers collaborated on the study of contemporary Japan, with a focus on the 2011 tsunami.
- LSHS English Lions incorporated global literature across all the English classes.
- Douglass High used novel studies across English and Social Studies classes.

Book studies. Groups used picture books to "dive into" an issue or theme, or as a way to quickly introduce multiple perspectives into a discussion. The novels were used for more in-depth studies.

- Willamette Valley - Two of the teachers used Trent Reedy's (2011) book about a young girl in Afghanistan, *Words in the Dust*. A third teacher looked at multicultural biographies.
- Harllee: *Shizuko's Daughter* (Mori, 1993) is a novel set in Japan in the

1970's and was used as a segue to look at the country and Japanese society in 2011.

- Garden Hills read *A Long Walk to Water*, which takes place in Sudan (Park, 2010).
- Vashon Island functioned as a book club, rotating titles and discussing them. The books were drawn from a bibliography assembled by group leader Merna Hecht and all focused on the common theme of war, conflict and immigration (particularly forced migration).
- Eastern Oregon (Amanda Villagomez) used multiple book clubs to look at a range of social issues in the novels.

Author visits.

- Orono members benefited from conversations with author Margy Burns Knight.
- The Global Environment students interacted with Canadian authors Caitlyn Vernon (*Nowhere Else on Earth: Standing Tall for the Great Bear Rainforest*, 2011) and Claudia Davila (*Luz Sees the Light*, 2011), who were in town for the Green Earth Book Awards. Students also engaged in an illustration workshop with Susan Roth (*The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families*, 2011).
- Chinle member Nancy Bo Flood celebrated the arrival of her new book *Cowboy Up! Ride the Navajo Rodeo* (2013) at a Chinle community family literacy night.

Virtual or electronic travel. Travel has historically been one of the best ways to begin the process of developing intercultural understanding. WOW students were able to electronically interact with children and teens in other countries.

- Several groups used pen pals as a way to stretch geographic limits. Third graders (ACLIP) wrote back and forth with students in Seoul, South Korea. A teacher at Douglass High tried to organize blogging with students in Brazil, but the project had to be postponed until another year.
- Electronic media was used to help students visually connect around the world. When the Global Environment group used *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families* (Roth, 2011) with their students, they invited artist Susan Roth to come and demonstrate the collage technique she used in her illustrations. As part of the workshop, Roth had the students create self portraits that were then photographed and added to her growing web-based collage of other portraits from children all over the world. The portraits link children virtually and visually (<http://www.susanroth.com/letsholdhands/index.htm>).
- Madeira participated in two web-based events that linked their children with children from other parts of the world. Their students competed in the UNICEF-sponsored World Math Day (<http://www.worldeducationgames.com/WEG2013/About>). For three days in March over 5 million students participate annually in the world's largest educational event for students from ages 4 through 18. Each day has a separate focus, either literacy, math or science. The second web-

based event the Madeira teachers and students participated in was the UN-sponsored World Water Day (<http://www.unwater.org/water-cooperation-2013/youth-and-kids/en/>).

Research Questions Revisited

The focus of this chapter is the practical aspects of this inquiry. Therefore, two of the research questions are pertinent to this chapter because they ask about the range of study group structures, processes and literature engagements that teachers used. The questions are: *What structures and processes did the study groups use to support their use of global literature? What are the different ways that educators incorporated global literature into their curriculum?*

The variety in the group structures and in the way members interacted with each demonstrated that there was no single group structure that was more effective than others in helping group members discover and use global literature with students. Members' knowledge and resources impacted the group more than the structure of the group. For example, it helped to have someone in the group with easy access to a large personal collection of international books. However, the narratives of the groups in chapters five, six and seven demonstrate that there were processes the groups engaged in that supported increased growth in their intercultural understanding, such as open inquiry and dialogue. These processes are discussed in the summaries of those chapters and in chapter eight.

The success of the groups in engaging with global literature demonstrates that there is a wide range in possible engagements that stimulate intercultural thinking, limited only by the groups' creativity. As teachers began to use global

literature, they discovered how flexible it is, fitting into many curricular designs or content areas. The lists above are testimony to the creativity of the group members. They also demonstrate one of the benefits of this type of project; the cross-fertilization of hearing what 100 people were doing had both an immediate and future benefit. Through the online postings and the digests, teachers shared and learned about books and engagements, so the ideas could potentially be taken and adapted to another situation. The teacher vignettes were published so that those ideas are now available to anyone who accesses the Worlds of Words website (<http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/>).

Online Aspect: Was it Successful?

This chapter closes with a look at the online aspect of the project. This was an important part of the project, because Michael Palmisano (2013), in his book on study groups, indicated that online study groups going across communities has not been heavily researched or discussed in the literature. This study tried to fill some of that gap.

As a person who has experienced rich interaction through online coursework at six different universities, I was very excited about this aspect of the project. I have engaged in conversation with educators across the United States and Canada, discussing issues in children's literature, libraries and schools. However the dialogue between the WOW communities fell short of what I have seen in other online discussion contexts. There are several reasons why this might have happened.

Accessing and Using the WOW Communities Site

A stipulation of accepting the grant money was that the group would agree to post on the community website at least once a month. The goal was to have dialogue across the groups. In order to look at the interaction closely, I coded all the postings, looking at who posted and why. I also looked at the nature of the post. There were four levels of posting activity: (1) individuals who read and responded to posts from other groups, (2) responses to posts within a member's own group, (3) meeting minutes recorded by the leader or designated member, and (4) sporadic posts or no posts. In order to understand this fluctuation, I looked at the percentage of members who actually joined the site vs. the frequency of the group posting. It was clear that the group leader had to encourage activity. Being able to log on to the site as part of the study group meeting also helped. One pilot group did dialogue on the site, but the group leaders had stipulated that posting was a requirement of participating in the group. However, even within this group there was fluctuation. Posting was easier for the younger teachers who were more accustomed to using technology, but challenging for the older teachers.

One of the problems mentioned several times in the final reports was the difficulty in accessing and maneuvering the site, which was reflected in the number of group members who actually joined the site and posted. The login process to get to one's community page required multiple steps. Where and how to post and upload documents was not intuitive. All of these factors made accessing and using the site challenging. A PowerPoint with screenshots explaining the steps in joining a community and posting would have been helpful.

In an effort to cross-fertilize and to challenge some groups' "5-F" thinking, I created digests of the posts and sent them out on the WOW communities listserv. Resources mentioned in the group posts were highlighted in the digests and, if they were electronic, were collected under a Resource tab so that everyone could access that professional reading. Members appreciated the digests and the ideas they gained. They also appreciated the public recognition of their work and the sense that it gave of being part of a larger educational effort.

Several members commented in the mid-term reports that it would have been helpful if the communities site linked to a tool (like Facebook) that they were already using. This would have eased the process of posting on the community page. One reason the digests were read was because they arrived in a format (email) that was already in use.

While the original grant proposal for the Longview Foundation stipulated that the online coordinator would provide support for the groups in the form of resources and expertise, there was not a large need for that kind of support. Groups accessed book lists easily. Groups did use the main WOW site extensively, with its book reviews and searchable database, in order to locate books that fit their curricular needs.

One of the original goals of the proposal to Longview was to have the communities stay active on the site even after finishing their commitment to their grant. In this way more experienced communities would act as mentors to newer communities. However, I was not able to determine if older groups logged onto the site. Members were not deactivated, so it was feasible to log on to the site in

subsequent grant cycles. It is also unknown if members contacted other groups privately by email. The digests were not sent out with blind addresses, so members had access to email addresses for other groups.

Fostering More Discussion

The online site became more of a place to share information than a discussion forum. I think that is so for several reasons. Teachers were busy and had limited time to figure out the mechanics of a non-intuitive website. Also, online discussion is easy to set aside when the face-to-face discussion is rich and rewarding. After several of the members tried valiantly but unsuccessfully to begin large group online discussions around key issues in global literature, one leader suggested that the lack of discussion on the website was an indication of the strength of the individual communities (ART/PM/FR - 2011-2012).

Reflecting back, I question whether one can build a community of over 100 members, where people would feel comfortable expressing personal thoughts and opinions. It was clear that feeling safe was necessary when discussing beliefs and values, and while group members felt safe within their groups, they may not have felt that way about a virtual community. While I tried to foster a sense of ownership and ease by requesting that people post introductions, few groups followed through and the introductions did not seem to promote an added level of online activity. Connecting pairs of communities might have helped foster online interaction or at least the dialogue between groups. Suggesting that members from a group contact another group because of a common interest might have helped teachers become acquainted, eventually feeling safe enough to dialogue about an issue.

Online dialogue is wonderful, fun and enriching. The potential for hearing multiple perspectives is magnified because the discussion can electronically cross many different kinds of borders. But teachers need to learn to engage in that kind of interaction and invest in the effort because they understand the value. This is difficult to do when teachers have to prioritize activities.

Summary

The Longview Foundation was interested in the range of study group structures and literature engagements that supported developing intercultural understanding. This chapter documented a wide range of possible structures and inquiries, suggesting that there are many ways teachers can learn together, and many ways to engage with global children's literature. Chapters five, six and seven describe the group inquiries in more detail, noting what helped teachers and students learn to think about other cultural practices, beliefs and values.

This chapter suggested that the online discussion would have been richer had groups felt safer about expressing personal opinions to over 100 people. Pairing groups could have helped teachers interact more easily with others in a different WOW community. Leader encouragement was also vital in helping teachers post.

CHAPTER 5: CULTURAL AWARENESS CLUSTER

This chapter begins the closer look at the individual groups. Beginning with a discussion of the notion of cultural models (Gee, 2008) as a way to organize the groups, the chapter then moves on to look at the cluster of twelve WOW communities named *cultural awareness*.

In the educational field growth is often measured in a quantitative way because educators want to be able to give evidence that learning took place. An intercultural survey that could have been analyzed with SPSS would have given concrete data that proved the effectiveness of global literature in the development of intercultural understanding. However, in order to create a survey, the goal of intercultural understanding has to be precisely described in a measurable way. Looking at the literature alone indicates that scholars, linguists, anthropologists and educators have varying opinions on what intercultural understanding looks like. Some described it as a linear process (Bennett, 1986; Fennes & Hapgood, 1997) and others as a recursive process (Allan, 2003). Geertz (1973) calls culture a web and Bhabha (1994) places it in a dynamic middle space. It is hard to measure something quantitatively that is in motion and constantly changing. Even if these professionals could agree on a definition it would be more applicable for adults. What does intercultural understanding look like in a growing preschooler, and how does it differ from a middle school student?

The moving target is difficult to pin down, therefore the following three chapters are not full of absolutes but rather observations, describing signposts of the developmental journey that appeared during the project, drawing on the

literature and framework described in chapter two. Chapters five, six and seven each begin with a description of the cultural model of the cluster and then tells the story of each group's inquiry. The chapters conclude with a discussion of some of the new understandings that transformed teachers' practice and study group processes.

Cultural Models

Each of the 25 WOW groups were unique, however for ease of analysis they were arranged into four clusters according to their early ideas about intercultural thinking that were embedded in their grant proposals. It is important to note that these early ideas guided the group's development of their project and their discussion about books. The ideas influenced the insights gained from their inquiry but did not dictate the results. Some groups gained insights that changed their thinking and the way they would approach a similar project in the future.

Another way to describe these early ideas about the development of intercultural understanding would be to use James Gee's notion of cultural models described in his 2008 book *Social Linguistics and Literacies*. As part of his description of cultural models, Gee acknowledges the history behind the term. The notion has been known as "folk series, scenes, schemas, frames and figured worlds" (p. 104) and has been described by anthropologists Dorothy Holland, Roy D'Andrade, and Naomi Quinn.

Gee's description of a cultural model is similar to Fennes and Hapgood's (1997) model of an "iceberg of culture"; these are the unconscious or conscious beliefs that guide what people do and believe. Gee describes them as the storylines,

the subconscious scripts that inform talk and interactions. They can be things like “work, get good grades, and you will succeed . . . [Gee states that the models] help people go about their lives efficiently without having to think through everything thoroughly at all times” (p. 8). He calls cultural models our automatic pilots.

It is important to note that each group member belonged to multiple cultural models due to the individual life experiences and beliefs each person brought to the group. Consequently there were many cultural models represented in the dialogue and efforts of the WOW groups. There were also shifts in the cultural models of each group over time and in different contexts. However, the main cultural model that surfaced in grant proposals was what determined the placement of a group in one of the clusters.

For the first cluster the cultural model that prompted them to apply for the grant was their concern for their students' view of the world and the need to become more aware. The students were limited in their experiences of diversity either because of the school population or because they had not and probably would not travel outside of their immediate community. The twelve groups in this cluster mapped out a plan to introduce students to various countries and cultures around the world, so they could become more *culturally aware*. They are described in this chapter.

Both the second and third clusters of groups shared a common desire to think critically about texts and the world, so they are described in chapter six. The eight groups in the *critical thinking* cluster used a range of definitions to describe their thought process. Some groups thought critical was related to comprehension,

while others defined it in a “Freirian” sense of thinking about power issues. The five groups in the *social justice* cluster read and discussed books focused on global social issues such as racial oppression, war, forced migration or the preservation of the environment.

The group in the *embedded intercultural perspective* is described in chapter seven. They shaped their inquiry around the framework that Kathy Short and the Van Horne Elementary School teachers developed during their study group inquiry about the development of intercultural understanding in K-5 children (Short 2003, 2008, 2009a, 2011a; Short & Thomas, 2011). Their goal was to think with an international perspective across the curriculum.

Cultural Awareness Cluster: Descriptions

Twelve of the WOW groups were clustered together because their proposals outlined a project that was more focused on information about countries and other cultures than on the values that inform how people think and act. A focus on almanac-type information is generally known as the 4F, 5F or touristic approach because of the attention given to a combination of information about festivals, food, fashion, famous people, folklore or flags (Short, 2011a).

The cultural models of these twelve groups led them to an inquiry that built awareness mainly through gathering and interacting with information. This method makes sense for several reasons. The first is that gathering information is the natural tendency when people have a question. In order to make informed decisions people have to have a bank of information to work with. This is an important first step in any inquiry. However information gathering does not necessarily create

understanding or empathy. Because people do not operate on predictable patterns, they cannot be studied in the same way one studies life cycles. Culture is messy and so are people with their value-laden actions and decisions. A second reason this information-based inquiry makes sense is the current emphasis on measurable learning in educational institutions. Information-gathering is more easily documented to demonstrate acquisition of new knowledge. Assessment is simple.

An additional and subtler reason information was a focus of the inquiries was the lack of stimuli to encourage group members to think beyond facts. In order to explain what I mean, I need to draw on my own life experience. I lived internationally for over 20 years in three countries outside of the United States. I understood something about crossing boundaries. I stored a lot of factual and experiential information in my head. Yet I had rarely, if ever, been challenged to reflect on my experience and push my own thinking about global issues. It was not until I had to teach cross-cultural understanding and took a course in social justice that I began to process my years of experience into understanding more about intercultural relations. In other words it took some prompting by someone who had thought about these issues to start me down that path myself. The modeling was important. While members in this cluster had traveled or lived in other countries, they may not have been challenged to think about intercultural understanding or global issues, and therefore would not necessarily engage in that kind of reflection with their students.

Gathering information is a necessary first step in any exploration, but the bigger question is what the groups did with the information following their inquiry.

Many theorists agree that awareness is a necessary step (Bennett, 1986; Case, (1993), so what these groups did was important in advancing them from little global awareness to a greater global awareness. My analysis of these groups examined whether they went beyond facts to a deeper level of intercultural understanding by engaging with belief systems and values. Some did while others did not.

The following descriptions of the groups are organized by the age of the students each group dealt with. The Orono and Saturday Book Group are at the end because they focused more on the development of a collection of resources.

WC ReaderLeaders, Alabama

The WC ReaderLeaders in rural Alabama was a pairing between two kindergarten classes and the public library that served the county. Located in a rural area, Leroy High School had only one campus for grades K-12. The county had high poverty and therefore the students had little mobility in terms of exploring the world. The library had stepped in over the years to fill the gap and help children explore the world through books and cultural events. The staff had a strong tradition of providing what they call *culture classes* to the county communities through the venue of the library building or through traveling to schools. Jessica Ross, the library director, explained that the goal was to expose the students to various cultures in a memorable way, so they have "memory pegs" that stick with them. The idea behind the strategy is that if the children do something exotic, like try raw fish in sushi rolls or chocolate-covered crickets, they will realize they lived through the experience. Later on they would then be more open to experiencing something new (WC ReaderLeaders/JR/I). So the library staff focused on creating

memorable experiences in the hopes that the cultural dissonance, the “weird!” factor, would be diminished. Allan (2003) identifies diminished cultural dissonance is one of the markers of intercultural understanding.

The group used the Kindergarten Alabama state standards to shape their project. The standards stipulate that kindergartners should be able to "describe ways people celebrate their diverse cultural heritages" (<http://alex.state.al.us/standardAll.php?grade=0&subject=T1&summary=2>), so the library staff and teachers used literature, language, songs, dances, games and holidays to broaden the students' understanding of other cultures (WC ReaderLeaders/P). The library staff visited the two kindergarten classes several times over the school year. They shared a book about the culture behind a celebration (Christmas, Chinese New Year, Mardi Gras, Easter, Choctaw powwow, and Cinco de Mayo) and engaged in a related activity. Because the library was concerned about home literacy, they used their funds to purchase multiple copies of several of the books the staff read so each child could have a copy to take home.

The group stayed focused on a 5F approach because that fit with the suggested curricular ideas in the standards. Description is at one of the lower levels in the ladder of thinking skills and the suggested assessment did not go beyond reporting what one has heard or seen. This raises the question of what state officials view as developmentally appropriate and of what they think kindergartners are capable of doing. Interestingly, Alabama standard #10 states that kindergartners should be able to "discuss rights and responsibilities of individuals in relation to different social groups, including family, peer group, and classmates," yet the

examples given relate to raising hands in class, obeying traffic laws and the safety issue of playing with matches. Deeper social issues could be part of the discussion (Vasquez, 2004), yet are not suggested by state authorities.

Cultural awareness as a goal made sense when considering the life experience of the library director and the mission of the library. Ross grew up in the community and, after high school, left because she wanted to experience life in another place. She eventually returned to the community to work and rear her own family (WC ReaderLeaders/JR/I). She sought to foster that same curiosity about the world she had felt, but within the mission of the library. Public libraries are more geared toward inviting children to explore rather than encouraging children to think critically about the world. Library staff work hard to support literacy, however what they do is geared for a volunteer audience. They deliver programs with a big wow factor in order to attract and keep an audience. They want children to come to the library so that they can then hook them into books and reading. Since the Washington county children could not travel to the world, the library attempted to bring the world to them through the large 14-foot map on the library wall, the culture classes they put on in schools, and through this WOW grant.

Even among libraries, the Washington County Public Library is unique. Because of the rural nature of Washington County and the high poverty rate in the 17,000 people who live there, the library has become a central meeting place for the community. It is the only place that will hold large gatherings and the only place that supplies free Internet access (WC Reader/Leaders/JR/I). The community rallies behind the library with support, but Ross is quick to specify that the programs that

get support are the amazing out-of-the-ordinary ones such as hot-air balloon rides or a musical instrument petting zoo (WC Reader/Leaders/JR/I). While balloon rides are not what would normally be called cross-cultural events that build intercultural understanding, Ross explained that the experiences prompt a shift in children's thinking that opens them up to experiencing something new and different.

The library's lesson plans may have been more touristic, but Ross was still concerned about cultural authenticity and linguistic diversity. The library invited the Choctaw Fancy Dancers to make sure that the kindergarten children heard about powwows in an authentic way. During the Cinco de May visit, a bilingual high school student teamed up with a librarian to read the featured picture book in Spanish-English read aloud, so that the children could hear authentic Spanish.

One of the factors important in fostering change for the WOW groups was the chance to discuss among the study group members. The largest shifts in understanding came from the groups that discussed with a sense of being able to take risk. The WC ReaderLeaders did not report engaging in discussions that prompted them to grow in their own intercultural understanding. However, they were working in an environment that invited them to take risk, think outside the box, and deliver creative programs in order to capture children's attention and build those memory pegs.

Spokane, Washington

The Spokane group in Eastern Washington was a grant recipient for two years (2011 pilot, 2011-2012). Even though they shaped their work both years around the framework *A Curriculum that is International* (Short, 2009a) and it's four

components, it was evident from their goals that their major concern was developing awareness and empathy. The pilot study was short, from January through June, and the members focused on the first or second components on personal culture identities and cross-cultural studies. They concluded that each component of the framework requires at least two months of classroom exploration. The following year they were able to make it through the framework's four components, including the last two, which are integration of intercultural perspectives and inquiries into global issues.

The teachers' goals were two-fold. They wanted to share with their students an abundance of global literature that promotes global understanding, and to work in a collaborative relationship, supporting each other in the inquiry. They defined global understanding as "increasing our students' awareness and understanding of diverse cultures and global issues, . . . [developing their] empathy for people who are different from them and live in places across the globe, . . . [and enabling them to] critically read about their world" (Spokane/P - 2011-2012). They agreed with Freeman and Lehman (2001) on the role that children's literature can play in student's lives. They felt that "international children's literature can spark the imagination, nurture curiosity, and delight the heart and mind" (p. 12). This quote is significant because, while the teachers wanted students to critically read their world, their focus was more on delighting children with global stories.

They met their first goal of sharing an abundance of literature with their students, and extended the goal into sharing books with families through the Family Book Bags. The teachers themselves were also offered an abundance of books to use

in their classrooms. Marilyn G. Carpenter, the group leader, had an extensive collection of picture books. She knew, as a professor of literacy and children's literature, the value of browsing and of careful selection, so would bring in a crate of books for each teacher for each component of the framework. The titles the teachers used with their students were quality literature, some of which were globally focused. Out of the list of 48 titles used in the Family Book Bags, 20 had a global or multicultural author/illustrator or theme. The mixture of global and non-global titles supported the third component of the framework of considering multiple perspectives, though several of the teachers did not report the ways in which they highlighted diverse perspectives with students. However they did acknowledge that the selection of books made a difference in their students' thinking. They noticed "a more mature use of language on the part of the students when discussing the books" (Spokane/MGC/D - 2.10.12).

The greatest success in the teachers' minds was the interaction with the Family Story Backpacks. The books were carefully selected to allow children to connect to the themes, and describe the connections to their own family history. Each backpack contained around five titles and a journal, with an invitation to respond to one or more of the books. The families were thrilled with the interaction, and in fact, enjoyed it so much they asked if it could be repeated in the spring. This response was significant, because many educators are working to foster a stronger school-family connection as a way of supporting student learning. Though the group did not reference the studies around funds of knowledge, the article that gave them the idea and structure for the project came from CREATE, the early childhood

education project at the University of Arizona. CREATE is based on the theory that education is more successful when using a student's funds of knowledge and building on strong family-school connections. The acronym stands for Communities as Resources in Early Childhood Teacher Education (createarizona.org/).

The teachers experienced growth themselves, and acknowledged "we are more comfortable in sharing books about culture and global issues since this is the second grant for us. We feel that we are improving in fostering class discussions that look at both diversity and universality" (Spokane/MT/2011-2012).

On the online forum, Marilyn Carpenter posted that the group struggled to get beyond the celebrations and food (Spokane/MGC/Discussion 2.10.12). This was evident in the way the teachers shaped their classroom inquiries. For example, while focused on the second component of the framework (looking at multiple cultures), first-grade teachers Charlotte Strait and Meg Baker had the students select a country, create a paper doll with traditional dress, and do some basic research on the geography, language, food and flag, all fact-based information. For the family story bags, the group decided on the following categories which were also more information based than value- or belief-based: food, games/play, family structures, heritage, everyday life including hobbies, music (Spokane/MT). They also posted that the WOW communities-wide question of balancing notions of diversity and universality prompted them to think and discuss among themselves, but they did not post further insights except to say that the question pushed them to think. It would seem that concepts around critical literacy were somewhat new to the group, so additional support from the WOW moderator could have helped them

add a more critical bent to their work.

Several teachers wrote vignettes both years, and it is interesting to look at the transition in their thinking. Kindergarten teacher Lacey Grummons wrote the first year that the concept of culture refers to what we believe, do and enjoy. She constructed an inquiry around the concept of friendship and what each values (Spokane/LG/V - 2011). The second year she shifted from a concept to an emphasis on same and different. Her students enjoyed listening to each other's reflections in the Family Backpack journals and concluded that personal cultures and family stories are both the same and different from family to family (Spokane/LG/V - 2011-2012). She did not report a dialogue around values and beliefs, which would have gone beyond sharing connections and would have supported a more conceptual understanding of culture. The shift from conceptual understandings to a focus on the same-different dichotomy also occurred in Meg Baker's and Charlotte Streit's classes. During the pilot study students took an in-depth look at Japan, including:

how geography impacts culture. The fact that Japan is surrounded by the ocean, has volcanic mountains, a large population, and small stretches of land directly impacts the economic, social, and historical aspects of the culture. [They also considered] why seafood is a large part of the Japanese diet, not merely because they like fish, but because it is an easily accessible source of food (Spokane/MB & CS/V - 2011).

The second year the students studied Mexico, but the "why" was not reported as part of the discussion. Instead, the artifacts for their Mexico Museum included

Mayan masks, Aztec clay suns, and paper bag piñatas (Spokane/MB & CS/V - 2011-2012). The shifts in the three classes seem to indicate that the study group discussion around the international curriculum framework was more conceptual during the pilot study.

Melissa D. Carpenter reported incorporating critical literacy in her classroom inquiry. During the pilot, one of the questions her second-grade students explored was defining *normal*, especially in terms of gender and family structures. Following multiple classroom discussions, Carpenter concluded:

The word *normal* was now used to describe the norms for each individual . . . As we talked about our personal cultures, an understanding of culture developed based on one's values, actions, traditions, and stories. [This] helped open the door for conversations about people who may be different-looking but hold similar values and . . . how we can tell what they value based on their actions (Spokane/MDC/V - 2011).

This new insight was followed up with action when, in a whole class discussion, two boys affirmed each other and walked over and hugged. Carpenter concludes:

The exchange between the boys was critical because it represented how our class's social interactions were no longer guided by the perceived norms as seen on television. We had established an environment where students were able to say what they stood for and take action that reflected those values (Spokane/MDC/V - 2011).

During the second year, her students interacted with the books in the backpacks and wrote responses that potentially could have revealed what they valued as family.

For example, one student responded to *Dumpster Diver* (Wong, 2007): "My dad and I search thrift stores for treasures. My mom and I like to shop for junk too. I have many treasures we have found" (Spokane/MGC/V - 2011-2012). The family clearly saw recycling as a hobby but also as a valuable way to provide necessities and spend time together.

The Spokane students concluded the year with an appreciation for the diversity that exists in the world and how each person is unique. As Janelle Stolp and Lindsay Wing state:

We found that teaching for global understanding can be tricky for first graders. First, we needed to build the children's schema prior to reading books centered around global understandings . . . We believe that all the ways we shared books about personal and global cultures helped increase their background knowledge so they can take their places as global citizens (Spokane/JS & LW/V).

Going through the framework in the way the teachers did, positioned students for an understanding of the world that can be built on in subsequent years. Curiosity about the world is a first step, and they noticed the enthusiasm the students had for studying the various cultures (Spokane/FR/2011). The next step for them in intercultural understanding is learning how to interrogate texts and think about power issues.

Madeira Elementary, Ohio

The Madeira group in Ohio was composed of a group of second grade teachers and the specialists who also taught the students (library, art, technology,

music and PE). Their stated goal in the proposal was to "collaboratively learn how to instill global awareness within the children . . . through read alouds, meaningful discussions, opportunities to engage in related research, explorations of art and music." The educators wanted the students to "make discoveries about the lives of people around the globe" and they had hopes that the students "may even realize that the children of the world are more alike than different" (Madeira/P). In order to accomplish their goal the teachers planned to choose a book each month that featured a country, "identify concepts to highlight, and generate a list of ideas that enable children to explore those concepts" (Madeira/P). It is because of this systematic touristic approach to looking at the world that they have been placed in the cultural awareness cluster. However, the educators included in their plan the chance to reflect on both the children's increased understanding and their own. This last part of the goal became a key point in the group's transition from exploring the world through a book a month to inviting students to engage in dialogue in order to understand the global issues and values that surfaced in the books.

The Madeira members positioned themselves from the start as a reflective collaborative community (Madeira/FW/P). The second-grade teachers were in a small school that encouraged professional development and innovative thinking. Scripted curricula were non-existent because teachers were valued as professional thinkers and performers (Madeira/FW-KW/I). The teachers were open to go where the learning took them as long as it fit with the curricular guides. They saw themselves as fellow learners along with the students, allowing the students to guide the direction and the pace (Madeira/FW-KW/I). In terms of pedagogy they

were less focused on methodology or on expanding knowledge, valuing instead an inquiry style that allowed students to make meaningful connections with the stories (Madeira/FW/FR).

In the early fall they made a major shift in their thinking and methodology, from being focused on a product to engaging with the process. They realized that "one of the most important things is reading literature to the children and facilitating and fostering conversations about the text afterwards. The discussions with children are a powerful component in helping children acquire an appreciation for other cultures" (Madeira/FW/MR). They noted that that process takes time. "Repeated exposure to global awareness literature coupled with discussion and opportunities to make connections to the real world fosters the growth of a positive attitude towards all people of the world" (Madeira/FW/D 2-31-12). This shift in their focus was confirmed as a positive change at the NCTE convention as they listened to the 2011 pilot WOW community groups present. "Our focus needs to be less about the creation of a schedule of books to use on global awareness but upon promoting good conversation about books that are relevant for kids" (Madeira/FW/MR). They also realized that they needed to "invest in the small moments and reflect on it and not get ahead of ourselves. Lets appreciate all the learning that is going on" (Madeira/KW/I).

The teachers highlighted several other insights that prompted their thinking to change and shifted their focus. One was an article on the *Notable Books for a Global Society* award that highlighted the need to help children make connections that go beyond surface level 5F knowledge, instead thinking about "values and

beliefs that lie at the core of each culture" (Short, Evans, & Hildebrand, 2011).

Another was a set of questions I asked them to reflect on which they used as fodder for discussion in one of their study group meetings. A third insight was witnessing the power of dialogue in a classroom to help children and teachers together shape new understandings of the world.

One of the elements in this dissertation analysis is looking at cooperative and collaborative elements in the study groups. This cluster of study groups demonstrates the limitations of cooperative work (e.g. teachers pooling ideas for units) and the power of dialogue in a collaborative environment (teachers reflecting and thinking together). One of the key reasons why Madeira made the shifts they did without the aid of a textbook or a professor is that they positioned themselves from the beginning as collaborative and as a result experienced the power of dialogue for themselves as well as for their students.

All was not reflective. As they maneuvered their way toward intercultural insights there were moments of focusing on heroes (Madeira/FW/MR) and school customs that were different from their own experiences (Madeira/video blog). They kept returning to their central question: Are all children around the world the same? However they also dug at issues of accessibility when discussing Giles Laroche's (2011) picture book *If You Lived Here: Homes Around the World*, noting that house construction depends on accessibility of building materials and environmental factors such as water levels and the climate.

The children themselves initiated a service project, which delighted the teachers. They felt the development of empathy in these children was a direct result

of the global literature they had been reading. They believed that children applying new knowledge to a new situation and taking action was the end goal of what they were trying to do (Madeira/KW/I). Yet the teachers were careful to surround the project with dialogue because they did not want students to think that "just because someone is different and may not have what we have . . . does not mean they may be unhappy. Furthermore, just because something or someone is different may not mean that it is better or worse" (Madeira/FW/MR). They were careful to position diversity as a positive thing, not something to feel sorry about.

Teachers also changed in the way they viewed story as they witnessed the power of story to change perceptions.

When you just read the book it is just a book, but when you let children talk about the book, that is when the transformation starts. That is where some ownership takes place and children hold on to themes and concepts, especially with the teacher who is receptive to the students when they are reading it (Madeira/FW-KW/I).

They were careful to start where their students were interested, scaffolding the literature so the children could keep making connections. When asked about the books they selected, the teachers said they picked books that they knew would foster discussions and that were more focused on themes than on cultural content (Madeira/FW-KW/I). They also wanted the children to "make personal connections to the people and themes of the literature, make connections among books shared, and also make connections to their world" (Madeira/FW/MR). The books were on display once they were shared with the class so they could be reread and easily

referred to. "Now we allow our students to guide the timing of our reading and discussion that follows to ensure that our literature is relevant and meaningful" (Madeira/FW/MR). They experienced richer discussions with repeated readings of the same book (Madeira/FW/D 5-2-12)

Garden Hills Elementary, Illinois

The Garden Hills study group in Illinois was based out of a single school, which had just been named the magnet school for the district's IB-PYP curriculum. The teachers were working hard at adopting the PYP curriculum, which included more of a global focus.

Garden Hills is included in this cluster because of the professional reading they proposed for their inquiry. The year before the grant was awarded, the principal had given every teacher at Garden Hills a copy of Homa Sabet Tavangar's book *Growing Up Global: Raising Children to Be At Home in the World* (2009). The teachers had not had a chance to read the book and the WOW inquiry seemed like an ideal opportunity to use the book in conjunction with a grant using global literature. Tavangar's book is based on the premise that giving children positive global experiences promotes happy informed global citizens. Her book covers an exploration of greetings, games, foods, faiths, languages and other items in a way that aligns more with the 5 F model or Bank's (2012) contribution model of curricular reform. She does encourage readers to explore beliefs and global issues and become involved with the UN Millennium Development Goals (<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>). The teachers coordinated the IB-PYP learner trait of the month with the action goals from Tavangar's chapters (Garden

Hills/MB/I). The teachers adopted two key goals:

(1) to increase the global awareness of our school community while working to become fully accredited by the PYP-IBA and (2) to continue to work to decrease the ethnic achievement gap at our school by increasing our use of culturally relevant literacy instruction using authentic materials (Garden Hills/P).

One of the inherent challenges in the second goal is finding authentic materials and learning how to engage with the cultures in the texts. In this they were helped by their working relationship with Karla Möller, an associate professor in curriculum and instruction at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Möller 's professional focus is on multicultural education and she has built up an extensive collection of multicultural and global children's books. It is through the interaction with Möller, the additional professional reading she added to the agenda, and discussion in the study group that the members moved from an initial focus on cultural awareness to looking at texts critically with an eye on social issues.

Möller added James Banks' four models of multicultural curricular reform (Banks, 2012) into the discussion. She knew that she wanted the teachers to experience the transformative power of children's literature in engaging social issues instead of just adding global content. However, the teachers at Garden Hills were like many others across the United States, stretched to the limit, so they did not have the energy to do much more than add to the curriculum rather than overhaul it. However, they were committed to doing what was necessary to meet their goal of wanting to "extend their abilities to work in equitable and just ways . .

.[while] increasing the use of culturally relevant literacy instruction using authentic materials" in order to address achievement gaps that existed in the school (Garden Hills/KM/V). "Some of the participants were a bit stressed by the amount of time and knowledge needed, but they are all working hard to build their libraries and their knowledge base" (Garden Hills/KM/MR). Möller 's support and guidance helped the teachers think deeply about the issues in the books.

The teachers learned about unfamiliar customs with their discussion around religious diversity and their conversation with a Muslim guest from Indonesia. When considering food the teachers pushed to think of activities "that would encourage students to both experience food and food rituals but also get them to consider the how's and why's of cultural food differences related to aspects of climate, culture, food availability" (Garden Hills/KM/MR). They also discussed how food has an organizing impact on cultures. They engaged with multiple aspects of an issue. Along with reading *Rickshaw Girl* (Perkins, 2007) and how the female character goes against gender traditions and uses funds of knowledge to reverse the family's economic crisis, they read *Nasreen's Secret School* (Winter, 2009), a story about girls trying to become educated in countries where it is not allowed.

They interacted with representation, reading books that profiled different people groups in Kenya, not just the Masai. They also chose books that represented the diversity in their own school population:

Books featuring both Asian countries and Asian/Asian American heritages, Mexican and Mexican American heritages as well as other Latino cultures, and African countries and African/African American heritages were used

extensively to allow students to see images of children who both looked like them and had a connected heritage as well as to see children who were joyously different from them (Garden Hills/KM/FR).

They read about activists who worked to solve an issue in a way that would impact future generations. The year started out with classrooms in the school reading and responding through an activity to *Each Kindness* (Woodson) to set the stage for a community that focuses on being kind and open to difference. They also added a picture book *Kindness is Cooler, Mrs. Ruler* (Cuyler, 2007) to "set the stage for an exploration of what it means to 'give back' to one's family, community, nation, and world over the course of the school year" (Garden Hills/KM/V). Over the year the teachers and students read about people who made a difference, often under harsh circumstances. Among others they studied the work of Wangari Maathai (Kenya), William Kamkwamba (Malawi), and Salva Dut (South Sudan). The focus was on people who saw a need and addressed it in a way that "follows this basic principle: the ethical and moral way to create lasting change is to respect and empower people's capacity to transform their own lives" (<http://www.waterforsouthsudan.org/mission/>).

Multilingualism was also a strong focus in the books, putting value on linguistic diversity. The school has three strands, bilingual, gifted and talented, and general education. Because of the multilingual aspect of their curriculum and their student body, they used "dual language, paired translated books, and books with foreign language words embedded" (Garden Hills/KM/FR).

The study group routine was to discuss a chapter in Tavangar, additional

professional reading supplied by Möller, then shift the focus to the many books that she had brought to share with the group around the Tavangar theme and the PYP monthly learner profile (Caring, Thinker, Risk-Taker, Knowledgeable, Inquirer, Open-Minded, Reflective, Balanced, Communicator, Principled). The books that Möller brought in were the catalysts that precipitated change in the way the teachers incorporated global literature in their classrooms. After engaging in extensive discussions of world issues presented in the books and informed by the international experiences of some of the group members and special guests like an Indonesian Muslim, the teachers were empowered to engage in similar discussions with their students.

The impact on the study group was profound. Mary Borgeson stated that it "has changed the way the teachers teach. It opened our eyes to the importance of multicultural perspectives" (Garden Hills/MB/I). She went on to describe the experience of reading and discussing *A Long Walk to Water* (Park, 2010) with several classes. "I taught for 28 years and this was one of the most powerful teaching moments of my life."

Eastern Oregon/Rinker & Dunlap

The Eastern Oregon group was intentionally set up as a way to "cross-pollinate" between two schools and share perspectives from two different populations alongside world perspectives gleaned through global literature (Eastern Oregon/CL/I). However, the distance between the schools made it challenging for the group to function as they had planned. Two of the teachers, Kate Dunlap and Missy Rinker, and Carol Laurentian, a professor at Eastern Oregon

University, were located in LaGrande, whereas Amanda Villagomez was in a bilingual school about two hours away. In spite of the limitations on their professional collaboration, the three classroom teachers involved were able to foster global explorations within each of their contexts.

The ability to shape and use global books according to each teacher's philosophy of education and curricular needs was an important part of agreeing to work with the WOW community (Eastern Oregon/AV/I). The result was that the two locations shaped their project with two different cultural models. Dunlap and Rinker initially were more focused on cultural awareness whereas Villagomez' cultural model from the outset was oriented toward social justice. Because of this difference, the Eastern Oregon group will be presented in both clusters.

Missy Rinker used her part of the grant to purchase texts on a variety of world cultures, exploring them during the *Daily 5* interactions with literature, and culminating with a multicultural food fest. Kate Dunlap focused her inquiry around the immigrant populations that helped in American and Canadian westward expansion, particularly the Chinese in the building of the transcontinental railroads. Amanda Villagomez taught in a bilingual Spanish-English school and wanted to engage her eighth-grade students in book clubs using global literature. Each teacher demonstrated in their work how flexible global literature can be, fitting into different learning environments and curricular needs.

Both schools were in high poverty areas, so the probability of students traveling and experiencing other cultures was minimal. The LaGrande teachers illustrated how isolated their students were when they related a story of a field trip

that involved crossing the Columbia River. Students had never been across a big bridge and wanted to know if the Columbia was the ocean (Eastern Oregon/FR). This geographic isolation prompted the educators' felt need to expand the world for the students beyond the local community.

The stated goal of the group was for students to develop an appreciation for the variety of cultures from many areas around the world while seeking the common human elements that bind people all together. For Rinker the goal was to lessen the 'weird!' factor and introduce students to cultures they had never encountered (Eastern Oregon/MR/I). Dunlap wanted

to share with my students the human aspect of history—struggles, triumphs, etc.—as well as beginning a conversation about the variety of immigrant traditions, celebrations, and cuisine that contribute to our modern society . . . while reading each book, we discussed the differences in culture and the struggles of each character (Eastern Oregon/KD/D 2.12.13).

In Rinker's classroom the focus seemed to be on 5F elements like food and traditions; however, these elements actually came at the end of the year as a conclusion to the students' *Daily 5* interaction around global books. Rinker carefully chose books with rich vocabulary and interacted with students around concepts, and characters or events the students could connect with. She wanted them to walk away from the book with something that they could use in their own lives.

Discussion had a big role in her classroom as a way to help each student conclude the year realizing that there are multiple perspectives that children bring to books, and that each person needs to be listened to attentively. So while her approach may

look as if it is focused on facts, food and maps, the literature she chose and the discussion around the books helped the children engage with other cultural ways of thinking, valuing and behaving. When discussing the end-of-the-year food fest, Rinker explained that 80% of her students are on free or reduced lunch, so their experience with food is limited. Most had never tasted a kiwi. Food had been featured in a lot of the stories they had read, so ending the year with a taste of foods from all the different countries they had read about was a fitting conclusion to their global exploration (Eastern Oregon/MR/I).

The discussion in Dunlap's class also included cultural traditions from the different minority groups who helped build the transcontinental railroad; however, the study led to rich discussions on tolerance. Dunlap noted that *Coolies* (Yin, 2001) highlighted the struggles of Chinese laborers working on the transcontinental railroad, while [the sequel] *Brothers* (Yin, 2006) highlighted the discrimination felt by minority cultures in a society. This discussion of discrimination led to students searching out books that supported the ideas of tolerance and understanding. As a class, we decided to read one of the books, *Whoever You Are* by Mem Fox (1997). I was impressed by how compassionate[ly] students behaved when speaking about the struggles of people all over the world (Eastern Oregon/KD/D 4.15.13).

In the final study group meeting Dunlap related, "They made so many connections. It was really about relationships. Every time we read one of the books, they were always a little kinder. The effect was to make the fabric of the world better for them" (Eastern Oregon/FR).

A collection of titles from the annual *Notable Books for a Global Society* book lists became an important resource for the Eastern Oregon group (Eastern Oregon/CL/I). These book lists include both fiction and non-fiction, run the gamut of genres and are oriented toward global issues. The chance to explore the books helped the teachers select titles that fostered discussion beyond a 5F approach (Eastern Oregon/MR).

When wrapping up the work at the final study group meeting, the teachers reaffirmed the importance of this work. "They are inspired to do more next year even without a grant—to do global literature more often, to put it more in the forefront and to dig deeper. As they said, 'Our students will never see this if we don't give it to them' " (Eastern Oregon/FR). For Carol Lauritzen the reward for the effort of getting teachers together was "the joy I could see on their faces when they talked about how their kids responded, and that the world had opened up a bit for them" (Eastern Oregon/CL/I). After the food fest Rinker's students concluded, "I'm not scared of that anymore. I'd like to know more. Those people aren't so weird" (Eastern Oregon/CL/I), demonstrating that concrete experiences can reduce cultural dissonance and prepare students for further exploration.

Shaker Heights Middle School, Ohio

The teachers at Shaker Heights Middle School in Ohio were working on an application for IB designation so were naturally interested in a project that would go across the curriculum and bring in multicultural perspectives. They wanted to "increase motivation to learn by incorporating [students' demonstrated] interest in Google maps with their reading of global literature, and, at the same time, improve

knowledge of geography and the social studies" (Shaker Heights/P). They planned on combining that media interest with the required seventh-grade study in ancient or medieval civilizations by having the students create a Google Lit Trip that would then be submitted for uploading on the Lit Trip site (googlelitrrips.com). This group was placed in the cultural awareness cluster because of the typical content covered in a Google Lit Trip, which uses Google Earth and photographs to help students connect to a picture book or novel. They can look at what the place physically looks like and learn some of the local history. Interacting with the questions linked to the book can give in-depth understanding of the book; however, the questions vary in quality and do not necessarily encourage critical thinking.

The teachers' goals for the project spanned both skill development and increased understanding. They wanted to "increase students' appreciation of global literature as a means of understanding themselves as world citizens." They also wanted students to learn to improve their communication skills, "broaden [their] abilities to create essential questions for inquiry; collect information; analyze primary and secondary sources; and synthesize their study through critical thinking, interpretation, and application" (Shaker Heights/P).

The teachers decided to focus on the Silk Road as part of the state-required study in medieval history. They built a cross-curricular unit that studied aspects of the cultures encountered while traveling the historic road. Based on the proposal, the unit looked like one that would fall into the 5F category, with an emphasis on facts and folktales, and using Cherry Gilchrist's (1999) book *Stories from the Silk Road* as a touchstone text. There was no mention of having students think about

global issues. However, what appeared to be a more fact-based historical study morphed into an exploration that looked at values embedded in the cultures encountered on the Silk Road.

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 one of the most important routes ever. 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 (Shaker Heights/SC/V).

Part of the reason the study ended up shifting out of cultural awareness is that the group was led by Sue Corbin, a literacy specialist with a PhD in curriculum and instruction, a history of teaching at the university level, and a personal history dealing with social justice. Corbin was a student at Kent State and on the Commons when the shootings occurred in 1970 (<http://speccoll.library.kent.edu/4may70/oralhistory/misheff.html>). She was also dismissed from a job for a faith conversion (<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/believers-who-stray-made-to-pay/110127.article>). Her personal experience made her think critically about the world, and she passed this on to the Shaker Heights members. She added professional reading to their study group discussions and challenged them to think about issues, not just facts.

The Silk Road unit included creating a room-sized historical and cultural timeline along with a webquest. Students also went on a historical artifact walk,

listened to music, probed real silk worms, created mosaics, wrote confessionals or diary entries, and studied the folk tales from the countries along the route. However the engagements were designed to help students dig past surface-level information. In science the students countered the prevailing media images of Muslims as terrorists by looking at what 13th and 14th century Islamic scientists contributed to science and math and how the discoveries were made in order to facilitate prayer. In math they

determined distances of cities using the Pythagorean theorem, which was known by the Babylonians, Indians, and Chinese. First, 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 (Shaker Heights/SC/V).

They also looked at the Islamic sense of order and balance, visually displayed through their symmetrical tiles.

One of the tensions in using literature to facilitate cross-cultural studies is whether or not to use folk tales. A sole focus on folk literature can often give the picture that the culture being explored is part of the past and not part of our contemporary world. However, Corbin agrees with Jane Yolán in her essay "Touch Magic" when she says that "Folklore is, in part, the history of humankind . . . it is the perfect guidebook to the human psyche; it leads us to the understanding of the deepest longings and most daring visions of humankind" (Yolan, 2000, p. 44).

Another reason the teachers decided to use folk literature was that, as a result of the study for this grant, they discovered that a lot of the books about the Silk Road were

written by Western authors and from a Western perspective. Folktales seemed like the most authentic literature that would give students a window into the historic cultures along the route (Shaker Heights/SC/V). A third reason the folktales worked well in this unit was the shorter length of the stories. Because a wide range of readers used the Silk Road study, the text length gave struggling readers a chance to become proficient at reading and understanding the content. They did this by writing higher-order-thinking questions around the folk literature, which later positioned them as the folktale experts.

The impact on the teachers' pedagogy was big. They previously had not had the opportunity to work collaboratively (Shaker Heights/SC/I). Jennifer Weisbarth and Paul Repasy taught in math and science and had never had a chance to teach in a unit theme with other content areas. Teaching the Silk Road allowed them to be creative, something that their concrete subject matter does not always encourage. Teachers also realized the value of picture books in helping both strong and struggling readers engage with content. John Koppitch looked at the literature he had taught in the past in Language Arts and since has incorporated more multicultural titles into his units.

This group was included in the cultural awareness cluster because of the focus on historical and cultural facts about the Silk Road. However, the discussions among the teachers, which led them to discard a lot of the Westernized historical narratives in favor of the cultural and value-laden folktales, made them move in the direction of critical literacy. This group's work displayed what can happen when teachers themselves have engaged in discussions that dig down to cultural values,

and then design learning that allows the students to do the same. What on the surface seemed to be strictly fact-based was in fact a rich study of Chinese and Islamic culture and values.

An extra bonus was the book discovered while hunting for material for the Silk Road unit. Each year the whole school reads a book together (One Book One Shaker) and in 2012-2013 everyone read *Inside Out and Back Again* (Lai, 2011), which gave teachers and students a rich look at transculturalism from the perspective of a real person writing from personal experience (Shaker Heights/SC/FR).

Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School, Michigan

MLK Middle School in Michigan was a group of sixth-grade teachers and the professor who had been working with them over the course of three years on developing improved content literacy practices. The teachers wanted to "add depth to the 6th graders' understandings of the cultures of Mexico and the countries in Central and South America, present and future" (MLK/P). They planned on introducing global literature in the geography class, but then using the books in other content area classes because one of the goals of the group was developing connections across disciplines.

An important element in developing intercultural understanding is depth of inquiry. However, country inquiries are often focused on 5F facts, so the desire to promote in-depth inquiry was a step in the right direction. Their strategy was to "choose a few countries from each continent so that we can have a concentration of books in order for the student inquiries to have the needed depth to further the

students knowledge and understandings" (MLK/P). The teachers and students were to use the books to engage in "cultural inquiries . . . researching the lives of the people/characters/settings included in the books" (MLK/P).

Through a text-set inquiry into Mexico, Caribbean, South and Central American countries, the students learned about the history, government, culture, natural resources, and economies of their chosen country. Students "wandered and wondered" through the trade books in the text set, asked questions, found answers and were pushed to ask new questions. They synthesized their new understandings across their geography, math, science and language arts classes by preparing a travel brochure inviting people to visit their country. They also looked at folk literature and discussed issues that were particular to their chosen country.

Literacy improvement was the particular pedagogical focus for the MLK group because they were dealing with learners in sixth grade who needed support in their ability to read more complex text. Due to the increasing load in the district on each teacher, the group members were limited in available time to dialogue among themselves. The focus of their conversation was therefore much more on actual lesson plans than on their own developing intercultural understanding. However, what they did accomplish in their classrooms earned them and their students a standing ovation when four of the middleschoolers presented the project to the school board and the community.

The teachers were all enthusiastic about this kind of text-set-based inquiry. In the process of discussing student work together, they gained some new pedagogical understandings, particularly regarding connecting with texts and

connecting across content areas. They noted that the student inquiry across the content areas was greatly facilitated by asking each student to keep all the materials for the unit in a single notebook. Cross-curricular connections were also enabled by the study group discussions; teachers knew what the others were doing in their classrooms and could refer to what students were learning elsewhere. As a result the students

demonstrated more interest in discussing the content they were learning . . . 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 (MLK/AH/V).

In the process of preparing for the unit and looking at the text sets that had been used in the past, group members noticed which books were dog-eared and therefore heavily used. The trade books and not the textbooks were the ones that students gravitated toward, so the group used the grant funds to update the existing text sets and create new ones specific to the countries the sixth graders were studying. They noticed the students' reading stamina improved since they 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" (MLK/AH/V). Teachers also noticed "redundancy . . . through the use of the text set materials can be a powerful learning tool both in terms of students connections with the subject matter and in terms of their literacy development" (MLK/MR).

Harlee Middle School, Florida

Harlee Middle School teachers in Florida wanted to create a cross-curricular unit for their 6th grade students, some of whom participate in the AVID (Advance Via Individual Determination) college-readiness program. This group proposed reading a Japanese novel, helping the students become aware of Japan and its culture. The proposal discussed collecting and analyzing data rather than discussing the values that would surface in the book, which is why Harlee is part of this cluster. However, inquiry questions were included that had the potential to go beyond facts and simple awareness. Discussions were planned around the impact of the culture and society on individuals, people who have made a difference, and environmental issues such as the availability of resources. Also, the book they proposed reading is one that is challenging to think about in terms of the relationships between the daughter, the father and the step-mother.

The plan was to read two global novels starting with one situated in Japan, a contemporary *noir* thriller, *Shizuko's Daughter* (Mori, 1993). Students would then look at concepts of distance in math, geographical mapping of urbanization and populations in social studies, and the cause and effect of the 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami in science. The culminating project would be to design an energy-efficient home in Japan. A second global novel would be read and studied across the content areas, again graphing cause and effect of events in the novel, and looking at the physical makeup of the country and a natural disaster that took place in history. The focus this time would be on how the actions of a character could make a difference in the country and include research on an actual person who

historically did make a difference. The culminating activity would be to create a children's picture book that "tells a story about the country from the novel they read and encompasses what they learned in math, science, social studies" (Harllee/P). Because the study was cross-curricular, one of the goals of the group members was to design an assessment activity that could be used to assess the learning across all four content areas. This was the role of the house design and the children's book.

The goals of the group were both intercultural and pedagogical in nature; however, the reported focus of their study group discussion was more on the pedagogy of working on a cross-curricular unit spanning language arts, math, science and social studies. All four teachers had the same group of AVID students, so this was a natural reason to try working together in a unit around *Shizuko's Daughter* (Mori, 1993). Many of the group's new understandings focused around literacy practices in other content areas and how well students make connections across disciplines when given the opportunity. Intercultural understanding was also a focus but mainly in Christiana Succar's language arts class (Harllee/CS/I) and through the lens of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995).

Succar decided after a ten-year career as a social worker in the Public Defender's office that she preferred to work with people before they had a criminal history. This background gave her an intuitive sense of needing to connect learning with the lives of her students if she had any hope of having an impact on them. When she walked into her first classroom and saw the traditional books on the shelves, she recognized that her students needed to read those books in order to succeed in college, but they also needed bridge books in the form of contemporary

novels that would give them a way to connect with the characters in the traditional literature. So she wrote a successful grant proposal and spent the year with her students reading 4 traditional novels paired with 4 contemporary novels, practicing what she recognized later was culturally relevant pedagogy (Harllee/CS/I) as described by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995).

In her class at Harllee, Succar was able to help her students make similar bridges between their cultures and the Japanese culture of *Shizuko's Daughter* (Mori, 1993). The school population is diverse with African American, Hispanic, Asian and Anglo students, but she pointed out that "most pupils do not inquire about other cultures and also tend to stereotype certain cultures" (Harllee/CS/V). The discussions around *Shizuko's Daughter* (Mori, 1993) engaged with values around parent-child relationships, rice preparation, tea-drinking, incense usage, expressions of love and other cultural rituals, allowing students to examine their own cultural practices compared to those of the novel.

Succar explains that she

chose this novel because the main character was a similar age to my students, I had some Asian students in my classes and felt the rest of the students needed some exposure to the Asian culture and recognize that despite cultural differences the character and my students have similar experiences (Harllee/CS/PC 1.31.14).

Students realized that they shared with classmates similar experiences of love, honoring the dead, or cooking rice. While the specifics were different, the overall experience was universal. The novel allowed for in-depth discussions into themes,

symbolism and characterization, which encouraged many students to open up who otherwise were generally embarrassed or uninterested.

Chinle Junior High, Arizona

Chinle Junior High is located on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. Because students have limited ability to travel outside of the surrounding communities, the study group members wanted to "broaden . . . the scope of our students' exposure to cultures beyond their own" (Chinle/P). They did this through focusing on literacy, which was, they felt, "by its very nature, a move toward global consciousness." But they also felt that "embracing one's own culture is an important foundation" (Chinle/P). The school helped shape that foundation by offering Navajo Culture and Navajo language classes. In addition to classroom engagements around books, the literacy teachers supported developing literacy skills in their students and families by offering a monthly Family Reading Night. One of the more popular literacy nights in 2011-2012 was a "global focused bazaar. Teachers who had lived or worked in various countries set up booths to read books and share cultural artifacts and food" (Chinle/P). The group planned to use the idea again as the finale to their grant-funded and globally-focused 2012-2013 year.

As the group leader Mary Ann Conrad describes, Chinle was a D school trying to get to a C standing. As a result the curriculum was very prescribed and teacher evaluation was frequent. This made it challenging to find the time and space to do something extra like developing global awareness. The group members were overloaded with work, so they hoped to add a global focus to what they were already doing, infusing global books into existing units or reading programs such as

Accelerated Reader. Because the school was on a Navajo reservation, the curriculum and any programs were carefully scrutinized and needed to be approved by the school board, so infusing into existing units rather than creating new units made sense.

The teachers wanted to purchase globes and classroom sets of UNICEF's *Children Just Like Me* (Kindersley, 1995). The content of this book is a series of 36 pictorial vignettes about children from all over the world. Anabel and Barnabas Kindersley spent two years traveling to over 140 countries to collect the information and photographs for the book. They selected children from a range of socio-economic means, race and social status, at times showing the diversity within a country, though most times with only a single representation from a country. While the book does touch on behaviors that the children and their families engage in (e.g. meet with extended family on a daily basis, honor the dead), it does not dig below the surface to the values that the family holds. For this reason the proposed goal of the Chinle group was more about cultural awareness than critically thinking about texts.

The teachers engaged in a range of activities to support their students' developing awareness. Locating countries was an important first step, so grant funds were used to purchase updated political globes and "every child they read about sent them to the political globes" (Chinle/MC/V). The main text they used was the UNICEF title; however, students also read and responded to books like Uri Shulevitz' (2008) *How I Learned Geography*. In order to help her special-education students have access to and interact with the material in *Children Just Like Me*

(Kindersley, 1995), Conrad developed cloze exercises for many of the pages, inviting students to record features about the lives of children around the world and compare them to their own lifestyles. Students gathered their pages about eight children into a self-made book and included a double-paged self-portrayal.

One activity that both the teachers and families participated in was the monthly Family Literacy Night. The April program was a Read Around the World night complete with a global feast and passports to be stamped to encourage participants to visit all the booths and taste the various foods. A popular booth was Conrad's from Paraguay. She served maté in the genuine container that looks like a bong, which, she adds, is a sure-fire draw for middle school students (Chinle/MC/I).

Though the project was more information-based, the teachers did want "to help our students read deeper and to incorporate more critical thinking into their reading and writing. Embracing world literature involves thinking skills and exposure to new ideas and perspectives" (Chinle/MC/FR). One way they introduced social issues was to look at the United Nations

and its concerns for children around the world. They wrote about the rights of children and about issues—water and food resources, education, cultural belonging, and the need for peace and safety. They learned about food customs, clothing, possessions, values, and religious and family structures around the globe (Chinle/MC/FR).

Teachers noticed the students' genuine interest and engagement when interacting with global books. The library saw increased circulation on their internationally focused magazine *FACES* from Carus Publishing (Chinle/MC/MR).

Teachers felt optimistic about the project as

students and teachers Googled together for more information on Cuba, Celia [Cruz] and salsa music after reading Brown's book [*My Name is Celia: The Life of Celia Cruz = Me llamo Celia: la vida de Celia Cruz*, Brown, 2004] . . . Then there were the globes. As students gained knowledge of continent and country, there was less spinning and more focused search for countries (Chinle/MC/FR).

One of the concepts the students struggled with was the notion of citizenship. They were citizens of the Navajo Nation, but also citizens of Arizona, the United States, North America and the world (Chinle/MC/MR).

At the Read Around the World night, member and author Nancy Bo Flood introduced her hot-off-the-press book *Cowboy Up! Ride the Navajo Rodeo* (2013). "It seemed right after 'traveling' so far, to come home and find our places, our homes, our people and to celebrate them in the fresh way one always does after having been away" (Chinle/MC/V).

Lithia Springs High School, Georgia

The LSHS English Lions were a group of English teachers located in an under-performing high school in Atlanta, GA. The school was in the second year of a Federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) and thus had many test and record-keeping requirements the teachers had to follow. In spite of the time-consuming records they had to maintain, the teachers felt that their effort in adding global literature into their classes would help their students gain a needed window into the greater world. The proposal did not address the need to look critically at text, which

is why the group is in the cultural awareness cluster. However the issues the teachers discussed with students indicated they did push their students to think critically about the world through global literature.

The high multicultural and English Language Learner (ELL) school population motivated the writing of the proposal (LSHS English Lions/RC/V). The teachers felt

the need for literature and writing that addresses all students. Global literature becomes a vital avenue for student differentiation and engagement. At the same time, all students need sensitivity and engagement with other cultures and the literature of those cultures (LSHS English Lions/P).

They were concerned about the learning needs of a student body that needed to see itself in literature. The teachers wanted the students to increase their awareness and understanding of people from other parts of the world because they were encountering the world in their school hallways. As Caitlin Hanzlick explained

As a person who has traveled extensively, and given the reality of today's global economy, I believe very strongly in the importance of exposing students to the diversity of the world and teaching them to appreciate rather than fear that diversity. They harbor so many false impressions and misconceptions about simple things, especially in regard to the Arab world, that if perpetuated could have severely negative consequences on our future (LSHS English Lions/CH/V).

The teaching team worked "to integrate global literature into the regular curricula and pacing guides of each of the literature classes including AP language

and AP literature" (LSHS English Lions/P). Rather than adopting a simple additive approach, the teachers restructured the literature courses, melding the old 10th grade American Literature/Composition into World Literature/Composition. The staff was also developing a new Multicultural Literature/Composition course as well as continuing to teach 12th grade British Literature/Composition. During the study group discussions, the teachers worked to maintain the global focus at the forefront of the curriculum. Their study group meetings included discussions about improvements in literacy, use of global literature, strategies in multiculturalism, concerns with multiliteracies, resources and assessments.

The teachers had decided to focus heavily on reading that year, and knew how critical it was that their students reflect on what they read through journaling and writing assignments. Along with the literacy and global focus, the teachers also worked to enhance their use of technology to help the students make real-world connections between the setting and the time of the texts and their contemporary world. They used a range of websites, personal travel photos and especially YouTube, which furnished videos of teens all over the world, giving them a way to see similarities and differences.

The discussions within the classrooms were rich with reflection and dialogue, tying both ancient and contemporary global texts together with contemporary events that students were familiar with. Texts by Russian Ayn Rand lead into discussions of the rise and fall of communism in Soviet block countries and current communist countries such as North Korea. Teachers then tied the discussion into issues of identity, freedom, and personal choice (LSHS English Lions/PF/V).

Night by Elie Wiesel (2006) prompted students spontaneously to bring in contemporary instances of genocide (LSHS English Lions/SM/V). Teachers also led students in engaging with issues closer to home. Pairing Thoreau with Martin Luther King Jr. and Occupy Wall Street materials led students into looking at civil disobedience across a range of decades (LSHS English Lions/WM/V).

Teachers also capitalized on teens' natural interests. Robin Farmer explains, "We read *Federigo's Falcon* [Giovanni Boccaccio] of Italian origin during our medieval studies. The themes of chivalry and courtly love are still relevant in today's modern society, particularly in the realm of dating which is of utmost interest to teenagers" (LSHS English Lions/RF/V). Students also looked at

Native American creation stories and identified their own beliefs about creation . . . We extended this conversation to include the importance of these beliefs to self-definition. Students worked in pairs to create their own stories that specifically reflected cultural viewpoints (LSHS English Lions/WM/V).

While the year was busy and teachers would say their style was hampered by the SIG requirements, overall the teachers believe "that our new emphases of reading and writing and talking about the literature helped students in attaining increases in their test scores" (LSHS English Lions/RC/FR). Not only did students meet federal improvement goals, but they surpassed them two times over. "Our students did reach new levels of global awareness as evidenced by their journals, writing, and discussions. They also increased their tolerance of one another and their willingness to meet new people within the school" (LSHS English Lions/RC/V).

Saturday Book Group, Missouri

The Saturday Book Group in Missouri had a long history of supporting teachers in making informed choices about books. Members were passionate about criteria and the selection process. The group was originally created to write the *Language Arts* column "Talking About Books." After the column ceased, the group kept meeting once a month to look at new books, write reviews and disseminate the information at annual TAWL meetings (Teachers Applying Whole Language). They were also concerned about the availability of books, and gave over 700 books to schools that had been destroyed in the 2011 Joplin, Missouri tornado. These two interests, collection development and making books available, guided their project.

Columbia, Missouri schools have over 40 home languages represented in the school population. Group members were aware of the high proportion of ELL students in some of their target schools through the working relationships they had with ELL teachers. They were also concerned about the need children have to see themselves in print. The Saturday Book Group members wanted to choose several of those languages and cultures, develop text sets around the countries where the languages were spoken, and offer the text sets to teachers both as a way for children from those countries to see themselves in print and to help teachers discover more about the cultures from which their students come. The group thought that because teachers may have many home languages represented in their classroom, they did not have time to become experts in each culture. Having some of the material at their fingertips would be a tremendous support.

This desire to create awareness and affirm students from other cultures was

the primary focus of the group, which is why they were placed in the cultural awareness cluster. While this group's text sets could lead to understanding values that would facilitate culturally responsive pedagogy on the part of the classroom teachers using the materials, that was not the focus of the WOW members' activities. The group was more involved with the collection and creation of the tool rather than the use of the tool. They wanted to "purchase books or find articles for the classroom teachers that might help them better understand the cultures of the students with whom they work" (Saturday Book Group/P). They did not try to engage in critical literacy and think about social justice. However some of the interactions in the classrooms around the books led the students to engage with the power of a military government, the asset of being multilingual, life as a refugee, and notions of compassion and unity in adversity.

The intuitive sense the group members had about the importance of the books to ELL students was affirmed during the year. Carol Gilles related:

We were touched when one little boy from Myanmar, seeing the books in the hands of his teacher said, "Wow! Books—MY country??" The light in his eyes and the enthusiasm with which he grabbed the bag helped us realize that this small project was important in the lives of newcomers. But, we also found that the project was important to the children who had been born here. They were able to better understand their classmate's previous lives and relate to them in ways that they never were able to do before (Saturday Book Group/GC/FR).

The group created five text sets focused on five countries that then were used

in the schools by ESL teachers and regular classroom teachers. The countries were selected based on the number of immigrants from those countries in the targeted schools: Myanmar, Russia, Cuba, Somalia, and Pacific Islands/Truk Islands.

The text sets were pedagogically well thought out, giving teachers a range of genres and formats (fiction, non-fiction, picture books, chapter books) that would invite an exploration of a country (Saturday Book Group/MR). The teacher materials accompanying the books included activities and cross-curricular connections aligned with Common Core State Standards (Saturday Book Group/CG/D 3.17.12). Each text set included a copy of Kosteck-Shaw's (2011) book *Same, Same, but Different* to be used to introduce the exploration of the country. Many children latched on to notions of diversity and universality, chorusing the title throughout the exploration as they encountered other things that were both the same and different.

The interactions that took place around the books demonstrated developing intercultural understanding on the part of the K-5 students. While the studies began with noticing differences (dress, houses, flora and fauna, alphabet), it was the presence of a child from another country that prompted discussions around concepts instead of information-based material. In one class that was focusing on Cuba, students realized that a classmate could help them with the pronunciation of the words written in Spanish, positioning the ELL student as an expert and his bilingual abilities as an asset (Saturday Book Group/MM/V). In another classroom, when one of the books mentioned a war between Somalia and Russia, students wondered if their classmates from those countries would need to be at war, thus

wrestling with how world politics impacts students in a U.S. classroom (Saturday Book Group/TG/V). The discussions around concepts like compassion and unity in the face of adversity helped students move away from an information-oriented engagement to creating empathy for characters in a story and their ELL classmates.

The study group members themselves appreciated the year of focusing on international books. Through the process they had the chance to think about the old favorites they had not realized were global books (Saturday Book Group/CG/D 10.29.11). Gilles also noted the tension the group felt around representation. "We were sensitive about what kinds of books we would choose. We didn't want to ignore conflict and wars in the countries, nor did we want the representation of the countries to only be about war" (Saturday Book Group/CG/V). Members were conscious of the image that various media project and wanted to balance that with the rich culture of the country. The sensitivity to violence was needed not only in book selection but also in book use. Gennie Pfannensteil reported that one of her young students did not want to engage with the books from her home country because she had just heard that a cousin in Somalia had been murdered during the night by a band of

bad people . . . I reassured her that I would honor her grieving and wait to talk about Somalia with the whole class. She gave the books back to me so they could be used later. This reminded me that we are not just looking at books and learning about various cultures, but learning about people's lives (Saturday Book Group/GP/V).

Orono, Maine

The Orono group was focused on stretching student horizons but also on children's literature as a genre. Members spanned several school levels (elementary, high school and university). Among the group of five, two were librarians and one was a teacher educator who taught children's literature, so it is understandable that the group chose to think about collection development as part of their proposed inquiry. Therefore the first question they explored was discovering the differences between multicultural and global literature. To help them answer their question they chose to read Freeman and Lehman's (2001) *Global Perspectives in Children's Literature*. Each member planned to take stock of their own libraries, noting breadth and depth of their own global literature collections. They also planned a session with author Margy Burns Knight to help them detect stereotype and bias in books.

They were realistic about the limits of their own knowledge. One member said:

Truthfully, I am not sure what global literature is. I read books to my students revolving around celebrations around the world, and share my experiences traveling to Israel and Costa Rica, but, I guess you could say that my experiences are limited (Orono/P).

Through reading professional literature they gained a larger definition of the term "global books." Barbara Keene explains, "At first I thought it was more of cultural traditional studies, but my understanding has evolved with a bit of reading" (Orono/BK/I). She now uses Lehman, Freeman and Scharer's (2010) definition from *Reading Globally, K-8* (defined in chapter two of this dissertation).

Through honing their own understanding of global literature, members hoped to

stretch the boundaries of our students' sense of community as they discover people and places that are, at first, startlingly different or all too familiar, and delve deeper to discover the varied, complex, and richly textured connections that build understanding and kinships across time and space. (Orono/P).

Group members began their inquiry with a focus on diversity in balance with universality. Their proposal did not include an intention to dig deeper, which is why the group is in the cultural awareness cluster.

At one of their first meetings they invited author and educator Margy Burns Knight to speak with them about learning through global books. Knight had an enormous impact on the group; what she said shaped the focus for the rest of the year. She emphasized teaching about the world through universal concepts, with an "emphasis on supporting positive aspects of cultures in other countries" (Orono/JW/V). She cautioned teachers not to look at cultures through differences and deficits (Orono/FR). She wanted students to see the positive side of Sudan, not just the war, poverty, drought and famine. She also wanted children to be empowered to be helpers though she did not emphasize looking at the root causes before helping with an issue (Orono/BK/I). This orientation to a positive view of cultures surfaced later in the group discussion when Keene noted that we need to "understand the human essence of the world however different-that other world citizens and society have something to offer the planet" (Orono/BK/I).

Knight's focus on universality and the thinking of the group around that

concept showed up in the goals and titles for their projects. Jane Wellman-Little presented a university workshop called "Recognizing the Familiar in the Faraway through Children's Literature" and led her university students in looking at particular authors, illustrators and universals (Orono/FR). Jessica Dunton selected 37 books (<http://www.donorschoose.org/project/go-global-one-big-happy-family/>) for her third-grade students, at least 28 of which had an around-the-world focus on a theme (hopscotch, food, Hanukkah, money, school, etc.). Keene was the one member who tackled a project that was more conceptual in nature and did not focus quite as heavily on universals. With the kindergartners at her school, she looked at worry as an emotion instead of ways of worrying around the world (Orono, JW/V). The teachers in her school witnessed the students' excitement and engagement around global literature and planed on using global literature more in their classrooms (Orono/FR).

The group met approximately once a month to "discuss issues of global children's literature and to examine and share global children's literature books" (Orono/JW/V). They described their work as critical literacy (Orono/FR), however the critical part was focused more on issues of cultural authenticity and detecting bias while in the process of selecting books. The chapter on the authenticity of global literature in *Reading Globally, K-8* (Lehman, Freeman and Scharer, 2010) was helpful in their selection processes. Cynthia Crosser is the education specialist for the University of Maine's library, and took on the task of updating the collection of global picture books. In the process she discovered *Sankofa*, a journal focused on books coming from the African continent and the diaspora. The journal publishes

reviews of children's and adolescents' literature and discusses issues with the books (http://www.morgan.edu/college_of_liberal_arts/departments/english/overview.html).

A concept that was mentioned several times in data from the group is that of taking action. Early in the project the group discovered the Goldman Prize given for excellence in protecting the environment. Members reported discussions about youth taking action, calling them helpers instead of heroes as a way to empower everyone to action. Dunton's third graders created a class book about helpers, which was available on amazon.com. Any profit from sales was to go to an organization to help schools and animals. However, Dunton did not report any funds going to organizations and as of February 2014 the book is no longer available for sale on Amazon.

The last point in the group's final report acknowledged how much this project impacted thinking for Wellman-Little and Crosser in their university teaching and interactions. Global literature had become not only an important part of the teaching collection in the library, but was now infused throughout the children's literature courses. Both continued to research "answers to our questions regarding the role of the illustrator and illustrations in global literature. Our research is leading us to look deeply into an artist's style and its influences upon content, depiction of character, and cultural authenticity" (Orono/FR).

Cultural Awareness Cluster: Shifts in Understanding

One of the research goals for this study was to identify key elements in the process of developing intercultural understanding through using global children's

literature. The groups in the cultural awareness cluster displayed a wide range of interactions with books that led to a variety of understandings about culture. Most started with information in an effort to make their students aware. However, some were satisfied to stay at an information level; others had stimuli that prompted them to look at cultural values and beliefs. While all would say they reached their goals, some of their new understandings put limits on the intercultural insights they could have gained. The discussion below attempts to point out those limits, while at the same time acknowledging the wonderful work of prompting students to engage with world cultures.

Many cultural theorists (Hanvey, 1976; Bennett, 1986; Fennes & Hapgood, 1997; Byram, 2000) include learning information about a culture and cultural practices as part of the process of becoming interculturally competent; however, it is usually at the start of the journey. In that sense the WOW groups that started at the awareness level had the longest trek to make in their thinking in order to develop intercultural understanding as defined by Allan (2003).

Critical Race Theory and Cultural Awareness as a Model

Cultural awareness was the beginning cultural model for the largest cluster of WOW community groups (44%) and the percentage seems reflective of the educator and librarian population in the United States. Why is this so? Gloria Ladson-Billings (1998), in her discussion of critical race theory in the field of education, proposes a phenomenon that contributes to this cultural model. She maintains that the movement for multiculturalism in schools has veered from its foundation of looking at dominant culture privilege and issues of power. It is now

watered down to celebrations of cultural traditions. She states in another article, "Instead of creating radically new paradigms that ensure justice, multicultural reforms are routinely 'sucked back into the system' . . . that attempts to be everything to everyone and consequently becomes nothing for anyone" (Ladson Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 62). If her assessment is correct, then it makes sense that many U.S. educators, who have a belief that teaching multiculturalism is necessary, would think that cultural awareness is sufficient. Adding units like Black History Month becomes the solution. Banks (2012) calls these units additive and believes they simplify multiculturalism by encapsulating it into a unit or two.

Critical race theory also points out that there is an unconscious privileging that happens with white teachers that allows them to see Eurocentric ways of knowing and being as the norm. This "normalizing" supports the development of dichotomies like "us and them", "same and different," and of "othering." Difference becomes uncomfortable. Caitlin Hanzlick was insightful when she wrote that her students fear diversity (LSHS English Lions/CH/V). Most people fear what they do not know or understand. White teachers in the United States have the privilege of determining how much they engage with difference and how they do it. Therefore it is easiest to add multicultural units into the curricular mix rather than do the paradigm-shifting, transformative work of rethinking a curriculum in a way that makes it global in nature.

In gathering information about cultures and giving their students the chance to experience aspects of the cultures, these WOW groups were helping their students start down the path of developing intercultural understanding. Cultural

curiosity, or the desire to explore, is an important foundation to developing intercultural understanding, and that certainly was evident in groups like the WC ReaderLeaders, Chinle and Madeira. But an important question is what they did with all the information they and their students gathered.

Stimuli for Shifts

While all these groups began with cultural awareness as a goal, they ended up with very different inquiries because of the composition of the group, their mission, the professional reading they engaged in, the books they chose to share with their classes, and the discussion that took place both among group members and with their students.

The groups that experienced the greatest shift in their intercultural understanding usually had some kind of external stimuli to push their thinking. Sometimes this was an article (Madeira, Harllee) or a guest speaker (Orono, Garden Hills). Most often this was a professor or graduate student who had thought about multiculturalism (Garden Hills, LSHS English Lions, Harllee), social justice (Shaker Heights) or cultural authenticity and representation (Saturday Book Group, Shaker Heights, Orono) and could stimulate teachers' thinking in those directions. Sometimes it was the books themselves, particularly when teachers used the lists for the Notable Books for a Global Society (Eastern Oregon, Madeira) or a collection that embraced thinking about issues (Garden Hills). By virtue of selecting read-alouds from these book lists, the teachers engaged students with narratives that invited discussion about global issues.

Professional reading was instrumental in helping some of the groups shift

their cultural models from thinking about cultural awareness to critically thinking about the world. Madeira read Short's article on the Notable Book list (Short, Evans & Hildebrand, 2011). Harllee read Ladson-Billings (1995) *Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy*. While these groups did not necessarily engage in discussions about power with their second and sixth graders, these articles did prompt them to move beyond gathering information and dig down to beliefs and values. The educators in these groups learned to invite extended deep discussions around a book.

A catalyst for thinking in a more critical direction came in the form of professional relationships with university professors. Sue Corbin, the leader of the Shaker Heights group, has a doctorate in curriculum and instruction with a strong interest in multicultural perspectives. She was able to ask questions of the teachers during their meetings that prompted increased depth of inquiry in the Silk Road unit. Garden Hills had the benefit of Karla Möeller's expertise in multicultural education and her personal library. Möeller was familiar with James Banks' (2012) approaches to multicultural education. She helped the teachers create learning engagements that invited students to look beyond the exoticism of different foods and see ways food might be culturally organized and reflect resource availability.

A stimulus that also pushed teacher thinking was preparing for recognition as an IB school. Including multiple perspectives is one of the requirements of the IB and IB-PYP programs.

Along with external stimuli of advanced degrees, professional reading, or IB mandates, the element that was critical to the growth process was dialogue,

whether in the study group or the classroom. Several theorists have thought a lot about dialogue and what makes it effective and transformative. Freire (2002) stresses the important role of dialogue in supporting the oppressed, enabling them to act on their situation. The dialogic process of helping them name their current situation and imagine other alternatives (conscientization) can lead to praxis. Bakhtin suggests that all ideas and positions need to be on the table in order for dialogue and understanding to take place and truth to be determined (Shields, 2007). Attinasi and Friedrich (1995), in their minute analysis of the process of dialogue, note the shift in power when true dialogue takes place; this occurred in WOW communities as members positioned themselves as co-learners with their colleagues and students. Attinasi and Friedrich (1995) add that life-changing dialogue occupies an “interstitial space” (p. 46). In other words, it was necessary for the group members to enter into the messy dynamic dialogic space with each other or their students, where the results were not scripted and planned, in order for transformative change to take place.

The study groups were especially important spaces for teachers to learn the process of open and safe dialogue. This happened as Madeira members positioned themselves as a collaborative reflective group and were therefore open to changing the direction of their thinking. Transformative dialogue in the Garden Hills group took place when members acknowledged holes in their own knowledge and listened to other perspectives.

Dialogue within the classroom had an enormous impact on teachers and students. The Madeira teachers realized that giving children chances to reflect

repeatedly on the concepts in a book was a powerful stimulus to students' growth in intercultural thinking. Missy Rinker from Eastern Oregon carefully chose books that encouraged discussion of perspectives. She also actively taught her students how to dialogue in a respectful way. The Lithia Springs High School students engaged in reflective conversations that helped them connect global texts with their personal history and the contemporary world. The role of dialogue was also important in helping students make connections with fellow classmates that had been marginalized (LSHS English Lions; Harllee).

One of the hallmarks of teacher study groups is the collaborative thinking that can take place as teachers think about theory and practice together. Dialoguing in a collaborative way was new to the math and science members in the Shaker Heights group. It not only allowed them to be creative in what they taught, but it also inspired them to travel from Ohio to Las Vegas to attend and present their work with the other Shaker Heights teachers at NCTE, a conference for English teachers. The group did more than plan a unit; they bonded as thinkers as they dialogued.

Shifts in Intercultural Understanding

One of the shifts that occurred in these groups was a diminishing of cultural dissonance, a lessening of the "weird!" factor. The act of trying something new and surviving was an important stepping stone for students in kindergarten (WC ReaderLeaders), elementary school (Eastern Oregon) and middle school (Chinle). In some groups this progressed into an openness to difference (Garden Hills) and multiple perspectives (Eastern Oregon). Teachers reported increased empathy (Madeira, Eastern Oregon, Spokane) and an appreciation rather than a fear of

diversity (LSHS English Lions, Harllee).

Engaging with other ways of being and knowing through literature became an important element in setting the climate for discussion that welcomed differences and other perspectives. Kristy Wanstrath (Madeira) has continued using global literature in her classroom, and books like *The Name Jar* (Choi, 2001) have become important texts for setting up a classroom climate that embraces difference (Madeira/KW/I). Kate Dunlap (Eastern Oregon) reported that studying the treatment of Chinese immigrants working on the transcontinental railroad helped her students understand the notion of tolerance, which in turn made them kinder to each other. The Garden Hills teachers used books like *Each Kindness* (Woodson, 2012) to impact the everyday actions of their students with each other, school personnel, their families and eventually the world.

One important part of intercultural understanding is shifting away from a deficit view of other cultures. It becomes easy to look at other areas of the world as places that need pity and aid when TV, magazines and websites are full of images of war and poverty in other countries, and ELL students are positioned in schools as needing help because they do not speak English. One tool teachers used to counter that deficit narrative was to look at countries through a lens of wealth, whether that was the wealth of what Islam contributed to knowledge through its discoveries (Shaker Heights), or looking at what a country contributed to the arts (Saturday Book Group on Russian music).

Teachers also countered this deficit notion by acknowledging bilingualism as an asset and other ways of speaking as valuable (Garden Hills, Saturday Book Group,

WC ReaderLeaders, Madeira). Sometimes this positioning was intentional; the librarians from WC ReaderLeaders read a story in two languages, and the Garden Hills teachers read bilingual literature, paired translated books, and books with other languages embedded in the text. Other times the insight was serendipitous; the Madeira teachers did not realize they had foreign-language speakers in their classes until the children helped them with pronunciations of foreign words, and in one of the classrooms benefitting from the text sets from the Saturday Book Group, the children realized that a Mexican classmate could help them pronounce Spanish words embedded in a book. The books, through the language and the content, were able to provide a voice for children and youth who otherwise had been shy and silent (Madeira, Harllee).

Not all the books were as helpful. One of the texts used in several of the groups was *Same, Same, but Different* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2011). The text has a sing song rhythm that children latched onto, effectively reducing complexity to a dichotomy: same and different. The notion of how people are all alike but different surfaced in the writing of many of the groups in this cluster (Orono, LSHS English Lions, Chinle, Madeira, Saturday Book Group, Spokane). It is a basic concept in intercultural understanding. However, it is problematic when the understanding stays there and does not go beyond that basic insight. The focus on same and different simplifies rather than supports the development of complex understandings of culture.

In Giles Laroche's (2011) book *If You Lived Here: Homes Around the World*, he discusses how the availability of building materials and environmental factors

dictate the structure of a house. The building materials and design begin to make sense in that local context. It is not exotic and weird; it is logical. Jenny Kostecki-Shaw (2011) was not writing a book to help difference make sense. In *Same, Same, but Different*, she wanted children to see that below the obvious differences are the same needs for family love, food and shelter, whether you live in India or the United States. However, the features that she illustrated are exotic. An early double-page spread involves Kailash's tree that is shaped like an umbrella, has monkeys and collaged leaves using many different papers. In contrast Elliott's tree is painted in brown and orange fall colors, looking very 'normal'. While Laroche's book adds complexity by explaining why houses are different, Kostecki-Shaw starts her narrative by reducing complexity to same or different. The easy refrain makes the message stick.

A similar text, *Children Just Like Me* (Kindersley, 1995) uses a template to look at each child and their situation. The authors show that geography and socio-economic levels may be very different, but all children have commonalities: they have parents and siblings, they have favorite toys and they attend school and learn to write. However, as the book demonstrates "sameness," it also points to facts that can be sensationalized, highlighting exotic differences. The book would have a different feel if the authors had pointed out the belief systems and values that people share across cultures. For example, all children want to be loved in a family unit, whether you belong in a family with one wife and three siblings or five wives and 22 siblings. When the focus changes from the number of wives and siblings (which sensationally makes families different) to a loving family, the exotic

differences fade into the background. In a sense, starting the story with family love moves 22 siblings from different, to norm, because family love feels familiar. It connects people at the heart level (everyone desires family love) instead of at the head level (all children have families).

Diversity that is dichotomized or essentialized (Banks, 2006; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012) does not allow the rich diversity of societies to be part of the discussion. It minimizes the interplay between the universal human experience and the many ways that those experiences can take place. Intercultural understanding comes from seeing the diverse human experiences as complex. Diversity without complexity can be problematic. Books like *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World* (Beeler, 1998) are fun to read and are designed to give children a positive experience with difference. But "around the world books" of that nature leave out complexity, and are creating a melting-pot experience that says "people are people are people" (Sims, 1982).

Shifts in Pedagogical Understanding

An important part of the learning of the WOW groups was discovering how global books can easily become a part of what they normally do. Several groups were dealing with over-extended teachers (LSHS English Lions, Chinle, MLK, Garden Hills), having to do more prescribed work with less creative space to shape learning engagements. So discovering the ease with which global books could be added to or switched out with the traditional canon was an important understanding. James Banks (2012) would problematize this and classify it as the additive approach to multicultural education. While his point is valid, adding the books was a vital first

step. Becoming aware of global literature and how easily it can become part of their curricular units helped teachers gain confidence in shaping curricular units. Later they could do the type of curricular reforming that Banks would call transformative multicultural education.

Some groups were able to do more than add global books to a unit. The LSHS English Lions had the luxury of overhauling the structure of one of their courses to make it more global, transforming the American Literature class into a World Literature class. Garden Hills specifically worked to make their literature engagements more than additive so their look at food around the world engaged students with how supply and cultural practices organize food choices.

The books helped the MLK teachers gain an important pedagogical insight. They noticed that trade books were dog-eared, indicating the content was more accessible and therefore more read than the textbooks. Another insight was on the value of re-reading or redundancy. Both MLK and Madeira members realized that the act of revisiting content or concepts helped students think about and internalize what they had read and discussed. Some groups also commented on the natural interest students have in the content of global books (WC ReaderLeaders, Chinle, Madeira, Eastern Oregon). Developing a healthy curiosity through books about the world was a significant step.

One of the important pedagogical insights for group members was noticing the capacity of students to think. While some groups stuck to information about cultures, others dug down to interacting with beliefs and values. This particularly happened with older students (LSHS English Lions, Harllee, Shaker Heights).

However, as elementary teachers engaged in dialogue with students, they realized that even young children can have incredible insights (Madeira).

Summary

This chapter introduced Gee's notion of cultural models as a way of organizing the WOW communities into clusters. The cultural model represents the members' early beliefs about the process of developing intercultural understanding. This chapter then presented the 12 groups that were part of the cultural awareness cluster. Through interacting with global literature, the teachers and students gained information about world cultures and an appreciation of how humans are alike and different. Through stimuli like dialogue and professional reading, some of the groups gained a deeper understanding of diverse and complex cultures. The focus on cultural awareness and "around the world" books were examined in light of critical race theory by pointing out the way dichotomies can essentialize complex human experiences.

CHAPTER 6: CRITICAL THINKING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUSTERS

This chapter includes two clusters of WOW communities who proposed to think critically about texts and the world. The first cluster is composed of groups who wanted to think critically in a broad sense. They did not identify specific social issues that had prompted their inquiry. The second cluster chose to think critically about specific issues, either a social one (war, sex-trade, abuse) or an environmental one (water or energy use). Because both clusters began their work with a critical stance, they are placed together in this chapter.

Defining a Critical Stance

The notion of critically thinking about a text has its roots in the work of Paulo Freire and his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2002) in which he discusses his idea of educating the oppressed. He proposes how, through reflection and dialogue, members of a group become more socially conscious of oppression (*conscientization*), develop the power to imagine something other than their present circumstances and then take action (*praxis*). The whole process is known as developing a critical consciousness or critical pedagogy.

Freire's work has had a tremendous influence on education. However, in the process of becoming well-known, his ideas have lost some of their edge. One of the resulting difficulties is the lack of a clear definition of *critical thinking* in many teachers' minds. The term is heavily used in workshop titles, professional literature, and education classes, so my pre-service students knew it was important. But when pushed for a definition, their understanding of the concept focused more on the use of higher order thinking skills, instead of thinking about power issues (Corapi,

classroom conversation, 10-1-13).

My pre-service students were not alone. Lewison, Flint and Van Sluys (2002) described the workshop they offered for in-service teachers in critical literacy. They reported on the early thinking of 13 teachers who wanted to gain a deeper understanding of critical literacy. Six were newcomers; they thought of critical literacy as exploring cultural differences, discussing life applications, or engaging in dynamic literature discussions. The novices had a clearer definition in mind; they understood critical literacy as reading texts with a critical stance, and considering multiple viewpoints in discussions of race, class, power, gender, language, and social justice. Two teachers were experienced in critical pedagogy. They created spaces for critical conversations throughout the day and across subject areas.

This same range of definitions was evident in the WOW groups as they shaped their inquiries and reported on classroom conversations. One of the tensions in doing the analysis was deciding where to place groups within the four clusters, and particularly with these two clusters. There were groups that stated they were going to critically think with students but did not. On the other hand there were groups in the cultural awareness cluster that did not indicate they wanted to critically think with students, but clearly did. In order to resolve the tension, I placed the groups in clusters based on their intent, described in their proposals. Gee's (2008) notion of cultural models are the stories, the subscripts that inform life. So I chose to place groups in these two clusters according to the way they self-defined.

The range within the critical thinking cluster included, at one end, the A to Z members who were literacy specialists in several schools. Concerned about

comprehension, they structured their inquiry in a way that equated critical reading with close reading. At the other end of the spectrum, Aveson, Stillwater, and Willamette Valley teachers problematized the representation of Muslims or Arab countries in a post-9/11 world. The range in definitions of “justice” was also true in the social justice cluster. Groups looked at environmental issues like clear-cutting (Global Environment) and water usage (Willamette Valley), while other groups in the same cluster conducted inquiries about war and resisting political oppression (Vashon Island).

Because this study is grounded in the work of Paulo Freire, critical thinking is defined as thinking about power issues. Lewison et al. (2002) define critical literacy as "problematizing all subjects of study, seeing knowledge as a historical product, and interrogating texts to see how they position and construct notions of identity and dominant cultural discourses" (p. 383). The authors then describe critical conversations as having four elements: they disrupt the commonplace or the norm, consider multiple viewpoints, focus on socio-political issues and then inform some sort of action that promotes social justice.

Because critical thinking leads to taking action on social issues, the clusters are presented in that order. The group descriptions are arranged by the age range of the students with which the educators worked.

Critical Thinking Cluster: Descriptions

Hobgood Elementary School, Tennessee

Hobgood was a group of K-2 educators, an ELL coordinator and two university professors in an urban Title 1 school in Tennessee. The teachers "were

struggling with how to teach literacy globally with a culturally and linguistically diverse group of learners" (Hobgood/JF/V). They proposed a project with global books that had both a school and home element. At school they wanted to use "global texts in curriculum and [in] promoting critical conversations and [in homes they wanted to] connect families with global texts" (Hobgood/JF/V).

The school had recently adopted a scripted language arts curriculum to which teacher fidelity was being monitored, so the group decided they would have more success at interacting with global books and perspectives in the social studies block. They decided on learning strategies that supported the use of global books that encouraged both critical thinking and the development of global perspectives. They also wanted to tie in the families by sending global books home and asking families to respond via a journal. The responses would then be shared in the classrooms, honoring the families' experiences and languages. It is because of the orientation to both critical thinking and multiple perspectives that I placed Hobgood in this cluster.

One of the university professors in the group, Bobbie Solley, had a longstanding relationship with the Hobgood staff, so when after-school study group meetings were not working for the group due to stress and fatigue, she was able to arrange for two-hour release time for the teachers. This allowed them the time to concentrate on their own learning with international books. The study group meetings focused on browsing and selecting international texts to use in the classroom and "on response strategies and facilitating learning of concepts through response and writing strategies" (Hobgood/FR). Teachers spent significant time

reviewing the literature and reflecting upon the representation of the characters so that they would honor multiple voices and ethnicities. They engaged in critical talk with the texts and worked at understanding the global perspectives in the literature (Hobgood/JF/V).

The teachers made several intercultural and pedagogical shifts in their thinking. One of the main changes in the teachers' thinking was the role that global literature could play in their curriculum. "The Common Core Standards and Race to the Top (TN) were highly influential on our group. Teachers were consumed with how to meet these standards. It took several discussions for them to see that this work meets these standards" (Hobgood/FR). Yet the voluntary group was populated with motivated teachers who wanted to improve their practice with the high population of ELL students in the classrooms. Gradually as the teachers engaged with the books in their professional development (study group) sessions, they began to see that the texts and the discussions not only supported the work in social studies but also in the language arts, in particular Writer's Workshop.

One of the first new understandings was an expanded notion of a global text. The titles the teachers suggested were old and needed to be replaced with titles that supported global perspectives (Hobgood/MR). Along with new understandings came several hurdles. "Kindergarten teachers were very reluctant to select books. They generally felt that the books were too difficult" (Hobgood/MR). Jeanne Fain discussed her own work with Pre-K children and tried to reassure the teachers that the books could be used for that age level. The modeling that Fain and Solley did was important in encouraging group members that young children can think deeply and

critically about text. Another hurdle was that knowledge was viewed in a compartmentalized way, but eventually teachers began to work across the curriculum. "Teachers found space in the literacy block to integrate the books as soon as they realized their students really made important connections with the text. Thus, the books were used across content areas, not just social studies" (Hobgood/FR). This was especially true with Writer's Workshop. In Martin Ridgley's first-grade class "students were participating in meaningful dialogue not only about the content of the stories, but including their own language as writers. This book talk experience was turning into a discussion about the process of writing a story" (Hobgood/MR/V). One example was the discussion around *Big Red Lollipop* (Khan, 2010): "one student identified this story as an example of an author writing a 'small moment' story. This was a type of writing that had been done in our Writer's Workshop class back in the fall" (Hobgood/MR/V). Following that insight, students spent the next weeks trying to locate authors hiding their autobiographical "small moments" in their books.

Another important insight was the ways in which global and particularly bilingual texts can support the development of L1 and L2 skills, but also work as a counter-narrative to a deficit view of ELL students and their families. Janna McClain explained:

As a specialist in working with English Learners, I wanted to extend the purpose of these books to include recognition of the global capital in our own community. Unfortunately, the environment in education today emphasizes the weaknesses rather than the strengths of English Learners. The students

are labeled “at risk,” “limited English proficient,” “below basic.” All attention is given to what they lack, rather than what they bring to the table

(Hobgood/JM/V).

A bilingual text was used in a first-grade class to support skills students were learning in Writer's Workshop. Student-composed texts were then handed over to the fifth and sixth grade ELL students for translation into Spanish. A class book was then published and showcased to parents as a bilingual text. McClain summarized:

I believe this project encouraged our 1st graders to recognize and respect the global capital in our community. They began to understand that other languages are to be valued. The 5th and 6th grade students felt empowered as leaders, rather than burdens, in an academic context. They began interacting more with younger students, as well as primary teachers, in the building.

They too recognized the global capital they possess, and ended the year confident of their ability to participate fully in our school community

(Hobgood/JM/V).

The Hobgood group also wanted to create a school-home connection, based on the notion of funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). They assembled Ziploc bags of global books and a response journal for children to take home and read with at least one family member. The invitation letters included ideas for responses and contributions, welcoming writing in any language. The response to this part of the project from both the teachers and the families was very positive:

The Latino families from this school overwhelmingly participated in the

family response journals in Spanish and English. Families had discussions about the books and shared their knowledge and values with their children. There was a proud feeling among the children that their families had something to say about the global literature (Hobgood/FR).

It was those connections made at home that helped teachers value the learning that can take place in both environments:

Children made different connections with home support. There was a circle of connections created where family, children, and teachers came together with their knowledge around the literature. The “playing field” was leveled. Families and children were linguistic and cultural experts. Also, discussion wasn’t forced [at school because] children came to school with something to say about the texts. The connections felt less hurried. This project provided an authentic space for enjoying book without the pressure of producing a product to the point that teachers and children “became drained out” (Hobgood/FR).

Hobgood teachers made strides in their intercultural understanding as they began to value contributions of family members to students’ learning. The value of multilingualism increased as they observed the insights children had into other languages and the empowering impact it had on ELL students. An important pedagogical insight was the way that global literature can foster connections across content areas through the dialogue around the books.

Stillwater, Oklahoma

The Stillwater group was led by university professor Seemi Aziz, working

with four elementary educators (first grade and Title 1 reading specialist) who were also her graduate students. The members created two book kits dealing with Middle Eastern cultures and the Arabic language. The educators' goal was observational. They wanted to (a) see the level of interest students had in the books, and (b) see if the students' knowledge of the regions and languages altered as a result of interacting with the books in literature circles. The language of their proposal would indicate that they belong in the cultural-awareness cluster because they were observing interest and knowledge; however, the inclusion of book titles in which prejudices against Muslims occurred, indicates they hoped that the stories would act as a counter-narrative to media portrayals of Muslims. This puts them in a cultural model that is more critical. Aziz is also a strong proponent of thinking critically about text due to her academic history and her personal experience as a Pakistani Muslim living in the United States.

The two schools represented in the study group were very different. Both first-grade classes were located in a school with a very diverse population located next to a university. The two classes had completed an earlier unit on American immigration, so had thought about global movement and the reasons why it happens. The Title 1 reading group was located in a more rural area and had a more homogeneous population. What the teachers had in common was their desire to expand their students' conceptions of Middle Eastern countries and Muslims by exposing them to books with characters coming from Muslim cultures. They felt this was very important. As reading specialist Rhonda Hover explained:

I grew up in the same area in which I now teach. My exposure to the Muslim

people and their culture was limited to cartoons with flying carpets and rich sheiks, as well as occasionally seeing people outside of my community wearing traditional Arab clothing. Similar to my experiences, my students are exposed to subtle stereotypes of Arabs through the cartoons and television programs they watch, in the books they read and the commercials they see (Stillwater/RH/V).

Jackie Iob noted that in order for "students [to] become critical thinkers and deepen their understanding of texts read, they need to be able to make strong world connections" (Stillwater/JI/V). She reasoned that it was important to expose her students to a larger world. The group wanted to encourage the critical thinking skills of the students, and they particularly did that with the book *Mirror* (Baker, 2010), a wordless book that conceptually is brilliant but suffers from limited representation. The Moroccan culture portrayed is more rural whereas the Australian culture is metropolitan Sydney. In the discussion students identified the Australian images as the United States, using "us" and "them" in their comments. When the teachers projected current photos of Moroccan cities and the Australian outback, the students were able to expand their notion of the two countries and concluded that the book needed to be expanded to include a range of images in order to portray the countries accurately.

Group members were familiar with Louise Rosenblatt's work on reader response. They noticed how students used their knowledge from the media or their own backgrounds to inform how they connected to the books, trying to make sense out of something that was different from their own experience. For example, when

looking at portrayals of Morocco in *Mirror* (Baker, 2010), one student used previously seen media images and identified a person as a masked robber or terrorist instead of simply a woman wearing a burka and shopping in a market. American-born students were not the only ones drawing on previous experiences. "International students made connections beyond the scenes described in the book. Their reasoning reached into their background knowledge of places outside the United States" (Stillwater/JI/V). The students focused heavily on text-to-self connections, trying to make sense of war, clothing differences, and celebrations like birthday parties. Their concerns and questions were very practical: Why would women want to cover their hair? How can kids get peaches in a war zone? Where could you hide books so they would be safe? How can children play safely during times of war? (Stillwater/RH/V).

While the children understandably drew on their own experience to understand differences, they made a variety of assumptions depending on their own exposure to diversity. The third-graders made assumptions such as "people from other countries [do] not celebrate birthdays, [demonstrating that a] lack of exposure [in their school population] puts them at risk of developing stereotypes" (Stillwater/RH/D 5.18.11). As the first-graders read *Big Red Lollipop* (Khan, 2010), they noticed differences in flags, birthday celebrations, clothing and parents' names (Stillwater/JI/D 5.16.11). The initial 'noticing' understandably focuses on differences.

In addition to the intercultural insights gained from watching students interact, the teachers gained some significant pedagogical insights. They noticed the

students' on-task behavior and sustained conversations, an indication that global literature can capture attention and support engaged learning (Stillwater/JI/V). Another insight related to the teachers' views of childhood and what content children are capable of discussing. Some of the teachers felt that student thinking needed to be prompted and guided, adapting content to fit students' emotional preparedness and maturity. However, they noted that:

Although it was difficult, especially at first, to let go of the "teaching" of these books, after participating in this process, we have learned to let go of the teaching a bit more, even in the beginning . . . We now know the importance of allowing them to make their own meaning of the books and incorporate the new knowledge into their own experiences with books and the world around them" (Stillwater/MB-ZM/V).

The teachers felt that their interactions demonstrated young children's abilities to engage in critical thinking via literature circle discussions. However, this particular study group was dealing with limitations imposed by school districts, and this is reflected in the limits that they put on classroom dialogue in spite of their desire to let go of the discussion. "For this reason, we did not address politics or religion during our lessons, but stayed on the topics of tolerance and compassion for people from other cultures and perspectives" (Stillwater/MB-ZM/V).

ACLIP, New Mexico

The New Mexico educator group, ACLIP (Adolescent and Children's Literature Inquiry Project), first started meeting to write journal articles and present at an NCTE conference. They seized the opportunity to expand their

understanding of the use of global literature to build international understanding. They described their group structure as a wheel:

The hub is our mixed educator group that shares a passion for global literature and exchanges ideas and questions as a study group. The spokes are the individual projects and inquiries that are supported by and radiate from the group's inspiration, inquiry, and idea sharing (ACLIP/P).

The "hub" became an effective "wheel" as the books purchased through the grant circulated through multiple projects. The books were used in a visual literacy course and in an undergraduate multicultural children's literature course. Korean and English copies of the same books were used for children's language development in a Korean mothers' group. An ACLIP member involved in community theater used some texts to stimulate script writing. The complete set of books and artifacts was used in a third-grade unit focused on South Korea and Korean-American culture, culminating in a student-created exhibit for the all-school museum.

One of the group goals was to address the lack of exposure teachers in the Albuquerque schools have to international literature and its use in classrooms. The group members "recognized that very few teachers in our area have information about global literature and that it can be hard to access. We have wanted to find authentic opportunities to share books and information about international literature with more teachers" (ACLIP/P). The group tackled this goal in multiple ways. One was through professional development opportunities at both Mountain Mahogany Community School (MMCS) and the NCTE conference. Book browsing

was significant, giving teachers a chance to actually see the books. This was informative because these types of collections are not profiled in bookstores or libraries; browsing international books has to happen in intentional situations. The all-school museum was another way teachers at MMCS were able to see the range of understandings the children gained through interacting with the books. This prompted their subsequent interest in using the books in their own classrooms.

Third-grade teacher, Genny O'Herron, worked with the other ACLIP members to create and analyze a six-week unit using the texts. She recorded the transformation of her students' thinking from initial interest/indifference/aversion to unbridled reading passion, intellectual curiosity, connections, and critical reading of the texts. Students particularly noticed issues with representation in the visual images (ACLIP/V). O'Herron introduced the texts carefully, scaffolding the students' interactions with the texts. She began with a read-aloud of the novel *A Single Shard* (Park, 2001), then, once the students were hooked, moved into other books by Linda Sue Park. She introduced non-fiction informational texts when the children began working on their museum exhibits. The range of non-fiction became important as students consulted as many sources as possible for their exhibits. O'Herron then introduced the books for which they had copies in English and Korean. The students enjoyed creating the narrative in the Korean versions, followed by reading the English versions. They also enjoyed the final set of books purchased directly from Korea and only in Hangul. Their interactions and creation of narratives resembled interactions with wordless books and demonstrates the communicative power of visual text.

Concurrent with the interaction with the books, Korean guest speakers were invited to come and speak to the students, allowing them to interact with people for whom the book settings and narratives were "home." The students also exchanged letters with pen pals from a school in South Korea. O'Herron noted that the letters were focused on same and different, but with an added depth. Children were asking:

What do Korean children and I have in common . . . do Korean children value and enjoy the same things I do? It's "cool" to eat sushi, here, (according to many of the dominant personalities in the classroom); what's 'cool' in South Korea? (ACLIP/V).

Finally, a South Korean backpack was created in order to support a home literacy connection. The popular backpack went home with individual students and was "filled with bilingual Korean-English books with CDs, Korean food, interactive artifacts like Korean alphabet magnets, and a student journal" (ACLIP/FR).

In an essay entitled "Beyond the Five F's," O'Herron wrestled with the process of supporting intercultural development:

Since our earliest professional development about multiculturalism, we have been warned about the great pitfall of the FIVE F's: reducing the exploration of culture to food, fashion, festivals, famous people, and folklore. This warning is helpful and important, but it doesn't necessarily spell out what and how a teacher should approach intercultural education instead. It has always left me feeling a little paranoid—like how can I do this, I don't know what to do!?!?

(<https://sites.google.com/a/mountainmahogany.org/intercultural/home/ar>

ticles).

Her tension remained as she reflected in the article on the museum exhibit that her students put together:

You'll see examples of each of the 'five f's.' They're there! We studied all of them. But hopefully that is not all you notice, because that is not all we did . . . We learned to look for 'patterns and problems' in books— like an overemphasis of Chinese symbols in picture books about South Korea or a heavy portrayal of traditional, ancient Korea rather than modern images. “Why do they keep showing people in hanbok?” was a common question asked during those weeks. I was thrilled. Not just because the students knew what a hanbok was (traditional dress), but because they were developing the capacity to examine books for stereotypes and cultural authenticity.

O'Herron noted that the students did engage in talk about similarities and differences, but she felt it was with increased sophistication (ACLIP/V).

As the ACLIP group reflected on the children's process, they noticed "that the sequence of exploring global and international literature, and then meeting Korean individuals, and finally writing to Korean pen pals allowed the students to synthesize and extend their new knowledge in very meaningful ways" (ACLIP/FR). Books were both the starting point and an effective gateway to developing the curiosity and connection that fostered the students' awareness, knowledge and interest in South Korean culture. Another important insight was the power of the Korean texts (purchased directly from Korean publisher) to captivate the children's interest and imagination. Teachers expected that interest, but not to the degree it

happened!

Aveson Charter School, California

The Aveson WOW community was composed of a small group of third through fifth grade literacy, science and social studies teachers in a public charter school in California. The school's mission is to provide an individualized educational experience for the students with innovative teaching methods, helping them to become independent learners and global leaders (<http://www.aveson.org/asl/about-asl>). The group leader, Jennifer Carey, had attended a conference organized by the Asia Society, so had done a lot of thinking about multicultural/global education and the support multicultural literature could provide students and families. The group used the *Literacy Cultural Relevance Matrix and Continuum* (Derman-Sparks & Olsen, 2010; Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1998) to select the global literature that would be a part of the study. The critical thinking in the teachers' book selection was the reason Aveson is included in this cluster. This was further supported by the critical thinking they did with their students.

The project began with the search for authentic quality literature to support the global exploration of their student population, which included a high percentage of special needs children (an average of six to nine children per classroom). Through the exploration, children identified a book character with whom they had a meaningful connection, and created a persona doll and narrative to present the character to a K-1 audience (Aveson/P). It was important to group members that the connection between reader and character be meaningful (Aveson/D - 1.11.13).

The student interest was high, demonstrated when they gave up their recess to keep reading their book selections. Carey noted that student discussions "challenge[ed] ethnic and religious stereotypes. Students are analyzing characters in profound ways" (Aveson/D - 4.26.13). Prior to this unit with global literature, the teachers had completed a study with their students on the illustrations and storylines in Caldecott books across the decades. Following the global literature study, one student put the two units together and noted that Caldecott books do not have any obvious characters that are gay, have a Muslim background or have special needs (Aveson/V). "This keen observation has opened the door to discuss past and current exclusion in our country" (Aveson/D - 4.26.13).

Like many of the groups in the critical thinking cluster, the Aveson group was versed in theory. They used several resources that helped them reflect on the learning engagements and think about student responses. Besides the matrix to guide the selection of books, they also used the book lists and critical reviews on the wowlit.org site. They kept in mind the four global competencies published on the Asia Society site (asiasociety.org) as they structured the engagements: investigate the world, weigh perspectives, communicate ideas, and take action (Aveson/D - 2.6.13). Toward the end of the study, they discovered Eckman's (2007) work on kinds of empathy and Selman's (1980) theory of perspective taking. Carey noted, "It was the validation of what we were doing. Wish we had found it earlier. It gave the academic language to what we did intuitively" (Aveson/JC/I). The critical process of naming (Shannon, 2002) was an important part of the growth of this group.

One of the characteristics of this group was a willingness to engage in bold

conversations with each other and with their students. Risk was evident as they engaged in authentic discussions that allowed teachers to:

ask questions that they felt could reveal an ignorance in a specific cultural area, specifically in regards to Muslim and Islamic understandings . . . Once we received the books, we could not keep them out of the students' hands! The students were able to participate in many deep discussions with a variety of adults (Aveson/FR).

The discussions surrounding *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq* (Winter, 2005) "invited students to challenge political choices that resulted in violence" (Aveson/V). The discussions around that particular book led to discussions of violence in other world conflicts, concluding with strategies and tools students observed people using in order to avoid war.

Following the Boston Marathon bombing, a young Muslim classmate heard derogatory comments against Muslim people. So in response to this social pressure against Muslim communities, Middle Eastern cultures became an important focus for the project. Teachers did this by giving the students vocabulary that defined Islam in order to foster discussions. Teachers used maps to show the range of countries where Muslims can be found, and talked about the different belief systems within the Islamic world. Muslims from the school community described their faith (Aveson/V). Through these activities, discussions, and books, students and teachers were able to gain the language and knowledge in order to understand, discuss, analyze and express other perspectives.

Middle Eastern cultures were not the only kind of oppression discussed:

Some students chose to address issues of bullying that specifically addressed weight issues and racial jokes . . . Other students chose to make dolls and draft stories about characters that were refugees or that experienced sexism in education. Almost every book widened the lenses of each reader (Aveson/FR).

Pedagogically, the project was rich in insights. During the discussions the teachers realized "It was in these moments when we thoughtfully chose to silence our viewpoints, deep, raw and transforming discussions took place" (Aveson/V). Another tool the group used that proved successful with all students across gender and age was the creation of the persona dolls. Students picked a character, made a doll with a range of available materials, wrote a narrative about the person and presented the story via the doll to another person. The teachers found that not only did story allow children to enter into difficult situations, but the dolls were "ideal vehicles through which to communicate depersonalizing memories and sensitive issues that might be difficult to discuss" (Aveson/V). The unit culminated in either the composition of an opinion piece (with supporting evidence from the book) or an "I Am" poem.

A to Z Literacy Movement, Illinois

A to Z (America to Zambia) Literacy Movement began in 2009 as a group of Illinois-based educators who supported schools in Zambia by sending supplies and books and through providing professional development for the Zambian teachers during summer trips to Zambia. Their goal was to end the cycle of poverty through literacy (<http://www.atozliteracy.org/page16.html>, blog post 12.4.2011). To that

agenda they added the work they planned to do with the WOW grant. The group wanted to use an inquiry around multigenerational book clubs and multicultural literature to provide themselves with professional development. They would then share their new insights with teachers in the district and state through presentations at schools and local conferences, and finally to the teachers in Zambia during a summer trip. They wanted to learn more about developing critical thinking skills in students in order to support an "understanding of their part in our global culture and the social justice responsibility that entails" (A to Z/P).

Several factors placed them in the critical thinking cluster. The first was their existing global relationship with Zambian teachers and their desire to continue to build that intercultural relationship. They had already seen the global need to provide training for teachers, and had a history of making trips to Zambia to provide professional development for teachers. They believed in social action, an important result of critical thinking. An additional reason they were placed in this cluster was their desire to develop critical thinking skills in their students. Finally, some of the professional reading they chose to engage with had a critical stance. While the history of the group could have put them in the social justice cluster, that aspect did not seem to be the primary focus of their proposal.

Their own professional development began with selected chapters from *Stories Matter: The Complexity of Cultural Authenticity in Children's Literature* (Fox & Short, 2003). This was supplemented by an article by Mendoza and Reece (2001) who used critical race theory to examine the discourse and images in several popular children's picture books. These readings helped the teachers in their

selection of the three picture books used in their project: *Gift of the Sun: A Tale from South Africa* (Stewart, 1996), *Sitti's Secrets* (Nye, 1994,) and *I Love Saturdays y domingos* (Ada, 2002). Ellin Keene's book *Talk About Understanding: Rethinking Classroom Talk to Enhance Comprehension* (2012) served as a way to deepen their understanding of comprehension in the reading process. This became the thrust of the project as the teachers worked to develop a cultural schema for the middle school students and help them learn to identify themes and ask deeper questions of the first graders.

While they had a global and critical focus, their reported insights were more focused on pedagogical insights and information-based cultural awareness rather than on intercultural understanding. Four possible reasons for this surfaced in the analysis. The first is that they are a group of literacy coaches and teachers, so they are immersed in practice. This is evident by their focus on insights that will improve teacher and student performance. The Common Core State Standards they selected as their focus related to building comprehension skills rather than supporting discussion that in turn supports the development of intercultural understanding (A to Z/P). The mission of the A to Z organization and the orientation of its members is to improve literacy. Reading the A to Z blog posts describing the interactions in Zambia, it is clear that literacy practices are at the forefront of what the group is about.

A second reason is the nature of the project. They were asking middle school students to share a book out loud with first graders, then facilitate discussion and activities around the texts in order to foster deeper comprehension of the book's

message. The middle school students were the teachers, so that meant that they needed to be prepared to teach, which entailed coming up with a plan. The stated goal for the young "teachers" was to develop the literacy skills of using text-based answers, and develop academic vocabulary (A to Z/FR); intercultural understanding was not a big focus.

A third reason for the emphasis on practice could be the nature of their discussions. They met four times as a study group. The first meeting focused on the professional reading and book selection, and subsequent meetings focused on discussing what happened in the book clubs and the meetings with the first-grade students. Though the group members had a trusting relationship with each other, they did not report asking the hard questions centered around power and issues of power that are central to critical thinking. While the reading from Ellin Keene (2012) does speak of deep understanding and mentions rigorous discussion, multiple perspectives, and development of empathy, the reported discussion centered more on frontloading knowledge about the country profiled in the three picture books than discussing issues existing in that country.

A fourth reason discussions might have been less critical is that once the initial book selection was made, the discussion centered around one text. Multiple texts could have brought in a diversity of views and images portraying the complexity and layers within each of the selected cultures. The chosen texts were important because they represented cultures in their schools (Mexican American, Muslim, and African), but a single story would not be representative of the students who might share the culture of each book (A to Z/FR).

One area that did reflect a greater intercultural understanding was the growth in their book selection process. Ann Yanchura, the group leader, reported that at the end of the year the literacy coaches received a district grant in order to purchase additional resources for their book room. She stated that the coaches did a much better job of incorporating multicultural and global titles in their order as a direct result of the work with the WOW grant. Because of their realization that multicultural literature has to be an integral part of their work, the titles they ordered were more diverse than before, with a range of cultures represented. One major insight was how vital multicultural literature was in their literacy work (A to Z/I).

Because Ann Yanchura and Gabriel Carbajal were teaching in a dual-language middle school, bilingual identity issues were a major focus in the school community. As their predominantly Mexican-American students read, studied and shared the global books, Carbajal realized how important it was to expose her students to multiple cultures through literature and the difference that made for them. She is now more committed to bringing a variety of cultures to her students through the literature she selects for her classroom.

The capabilities of the middle-school students (for the group members) and the capabilities of first graders (for the middle-school students) became an important pedagogical insight: both discovered that students are more capable than originally imagined. This became an important counter-narrative to some of the reported discussion and planned activities. Originally both the teachers and the students had expressed the perceived limits of their intended audience. Students

questioned the difficulty of the text they were going to read to the first graders and thought the teachers should have selected easier books (A to Z/MR). Teachers frontloaded information about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for the middle school students to help build their schema around *Sitti's Secrets* (Nye), even though they noted that the conflict would not be discussed with the first graders (A to Z/I). Following their inquiry, the change in their perceptions was evident. Of the six teacher vignettes, four mentioned the capabilities of middle school students as leaders and teachers. One of the classroom teachers in particular mentioned that she realized she could learn from her students (A to Z/AM/V). This reciprocity in learning is an important notion in Freire's concept of critical pedagogy. For this reason funding to support this group's exploration for a second year could have supported their increased risk-taking in their discussions both with middle school students and with first graders. Yanchura closed her vignette stating that "isolated instances of multicultural experiences, while beautiful in themselves, do not add up to a culturally sensitive and responsive education" (A to Z, AY/V). She herself realized that this was merely a beginning.

Tri-Cities, New York

Tri-Cities was an upstate New York group of four K-6 teachers (grade 5, ESL, literacy coach and reading specialist), one doctoral student, and one professor/group leader. Kelly Wissman invited members she knew were committed to thinking about learning through literature. "All members of this global literacy community . . . embraced the role of literature in supporting students in becoming critical thinkers and thoughtful members of a global community" (Tri-Cities/P). This

group from the start focused on deep critical thinking among themselves so that they could then think deeply and critically with their students. They pushed themselves to read and think with multiple, critical and global perspectives.

One of the striking things about this group is the number of agenda items they were able to think about and discuss during their regular monthly meetings. They discussed their own classroom practices, sharing ideas and giving feedback to each other. They shared around 20 global books each month with each other, which means they carefully looked at over 140 titles across the year, allowing members to add to their bank of potential titles. They discussed two pieces of professional reading which were generally critical in nature, allowing them to theorize their experiences. And finally, very important to this group, they supported each other as they struggled with teaching environments that restricted rather than supported inquiry. Through thinking and discussing with group members, each person was able to discover how much control they had over their own teaching (Tri-Cities/MB/V). Wissman notes in a report "the extraordinary power of teachers talking about their practice and feeling respected. In almost every meeting someone [made] a comment to the effect of how this group is the most effective 'professional development' they have had" (Tri-Cities/MR).

The range of professional reading discussed by the group fostered and supported their questions. The two articles or book chapters supplied by Wissman each month gave them an opportunity to theorize what they observed or experienced in their classrooms. Two examples below supported them with both pedagogical and intercultural insights. Kathleen Collins' (2011) work on positioning

theory helped them think about the construction of bilingual or immigrant identities and the thickening that occurs as children encounter the various dominant school discourses and cultures. The group wondered about "the potential and limitations of global literature for kids who have been profoundly marginalized or 'profiled' in their schools" (Tri-Cities/KW/D - 11.10.12). Kathy Short's articles on the wowlit.org blog helped them think about the assets and limitations of the Common Core State Standards in regard to global literature. CCSS was one of several roll-outs that occurred in their area.

We wondered about the effects on our inquiries, if we could justify the use of fictional global literature to administrators, etc. Over time, though, group members commented on how much the nonfiction texts enriched and extended their students' literary understandings and conversations about big ideas (Tri-Cities/FR).

Even though the group members did not know each other prior to meeting together, they were able to develop quickly the safe environment in which to engage in rich dialogue. Wissman believed "in teachers as intellectuals and agents of change" (Tri-Cities/KW/V) so the expectation for deep discussion existed from the start. The chosen subjects for discussion varied depending on the reading and the individual inquiries, but included:

definition of global literature and issues or representation, what it means to be bilingual, WWII from multiple perspectives, difficult conversations about the vast injustices in kids' lives and the role of literature in addressing it, inquiries into experiences of immigrant and migrant children, exploring

issues of access to literacy and injustice, and Native American boarding schools (Tri-Cities/MR).

The wowlit.org site was also a rich source of ideas as each member spent time reading the teacher vignettes (WOW Stories) and sharing practices they wanted to try (Tri-Cities/KW/D - 2.23.13). This rich reading supported their "exploratory and generative conversation about guiding questions and in-class engagements to support critical inquiry and the exploration of multiple perspectives" (Tri-Cities/KW/D - 12.14.12).

Each teacher had a unique focus that contributed significantly to the group's pedagogical and intercultural insights, particularly in regard to their classroom process. The classrooms of Simeen Tabatabai, Maggie Burns and Heather O'Leary will be discussed individually. However, Wissman summarized the communal learning well in her introductory vignette. Collectively the group learning:

resulted from wide-ranging study of children's literature; careful thinking about how to surround that literature with nonfiction, multigenre texts; thoughtful arrangement of classroom resources to promote discussion; considered attention to local, state, and national standards; purposeful development of a teaching stance of listening and openness; and an embrace of the sometimes uncomfortable feeling of not knowing all the answers or how students will respond (Tri-Cities/KW/V).

Simeen Tabatabai was particularly concerned about the process of digging through layers of thinking around a belief (e.g. a bindi) or a notion (e.g. value of education). Through wondering, noticing and discussing, she and her students

moved beyond facts, stereotypes, generalizations and dichotomous thinking, toward a deeper understanding of differences. They explored multiple perspectives, challenged assumptions, looked closely at relationships (especially those involving power) and reflected on how they could take action for social justice in their world. This was not a simple process. Tabatabai is a multicultural person herself, having lived on four continents. She realized that "understanding and accepting differences can be strenuous for students being brought up in predominantly mono-cultural environments" (Tri-Cities/ST/V). A key concern was how to promote "critical literacies with her students and to create a classroom community in which the students come to their own viewpoints" (Tri-Cities/KW/D - 11.10.12). In order to do that she taught them elements of dialogue: to "listen carefully to each other, ask questions, build on each other's ideas and disagree with each other in a respectful way. The children control the conversation and [she acts] as the facilitator" (Tri-Cities/ST/V).

Tabatabai summarized the value of creating these classroom dynamics for students:

Creating the spaces to read global literature and nonfiction texts about the wider world, and then taking the time to talk about meaningful issues can allow students to become more powerful and more purposeful, more informed and intelligent, more aware and more free in their thinking. To do this, I need to build community and trust, and while that takes time, the end result is that my students feel secure and encouraged to actively seek out views, norms and situations that are different from their own. They are open to exploring them, both to try and truly understand their own selves, as well

as to see the humanity of others (Tri-Cities/ST/V).

One specific example from her classroom occurred after reading *Books for Oliver* (Larkin, 2007). Students developed strong empathy for the protagonist and began to discuss the issue of poverty and the ethics and morality of having so much when so many others are deprived.

Maggie Burns was a reading specialist in a school with a heavily prescribed curriculum. Being part of the study group allowed her to make some significant changes in her thinking about the process of learning. She realized she had choices within the prescribed intervention system in terms of the texts, the delivery, and her approach. She went back to her Fountas and Pinnell *Leveled Literacy Intervention System*, and selected texts that reflected global perspectives. Also, as a result of being in the WOW study group and interacting particularly with Simeen Tabatabai, she decided to listen more and talk less, allowing the dialogue to be a collaborative way of creating understanding. She had learned from Tabatabai who "talked about kids with such respect for their intelligence and for their multiple perspectives. [Simeen] listened carefully and asks 'What are you thinking?' without evaluating what they say" (Tri-Cities/KW/I). One significant story emerged with Burns' interaction with four third-grade African-American boys who were disengaged but compliant learners. They became enthusiastic through their effort to understand a text (*Alfa and Beto: The Biblioburros*, Morrow, 2013) and to create a school-wide project to collect quarters to support the burros in Colombia:

Initially inspired by one man's efforts to bring books to children in rural Colombia, the boys mobilized their literacies to think beyond themselves, to

develop a plan of action, and to communicate with a wide range of audiences. While they were doing so, they developed a greater sense of agency as readers and writers because they had a purpose that drove and motivated them (Tri-Cities/MB/V).

They had gone through hard times themselves and connected on that level with children in Columbia (Tri-Cities/KW/D - 4.30.13).

Heather O'Leary taught pull-out ESL in a school that was considered high needs and low-performing. Using global literature helped her:

tap into a deep well of knowledge, feelings, and ideas which helped develop a greater sense of community, mutual respect, and sharing of ourselves that was both motivating and a basis for deeper academic study . . . Using global literature to teach thematic units helped bridge many differences between students. It helped [her] offer instruction appropriate to each student's age, interest, and level of academic challenge (Tri-Cities/HO/V).

In addition to the academic benefits to her students, using global literature helped her support a shift in the way she and her students thought about bilingualism and biculturalism. She gained a deeper appreciation of her ESL students' unique strengths as a result of living in two worlds. In turn she invited students to talk and write about their dual cultural and linguistic identities, purposefully shifting the discussion away from the frequent focus on similarities and differences. She noticed how much they began to recognize and take pride in their biculturalism and bilingualism and how much recognition they began to get from their peers for being people with special strengths rather than students who "need extra

help” . . . All the ESL students came to view themselves as readers and writers with special strengths and knowledge (Tri-Cities/HO/V).

O'Leary offered a final insight on the power of global literature as a means of instruction when she concluded her story by saying:

We studied a rich curriculum. We did not fall victim to the narrowed curriculum that has been the unintended consequence of testing and accountability. We resisted the pressure to raise test scores by narrowing the curriculum so that students spend their time on basic skills, learning test-taking strategies, and practicing the test genre (Tri-Cities/HO/V).

Willamette Valley, Oregon

Willamette Valley was a group of two university professors and four secondary teachers spanning language arts/reading, math, social studies and science. This group has been placed in the critical thinking cluster because they wanted “to engage in inquiry around issues of language, culture, and global societies within and across their content area disciplines” (Willamette Valley/P). They also met to discuss theory. They used Short’s (2003, 2009a) articles as a way to think about using global literature in the development of intercultural understanding. It is important to note that, unlike the ART and Spokane groups, Kathy Short's article did not shape the group actions as much as it shaped the reason for engaging in the inquiry.

One of Tracy Smile's and Marie LeJeune's goals was to support the classroom teachers (Willamette Valley/FR). Group members were dealing with distance between the schools yet met once a month face to face to look at global books,

become acquainted with award lists that would give them titles to think about, and discuss what was happening in the classrooms. In addition to responding to questions via email, Smile or LeJeune also met with teachers at a coffee shop to discuss classroom interactions and the thinking of the teachers. Posting on the discussion site was not optional for this study group, so there was a sharing back and forth and support of each other that took place online that was unique to this WOW group. The support was also ongoing. "It is our continued goal to work closely with these teachers beyond the original parameters of the grant funding and visit their classrooms throughout the 2011-2012 school year" (Willamette Valley/FR).

The theoretical underpinning of the group was important and supported the leaps in growth that this group experienced. As mentioned above, the group read articles by Kathy Short (2003, 2009a) to orient themselves theoretically, particularly in:

the theories articulated around what is meant by culture, instructional goals that go beneath surface level explorations of cultures, and the importance of global perspectives included in the curriculum in order to more fully prepare students to citizens in the 21st Century (Willamette Valley/FR).

The group discussions were important in terms of diversifying their own thinking. Mallory Marquet relates how they discussed that: " 'multi-cultural' might encompass biographical characters that were not only from diverse cultures, but also different eras, or a culture within a culture, or from a 'poles apart' country, or even part of a group such as 'the deaf community'" (Willamette Valley/MM/V).

The four teachers involved in the inquiry chose to use the books in different

ways, but they all used an inquiry approach. Several tried out new strategies, such as using biographies that were narrated by young protagonists. This choice of literature helped to facilitate connections (Willamette Valley/MW/V) for all readers, but particularly students who were struggling or learning in English as a new language (Willamette Valley/MM/V). Two of the inquiries are particularly interesting for the purposes of this dissertation and are discussed below.

Eryn Willow meticulously recorded the growth process she and her seventh- and eighth-grade students went through as they engaged with the novel *Out of the Dust* (Reedy, 2011), which was a contemporary story of a young Afghan girl, struggling with a cleft palate and her desire for an education. Willow created the inquiry unit around the large concepts of culture, education, poverty, war/civil unrest, gender and health. She set her students up for success by choosing a book and carefully scaffolding the unit to engage both her struggling and able readers, both male and female. Beginning with the visual, and always capitalizing on what students wondered and noticed, Willow led them from being just curious about or appalled at Zulaikha's life to appreciating and understanding how her culture and values informed her actions. Willow understood that her students had:

limited understandings of the world beyond what they experience through the popular media [and that] their perspectives were guided not only by their undeveloped views of the world, but their reactions to it. [With them she wanted to] explore alternate perspectives and experiences of teenage life and what that encompasses: friends, family, responsibilities, strengths and weaknesses, moments of courage and fear (Willamette Valley/EW/V).

Shifts in student viewpoints went from seeing American military as heroes, to being puzzled at Afghan reactions to the military and finally seeing war as complex. "They began to understand how different cultures, living wholly different lives, might misunderstand each other's intentions. They grasped why one person's kindness could be considered impolite by another" (Willamette Valley/EW/D 7.6.11). Their appalled reactions to girls marrying young and their judgment of parents for allowing it to happen shifted into more of an understanding of the need for a young man to have financial security in order to take on a family, and the increased chances of a teenaged girl being able to bear healthy children because she is young and strong. Their views on education shifted the most. They were offended that children were not all allowed an education, but began to understand oppressive regimes when a student commented "You're easier to control when you're dumb" (Willamette Valley/EW/V). As they looked at life through an Afghan girl's eyes, they displayed increasing empathy for the characters.

The ability of Willow's students to entertain multiple perspectives and the complexity of the themes they looked at were supported by the book pairings that she furnished with the novel. Willow created text sets using both multicultural and global picture books. Each group of students focused on collecting 'noticings' from the novel, but added in what they saw and discussed in their small group interactions with a text set of picture books that went with each theme. The books allowed the students to see multiple representations of the concept in various contexts. For example one group noticed that what one considers poverty changes with the context and culture:

that being poor doesn't mean the same thing in every country. We first noticed it when Zulaikha couldn't understand why the American soldiers wanted her to take more toys from the toy box at the end of their meeting. She said something like, "How could I take more when we already had so much?" The kids and I discussed this and thought about how little it took to make Zulaikha happy because she considered herself rich with family. Then [students] started noticing that different cultures . . . thought being poor meant different things. Such as in *The Table Where Rich People Sit* by Byrd Baylor(1994)—she thinks being poor is not being able to go out and hike in the wild and be with the animals. In *Fly Away Home* by Eve Bunting (1991), being poor meant having no house, but the young girl and her father living in the airport had each other and had a lot of fun, too (Willamette Valley/EW/D 5.27.11).

Jennifer Davis decided to go into teaching after 20 years of experience in applied soil research. As a scientist she "sought to remove the subjective nature of the human condition from my research and writings thereby making the dissemination of scientific information as close to the 'truth' as possible" (Willamette Valley/JD/V). However, she understood that decisions and policies regarding natural resources are based on the value placed on the resources by humans. This became her pathway to integrate culture into teaching scientific content. She planned to use global literature so that "by exploring the value that global cultures place on water, my students will hopefully be able to consider water resource issues from a global perspective" (Willamette Valley/JD/V). She began

with her own question: "What connection and responsibility do we have to our global neighbors with whom we share this resource? It was this globally unifying topic of water through which I sought to connect content and culture in my science classroom" (Willamette Valley/JD/V).

Her inquiry unit around water for her eighth-grade students began with a survey, asking them to record and reflect on their water usage over a long weekend. Questions focused on their purposes in water usage: for survival, to make life healthier, and for luxury uses. It also asked about water waste and if they had used water for any ceremonial purposes. Following the classroom discussion, the students felt that overall they used water efficiently and had a hard time considering how their water usage might be a luxury or a waste.

Davis carefully selected two trade books for the unit, looking for in-depth narrative that went beyond a tourist approach. She chose *A Long Walk to Water* (Park, 2010) and *Our World of Water: Children and Water around the World* (Hollyer, 2008) which allowed the students to engage with lives of children in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Tajikistan, Bangladesh, Peru and the USA. While the Hollyer book could be classified as an "around the world" surface look at children's use of water, the narrative is not full of curiosities and differences. The profile on Gamachu Boru from Ethiopia exemplifies the child that most fits the media stereotypes of drought-stricken areas, yet the text positions him as one who knows how to survive and thrive. For instance, when discussing how Gamachu cleans his teeth, it says "A stick from an andarak or an adea plant makes a good toothbrush. Gamachu knows how to find the right plants. He doesn't need water to clean his teeth this way"

(Hollyer, 2008, p. 35).

An interesting pedagogical insight was the enthusiasm with which the students interacted with the books, demonstrating the appeal of personal narratives that fostered connections, and trade books over textbooks. Students used the same questions they had answered to understand water usage in the profiled countries.

Students:

were awed by what some kids had to go through to get water, [and] were able to go from focusing on merely drinking water to survive to considering use of water for religious purposes and celebrations. There was also a great shift in their categorizing of their use of water as 'wants' and 'needs.' The strongest shift was in their realization that many of their uses of water would, to the rest of the world, be considered a luxury . . . Students also better understood the high value placed on water in these cultures and the ability of these children to use water carefully and still lead fulfilling, rich lives (Willamette Valley/JD/V).

Davis had the students record their new understandings in a graphic organizer or diagram. Through the literature and the reflection process, students began to develop an "appreciation for these individuals' culture, [and] changed their perspective of their own relationship with water" (Willamette Valley/JD/V).

Teacher Talk, New York

The Teacher Talk group had existed since 2000 as a university-based inquiry and support group. The mixed group of K-12 teachers, specialists and professors had met monthly on Long Island, N.Y. to discuss children's literature and its use in

the classroom, seeking to keep it alive and a joyful part of learning. The group as a whole was committed to the use of multicultural literature and culturally relevant pedagogy. They viewed reading as a sociocultural transaction (Teacher Talk/MM/I).

The global literature focus was not the only way their inquiry crossed borders; the group expanded beyond its state borders when Joan Zaleski invited a new member to use Skype to join the discussion from Hawaii. This reflected the group's desire to consider added perspectives.

The Teacher Talk group was one of three WOW communities that participated in the project for more than one year, so the growth in their understanding is significant because it reflects what happens with longer sustained inquiry into the use of global literature. However, the difference in the focus of each year's inquiry led them to predominantly intercultural insights the first year and pedagogical insights the second year, albeit both with global literature.

The critical nature of their inquiries is the reason they are in this cluster. The Teacher Talk members have a history of critically thinking about social justice and global issues through interacting with children's literature (Teacher Talk/JZ/I). In that sense they could have been part of the social justice cluster, however the foci of the inquiries and the classroom engagements were more in line with general critical thinking than thinking about particular social issues. The 2011-2012 goal was to develop a definition for global literature that would support the development of a global perspective for themselves and their students. The 2012-2013 goal was to problematize the Text Complexity Exemplar list for the Common Core State Standards, adding more global and multicultural titles to the list, thereby supporting

the development of a global perspective. They surrounded their thinking and reflecting both years with professional reading. Significant texts were the international curriculum framework (Short, 2009a), Suh & Samuel (2011), and *Pathways to the Common Core* (Calkins, Ehrenworth & Lehman (2012).

In the process of asking "What is global literature?" the members were digging past a mere definition to a description of the nature and scope of global thinking that leads to a global perspective. Global literature as a genre was easy enough to identify as they thought about origins of authors/illustrators and the book settings (Teacher Talk/MM/V). However, they thought that reading true global literature should lead to global perspectives as readers transact with the texts. Early in the inquiry they settled on some characteristics of global literature, describing it as a universal story told from a different perspective that builds tolerance. By *global* they meant anything outside of the student's background knowledge, but also a story that investigates a character's perspective instead of a touristic run-down of facts (Teacher Talk/JZ/D - 10.1.11). They did not think of *global* as a book about an element that is in common across the globe, such as losing a tooth or going to school. Instead, they thought a global story connects at a heart level instead of merely an informational level. In one of the meetings, members looked at multiple stories and posted some titles that were truly global because they reflected the transnationalism of living in two cultures: *Grandfather's Journey* (Say,1993), or *Apple Pie 4th of July* (Wong, 2002). Other titles were too universal, without regard to the unique cultures represented: *This is the Way We Go to School* (Baer, 1990) or Wellington's 2004 title *Crepes by Suzette* (Teacher Talk/JZ/D - 10.27.11). Two pieces

of global literature that met their criteria were the focus of multiple vignettes. The first year many of the teachers read *Inside Out & Back Again* (Lai, 2011) with their students (grade 3 through university). The second year several of the teachers read *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* (Lin, 2009) and created cross-curricular units with the book.

Louise Shaw asked a question in her vignette that reflects the group's thinking about the nature of global literature across the first year: "Is it a separate genre or does it describe a perspective, an individual's way of reading and thinking about a piece of literature?" In other words, global literature contributes to the development of a globally-oriented way of thinking and knowing. She used dialogic theory from Bakhtin and Ernest Boesch to illustrate part of that process. She concluded that her students:

gained insight into someone else's perspective on the world while learning more about their own. 'It is through gazing at one another and exchanging points of view in a continual dialectic that we come to understand ourselves and those whom we see' (Gomez & White, 2010, p. 1017). [Shaw felt] that this is the essence of global literature (Teacher Talk/LS/V).

The vignettes repeatedly focused on common humanity with engagements around universal themes. While this seems more in line with the cultural awareness cluster, it represents the group's conclusion rather than their beginning orientation. Through critically thinking about literature and then standing back and reflecting on their discussions within their group and with their students, they were able to conclude that:

global literature has helped [us] to understand the 'human story' within literature. . . We can relate to characters in stories because the themes that flow through the book hit on life themes that are a part of the human experience, regardless of ethnicity and cultural background we bring to it (Teacher Talk/EC/V - 2011-2012).

Rather than staying focused on dichotomous understandings of same and different, the analysis of their data revealed a more nuanced understanding of common humanity that acknowledged but was not limited by the cultural experiences of each reader. Their understanding went "beyond the text to a stance that recognizes the perspectives and cultural assumptions of both the author and the reader" (Teacher Talk/P 2012-2013).

Instead of thinking in categories, they thought more about values, beliefs and feelings. Joan Zaleski described her interactions with her university students:

Feelings became a universal language, instead of culture becoming a barrier . . . [While reading *Inside Out & Back Again* (Lai, 2011), students] shared an experience of having to leave behind something or someone they loved . . . [The book] helped them understand why their families might be silent about the Viet Nam War . . . we gained respect for each other's background. [Zaleski concluded that] when students personally connect to the emotions and feelings of what they are reading, it is much easier for them to share their own stories, make their own meanings (Teacher Talk/JZ/V - 2011-2012).

Zaleski supported student connections focused on feelings, which in turn fostered a development of global empathy, one of the elements of intercultural understanding.

Other Teacher Talk members reported a similar emphasis away from factual information toward feelings, values and beliefs. Amy Geddes described her discussions with her ESL students as enabling dialogue about their own losses and gains (Teacher Talk/AG/V - 2012-2013). Geddes looked for these deeper universal themes that specifically enhanced her students' abilities to be global thinkers, to foster tolerance (Teacher Talk/MM/D - 5.14.13). Esmeralda Carini added that discussion involving feelings gave way to higher level thinking and “provided an opening for students to explore their own assumptions and life experiences . . . It supported concepts of tolerance, diversity and acceptance of all” (Teacher Talk/EC/V - 2011-2012). Jennifer Pularra mentioned specifically that she and her students discussed how “sharing your life story makes it feel important” (Teacher Talk/JP/V). They discussed friendship, hardship, family, culture, country pride, citizenship, and religion. They explored emotions such as pride, bravery, jealousy, loneliness, depression, joy, happiness, and love. Pularra concluded that “global thinking led us to realize that differences are what make us all alike” (Teacher Talk/JP/V).

During their inquiry in 2012-2013, Teacher Talk members focused on problematizing the CCSS Text Complexity Exemplar list (*Text Exemplars and Sample Performance Tasks - English Language Arts & Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects*; http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_B.pdf). While the CCSS gave them a common language across districts and age levels, they began to notice the different ways that districts instituted the standards. Some took the Text Complexity

Exemplars as a mandated list and others a suggested list. When they noticed the age of the books selected to be part of the list, and the lack of rich diversity, they wanted to find texts comparable in lexile and text complexity that were global in focus, and would allow students to interact with global universal themes.

The main insight that surfaced during the course of the second year was the power of an educator study group in supporting teachers in a time of great change, increased scrutiny and prescriptive practices. The Teacher Talk group acknowledged that the CCSS supports the professionalism and latitude of teachers to construct units based on their individual classroom needs; however, it took the study group community to help the teachers maintain the focus on creating engagements that kept their students loving literature. As veteran teacher Vera Zinnel noted, it took her a while to realize that even with prescribed curriculum, she could modify the script to fit what she knew fostered rich discussion that supported global thinking (Teacher Talk/VZ/V - 2012-2013).

Carini, in her role as a district literacy specialist, worked to help teachers in her district understand that the CCSS define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, but not how teachers should teach. Through Carini's workshop, the teachers were able to "develop respect for their own professional judgment and for the professional judgment of each other" (Teacher Talk/MM/V) Practically, this meant that many of the teachers felt they had the professional competence to expand the Text Complexity Exemplar list with rich and meaningful texts to build a curriculum that is aligned to the CCSS. The teachers were not the only ones to gain important insights into their professional practice. Carini shared how she herself

realized how important it was to support the empowerment of the teachers rather than just instruct them (Teacher Talk/EC/V - 2012-2013). Instead of handing them curriculum and methods in a "banking" manner, Carini gave them the tools to adjust the content and methods to fit their individual classrooms, while staying aligned with the Standards (Teacher Talk/EC/personal communication).

Zaleski added a caution to this study group success story: "I worry that most teachers, without the support of colleagues, would turn to published lists, curriculum, and lesson plans" (Teacher Talk/JZ/V - 2012-2013). Her caution was illustrated by Angela Buffalino-Morgan's description of trying to find global texts around a mapping unit that would allow students "to 'meet' people outside their own communities and see how landscapes influence people's ways of life" (Teacher Talk/AB-M/V). In the process of locating books through libraries and bookstores, she did not find the rich materials she was looking for and, without the support of the Teacher Talk community, would have ended up with very little. This speaks again of the necessity of making global literature more findable and accessible.

Social Justice Cluster: Descriptions

These groups, like the critical thinking cluster, discussed their questions with a critical stance. However, they were focused on a particular global issue such as the environment (Global Environment) or oppression (Vashon Island), or they adopted a social justice stance that made them structure interactions around global literature through critical conversations about big issues (Douglass high School, Cunningham Colts, Eastern Oregon/Villagomez). The groups are arranged by the age group with which the educators interacted.

Cunningham Colts, Nevada

Cunningham Colts was a group of five third-grade teachers in Nevada, who wanted to help their students develop increased global literacy/global citizenship. They wanted their students to be able to question their world and see themselves as agents for social change. In order to engage in dialogue with students, the teachers selected books that dealt with identity, migration, war, oppression, human rights, and the global community. With the books they also engaged in questioning history, and looking at local and global environmental issues. The teachers selected professional reading that would help them theorize and understand what was happening in their classrooms. They read Randy Bomer and Katherine Bomer's book, *For a Better World: Reading and Writing for Social Action* (2001). Because of the reading and the focus of their inquiries with students, the group was placed in the social justice cluster.

One of the primary goals of the group was to help their students develop a greater sense of empathy, and therefore increased tolerance and acceptance of others. They also wanted their students to gain a sense of agency. In order to accomplish their goals, they mapped out a series of six large themes (e.g. war and oppression; global community and human rights), created text sets for each theme, and scheduled time to cover the themes across the year. However, once they began the process of reading the literature with students, they discovered that what they needed to do instead was wait until the themes could be naturally inserted. The process became much more organic:

As a group, we decided that these books do not need to be read in specific

sets or themes, but can be taught as we see our students may be ready for them. We . . . realized that this rigid structure did not allow for a more natural flow of discussions and connections. Instead, we have decided to pick and choose books that may tie into our reading, social studies, or science themes and have students make those connections . . . on their own (Cunningham Colts/MT).

They did not want to impede the students' natural curiosity, and so they allowed the conversations and choice of books to weave in and out of topics (Cunningham Colts/FR). The same need for flexibility happened with the professional reading. They had originally mapped out a rigid reading schedule, but instead found that what worked better was to divide the chapters up among the members, allowing each to report on what they had learned and reflected on from the assigned chapter.

All the teachers understood on a theoretical level the importance of dialogue, and believed that it empowered students by allowing them to embrace their thoughts, responses, and opinions. Dialogue supported the dynamic process of thinking and reflecting (Cunningham Colts/V). Stimulating dialogue was not difficult because "children are naturally curious, inquisitive, and bubbling with questions . . . As educators, we constantly nurtured and celebrated their excitement and curiosity and often contributed our own questions and wonderings" (Cunningham Colts/V).

The teachers intentionally supported dialogue several ways. The first was through the reading response journals, which primed student thinking, drew on discussions, or allowed students to ask further questions. Students would then read a partner's thoughts and respond back in writing, an exercise the teachers called

"literary letters." They also used a dialogic style of read-aloud, recording and posting questions on chart paper, which stayed up for a long time as a support for writing and conversation. They also posted response starters to help students dig beyond "I liked the book."

Even though the teachers allowed dialogue to guide book selection, they intentionally taught point of view. They were certain that learning other perspectives was critical to the development of empathy of students for others. The empathy students gained became one of the highlights of the year. This was demonstrated as they nodded at comments classmates made, supporting their questions, and by the final project of the year, the publication of their own stories to donate to a bilingual school in Cambodia.

As a group, they gained insight into the importance of global literature in the classroom. "Often times we are so preoccupied with testing, pretesting, and a skill driven curriculum that it becomes easy to lose sight of our goals of being a *world teacher*" (Cunningham Colts/MT). Integrating world literature transformed the way the teachers thought about their curriculum; however, this was not a straightforward process, because "some of our colleagues . . . were initially nervous and apprehensive about integrating new literature" (Cunningham Colts/FR). They wondered about fitting in books around the required basal readers. They thought that some topics might be too sensitive to talk about in class. The tensions prompted "great discussion during our meetings. Having these open discussions and concerns and being a network of support for each other allowed us to reevaluate our teaching practice in order to provide our students with the life changing curriculum"

(Cunningham Colts/FR). They further clarified their initial hesitations of sharing stories that touch on sensitive issues such as poverty and hunger:

These hesitations mostly stemmed from our fear of how our students may react and the questions they may ask. Through conversation, practice, and support of each other's goals, we came to realize that the dialogue that would emerge and questions that would be asked from sharing these stories were the foundation for helping our students understand their important role in the world and the changes they can make to one day make it a better place (Cunningham Colts/V).

The teachers' hesitations were not unfounded, possibly because many of the students dealt with issues of poverty and hunger themselves. "Many of our students live in the neighboring motels, also known as *budget suites*, which rent their rooms weekly. As a result, these students are classified as homeless due to the unstable nature of their living situation" (Cunningham Colts/P).

An important part of a social justice framework is social action. Yet, how do students, who are themselves dealing with issues such as hunger and poverty, become empowered to exercise their own agency? Making a difference was an important goal for the year. "We did not want our students to simply read about the world, but to rethink how they can change it" (Cunningham Colts/FR). The final project grew out of reading books that discussed literacy in other parts of the world. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq* (Winter, 2005) relates the herculean efforts a librarian went to save her library collection in 2003, during the Iraqi war. *Nasreen's Secret School: A True Story from Afghanistan* (Winter, 2009) relates the

efforts a grandmother made to provide an education to her granddaughter, living under the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. The students were concerned about the lack of books and education and wondered what they could do. As they thought together and brainstormed ideas, they concluded they could write and publish books, and then send them to a school in need. As a result of their publishing project, the students sent more than 80 books to a Cambodian bilingual school that offers instruction in English and Khmer. The project was not carried out in isolation:

Just like any topic or thematic unit taught, this activity led our class to learn more about Cambodia, other world problems such as hunger and malnutrition, and ways to combat such problems. As world advocates, our students learned about peanut butter as a new and effective way of helping those who are malnourished in other countries (Project Peanut Butter), leading them to also engage in a peanut butter drive to send to Cambodia along with the books and school supplies. Undoubtedly, our students became true change agents and world advocates (Cunningham Colts/V).

How much does one's own history of dealing with issues of poverty, hunger, and homelessness contribute toward developing a greater empathy for others, who are also in in tough circumstances? When asked what role that played with her students, Jennifer Crosthwaite responded that reading world literature was key, especially stories about the experiences of children. The books influenced both the students' thinking and their interpretation of their own lives.

Was I surprised at their generosity and willingness to share their hard work for the betterment of others? I would have to say no . . . Most importantly,

students understood the impact they would have on other children simply by donating these books. Reading world literature, taking action, and making a difference made the entire experience REAL to them . . . This project allowed students to see their hard work evolve into a major change for other children they had read about in books. [Crosthwaite concluded:] I once read that critical literacy not only shapes one's mind, but also your heart. I strongly believe that our students' hearts were shaped and changed (Cunningham Colts/JC/personal communication - 7.18.13).

Global Environment, Maryland

The Global Environment community in Maryland was composed of seven elementary teachers and one university professor. Their focus was on incorporating international literature into science and social studies curricula, so the books they gathered were centered on the issue of environmental stewardship. This group was an effective demonstration of the excitement that is generated around global literature because the group increased in size as teachers began to interact with colleagues and talk about the inquiry.

This group was created by Professor Ernie Bond, known for his work on environmental issues and as a member of the advisory board for the Nature Generation, the educational arm of the Maresco foundation, which funds the Green Earth Book Awards. It is this orientation to environmental issues that placed this group in the social justice cluster.

As a past jury member of the international Hans Christian Anderson award, Bond had contacts all over the world who were working in the area of children's

literature. One of the goals of this group was to create a website of international titles focused on environmental stewardship, a much-needed resource due to the focus on global environmental issues in the schools around the world. However, finding titles that originated in other countries can be a difficult task. Rather than use only U.S. resources to locate potential books, Bond used a listserv with international membership (childlit) to gather suggestions for books originating in or focused on other countries (Global Environment/EB/personal communication/4.23.14). The list is periodically updated as new titles become available (<http://faculty.salisbury.edu/~elbond/environmentalist.html>). In creating this website, the legacy of this group will be valued and can be used for years to come.

Bond, like many of the professors who worked on the WOW project, is a strategist. He piggy-backed the WOW grant onto a Department of Education STEM grant and the Green Earth Book Awards. Grouping grant monies and inquiries streamlined the selection process, increased the purchasing power for books for the group members, and supported creativity in the learning engagements. The local presence of the award ceremony around Earth Day allowed for classroom visits from authors, since they had arrived in order to receive an award. A final benefit of securing additional grants was each member's ability to keep copies of books for their classrooms and give copies to their students. Many of the students received copies of either *Luz Sees the Light* (Davila, 2011) or *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families* (Roth, 2011).

Browsing and giving access to physical books instead of just providing

descriptions or reviews is an important element in supporting teachers in their use of global titles. The titles considered for the Green Earth Book Award are housed in the Salisbury University Curriculum Collection. This meant that the teachers could browse a wide selection of books and make informed selections that fit their students and the focus of their inquiry. The fact that the titles had been nominated for an award would indicate they were of good quality. Teachers chose titles "specifically to enhance the range of perspectives available, others choose books based on appeal as whole-class reads" (Global Environment/V). The book selection process also demonstrated the potential difficulties of using international titles. The teachers at Salisbury Middle School picked *The Carbon Diaries* (Lloyd, 2009) as a work of fiction, yet were unable to use it as planned because the Board of Education approval process was too slow.

Although this group did not report on the content of their study group or classroom discussions, they did report new insights for students in intercultural understanding. The students were able to gain a global sense of environmental issues when teachers used books that dealt with issues in several geographic areas. For example Gerrie Wiersberg's fourth grade class engaged in a year-long focus on environmental science. "The class had actually started by reading some of Bruce McMillan's books exploring the ecology of Iceland. They had plotted locations on a world map, and they had investigated the lives of puffins and humans in Iceland" (Global Environment/V). With the new text set they were able to compare the ecological conditions in Iceland to what was happening in Kenya (*Mama Miti: Wangari Mathai and the Trees of Kenya*, Napoli, 2010; *Seeds of Change: Planting a*

Path to Peace, Johnson, 2010), Eritrea (*The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families*, Roth, 2011), Honduras (*The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough*, Milway, 2010), and Denmark (*Energy Island: How One Community Harnessed the Wind and Changed Their World*, Drummond, 2011).

The development of a sense of self and of connectedness was significant for students who participated in Susan Roth's art workshop. She taught the students how to create the collage style she used in the illustrations for *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families* (Roth, 2011). Children created self-portraits "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' " (Global Environment/V). Roth took photos of self-portraits made by children from around the world, then linked them together, holding hands, in a continuous frieze (<http://susanroth.com/letsholdhands/index.htm>).

Meeting with Canadian author Caitlyn Vernon and discussing her work in the Great Bear Rain Forest in British Columbia (*Nowhere Else on Earth: Standing Tall for the Great Bear Rainforest*, 2011) was significant in demonstrating the relationships between people and forest, and the impact young people can have on their world. This is a critical understanding for young people in order to give them a sense of agency and support their desire and efforts to change the world they live in. "The 7th graders were transfixed by the accounts of the Gitga'at people, the environmental issues raised, and the concept of youth activism" (Global Environment/FR).

Finally, children's stereotypes were challenged as they read *Luz Sees the Light* (Davila, 2011), a graphic novel of a Latina child living in Canada. "This was

actually a very interesting concept for the children to consider... Here was a character that did not fit with their preconceptions about Canadians or Latinos" (Global Environment/FR). The author, Claudia Davila, is originally from Chile but is now living in Canada.

Vashon Island, Washington

Vashon Island members had a strong history of community activism, which informed the focus for their year as a WOW community. They had worked with high school students to collect memoirs from WWII veterans, POW's and camp internees, then presented their oral histories in a drama. They had also collected oral stories from the island Hispanic community, giving them voice and visibility. Students from the three schools and community organizations had also participated in community rebuilding, improvement and sustainability projects in places as far away as New Orleans, Mexico and Nicaragua. It is this past history and orientation toward reading about social issues and engaging in social action that guided the placement of this group in the social justice cluster.

Not only was the group crossing borders with books and service projects, they were also crossing borders within the group itself. Vashon Island is an "alternative community," representing a wide range of philosophies (Vashon Island/MH/I). One of the goals was to build connections between community schools and organizations that serve students with families of diverse persuasions. Members worked with Family Link, the community's program for home-schooled students, and Student Link, an alternative school without walls in which students check in with teachers on a schedule. Members also included an arts/humanities

educator who works with immigrant youth, a public school seventh-grade humanities teacher, a school librarian at the public middle school, and a seventh- and eighth-grade social studies/humanities teacher at the island non-religious private school.

The main focus of their study group meetings was to discuss the three or more novels that each member read over the course of each month. The dialogue between study group members about the books became one of the highlights of the WOW project. Group leader Merna Hecht characterized it as respectful, challenging, lively and intellectually satisfying.

It has been a unique experience as none of us would have taken the time to read these books or even have been aware of them. Our discussions have generated lively debate, a focus on important global issues and their rightful place in the classroom. Because of the project we are committed to bringing this material into our classrooms (Vashon Island/MT).

At their final study group meeting, they concluded: "we had not anticipated how much we would gain as teachers from this endeavor. None of us would have read as widely or critically as we did without our commitment to the WOW study group" (Vashon Island/FR).

The dialogue was an important part of the group's learning, both in building bonds in the community and in discussing practical issues in using the books. "We appreciated talking between programs and schools. It was enriching to us to work together and it provided us with an important community building opportunity" (Vashon Island/FR). They valued the discussion so much that they suggested that

Worlds of Words continue supporting projects between schools—private, public, non-traditional and home school programs.

In addition to reviewing each title, they also considered reading levels, age appropriateness, which readers might particularly benefit from the book, and where the title might fit into an existing curriculum. They considered issues to which parents might object. They discussed what additional background information and research would be required for the students to fully understand the book. They also brainstormed how the book could be used as a mentor text for classroom projects. Finally, they tried to list possible connections to community resources (e.g. people who have engaged in humanitarian missions) that would help students understand the content (Vashon Island/FR).

One particularly important aspect of the dialogue was the attentive listening by group members as others shared their thoughts about books. As previously mentioned, the dialogue included content that members thought would or would not be appropriate for their student audience and objections parents might have to some of the content. However, through the process of "active listening" and hearing diverse opinions, members expanded their ideas of what books they could and would use with their students (Vashon Island/MH/I). This is significant because the content, in many of the books, described very difficult situations. One example is *Gringolandia* (Miller-Lachmann, 2009), a novel centered on Pinochet's oppressive dictatorship in Chile. Sandwiched in the story, the teen protagonist learns about the torture his father endured during the five years he was imprisoned, and that has left him a wounded man, both in body and spirit.

The group's goals for their students were transformative in nature. They wanted to help students to cross borders and change the view of themselves "so that the phrase 'like me' includes what we thought was foreign or strange" (Vashon Island/P). In other words, they wanted their students to grow to be "someone who has the communicative competence to interact with people from other cultures on multiple levels without experiencing the mystification and confusion when confronted with something different" (Allan, 2003, p. 83). They hoped to do this through literature by:

imagining oppressive social and political situations in order to develop empathy for others and a vision of how to participate in changing things for the better, . . . helping students develop a political imagination that will support them in creating a vision of how to contribute to peace, . . . [and] giving the students a sense of voice and efficacy regarding their values, hopes and dreams for a more just and sustainable world (Vashon Island/P).

The learning engagements the group designed around the book titles allowed for dialogue, added research as students became curious, and provided for the creation of projects as visible records of student interaction with the concepts and issues in the books. They selected "window books"—books that gave a realistic picture of another culture. One such title was *No Ordinary Day* (Ellis, 2011), which they thought:

was outstanding not only for its portrayal of certain aspects of poverty in India and how it affects the daily lives of young people, but even more-so for the way it educates the reader about leprosy. We agreed that Deborah Ellis

was able to present the ways people with the disease are stigmatized and made outcasts without being overly moralistic or didactic (Vashon Island/MH/D - 11.16.11).

Tim Heryford based his study of contemporary India on Ellis' book. Through interacting with the story, he wanted students to "see how people all around the world live with the same universal needs and fears" (Vashon Island/TH/V). He wanted them to read texts that would dispel stereotypes and broaden their understanding of big world events like conflict, poverty and disease. Along with the book, students studied the United Nations Commission on human rights and children's rights, Gandhi and the Indian art form called *mandalas*. They gained deeper understandings of issues in contemporary India, human rights and peaceful revolution.

Lauretta Hyde taught at the Harbor School, a private school that centers its curriculum on social justice issues. The umbrella subject for the seventh grade year is *Becoming a World Citizen*, in which students "examine world religions, human rights, peace makers, the disenfranchised in America, etc. [They] 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?' " (Vashon Island/LH/V). As part of that focus, Hyde used *The Breadwinner* (Ellis, 2001) as a mentor text to introduce her study on peaceful heroes. After reading about Parvana, a young Afghan adolescent in Kabul who dresses like a boy in order to earn money to support her family, students then created Venn diagrams, comparing their lives to Parvana's.

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 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 (Vashon Island/LH/V).

Both Heryford and Hyde guided their students in an inquiry about the concept of peaceful resistance. Heryford read *After Gandhi: One Hundred Years of Nonviolent Resistance* by Anne Sibley O'Brien and Perry Edmond O'Brien (2009). His students began to understand how the independence of India was won through non-violent resistance. Students used their new understanding to create "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" (Vashon Island/TH/V). Hyde guided her students in the same direction, looking at *Peaceful Heroes* (Winter, 2009), both well-known (e.g. Martin Luther King Jr.) and less well-known (Oscar Romero, Ginetta Sagan, Marla Ruzicka). She used a combination of picture books and informational books to help her students engage with people who resisted oppression in a non-violent way. Students then created a picture book biography of one of their heroes to share with younger children.

Eastern Oregon/Villagomez

Amanda Villagomez was a member of the Eastern Oregon group. However, because of the two-hour driving distance and the one-hour time zone difference, she

functioned more as a study group of one. While the other members of the Eastern Oregon group reflected the group's proposal and were placed in the cultural awareness cluster, Villagomez had a clear social justice orientation from the start. This was apparent for several reasons: (a) She taught in a bilingual charter school. As a result of being located in the state county with the highest poverty level, the school felt that social justice was an important element in the curriculum. (b) Villagomez' family experiences made her sensitive to social issues. Her husband emigrated from Mexico; her grandmother lived in Arizona and worked to support United Farm Workers; and her mother exposed her children to other cultures and justice issues (Eastern Oregon/AV/I). (c) The titles she chose for her book clubs were ones that engaged with social issues like the plight of migrant workers, war and its effect on citizens, the building of cross-cultural communities, terminal illness and forced migration. For these reasons, Villagomez' work is considered part of the social justice cluster.

The vignette focuses on the *Looking Within, Looking Beyond* unit Villagomez taught in her eighth-grade language arts class across the last two quarters of the school year. She believed in the integration and interaction between reading and writing, so her students read and wrote constantly, practicing reading like writers and writing like readers. Four of their selected titles were for their global book clubs and three others were for their independent reading. All titles were from a list of possible multicultural and global texts; some student-generated independent-reading titles were approved because of the global focus of the text. The WOW grant funds enabled Villagomez to purchase needed multiple copies of global texts in

order to read in book clubs (Eastern Oregon/AV/I). Students recorded their thoughts in journals (in either Spanish or English), preparing to discuss the book with their book club members or reflecting on points that came up in the book discussions. They also wrote multiple identity poems, personal narratives or fictional pieces incorporating global experiences, and several literary essays that "explored a single theme or character in Spanish, [and] how multiple texts explored a similar theme/concept in different ways in English" (Eastern Oregon/V).

Discussion was an important element in the interaction around the books, helping students dig to a more complex understanding of the text, the social issues that were part of the story, and how those same issues play out in a local or global context today. The discussions took place in multiple places. Students reflected on their reading through writing, because Villagomez believes that:

writing is a powerful means to process thoughts and become more aware of thinking about text. As a result, I intentionally incorporated a range of written responses to reading into the unit, starting with informal quick writes and progressing toward the more formal text analysis essays at the end of the unit (Eastern Oregon/V).

Students discussed among themselves during the book club meetings. Villagomez engaged students in the close reading of text by teaching and working with the Notice & Note signposts (*Notice & note: Strategies for Close Reading*, Beers and Probst, 2013), giving them clear strategies to help them comprehend a text beyond simple summary. She would push students to dig deeper when she noticed surface level comments, asking them to take note of their thinking while reading or

discussing. She also gave students discussion tools, such as reminding them that comments should reflect consideration of what peers have already stated. She acknowledged:

Book club meetings were rich opportunities to learn from each other and to co-construct understandings about texts and culture. Through interacting with peers, students were able to expand beyond their own thoughts and were able to benefit from their peers' perspectives and prior knowledge that supported stronger comprehension of the experiences in the texts (Eastern Oregon/V).

Through the discussions and writing assignments, the students generated questions they wanted to consider, which reflected Villagomez' orientation toward engaging with social justice issues. They wondered what it was like to live in a context of war and how people deal with extreme hardships or painful events. They were interested in the discrimination or the bullying out of fear, generated by reactions to events such as 9/11. They tried to imagine life as a refugee and what it would be like to relocate and have to learn a new culture and language. They wondered what living in fear of the rulers of your country would be like, or about war-torn countries' perspectives of the United States (Eastern Oregon/AV/D - 2.9.13). The students did additional research and individual reading in order to answer their questions and write their essays.

Through the process of looking within and looking beyond, students gained an array of intercultural and personal insights (Eastern Oregon/AV/D - 4.18.13). They gained a greater understanding of what it was like to live in a country with an

active war. They developed empathy for what immigrants go through as they leave everything behind and move, adapting to another country and language. They learned to appreciate their own heritage and families. They gained important socio-cultural insights as they realized they could not judge a person by their appearance because they had no idea what that person had been through. They also realized that immigrants can create a strong community even though they may initially be fearful of reaching out. The discussions also served to correct misconceptions such as the assumption that the mother in *Shooting Kabul* (Senzai, 2010) should have had known about the terrorists' 9/11 plans because she was from the country from where the terrorists came (Eastern Oregon/V).

Douglass High School, Missouri

The Douglass group was located in a unique high school in Colombia, Missouri. Originally opened after the Civil War as a school to serve African American students, it is now home to approximately 200 students who are "at-risk" and thrive in a more alternative style of learning. It is also the home for the district Adult ESL and Adult GED instruction, and is seeking to become the designated home for ELL instruction. Because of the unique population, the principal hired a group of teachers who frame teaching and learning within a social justice stance. As a result of this shared pedagogical orientation, many of the teachers taught as teams, structuring the units to enable students to make connections across curricular subjects, particularly English and social studies. They used inquiry as a primary methodology, supported by the interaction of reading, writing and dialogue. Through reading global books they wanted students to explore their own views of

the world as they crossed cultural boundaries and developed greater global awareness (Douglass/P).

The history of the school makes apparent the fact that the school population and focus had metamorphosed many times, and had supplies that reflected all the changes. As a result, teachers wanted more contemporary and engaging literature that allowed classrooms to "become better equipped arenas for open exchange and perspective-sharing about the global community" (Douglass/P). The group spent the entire grant on multiple copies of twenty-two titles that were written by international authors, and were either situated in other countries or dealt with immigrants arriving in North America. While some titles catered to teen issues, most were stories of teens dealing with oppression such as the sex trade, forced servitude, early marriages, no educational opportunities, and prejudice.

Students engaged with the literature through whole group and independent reading. However, they did not end up reading as many titles as the teachers had hoped because the teachers "did not anticipate on having as many 'stopping points' to clarify and discuss student questions/confusions. The teachers did not want to rush past these conversations; so instead, they decided to read fewer texts" (Douglass/FR). This is not surprising because global literature engages with cultural features that are unfamiliar, challenging comprehension, yet stimulating curiosity. Dara Bradley relates how she realized:

putting the book down literally was an important part of our book study because it gave us the opportunity to appreciate national differences, such as sports, and to examine stereotypes . . . and understand them as superficial

knowledge that engenders prejudice. Taking time to nurture these types of connections, ones that might on surface appear to be trivial, enabled students to read more deeply and confront what could otherwise be a conflict of understanding between them and the text (Douglass/V).

Her comment illustrates the need for students to have some factual information, even of the 5F variety, so that they can think about and make sense of the text. Bradley allowed students to research what intrigued them about the country, capitalizing on their interests and personal inquiries.

Bradley's comment is an illustration of the tension the teachers felt as they guided students' interaction with what is unfamiliar, while at the same time thinking about global issues. They wanted students to gain global understanding, "to see themselves as connected to people and events which they may never hear about on their own television sets at home (Douglass/FR). However, the teachers were unsure of the extent that students gained empathy and developed action-oriented desires to remedy any issues represented in the books. The teachers appreciated the complex nature of global understanding and were happy to nurture students' interest in language. However, they were also interested in how this might eventually translate into transformative global awareness (Douglass/FR).

One tool the teachers used to support deeper understanding of issues was to post charts with themes that could appear in the books and guide thinking (Douglass/V). They considered a wide range of social issues and themes:

- Resistance
- Division
- Hope/hopelessness
- Betrayal

- Power/powerlessness
- Displacement/belonging
- Voice/silence
- Change
- Enslavement
- Greed
- Courage
- Freedom
- Bondage
- Violence
- Peace
- Disillusionment
- Separation

In a discussion of *Sold* (McCormick, 2006), teachers and students asked questions in order to unveil assumptions and explore point of view. They considered voice (and silenced voices), power, resistance, freedom and bondage. When reading *I Am the Messenger* (Zusak, 2005), they also considered the ramifications of being a passive member of society versus taking action to solve problems in a community. The character of taxi driver Ed “forced us to think about the ways we wanted to participate in our communities and if we would act to make a difference” (Douglass/V).

Reflecting on the year, teachers felt that the salient understanding for them was the importance of fostering connections. Their overall conclusion was that creating connections for students was at the heart of their discussions in and out of the classroom (Douglass/V). Bradley explained:

I wanted students to be able to connect to characters outside of their own understandings of the world. They needed to be able see themselves as living and practicing citizens who belonged to an ever-changing global society. . . I was more than pleased to find us on the trails of human values, national past

times, and language. I would not suggest that their reading of this text translated into transformative global awareness where they understood the interrelationships between the past, present, and future of global issues. However, their questions and curiosities encouraged them to think critically about the text and to connect creatively in ways that helped them care about the decisions Ed [*I Am the Messenger*, Zusak, 2005] made for his life . . . In our [WOW] inquiry group, what we ultimately relearned was that making connections is at the heart of all learning. Not just in reading a text or classroom learning, but in how we relate to one another, develop empathy for what we see, and form a worldview different than our own" (Douglass/V).

Within the study group, members did not engage in professional reading due to time constraints; however they reflected together on what happened in various classrooms. There was a strong sense of trust from the principal, so discussions were open. "Each individual was dynamic from the start. The [school] context was different and intense. These are not people that stand on the side . . . Alternative education [implies an] innate permission to do alternative things" (Douglass/LS/I). Sanchez felt the inquiry with both teachers and students was successful since the staff "jump[ed] in, [were] honest and work[ed] together" (Douglass/LS/I). Together they considered "how to encourage author critique with well-defined assumptions and beliefs, nurture rigorous discussions, and focus on issues of difference while instilling a culture of inclusion" (Douglass/V).

Critical Thinking and Social Justice Clusters: Shifts in Understanding

All the groups in the critical thinking, social justice, and embedded intercultural perspective clusters could fall under one heading, that of taking a critical stance in their work. What differed was the way they approached their inquiry, and the concepts or themes that determined the direction of their thinking. This chapter focused on the critical thinking and social justice clusters. The difference between the clusters was in the subject matter with which they intentionally engaged. While the critical thinking cluster focused on interrogating texts with an eye for issues of power and oppression, the social justice cluster read and thought about power and oppression in regard to specific issues, encouraging a movement toward social action.

As discussed at the beginning of the chapter, defining critical literacy is a challenge. Different groups in the critical literacy cluster used a variety of working definitions for the concept. Groups such as A to Z Literacy seemed to define critical literacy as deep thinking. They worked on closing literacy gaps with their own students and with their partner schools in Zambia. Their primary goal was to alleviate poverty through increased literacy. However, they did not focus on social issues such as poverty, but instead encouraged thinking in ways that supported the comprehension of a text. Other groups (e.g. Tri-Cities) used critical literacy as defined in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2002), examining issues of power and oppression. This difference in definition meant that, even though they used the same terminology, the goals of the inquiries differed practically.

No large differences between the critical literacy and social justice clusters

emerged in terms of the intercultural understanding they gained. However, several differences in the focus of the clusters surfaced. The first is that the social justice cluster was more concerned about issues than generally interrogating a text. They selected books that concentrated on large global problems (energy or water conservation) and justice issues (war, abuse, the sex-trade, poverty). Secondly, while the development of sense of agency surfaced in groups from all clusters, it was an important goal for the social justice cluster. They wanted students to see potential action they could take with a range of issues. Finally, the social justice cluster tended to be more willing to acknowledge and then set aside issues of appropriateness, and ask tough questions of their students.

Several recurring themes emerged through the analysis of the data. While these themes may have been touched on in the cultural awareness cluster, they were more prominent with these two clusters.

A Stance that Permeates

While all 25 groups would agree that global literature is a necessary part of the curriculum, the critical literacy/social justice clusters felt that global literature was vital and needed to be a part of the curriculum across subject areas and throughout the year. The teachers were not just after an awareness of the world, but wanted to transform the way students thought by supporting the development of a global worldview. For these groups global was more than a way to describe the origins of the author/illustrator or the setting of the book. It became a way of thinking, a perspective, a stance. It was transformative. The Teacher Talk members called it a globally-oriented way of thinking. It permeated all reading. The

Cunningham Colts called it becoming a world teacher. The broadening effect of thinking globally impacted even the definition of multicultural literature.

Willamette Valley teachers began to think of multicultural in a literal sense, as literature from all cultures, not just minoritized ones.

One concept multiple groups discussed was that of humanization. They used various words such as humanizing, human story, human experience, or humanistic. They were describing what Freire (2002) calls the human vocation: to know ourselves. It is in knowing others that we begin to know ourselves. As groups engaged with global literature, many members commented that students began to understand themselves better. Shaw (Teacher Talk) points out that it is a recursive or dialogic process: we cannot totally know ourselves before knowing others, and it is in knowing others that we become more acquainted with ourselves.

Group members in the critical thinking and social justice clusters also used the word *universal* while describing their insights. What difference was there between the usage of the term by the cultural awareness groups and the use by groups using a critical stance? One difference was the point in the inquiry at which they used the term. Groups aiming for cultural awareness began their inquiry with same and different as a concept they wanted their students to grasp. The groups using a critical stance used the term after reading and reflecting on literature. In other words it was a conclusion rather than a basic understanding going into the inquiry. Universalism in the critical thinking clusters reflects a deeper, more nuanced understanding of the connections between humans. The idea of universal themes also surfaced, but rather than focusing on fact-oriented universals (going to

school, losing teeth, playing games), the universals were more at an emotional level: we all fear, we all believe, we all value.

One of the other aspects of a critical stance is a focus on complexity rather than simplistic or dichotomous interpretations of events. Intercultural and critical thinkers look for complexity rather than simplicity. Allen states that an interculturally understanding person is not mystified and confused with something that is different (Allan, 2003) and part of that comfort-level is entering a situation expecting complexity. The Douglass teachers called it embracing the tension of focusing on differences while instilling a culture of inclusion (Douglass/V). The Tri-Cities group described how they engaged with complexity by thinking with multiple, critical and global perspectives.

Dialogue

In the previously discussed cultural awareness cluster, open dialogue is what propelled some groups into a deeper understanding of cultures; however, the role of dialogue was front and center for the groups using a critical stance in their work. These teachers were after transformation in terms of the way they thought with colleagues and with their students in their classrooms. They were after global thinking, not just developing awareness. A necessary first step was creating a safe place for dialogue. Teachers intentionally fostered dialogue in several ways:

- They chose books that had tension and therefore fostered sustained discussion (Stillwater).
- They gave students tools to think with like Notice and Note signposts (Eastern Oregon), conversation starters (Cunningham Colts), and charts with

themes (Douglass).

- They taught elements of dialogue (Tri-Cities, Cunningham Colts, Eastern Oregon).
- They taught respect as the antithesis of comments that belittle, reduce and therefore stereotype (Douglass).
- They respected fellow group members and were able to turn around and show that respect for students.
- They asked students to think more deeply. They expected reflections to go past looking at basic differences to a more nuanced view of the culture (Vashon Island).
- They learned to listen more and talk less.
- They realized that they themselves could learn from students (A to Z), and they viewed students as smart and capable of deep thinking (Tri-Cities)

Donald Macedo, in his introduction to the 2002 edition of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, states that many educators "transform Freire's notion of dialogue into a method, thus losing sight that the fundamental goal of dialogical teaching is to create a process of learning and knowing that invariably involves theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogue process" (p. 17). The teachers in these clusters resisted the urge to systematize the learning that took place around global literature. They allowed and encouraged the "messiness" of students wrestling with tough issues. Because of the process of dialogue, Eryn Willow's students could ask why education is restricted for girls, and theorize that "You're easier to control when you're dumb" (Willamette Valley/EW/V).

Safety & Risk: Moving Toward Liberation

One of the elements of educator study groups discussed in the literature is the necessity of creating a climate that feels safe (Birchak et al., 1998), allowing members to engage in risk-taking behavior such as showing ignorance, asking big questions, and discussing differences of opinion. This is a fundamental part of critical thinking, because if risk-taking is not comfortable or safe, students and teachers will not engage in critical dialogue. During the interviews done with various WOW groups, the leaders were asked how they created that safe feeling in the study group. Some specified that they felt they were all on an equal playing field (Hobgood); some of the professors and leaders stepped back and refused to play the role of an expert (Tri-Cities, Douglass); for others there was a deep respect for fellow members, seeing each other as intellectuals and agents of change (Vashon Island, Tri-Cities).

In thinking about the data for these clusters, one of the most important and helpful texts has been Freire's (2002) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. As Freire described oppressed people as prescribed, adapting to imposed structure and preferring the security of conformity, it became clear that many teachers are working as oppressed professionals, unable to teach in ways that promote deep thinking. It is no wonder that thinking deeply about texts and issues was a challenge for some members in these communities. When they saw what happened in their study groups and in their classrooms, they experienced a professional liberation.

This liberation is not easy growth in today's educational institutions. Because critical thinking, by its very definition, involves interrogating issues of power, voice,

oppression and agency, it requires a feeling of safety in order to do it. People need to feel free to go where their thoughts take them. This runs counter to the culture in the U.S. educational system. Teacher preparation programs include classes on classroom management; prescriptive curricula outline in detail how and when to teach; professional development is top-down instruction. Teachers struggle with the notion of critical thinking because it runs counter to how they are often told to teach. The study group was vital for this liberation to take place so that in turn, it could happen in the classroom.

The study group was not the only context that needed to feel safe. The classroom dialogue also needed to feel safe in order for students to experience the same liberation. For that to happen, teachers needed to let go of the control over the dialogue. That was not an easy process. While they saw what happened when they talked less and listened more (Tri-Cities), it was not easy to remain silent. Teachers in the WOW groups described the need to overcome their fear of where conversations could go and of what the children may ask (Cunningham Colts). Other teachers were nervous about showing their ignorance of world beliefs such as Islam (Aveson). Still others were nervous about what parents would object to (Vashon Island) or struggled with self-imposed notions of age-appropriate books and topics of conversation (Stillwater, Hobgood, Cunningham Colts, A to Z).

When the conversation was less controlled, groups reported powerful insights contributed by the students: "When we chose to silence our viewpoints, deep, raw, transforming discussions took place" (Aveson). Tri-Cities teachers described the process as embracing the uncomfortableness of not knowing all the

answers or how students would respond (Tri-Cities/KW/V).

Study groups that had outside or self-imposed limits did not report the same level of dialogue in their classrooms. A to Z was a group of literacy coaches who were necessarily focused on building comprehension. Their mission of developing effective pedagogy limited the types of dialogue they engaged in. Rather than be organic, the dialogue between the middle school students and the first graders had pre-determined questions and activities, designed to foster comprehension of a text. They also did not feel comfortable bringing Middle Eastern politics into the dialogue with the first-graders when interacting with *Sitti's Secrets* (Nye, 1994). Stillwater also had self-imposed limits due to a research agenda that dictated the scope of what happened in the classrooms. There were also limits imposed by one of the school districts, which created a climate of limits. The teachers had to focus on sanctioned subjects like tolerance and compassion, steering clear of politics and religion.

Most groups worked through their fears of loss of control or their notions of what children should read about. Group members learned to open the dialogue. They engaged students with emotionally wrenching issues such as the sex trade or abuse, or with global-sized issues such as lack of water or lack of energy. The teachers and students discussed issues that mattered in their minds. Discussion topics were organic, going where the inquiry led (Aveson, Douglass, Willamette Valley, Cunningham Colts). In a sense, the teachers wanted big thinking, so used big concepts with which to think.

Teachers specifically chose books that demonstrated multiple perspectives,

and that moved thinking beyond generalizations and dichotomous conclusions. They kept the thinking in very large categories that defied the tendency to narrow, deliberately inviting complexity into the discussion. The development of intercultural understanding in these groups was a movement toward being comfortable with "un-categorized messiness." Perhaps the biggest learning for the teachers was to look at the unknown without fear but with a sense of adventure. Simeen Tabatabai (Tri-Cities/ST/V) noted that the development of that stance can be very uncomfortable for mono-cultural students. The messiness of open inquiry, likewise, can be very uncomfortable for teachers when they are being told to control their classrooms and what to teach.

Taking Action

One of the signs of intercultural understanding is a commitment to taking action to improve a situation. Students often study heroes who saved people's lives or solved a big crisis, so taking action becomes something highly visible. However, across the groups that reported taking action, the "visibility" varied. Sometimes it was a plan to recycle or to be kind on the playground, while other times it was more visible such as publishing books and sending them to Cambodia.

It is important to note that by participating in a study group focused on taking a critical stance, these teachers were taking action, and they led their students in thinking about where they could take action, whether locally or on a larger scale. In a sense, these teachers were the radicals Freire describes (2002, p. 39), refusing to be limited by prescriptive curricula, pushing against parameters that limited what they knew to be better practice. These teachers were working to

develop dialogue in their classroom that was liberating for themselves and their students.

The editors in the May 2002 issue of *Language Arts* discussed the notion of action. They felt that action may have an underground, subtle aspect to it, but it is action nonetheless. They described the contributors to that issue as focusing first on themselves and taking action in their personal lives so that they could invite social action into their classrooms. The editors concluded, "critical literacy is not a curricular activity, but a way of living" (Short, Schroeder, Kaufman & Kaser, 2002, p. 371). The WOW group members were models of what the editors described. They took action by thinking critically in the study group discussions and then moved the critical dialogue into their classrooms.

Pedagogy

Several significant pedagogical understandings surfaced through the group inquiries. One of the more significant insights was the place of information in the pursuit of intercultural understanding. Many of the teachers in the critical thinking and social justice clusters were familiar with the concept of the 5F's. They purposefully wanted to engage their students in thinking that went beyond surface-level information. But several of the groups noted that students needed basic information about a culture in order to comprehend the text they were reading. ACLIP students needed to find out about Korean geography, dress, and script in order to bring a critical perspective to the picture books in their text set. The same was true for the Douglass High School students who read *I Am the Messenger* (Zusak, 2005). They needed basic information about Australian linguistic styles in order to

comprehend and think critically about the text. The Douglass teachers had to stop often to cover information that, in their opinion, may be trivial, but that the students needed for comprehension of a text that was far from their personal experience. The Tri-Cities group discovered a side-benefit to gathering information through non-fiction texts. Students' views of a culture or event were enriched. This made the teachers more open to using the informational texts called for by the CCSS.

The Douglass teachers concluded that much of teaching is trying to create connections for students. Many groups reported on a sense of connectedness that was created through global literature. Hobgood teachers noticed the connectedness between home and school through the interaction in both places around the backpack texts. Students felt a global connectedness as they created art that literally connected them with children electronically (Global Environment). Teachers reported on the cross-curricular connections that were made through global books, de-compartmentalizing disciplines (Douglass, Cunningham Colts, Hobgood).

Study Group

As noted in the summary for the cultural awareness, the study group experience was itself liberating and empowering. Teachers were positioned as intellectuals and agents of change. They developed a sense of competence so they could interrogate the CCSS Text Complexity Exemplar list and gather additional titles. The groups were safe places to be vulnerable and ask questions. Merna Hecht summarized it well when she stated that the group dialogue was respectful, challenging, lively and intellectually satisfying (Vashon Island/MR).

Several practical insights about study groups emerged as significant. The first

was the role of browsing. The Tri-Cities group would look at around 20 books per meeting. That quantity was not overwhelming, but served the purpose of bringing in a range of books to support multiple viewpoints, multiple global experiences, and multiple experiences around a theme. Both the Teacher Talk and ACLIP groups noted how important the browsing and sharing of titles was, due to difficulties in accessing books.

A second insight was the need to engage in professional reading of a critical nature. Like the cultural awareness cluster, the groups that discussed professional reading reported greater depth in the conversations within the group and in the classrooms. It enabled them to theorize and understand what was taking place in the classroom dialogue.

Finally, reserving the space and time to meet together was important so that the study group discussions could actually take place. Besides being on the schedule, additional factors signaled to school administrators that this work was important. The receipt of grant funds (such as the WOW grant) indicated that there was value in study group inquiries. Also, release time with classroom substitutes increased the work's visibility and status in the eyes of the rest of a school community (Hobgood).

Summary

The critical thinking and social justice clusters used a critical eye to look at texts and global issues. However, their definitions of critical differed, so the depth of their critical thinking was varied. One of the important insights they gained was the need to move into an uncomfortable space of letting the dialogue go where teacher or student questions led. The teachers also realized how competent they were as

professionals, and how competent their students were as thinkers.

The final group, ART, adopted *A Curriculum that is International* (Short, 2009a) to shape their inquiry. Like the groups in this chapter, they used a critical stance in their work; however they are set apart because their goal was not just to critically think about the world and global issues, but also permeate the curriculum with a global perspective going across disciplines and throughout the year.

CHAPTER 7: EMBEDDED INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

The members of the ART group (known as Pot Spring the first two years) used the international curriculum framework (Short, 2009a, 2011a) to shape their inquiries. Prisca Martens, one of the leaders of the group, received her doctoral degree from the University of Arizona and has been engaged in the work of Worlds of Words as an advisory board member and in contributing book reviews. It is natural that she would be familiar with the international curriculum framework because global literature is the focus of the WOW website.

ART is the single group in this cultural model so the inquiries of the ART members are the main focus of this chapter. However, several other groups read and thought about the international curriculum framework, so the discussion of the framework references work done by other WOW groups. This chapter also includes a discussion of taking action, one of the important goals for groups who engaged in critically thinking about texts and examining social issues. Taking action was a large focus for the ART group which is why it is included in this chapter. However, in order to document the multiple ways teachers and students took action, the discussion necessarily includes other groups and how they thought about or took action.

International Curriculum Framework

The international curriculum framework was formulated with Short's work with international schools. It was further developed when teachers at Van Horne Elementary (Tucson, AZ) wanted to give their students a larger understanding of the world. During the study group sessions, the K-5 teachers used the framework as a

way to understand what was happening in their study group and with their students. It has been published in journals (Short, 2003; 2009a; 2011a; Short & Thomas, 2011) as well as online (<http://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/storiesi2/5/>), but for purposes of this dissertation, the presentation of the framework engages only with two of the publications.

The Framework.

The basic framework for *A Curriculum that is International* is shaped by four concentric circles, with personal cultural identity at the center, and expanding out to include cross-cultural studies, then intercultural perspectives, and finally inquiries into global issues. The circles are drawn with dotted lines, indicating the recursive nature of the framework.

The central focus on personal cultural identity helps students realize that everyone has a point of view, shaped by the multiple cultural groups or thought collectives (Fleck, 1935) a person belongs to. The Van Horne teachers engaged students in thinking about identity by using books where the characters were struggling with their identities. The class would then draw cultural x-rays representing the multiple cultural voices with which the character was interacting. Students then drew their own cultural x-rays, life journey maps and identity intersections as ways to realize the stories, values and beliefs that were important in their own lives. This understanding helped children see universal aspects of being human and at the same time begin to recognize and value the diversity that existed between classmates.

The second circle is focused on cross-cultural studies. Van Horne teachers led

in-depth cultural studies that allowed students to examine the diversity that existed within a culture. They avoided information-focused explorations that looked at fashion, food, festivals, flags, and folklore. Instead, values and beliefs were explored, especially as they were informed by geographical, historical, economical, political and social issues particular to a country. The process of exploring another culture gave students a way to understand themselves even more. Hence cross-cultural studies acted as both windows and mirrors, looking out to understand another person and gaining understanding about oneself. Cross-cultural studies led to the concept that there are many ways of being and knowing in the world, and that a person's viewpoint cannot be the norm against which all other views are measured.

The third circle is not so much a separate study as a stance that runs throughout the curricula. Labeled *integration of intercultural perspectives*, it calls for an international perspective to be a part of all disciplines and units. By inserting more perspectives into an inquiry, Van Horne teachers naturally added complexity to a question. It also developed the students' expectations that there were diverse perspectives on all issues.

Though most of the WOW inquiry units were woven into language arts and social studies curricula, teachers did begin to see how a global perspective could cross disciplines. Some WOW groups intentionally set out to create cross-disciplinary units that incorporated global literature in math and science. An example would be the groups who looked at an environmental issue manifested in multiple countries (e.g. ecological conditions in Iceland, Denmark, Kenya, Eritrea and Honduras). Kathy Short and Lisa Thomas noted the scarcity of global scientific

and mathematical material, indicating that those genres of texts are rarely selected for translation (Short & Thomas, 2011). Therefore the bibliography that the Global Environment WOW group created was a valuable contribution toward building awareness of the texts that do exist.

The Van Horne teachers discovered that one of the ways to use global literature across disciplines was to find a broad concept or big idea that could move across multiple disciplines. So instead of just focusing on an information-laden study about Roman civilization, they would ask a big question like "what is civilization and how is it established and destroyed?" As much as possible, they shaped their lessons around larger concepts that supported metacognitive thinking and integration, because it is more engaging to wrestle with ideas and concepts than a list of facts. Another factor in helping children think conceptually across disciplines were the thinking tools teachers developed. They realized that they themselves had been pushed in their thinking as they developed organization tools to display their thinking. The teachers decided to allow the students to engage in the same development of tools to help them think on a meta-level.

The final circle, *in-depth inquiries into global issues*, helped Van Horne students to understand the local and global complexity of social, political and environmental issues. This allowed them to consider ways in which they could take action to help address issues. These inquiries were instrumental in giving students a sense of agency, encouraging them to go beyond just inquiry and discussion. One of the important pedagogical considerations for the Van Horne teachers was the way in which they introduced and connected the issue to student lives. Instead of

plunging into abuses of human rights, the teachers first looked at where students operated everyday (the playground) and discussed areas where the children thought they had been treated unfairly. This dialogue around unfair treatment then segued into various human rights abuses such as child labor. Through stories like *The Carpet Boy's Gift* (Shea, 2003), students developed ideas of how characters take action.

A critical stance was important to the discussions throughout the framework so that issues of power, oppression and social justice were part of the conversation. This supported students and teachers in discussing at a conceptual instead of topical level. Short and Thomas (2011) note that without critically reading the word and the world, studies can easily settle into superficial tours of cultures, supporting the notion that in order to solve the world's problems, we just have to get to know each other and therefore like each other. A critical stance allows students to wrestle with ideas and words instead of just walking on top of them (Freire, 2002), asking questions of *what is?* and *who benefits?* as well as imagine *what if?* Engaging with race, class and gender issues through a critical lens acts as a corrective for colorblindness—the idea that skin color doesn't matter; it is the inside that counts.

The international curriculum framework allowed teachers to evaluate what was happening in the classrooms, noting areas that needed more emphasis. Short and Thomas (2011) discussed some of the issues that came up as they supported intercultural thinking in a school context. This issues they brought up are significant because the same issues were evident in the interactions in various WOW groups:

- Encouraging students to engage in critical dialogue: students would

comment or share a connection rather than build on a peer's ideas, and use the story to think about an issue.

- Thinking conceptually rather than topically: without thinking about multiple cultural perspectives, inquiries around their own personal cultural identity and other cultures easily shifted into more of a topical look at subjects that are at the top of the iceberg of culture (Fennes and Hapgood, 1997). Within the WOW communities, the groups that dug down to beliefs and values were more successful at building conceptual notions of culture.
- Viewing your own culture as one possible perspective rather than as the norm.
- Maintaining a balance between personal connections with commonalities across cultures and the uniqueness of cultures. This was a difficult tension for the WOW groups because of global books that cover a common event (throw your tooth on the roof, going to school) or books like *Same, Same but Different* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2011) that are reductionist in their presentation of culture.
- Identifying and noting the availability of materials to meet issues that arise out of student thinking: these cannot be predicted and therefore are difficult to meet unless there is someone with expertise in global literature and a library with access to titles.
- Emphasizing the need for contemporary images of countries: much of the global literature is folklore or historical fiction, which does not allow students to see that the culture is functioning today. The LSHS English Lions

used YouTube to show students contemporary images of teens in various countries.

- Discovering that cultural websites for children can be limited to surface notions of culture: even when teachers are willing to engage children in dialogue around cultures and issues, the resource infrastructure for that kind of discussion may be slim to non-existent. This demonstrates the importance of the resources on the wowlit.org site, including the vignettes recording successes and difficulties in helping children think interculturally.

Cultural X-Rays

One engagement with books needs to be mentioned because the ART group used the technique extensively. A cultural x-ray is shaped around an outline of a person with a large heart. On the outside are characteristics that are easily observable, while the inside of the heart contains beliefs and values. Cultural x-rays are effective ways to visualize a personal iceberg of culture.

Embedded Intercultural Perspective: Description

The ART group is of particular interest to this dissertation because the members were involved in the grant for multiple years. They participated in the short pilot study and both the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 grant cycles. Because of the teachers' sustained inquiry, there was greater opportunity to frame interculturalism as a lens or perspective reaching across the entire curriculum. While the critical thinking and social justice clusters were able to conclude that global thinking needed to spread across the curriculum, the ART community was actually able to put that into practice because of the third grant cycle.

ART, Maryland

The ART group (Artists Reading & Thinking) shaped their inquiry around the international curriculum framework presented by Kathy Short (2009a), which emphasizes gaining a global perspective that permeates thinking. For this reason I have called the last cultural model *embedded intercultural perspective*. The ART group also discussed the work of James Banks (2004) on stages of cultural identity. Both James and Short begin their frameworks with the notion of studying one's own cultural identity as a means of understanding how people are shaped by their history, values and beliefs. This in turn informs behavior and action. Understanding one's self is foundational to respecting others (Banks, 2004; Short, 2009a; Short & Thomas, 2011). Both frameworks also emphasize thinking critically about issues and taking action in society.

It is important to note that the international curriculum framework acted as an entry point. It shaped the teacher's inquiry by giving them a way to "enact theoretical beliefs and organize instruction" (Short & Thomas, 2011, p. 152). Group co-leader Prisca Martens explained that the framework helped them enter into the study, but it did not constrict them, forcing teachers to use the components in a stair-step fashion (ART/PM & RM/I). The framework has dotted lines, and Martens notes that each year the teachers became more skilled at weaving the concepts in and across the curricular content (ART/PM/I). Using global literature and thinking about global perspectives became more recursive, spread throughout the year.

My lingering question now is how to better and more naturally integrate aspects of the *Curriculum that is International* throughout the year. For

example, finding ways to take action are part of identity and knowing who you are as a cultural being. We did that some this year but want to weave it in more (ART/FR - 2012-2013).

It is evident through Martens' comment that global thinking was becoming for the teachers a stance or a lens, a way to approach classroom learning.

While all the WOW groups were very intentional in their proposals, outlining their questions and how they were going to go about their inquiries, the ART group structured their project as a serious research study. Prisca and Ray Martens had worked with teachers at Pot Spring Elementary for several years, researching how children learn to read and represent meaning through art, and how that impacts their understandings of text. The WOW grant added a global and intercultural side to their research. The teachers were new to the use of global literature to foster discussion that leads to intercultural understanding. Across the three grant proposals, insights from previous years shaped the study the following year. The research questions and goals became more focused and the language less academic. The 2012-2013 proposal summarized the goals for the three years, stating that:

our goals for all of the children are that they understand themselves as complex cultural beings who are not only citizens of their local families and communities but also of the world. As citizens they respect and value cultural perspectives and ways of living and being that are different than as well as similar to their own. And, they care deeply about others and issues in the world and assume responsibilities to make the world a better place for others as well as themselves. A final goal is that the children see art as a valid

language that they can read and compose in to represent their meanings and understandings (ART/P - 2012.2013).

As indicated in the goal, art was not a side element in this inquiry because of the artists involved in the inquiry. Ray Martens is a visual artist and teaches at Towson University. Through the study group interaction with Ray Martens and Pot Spring art teacher Stacy Aghalarov, the teachers themselves began to learn the language of art. Aghalarov was an integral member of the team, not just a bonus. In her classes, she built on the artistic language the teachers and children were learning to read and speak:

Picture books were critical in the study because they helped connect what the students are reading and learning in their classrooms with their art instruction. Their experiences with picture books in both classrooms broaden their understandings of "literacy." Instead of viewing reading and writing as only written text, they understand they can read and create their own meanings in art also. [Aghalarov explains that] illustrations are pictorial representations of meaning . . . I help the students look deeper into the illustration and find clues that will help them understand the story. The students use this knowledge to better understand stories when they read picture books in their classrooms (ART/SA/V - 2011).

The focus on art was used to support meaning-making across cultures. Martens and Aghalarov actively taught the teachers and students a new language. They learned to value the new language. It complimented their work and helped them in other areas. This could only spill over into the value they put on other

spoken languages, other ways of knowing or being. They understood, from learning to speak "art" that there are other ways to make meaning. This is a fundamental orientation that fosters healthy intercultural exchange and understanding. They were prepared to learn to hear and communicate in another cultural language.

Across the three grants, the global aspect (the third component in the framework) increasingly infused the whole art curriculum as team members sought to locate "global picture books that support all of Stacy's art projects (including those 'outside' the study) to give those projects a more global perspective" (ART/P - 2012-2013).

In the kindergarten and first-grade classrooms, the teachers' strategy was to read a book a week from a text set focused on the component under consideration (personal cultural identity, country study, taking action). They would then ask students to respond to the text in many ways such as:

reading and discussing the story, inviting the children to respond in written language and/or art in their sketchbooks, examining selected illustrations to explore why the artist made particular decisions and how these decisions relate to the story meaning, asking children to share their responses, building on the children's responses/interests, and using strategies that invite the children to explore their thoughts in more depth (ART/P - 2012-2013).

As teachers gained experience in working with global literature, they refined their engagements to be more responsive to children's questions and interests. They also shaped the inquiries to move from local to global contexts. For example, within the inquiry on self-identity, teachers began with text sets that resembled the Pot

Spring Elementary dominant cultures. They then moved on to global texts that incorporated different notions of identity, and looked different from what the students were used to.

It is interesting that for the first year, the text set that the Martens created around identity was primarily international. The teachers added books to the text set, but, while they were great books on taking action, they were all American authors and illustrators (e.g. *The Curious Garden*, Brown, 2009). This demonstrates that the books that are front and center in many teachers' minds are the ones generated in the United States. This lack of awareness supports the need to purposefully look for international titles, which takes time and determination. Prisca and Ray Martens were constantly on the hunt for books that represented various perspectives in India, and by the third year, had books that gave a picture of the diversity in that country, not only in landscape, people groups and status, but also in art. Each of their text sets incorporated a book using an indigenous form of artwork, demonstrating diversity of visual expression and the variety in story traditions within the country.

As noted above, this group framed their study as research, not just as an inquiry. Some of the teachers were active in the research before the WOW grants, and the group has continued to pursue research questions in the 2013-2014 year. Two of the participants from the beginning were first-grade teachers Michelle Doyle and Jenna Loomis. Their WOW stories from the three grant cycles demonstrate an effective use of the international curriculum framework, and chronicle their growth in intercultural understanding for themselves and their students. While all the

teachers had insights into the process, Doyle's and Loomis' will be emphasized in the discussion below because of the continuity of their involvement in the research, and the documentation of the process in their vignettes.

The data the group collected and discussed varied, spanning classroom interactions, artifacts, and recorded study group meetings. One of the primary research tools the team used was interviews. They talked to the children at both the beginning and end of each of the school years to try to determine their initial intercultural understandings and what kinds of shift those understandings made over the course of the school year.

One of their first inquiries with the students around identity was to survey the families and find out where they came from. Establishing that we are all "from somewhere else" supports students in realizing that there is no norm. This is an important concept in both critical literacy and intercultural understanding, one that opens up minds to other perspectives. As the teachers moved through the grant cycles, they built on the notion of ancestry, and invited families to tell stories that reflected on family history. The third year, the students composed a Me-book. Many classrooms in the United States do a similar exercise, however the ART teachers encouraged their students to take a deeper look at their identity by including "a page with a world map that shows where their families originated, what their name means . . . and a cultural x-ray [about themselves]" (ART/MT - 2012-2013).

Doyle and her students initially developed their ability to see diversity by starting with traditions around celebrations, which, she notes, "helped us begin discussions of culture" (ART/MD/V - 2011). They also created webs about families,

noting the rich diversity that exists in what families look like and what they do. When discussing personal cultural identities with her students, Doyle used texts that engaged thinking about identity on multiple levels. The books had characters interacting with gender and ethnicity, but also relationships and language so that ideas of complex identities were built. Doyle added depth to the exploration of cultural identity by drawing cultural x-rays of Suki, her sister and friend, all characters in *Suki's Kimono* (Uegaki, 2005)

to help children consider aspects of who they are in both observable ways others can see as well as inwardly in their hearts . . . The children's comments indicated to us that they were distinguishing between outer visible aspects of culture and inner aspects of who they are (ART/MD/V - 2011).

Through discussing multiple texts and creating cultural x-rays for themselves and story characters, Doyle began to see evidence of "their deepening caring and sensitivity to each others' individuality and their growing awareness and appreciation of the differences that made them who they are, including their families, backgrounds, experiences, [and] traditions" (ART/MD/V - 2011-2012). Creating cultural x-rays of characters allowed the students to engage in the higher order thinking skill of inference, but also to develop the critical understanding that actions in stories stem from a character's values and beliefs. By drawing cultural x-rays of characters as a whole class, following a read-aloud, the students and teachers were taking what were visible actions and digging down to the values of the character that informed the actions. In other words, the students learned that people behave the way they do because of their culture. This is a critical insight for

intercultural understanding. If a person learns to ask "why?" as a way to understand another's opinion or action, it is a first step toward intercultural communication and understanding.

From this understanding of culture, the class moved on to an in-depth study of India, with the goal of understanding the rich diversity that exists within Indian culture. Through immersion with a wide range of fictional and informational texts, the students were able to appreciate the obvious diversity in landscape, language, fashion, traditions, and lifestyle. "Just as our classroom was diverse, we continually talked about the diversity in India and how, depending on what part of the country you visited, you'd meet different people and have different experiences" (ART/MD/V - 2011-2012). In order to engage with this diversity, they read books from four different text sets of 14-18 books each, which rotated through the first-grade classrooms: Culture and Traditions; Cities and Villages; Land and Resources; Animals, People, and Children. "Each text set included [fiction and] nonfiction books, folktales, and one art book that highlighted an Indigenous group in India and had illustrations that used a specific artistic technique" (ART/LF/V - 2012-2013). Doyle notes that the books fed the continual curiosity of the students, which is important in developing intercultural understanding. While reading books, students would take notes on graffiti paper, then, at the end of each week, they would write about or sketch some new understandings about India. Doyle observed that "the students began to see that while there are external differences in such areas as clothes, customs, food, and language, many internal feelings and values are similar." She used theory from Collins, Czarra and Smith (1998) to conclude that she and her

students learned "what it is to be human" (ART/MD/V - 2011-2012).

Their country-study concluded with each student writing a book about India. Before actually composing and illustrating the texts, the class engaged in additional higher-order thinking skills by sharing their discoveries and organizing their new understandings into categories. In order to support the students' writing, Doyle re-read several books that the children could use as models for their own books. Two books, *Same, Same but Different* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2011) and *Mirror* (Baker, 2010), became great opportunities to understand how comparisons of two cultures can engender stereotypes when representation of diversity within a country is not part of the text. The children demonstrated that critical understanding when they pointed out that their book title cannot be "When I go to India I will see," changing the title to "might see" or "hope to see" (ART/MD/V - 2011-2012).

Like many other WOW groups, the ART group looked at notions of same and different, but one difference in their approach was that they concluded rather than began with the idea that humans are diverse and also similar. An additional difference from some of the cultural awareness groups was that they mapped the complexity. They mapped their own complexity, even noting changes in themselves from the beginning of the year to the end, through doing cultural x-rays twice. They mapped characters from many books. They had visual evidence from many discussions and texts of the complexity of individuals from cultures like and unlike their own.

The third component in the international curriculum framework is *incorporating multiple perspectives* across the curriculum and throughout the year.

Perspectives cannot be relegated to sporadic units but need to be part of many discussions. Doyle and Loomis supported this understanding through the multiple cultural x-rays students created for characters, the many discussions of the individual choices their students made, the careful study of diverse perspectives in India, and by integrating across the year the concept that people take action out of their beliefs and values.

The third component of *incorporating* is also apparent when looking at the growth of each member of the group. Each year new teachers joined the ART study group. The vignettes from the third year are particularly interesting to examine because some teachers wrote vignettes that demonstrate a more linear approach to incorporating *A Curriculum that is International*, whereas the vignettes from Doyle and Loomis indicate that notions of identity, multiple perspectives, and acting out of beliefs and values to improve society are discussed throughout the year and the classroom curriculum. The components became intercultural concepts that were embedded in many units and discussions.

The fourth component, that of taking action to make part of the world a better place, was shortened during the first two grant cycles, but by the third year, taking action received lots of attention. Doyle and Loomis led student in a focused look at action-taking toward the end of the year, but it was also the subject of many discussions across the year because it was tied to the notion of personal cultural identity.

The ART teachers wanted action to be authentic, coming from the concerns the children gravitated toward during the India study. Because of the different

classroom discussions and the teachers' personal interests, Doyle and Loomis structured the inquiry around action differently.

In Doyle's classroom students were concerned with water issues and endangered animals in India, so she engaged them in an inquiry around environmental issues. This was a natural fit with the school philosophy and her own passion for the environment. At Pot Spring Elementary, respect was a big tenet, so taking action and caring for your local "world" was integrated into the respect Doyle's students afforded their classmates, their building, and their landscape. Doyle's students had also been in charge of the school's Bayscape, a planting of native species that prevented erosion of school grounds. As Doyle reflected back on student action across the year, she realized that she had given her students a voice, an important element in taking social action. Throughout the year, the students had maintained the area, and used posters and morning announcements to advocate for keeping balls and feet out of the garden. The action they had already been taking flowed naturally into their inquiry into global environmental issues. Through the reading of global books, they understood how others had taken action on even larger environmental problems (such as hunger in *The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families*, Roth, 2011).

Loomis emphasized that people take action out of their values and beliefs. Across the year, beginning with their own personal cultural identity, students had created cultural x-rays that indicated the values and beliefs in their own hearts and then in characters' hearts. They discussed the resulting actions that characters took. In order to support the students' creative thinking about action, Loomis read many

global texts where the characters take action. As a class they created a heart chart, recording the heart characteristics of the characters and the actions they took. In this way they ended up with a list of possible actions that went beyond environmental issues, something that was a concern the pilot year. As a final summative inquiry, Loomis had each student record artistically a problem they were concerned about, the values and beliefs in their heart that would make them care about the issue, how they would take action, and finally an artistic rendition of the problem post-action (ART/JL/V - 2011).

What is striking about reading the vignettes from the two teachers was the growth in their conceptual understanding of culture. The framework of looking at personal cultural identity, multiple viewpoints and taking action out of one's beliefs and values, became so engrained in their thinking that they could verbalize the framework without quoting and they could weave the components across the curriculum throughout the year.

The development of conceptual thinking was not the only benefit for the teachers. Over the course of the three grant cycles, the Martens fostered a strong sense of community with the teachers. They were present in the classrooms several times each week, met informally with teachers, but also formally every two to four weeks in study group meetings. As the group grew, they also added grade-level meetings for purposes of planning what was to happen in the classroom, allowing the whole-group study to remain focused on whole-group issues. When the group expanded out of Pot Spring Elementary, the study group meetings became Saturday breakfast meetings, which Prisca Martens describes as strong community-building

opportunities:

Everyone LOVES having breakfast on Saturdays (at a diner) away from school. Those meetings average two hours. There's a lot of 'bonding' and sharing that goes on beyond our WOW work too but that's fine since it's all related to community (ART/MT - 2012-2013).

The agenda for the whole-group meetings remained the same across the three years. Teachers would report and reflect on what was happening in their classrooms; they discussed professional reading addressing global literature; the Martens or teachers would present potential books to use in the classroom inquiries, discussing themes and strategies; finally, Ray Martens would talk about several illustrations to build the artistic background knowledge of the group members.

By virtue of participating in a study group, all WOW members grew professionally. However, this group was particularly strong in that area. The Martens fostered and supported professional growth in the teachers by positioning the group as a thought collective (Fleck, 1935), where they would "think and grow together, collaborating and building shared meanings about intercultural understandings and global literature" (ART/P - 2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013). They also supported growth by using grant funds to take the teachers to present at an International Reading Association (IRA) state conference, national conventions for National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Whole Language Umbrella, and the Hofstra International Scholars Forum. During the second and third years of the grant, the teachers presented their work in two NCTE sessions, one with the other

WOW communities and one with just the ART study group. The Martens also published four articles as co-authors with several of the teachers, with several more in the process of being written. Through all of these efforts, the teachers have been empowered, and realized that they have something to contribute to the scholarship around thinking with picture books (ART/PM/personal communication).

The rich professional support also stimulated independent research questions. Jenna Loomis wanted to compare both quantitatively and qualitatively two writing samples from her first-grade students. One was completed with the rich artistic thinking, typical of what was happening with global books. The other was completed with the mandated curriculum. The difference between the writing samples was striking, with Loomis making a strong case for the inadequacy of the mandated writing tests used for assessment.

The process of reflecting on theory and practice empowered teachers to take control of their own learning and teaching. Martens notes that the first year of the project the teachers would take the books and ask what to do. Now they inform the Martens of what they have initiated in their classrooms. The challenge of thinking collaboratively encouraged some to stick with teaching instead of following through on a decision to change careers. They agreed that they could not return to teaching "the old way" (ART/PM & RM/ I).

Embedded Intercultural Perspective: Shifts in Understanding

Both the Spokane and ART groups used the framework from *A Curriculum that is International* (Short, 2003, 2008, 2009a, 2011a; Short & Thomas, 2011) to shape their inquiry, yet they ended up with quite different inquiries. Their cultural

models were different, which made them emphasize different goals within the study group and their classrooms.

International Curriculum Framework: Descriptors

Short and Thomas's (2011) article was particularly helpful in analyzing what took place in the ART group. The article discusses some of the insights and challenges (called descriptors) that the Van Horne teachers encountered supporting the development of intercultural understanding while using the international curriculum framework. The descriptors are used below as a way of organizing the discussion of the shifts in understanding in the ART group. Other WOW groups are mentioned when relevant. The descriptors are (p. 151):

- Learners explore their cultural identities and develop conceptual understandings of culture.
- Learners develop an awareness and respect for different cultural perspectives as well as the commonality of human experience.
- Learners value the diversity of cultures and perspectives within the world.

Exploring cultural identities / developing conceptual understandings. A

conceptual understanding is important because it enables students and teachers to think more deeply about cultural beliefs and values, which in turn promotes a deeper understanding between people. For example, to understand the concepts of the Quran and what prompts a Muslim to engage in jihad is going to equip a peace negotiator much more than a simple understanding of Ramadan and how it is observed. To walk across the surface of a culture does not promote dialogue at a conceptual level. Some WOW groups, particularly in the cultural awareness cluster,

demonstrated the limits of surface-level engagements. Other WOW groups that engaged with concepts demonstrated how conceptual thinking can lead to a deeper understanding not only of particular cultures but also of what it is to be human.

The ART and Spokane groups used multicultural and global books to support students in thinking about personal cultural identity, leading to an understanding that each person is unique and special. This is a classic unit in many pre-primary and primary curricula, so the teachers added a global element and expanded on what most had probably done in the past. The ART group pushed students to dig down to their own values and beliefs by asking them about their choices and ways of going about daily activities at school and at home. By the third year of the project, the ART teachers were able to weave conceptual understandings of culture throughout the year because they themselves had built a rich understanding of culture. They engaged students in thinking about personal values and beliefs every time they asked children to express their understanding of a text, or why they used line and color the way they did. "Why?" was a constant discussion point, demonstrating both that people act out of their understanding, values, and interests. In the process the teachers made visible the uniqueness of each student.

The Spokane group aimed to think conceptually about culture, and reported classroom discussions that supported conceptual understandings. The teachers engaged indirectly with values and beliefs by collecting family stories through the backpack project. During the pilot year, when the study group was thinking more conceptually, the teachers helped their students move toward more conceptual thinking by discussing ways that Japanese culture is informed by the country's

history, geography and economy. The Spokane group then moved toward celebrating culture. The two groups were good examples of what happens when the critical piece is present versus what happens when it is set aside for a different emphasis.

The success of the ART group in thinking conceptually was also due to working with the framework for three years. Refining an understanding will happen when a person has a chance to reflect and redesign, especially coupled with collaborative thinking in a study group. But also critical to the process was the conceptual thinking that the group did. When asked what they did to support the conceptual nature of the thinking, Prisca Martens named several things:

I think it'd have to be the readings and discussions as a group, personal planning conversations, the picture books (which are incredible!), the vignettes (I think those are big!), and the other writing we do. With articles (not the vignettes) it ends up being mostly me, but they read and help revise/edit. I think when the writing is about/by them, they have another 'lens' to think about what they're doing (ART/PM/Personal Communication).

Looking across all the WOW groups, it seems that when a celebratory note was added to cultural explorations, it made it easy to stop there instead of pushing to dig down to beliefs and values. Celebrating culture stays at the level that says that if we listen to each other we will become friends and solve our problems. It is fun, it creates appreciation but it does not necessarily develop a valuing or understanding of another culture.

The WOW groups indicated more conceptual thinking when they reported

that, in the process of discussing themselves and others as cultural beings, they gained an understanding of the human experience or people's common humanity. This transcends the more reductionist understanding that humans are both same and different. Conceptual thinking was also evident with the groups that gained an understanding of same and different as a conclusion, after an in-depth look at diversity that focused on beliefs and values in combination with obvious visible differences.

Different cultural perspectives / common human experiences.

According to Short and Thomas (2011), studies focused on personal cultural identities, coupled with cross-cultural studies with particular attention on complexity, support the development of a conceptual notion of culture. The ART teachers and students, from pre-school through first grade, gained a more conceptual understanding of culture because of their focused attention to complexity. From the first day of school and their initial inquiry into family history, they heard stories about diverse reasons and ways people arrived in the United States. The teachers' attention to individual histories inherently demonstrated complex reasons for immigration. Taking the time to hear family stories put value on each one. Valuing individual stories and voice became even more important in the pre-school classes as Christie Furnari created oversized cultural x-rays and listened to many stories about feet, hands, hearts and brains. Furnari supported multiple perspectives with preschoolers as she remarked on their original thinking, decisions, writing and oral stories, encouraging them to tell something from their perspective and not just repeat what a friend said (ART/CF/I).

While it is not difficult to see differences or similarities when comparing cultures, it is more difficult to balance an understanding of universal human experiences with diverse ways of being and doing. That basic notion of same and different was discussed and even celebrated in many WOW groups, especially in those that discovered the book *Same, Same but Different* (Kostecki-Shaw, 2011) with its easy refrain. The ART group looked at the book critically and saw the potential Indian and American simple stereotypes that could be formed by reading the book. As a result they decided to do an in-depth country-study on India. They consciously interacted with multiple perspectives from India by creating cultural x-rays for book characters in their text sets. They also looked at various artistic mediums and styles used in different areas of India.

Both the ART and Spokane groups valued connections with families and fostered a connection to family stories. The Spokane group did this through family backpacks, inviting families to record connections they had with books and telling some of their family stories. Their goal was to foster connections that support growth in literacy and the family-school dynamic. The ART group did this by surveying all families at the beginning of the year, asking about languages, immigration to the United States, and the story behind and meaning of the students' names. They also invited families to be a part of the in-depth country inquiries as cultural experts, thereby acknowledging and valuing Indian and Mexican cultures. They found that the participation level and pride from the Indian and Mexican students increased exponentially; they have since wondered how they can make that same engagement take place for students from all the other countries

represented in the classrooms. Teachers and students gained an important understanding through listening to all the family histories; in the process of understanding that we all are from somewhere, the notion of the American norm was deconstructed. The idea of a norm was also an aspect of the final descriptor described below.

Valuing diversity / world perspectives. Interculturally understanding people go beyond just learning about other people. They place value on diversity, seeing it as an asset. This naturally avoids two potential pitfalls of cross-cultural studies: that of positioning one's own culture as the norm, and seeing other cultures and ways of meaning-making as the "other."

Engaging with multiple perspectives implies that there are multiple worldviews and ways of knowing and making meaning. The ART community spoke two semiotic languages, one with words and one with color, placement, and line. As the children learned to make meaning in that language, they were becoming open to the idea that there are still more worldviews with which people around the world learn, know, communicate and make meaning. Not only did this project move children along the path toward intercultural understanding, but it also helped them become more critical thinkers because they were learning to dig down to alternate meanings.

The value in learning to speak two languages is striking, and I believe contributed immensely to the success the ART teachers experienced. Bilingual people have a head start in becoming intercultural understanding because they understand multiple ways of making meaning in two or more languages. The ability

to see art as a way of communicating and making meaning can help students and teachers put value on other spoken languages and other ways of knowing or being. In essence, the ART teachers and students became border-crossers. They were positioned to learn to hear and communicate in another cultural language. Norma Gonzalez (2001) underscored the value of what happened in the ART community when she states:

To deny children a powerful tool for developing their unexplored potential by failing to expose them to multiple semiotic systems is to truncate their eventual development and derail their limitless possibilities. There is a saying that "El que habla dos idiomas vale por dos." (The person who speaks more than one language is worth two people.) Our accretive language abilities can multiply the dimensions of our self (p. xx).

Language is important to intercultural understanding because it allows communication between two people, but it also connects people at the heart level. Language is an important tool because "to speak of language is to speak of our 'selves.' Language is at the heart, literally and metaphorically, of who we are, how we present ourselves, and how others see us" (Gonzalez, 2001, p. xix). If language is a picture of ourselves, then the more we learn the languages of others, the more we can understand them. An early step in that direction is learning to put value on languages, and that is what the ART community did by learning to speak "art". Learning another language, whether it is color, line and shape or Hangul or French, acts as a counter-narrative to the nation's English-only ideologies and laws, viewing heritage languages as resources.

Taking Action

The last component in the international curriculum framework deals with taking action around social issues. The development of the ability and desire to take action is a shared goal of critical pedagogy, multicultural education and intercultural dialogue. The ability to take action is a critical piece in the development of citizens who take responsibility for their country. Freire believes that education must be followed up with action. The purpose of thoughtful education is to develop the ability to think about and take action on a situation that is meaningful.

Several articles by Roger Hart (1992), Rahima Wade (2007) and Kathy Short (2011b) were instrumental in the analysis of action taken in various WOW groups. The discussion of taking action is placed here in the dissertation because of the emphasis on action in the international curriculum framework, and because the ART group thought holistically about action more than other groups. Because this is the final circle in the international curriculum framework, this is the component that was often skipped or shortened. The ART group had greater success the third year because taking action was not relegated to the final unit of the year. It became an integral part of the dialogue throughout the year. But in order to understand their success, it is necessary to bring other groups into the discussion and consider the multiple ways that groups thought about taking action and tried to engage in the process of taking action.

Roger Hart, a professor of environmental psychology, wrote an essay for UNICEF on children taking action. Entitled *Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship* (1992), Hart's essay describes various projects from around the world

where children and adolescents have been instrumental in the development and execution of action projects. He visualizes the various levels of participation of children and youth on a ladder. The range is from the lowest rung of children being manipulated into action, all the way to the top rung of child-initiated projects in which adults work with them in a Vygotsky-type of zone of proximal development; the adults support youth technically and emotionally, but not in a directorial way (pp. 21, 31). In this top rung, the decisions are shared with the adult, enabling the children or teens to accomplish more with adult participation and guidance than in projects that are simply child-initiated and directed.

Hart believes taking action is a necessity both in the community and in schools if a country wants to prepare children to participate in a democratic form of government. Hart describes the benefits of taking action as the development of social competence and social responsibility, along with a sense of community and political self-determination. He advocates for genuine participation in meaningful projects, involving solutions to real problems, so that young people develop the ability to reflect critically and compare perspectives in order to develop their own beliefs. He acknowledges that this is difficult in schools where educational authorities are afraid of losing control. He draws attention to several other challenges. Participation can be difficult because of varied notions of childhood and the role of work and play in the daily routines. He believes that the socio-economic level of the family has a large impact on the notions of independence/self-direction and obedience, because compliance by children to parents in some situations may mean survival. These challenges imply that adults who advocate for children need to

work doubly hard to liberate the voices of poor children (p. 33).

There were several WOW groups where giving voice, in regards to action, was something the teachers commented on. ART teacher Michelle Doyle realized that, by giving her students authentic opportunities to promote caring for the school Bayscape, she was giving them agency and voice. Tri-Cities teacher Maggie Burns describes how her Response to Intervention (RtI) group of four third-grade boys gained voice and agency:

Initially inspired by one man's efforts to bring books to children in rural Colombia, the boys mobilized their literacies to think beyond themselves, to develop a plan of action, and to communicate with a wide range of audiences. While they were doing so, they developed a greater sense of agency as readers and writers because they had a purpose that drove and motivated them (Tri-Cities/MB/V).

Hart states that the precursor to participation is the ability to understand and take another perspective. In this sense, the WOW community groups were positioned to take action, especially those in the critical thinking, social justice and embedded intercultural perspective clusters where multiple perspectives were routinely part of classroom discussions.

Rahima Wade (2007) adds an important caution to the literature on children taking action. She compares service-learning with educating for social justice and makes a strong case for thinking beyond simple action. Both kinds of action support the development of civic responsibility, are aimed at solving a problem, and involve collaborative efforts to effect change. However, service-learning does not promote

the examination of the root causes of an issue. She does add a hopeful note and explains how service-learning projects can be transformed into social justice-oriented projects. She gives the example of collecting clothes for a shelter or serving food in a soup kitchen, typical service-learning projects. Students can think beyond just rendering service by discussing why people become homeless, then exploring the range of services the community provides for homeless people. Students can then determine what services are still needed to help people work and live on their own. They could write to public officials, advocating for services and fundraising to support the needed services. Based on her action research with teachers, Wade noted classroom circumstances that support the transformation of service-learning into a social justice education. Included were encouraging student questions, introducing multiple perspectives and modeling activism. Circumstances that acted as deterrents for effective social justice education included the preoccupation with standards and tests, along with required curricula.

Wade (2007) points out that children want to be change-makers. They notice differences and inequity and want to do something about it. This natural empathy and desire to help needs to be capitalized on, but in a way that prepares children to be thoughtful and action-oriented adults. Wade states that charitable service without a critical analysis of conditions that create or support the problem, make it easier for the providers of help to blame the recipients for their condition.

The WOW groups reported engaging with root issues to a limited degree by discussing beliefs, values and practices that impact social issues. For example Willamette Valley teacher Jennifer Davis looked at water usage around the world.

She engaged her students in a water usage survey to identify their own usage habits, indicating whether they viewed particular uses as a necessity or a luxury. They then compared their water use to other countries, particularly in places where water is scarce or has a part in religious ceremonies. Another example of groups discussion root causes was the inquiry by the Global Environment group into resolving hunger issues in Eritrea by planting mangrove trees. The students looked at the work of Dr. Gordon Sato through the picture book by Susan Roth (*The Mangrove Tree: Planting Trees to Feed Families*, 2011).

Kathy Short (2011b), in her article entitled *Children Taking Action Within Global Inquiries*, describes how the Van Horne teachers engaged in action that did help children think about root issues. The resulting action may have looked on the outside like a service-learning project, but, through the process of finding a connection to children's concerns, reading stories of children taking action, examining the root cause, and then taking action, children did not act out of pity but out of a deep understanding of the issue. "Only after examining root causes did children identify ways to address hunger through working with community and global organizations that focus on sustainability where those receiving a gift use it to take responsibility for action" (p. 52). Also important, the children changed from seeing action as the sole responsibility of adults and saw themselves as agents of change.

The Van Horne teachers developed a list of characteristics that served as criteria for evaluating action projects, looking for ones that are both authentic and meaningful (Short, 2011b). Examples from WOW projects are inserted following the

description of the characteristics.

Authentic action develops through inquiry and experience. Grounded in students' questions and lives, service is informed by the content children are learning. The service in turn drives further learning and inquiry. For the Van Horne teachers, books were an important part of the process because they provided a way for children to access difficult issues in their community, and a bridge for connecting to these issues on a global level. Teachers used nonfiction to make the issue real, give the facts and build vocabulary. Fiction gave students the emotion and the struggles.

One of the big issues frequently discussed in the world of children's literature is the appropriate use of difficult stories, but Short (2011b) points out that children need perspective, not protection. She also believes that taking action helps children move from a position of powerlessness to a position of possibility. Protecting children from difficult situations renders them powerless; it does not allow them to develop perspective, keeps them from learning to think about root causes and learn the skills of effective action.

Literature played key roles in the action projects in several WOW groups. Both the Tri-Cities group and the Madeira group were moved to action by the story of the biblioburros in Colombia (*Biblioburro: A True Story from Colombia*, Winter, 2010; *Alfa and Beto: The Biblioburros*, Morrow, 2013). The teachers further informed and supported their students' interest with video footage of the mobile library. The Cunningham Colt students responded to a reading of *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq* (Winter, 2005) and *Nasreen's Secret School* (Winter,

2009), and wanted to help children who have limited access to books. The ART students read global stories across the year, charting types of action to foster their own creative thinking around action.

Some of the WOW groups reported on large inquiries that involved global issues. Some inquiries led to teacher or student action. Within the cultural awareness cluster, Chinle students looked at human rights. Eastern Oregon students looked at the historical marginalization of immigrants. Garden Hills students looked at water supply issues in the Sudan. Harllee students considered prejudicial treatment in their own student body based on race. None of these groups reported taking group action beyond becoming more aware; however interacting with the literature changed the way the teachers took action to shape their future classroom instruction. This was particularly true in the Garden Hills group where the study group discussion provided a way to go through the action-reflection cycle (discussed below). Questions led to more inquiry, which led to new questions and a change in what motivated action.

Within the critical thinking and social justice clusters, teachers also engaged students with big issues. Aveson and Stillwater students thought about prejudicial treatment of Muslims. Willamette Valley students thought about education for girls and the world water supply. Global Environment students thought about environmental issues that lead to hunger in Eritrea. The Eastern Oregon/Villagomez and Douglass students thought about a range of social issues, depending on the book they chose for their book groups. In these clusters the teachers did not report the change in their own teaching (though that also happened) as much as the way the

books challenged student thinking.

Within the embedded intercultural perspective cluster, taking action for the ART teachers in the third grant cycle became embedded in the whole year-long global inquiry as teachers read books, charted various types of action and what in the character's personal cultural identity would have made them take a particular action. While the ART teachers did not structure their studies around big questions such as fairness and human rights, they did seek to discuss issues that were significant to students. They listened carefully to what the children were interested in as they studied India and Mexico because they felt strongly that the issue(s) they focused on needed to be authentic, ones the students were naturally interested in.

Authentic action meets genuine need. The action should meet an actual need that is recognized and understood by the students. In order for this to happen, children need to see the issue as significant, have time to research the nature of the need and root causes, and explore perspectives around the issue. Van Horne teachers supported this inquiry process by starting with an issue in the school (e.g. unfair treatment on the playground), exploring perspectives (from students, playground monitors and administrators), discussing rights (of different age-groups on the playground), and then moving into a global focus on human rights (supported by reading multiple global stories and a visit from one of the Lost Boys of Sudan). Across the diverse inquiries the Van Horne community engaged in, any look at global issues was anchored in local issues that children were interested in and could see or experience at some level.

In two of the WOW groups that actually took public action, the student

demographics may have played a part in the process of recognizing genuine need. Some of the Cunningham Colts and Tri-Cities groups of students could be considered as coming from families or groups of people who have been marginalized. The Tri-Cities third-grade students were African-American boys who had received remedial services since grade one in both English and math. A significant proportion of the Cunningham Colts school population was considered homeless because they lived in motels charging weekly rates. It is interesting that both groups were receivers of services and yet responded quickly to children who also needed assistance.

One of the elements of intercultural understanding that leads to social action is a sense of empathy. The students in the Tri-Cities and Cunningham Colts groups had natural empathy. They recognized need quickly and had an intuitive deep understanding of what need feels like. When asked about her students' response, Jennifer Crosthwaite responded "I would expect nothing but that" (Cunningham Colts/JC/personal communication). She felt strongly that the critical thinking around global books had changed not only her students' thinking but also their hearts. The books reflected the students' own lived experiences of being in need, but instead of just focusing on their own local or personal needs, they were able to expand their view of need into a global context.

Once a need is recognized, the process of taking action can be a difficult challenge. For the Cunningham Colts the donation of the student-created books was not easy. Crosthwaite shared that it was difficult finding an organization that would welcome the books her students created, and that most organizations wanted money instead of goods. Yet she persevered and found an international school in

Cambodia that offered bilingual instruction (in Khmer and English) so that the books could be useful (Cunningham Colts/JC/Personal communication).

Authentic action was a study group discussion issue in the ART community. While many of the educators participating in the WOW grants understood and supported taking action, many times the action was relegated to visible issues such as environmental concerns and recycling, being kind to classmates, or collecting money for a cause that had caught the children's attention. The ART teachers wanted to go beyond the recycling the students were already doing. During the pilot year they sought to develop the creative thinking around issues that reflected a variety of actions and individual interest. In order to support that increased diversity of issues and more complex notion of action, the ART teachers read global books and charted the wide range of issues characters faced and the actions they took. They also tied action to cultural identity when trying to identify the belief or value that led the character to take a particular action. Through this exercise, the teachers expanded on the children's notion of agency and demonstrated that there are lots of ways to take action.

Authentic action builds collaborative relationships and mutual exchanges. The notion of a collaborative effort with a mutual exchange of ideas, information and effort, is an important corrective to children's belief that individuals act alone. Each person is seen as having something to contribute to making the action more effective. Literature again was an important tool with which the Van Horne teachers fostered respect for all participants taking action. The respect students gained for story characters helped them act with respect, and not

pity, toward the recipients of their own project.

The mutuality of collaboration was an intriguing question in the analysis of the A to Z Literacy group. The exchange between the school in Zambia and the U.S.-based study group was more one-sided, with the Illinois teachers coming in to teach the Zambian teachers. This is natural because the Illinois teachers are highly trained literacy specialists, and the Zambian teachers had little pedagogical training. However, in Freire's (2002) thinking, there is a tremendous benefit to teachers as they position themselves as fellow inquirers, and open themselves to mutually learning from each other. The occasions on the A to Z blog were rare when teachers noted they learned from the Zambians. The actual inquiry project with the WOW grant also followed a more top-down arrangement because middle school students read to first-grade students, engaging them in activities they had created to support the young children's comprehension of the story. The work the A to Z members engaged in locally in a housing project was also more top-down in nature. Members reorganized the library and generated reading programs for children and parent education classes. These are all wonderful projects, but were not reported as collaborative. However, one of the classroom teachers wrote that she realized she could learn from her students, and the middle school students realized how smart the first grade students were. This was an important turning point in developing a mutual respect for all participants in a project. Reflection on what they have learned from Zambians or parents and children in the housing project could continue to make the action and learning more mutual, and more in line with Freire's notion of positioning teachers and students as both co-constructors of knowledge.

The A to Z members may still be discovering a collaborative stance with their project participants, but they were profoundly changed through their engagement with global literature. They acknowledged multiple times how multicultural and global literature has now become central to their work and their book selection. The use of global books has transformed part of their thinking and their actions (A to Z/AY/Personal communication).

Authentic action includes action and reflection. Like any effective learning cycle, taking authentic action involves "identifying a problem, researching to understand it, planning, anticipating consequences of actions, taking action, observing what happens, reflecting on what occurs, accepting responsibility for consequences, and then acting again" (Short, 2011b, p. 54). Various kinds of action are evident throughout the process: both direct and indirect action, as well as research and advocacy.

The teachers in all of the WOW groups engaged in action. They saw a need in their students' understanding of the world and global issues, planned for instruction, gathered global literature to read, and engaged with their students in explorations of cultures and social issues. Looking back across the groups, the teachers who engaged in reflection within their study group and/or with their students are the ones who reported significant insights in their intercultural and pedagogical understandings.

Authentic action invites student voice and choice. As students realize they have agency in their local environment, they also realize that they can have agency on broader world issues. In the process they also shift from seeing the individual

benefit of action to the benefit of group responsibility.

Literature had a big impact on the Global Environment students in terms of developing agency and voice. These students were moved by Caitlyn Vernon's (2011) book on the Great Bear Rainforest in British Columbia, Canada. Throughout the pages, the author tells the stories of children and teens who took some form of action to protect vulnerable forests, animals, or native industries. The stories also demonstrated the power of working as a group for change. The activism recorded in the book gave the Global Environment students a greater sense of their own potential agency.

Authentic action involves civic/global responsibility for social justice.

ART teacher Jenna Loomis was able to invite children to engage in the critique-hope-action cycle, at least on paper. Following the rich creative thinking about action in the stories they read, the students individually determined what issue they were concerned about, sketched what that looks like, recorded what in their cultural makeup prompts their concern, determined what action is needed and finally sketched what the issue would look like after action is taken. This type of cycle gives the students the chance to engage in critique, the development of a solution that gives hope, and finally planning for actual action.

Based on what Hart, Wade and Short present in their articles, authentic action is important if children are to be equipped to be knowledgeable and effective citizens. The WOW members, particularly in the critical thinking, social justice and embedded intercultural perspective clusters, would agree that action is important. While some of the actions taken may not meet all the criteria for authenticity, and

were on lower rungs of Hart's participation ladder, they were still important first steps. Students in the WOW groups responded spontaneously out of what they were learning about social issues through books. They wanted to remedy the issue and somehow help out. While not all WOW groups addressed root causes, they did succeed in developing empathy for others.

Small steps are important, especially when framed within larger global issues. Action becomes more purposeful the more children are able to learn about an issue. Awareness can lead to more intentional thinking, learning, dialogue and action. With added time, support and reflection, the students' and teachers' actions could be transformed into a life-long perspective that invites learning, critique, and solution-generating dialogue.

Summary

This chapter discussed the ART group who used the international curriculum framework to shape their inquiry. The group demonstrated the deep thinking that can occur when concepts rather than facts are part of the inquiry. The ART teachers were able to help their students place value on alternate ways of communication through their study of meaning-making with art. The teachers were also able to embed an intercultural perspective throughout the year and across content areas. The framework became more than a methodology and permeated their thinking.

The chapter concluded with a discussion of taking action, an important part of critical pedagogy and the international curriculum framework. While all the groups may not have taken action on social or global issues, the discussions they engaged in among themselves and with their students were action in themselves.

CHAPTER 8: FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND NEW RESEARCH QUESTIONS

From February 2011 through August 2013, over 200 educators and community members participated in 25 educator study groups spread across the United States. They were looking at the development of intercultural understanding through interactions with global children's literature. The groups met individually face to face, and also collectively in an online members-only forum. The group members engaged in action research, documenting their goals, interactions, thinking and literature engagements through proposals, reports, online discussion posts and vignettes. Also part of the data were 20 interviews of selected members. The study was funded by the Longview Foundation and the funds were distributed to the groups by Worlds of Words grants. The study groups were known as WOW communities.

The purpose of this dissertation was to look at the development of intercultural understanding in educators through interactions with global children's literature. So the primary research questions were: *1. What are the key elements that influenced the development of intercultural understanding?* and *2. What intercultural understandings developed through the interactions around global literature?* Constant comparative analysis of the data was used to look for similarities, differences and broad themes across the WOW communities.

The theoretical framework that shaped the study was a dynamic view of culture as tensions and events push people to rethink their ways of being and doing. This view of culture fit with the dynamic, recursive and non-linear process of developing intercultural understanding. Central to the structure of the study and the

analysis was a belief in the effectual power of story to inform and engage readers with multiple perspectives as they responded and dialogued about the texts.

When I began this study I expected to end up with a list of content elements that I could adapt and add to future classroom or library inquiries using global literature. What I found instead was that the content, while important, was secondary to the process. Changes in perspectives and growth in understanding were precipitated by tensions in or challenges to members' belief systems or ways of operating. As the data for this study was analyzed, the tensions in cultural and global perspectives, supported by open inquiry and dialogue, were key to the development of intercultural understanding. Merry Merryfield (2000) documented a similar process. As the teachers in her study encountered various cultures and cultural practices through global literature, the tensions between their own cultures and that of the characters helped them become more culturally sensitive to their students, and more culturally broad in their teaching and curriculum.

This study provided insights into two important issues in U.S. education. Most states are now using some version of the Common Core State Standards as their state frame for curriculum. In anticipation of the various state roll-outs, many of the teachers in the WOW study groups were considering how to integrate the CCSS in their classroom inquiries. They discovered how easily global children's literature fits with the standards and supports the deeper complex reading and thinking that is one of the important elements in the CCSS. The inquiries of several groups also provided important demonstrations of how global literature supports STEM inquiries. The Global Environment group tied their inquiry directly to the

district STEM goals. Several other groups engaged in cross-disciplinary inquiries, demonstrating how global literature can support and inform inquiries in math, geography, and the biological and environmental sciences. Many WOW groups engaged with forms of technology in order to capture student interest and support their questions.

There were several important limitations on this study. One in particular limited the scope of the group inquiries. The mission of the funding agency, the Longview Foundation for World Affairs and International Understanding, is to help young people in the United States learn more about world regions and global issues in order to help them address issues that require international knowledge and cooperation (<http://longviewfdn.org/about/mission/>). The mandated focus was therefore global rather than local. Because of this global rather than U.S. focus, the racial and social issues faced by African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans were not a large part of the group inquiries. Oppression and social issues in the United States were addressed in groups that had a racially and ethnically diverse population, or in groups that had a high population of children from a historically oppressed ethnic group. But even within those WOW communities, the focus was more global than local.

An additional limit mandated by Longview was that the WOW grants would be awarded to groups teaching in schools receiving Title 1 funding. This requirement seems based on an assumption that the socio-economic status of the students has a bearing on their exposure to world cultures. While this assumption was born out in some of the groups that were more rural and in high-poverty areas, it was not valid

in schools with high immigrant populations. Children arriving from other countries may have been the beneficiaries of free or reduced lunches, but they also brought rich global life experiences that broadened the perspectives of their teachers and classmates.

Findings: Key Elements that Led to Tension

James Gee's (2008) notion of cultural models helped organize the groups into clusters by their proposed goals, but I found it impossible to conclude that a particular cultural model generated movement of a certain kind toward intercultural understanding. There were too many exceptions. So much depended on what the members read or discussed. So while the Cultural Awareness groups generally did not engage in the critical thinking typical of the other clusters, there were some groups that did. While most of groups in the critical thinking cluster asked classic questions related to power and voice, there were some that said they were critical but were using a different definition of the term. Rather than make generalizations based on clusters, what was more useful was looking at the elements (or tensions and events) that helped the groups make significant gains in their intercultural understanding.

There were many findings gained from this study, both intercultural and pedagogical, chronicled in chapters four through seven. When discussing these shifts it was hard to differentiate between those that relate to intercultural understanding and others that reflect a change in pedagogy. They tend to work together so that a new understanding regarding interaction with other cultures often came with a shift in the pedagogical engagements around the book. An

example would be the way Garden Hills changed the focus from exploring facts to discussing social issues. As a result, this changed the way the group dialogued to include a critical stance.

What are highlighted in this conclusion are the understandings that were transformative for teachers and students both in their way of knowing about the world and their way of being in the world. The understandings are organized in three categories: intercultural understandings, pedagogical understandings and understandings about the study group practices.

Intercultural Understandings: Deeper Understandings About Culture

All groups gained, in the minimum, some cultural awareness. This was a positive and beginning step, but the goal of awareness by itself tended to stunt further growth. The danger in beginning and ending with cultural awareness is reductionist thinking and the development of stereotypes. Instead of being a step forward toward intercultural understanding, simple cultural awareness can actually be a movement toward thinking in dichotomies (e.g. same/different, heroes/enemies, rich/poor, pity/grateful, and us/them), deficits, or with stereotypes and prejudices (Short, 2011a).

There were two areas of thought and two ways of thinking that helped move WOW groups toward a deeper view of culture and cultural practices. The first area was a focus on emotional connections at the heart level. The second area was an engagement with complexity. The first way of thinking was digging down to concepts rather than just considering information. The second way was engaging in open un-scripted dialogue.

Humanization is to know the heart. One of the more important understandings was transferring a factual focus on a culture to engaging with the humanity of the people who live as part of a culture. Freire (2002) states that our vocation and central problem is humanization, or to know humanity, and the groups who engaged in that kind of inquiry reported deeper thinking. Cultural facts supported curiosity and interest. When the teachers and students moved past the facts into the beliefs, values and cultural practices that lie below the surface on the iceberg of culture (Fennes & Hapgood, 1997), then the thinking became deeper and moved toward open inquiry and a more critical lens.

One of the dangers of thinking of a culture as a set of finite facts is that it severs human bonds and positions the learner as someone apart from the other. It reifies or objectifies culture. A factual look, even if it is fun title like *Throw Your Tooth on the Roof: Tooth Traditions from Around the World* (Beeler, 2001), removes passions and struggles that help create empathy. Using global literature was certainly a tool and was helpful in deepening the thinking of teachers and students, however, country books (e.g. *France*, Alcraft, 2008) and "around the world" books tended to keep the inquiry at the survey level. The books that spoke about social issues introduced human struggles and supported a deeper level of dialogue.

Recognizing complexity. A focus on the complexity of life and multiple viewpoints acted as a corrective to dualistic or celebratory thinking. That kind of thinking is particularly easy to fall into in elementary schools because of the age of the children, and a focus on teaching/learning strategies that reduce complex issues down to principles that are easily stated. Engagements with books like *Same, Same*

but Different (Kostecki-Shaw, 2011), the process of celebrating diversity, or tasting cultures, acted as brakes on the development of intercultural thinking.

Seeing the diversity in their own cultural milieu helped students from the ART group understand that culture is complex. Students could then begin to accept that diversity is inherent in all personal and world cultures. Accepting diversity, in turn, lead to valuing diversity. While none of the WOW groups described culture as dynamic and changing, they did acknowledge the diversity in their classrooms and in the world cultures they engaged with. The groups that discussed more than diversity and engaged with complexity engaged in deeper thinking. The ART group was very intentional about looking at culture in a complex way. They engaged with complexity in their study in personal cultural identity; they engaged with complex reasons each time they asked children to explain why they drew something the way they did; they intentionally looked at multiple aspects of Mexico and India in order to make sure the students understood the complexity of these countries.

Thinking about culture at a conceptual level. In *Inquiry as a Stance on Curriculum*, Kathy Short (2009b) defines concepts as the big ideas or issues behind topics that lead to understandings that run across topics. Concepts help thinkers wade through the glut of information and identify understandings that will be useful in solving future problems. Concepts go beyond information to search for the "why" behind the information.

Several types of thinking helped move the WOW groups beyond just information. Thinking about common humanity, asking "why?" to discover backgrounds or process, and acknowledging complexity or multiple perspectives

helped groups engage in deeper thinking at a more conceptual level. Facts can be seen as immutable rather than dynamic and do not invite discussion. Conceptual thinking introduced tension, which gave them something to wrestle with.

Conceptual thinking took many different forms. Usually the idea that we are all "same but different" indicated dichotomous thinking, but some groups, such as ART and Eastern Oregon, arrived at that understanding after a rich look at diversity, demonstrating conceptual thinking. Barbara Keene (Orono) also engaged in conceptual thinking when she discussed worry with kindergartners. When Shaker Heights students looked at how the Pythagorean theorem differed in Babylonia, India and China, they discovered how mathematical formulas reveal the way different people see and think about their world. Digging down to beliefs and values, the "why," pushed students to think beyond facts toward concepts. As the ART teachers demonstrated, conceptual thinking can eventually become embedded in practice, so that deeper dialogue becomes part of daily interaction. To wonder about perspective and respectfully ask "why" becomes the new norm for classroom practice.

Conceptual thinking was supported by moving from local to global contexts. This happened in groups that began their inquiry thinking about themselves, grounding their work in what was familiar and then moving into the unfamiliar. For example, Jennifer Davis (Willamette Valley) had her students record and reflect on their own water usage before moving into a global exploration of water accessibility and use. The students could engage in thinking about water theoretically and abstractly because they began with their own reality. The same was true for groups

that began looking at their own cultural identities before mapping cultural identities of characters encountered in global books. In the case of the ART teachers, the movement was not so much local to global as back and forth. Each time they created culture maps for characters, it gave them new concepts to consider in their own cultural identities.

The teachers who demonstrated the most growth were those who began to think conceptually rather than about topics or methods. This was evident with teachers like Christie Furnari (ART), who were with the project more than one year, and wrote at least two vignettes. The first year (2012) Furnari's vignette stayed focused on "same and different," which was her focus with her preschoolers during the whole year. The second year (2013) she led her three and four-year-olds on a rich exploration of their own personal culture by telling stories about the various parts of their bodies. Rather than focus on facts about each other, she engaged her students in discussions about how their brain (their culture) informs their actions. In the ACLIP community, Genny O'Herron realized that conceptual thinking needed a factual foundation. She and her students needed to understand some facts about South Korea before they could think about Korean values and beliefs.

Conceptual thinking needed time in order to develop. The ART group was a good example of what can happen when the inquiry question is refined rather than changed so that teachers can reflect on their understandings and their practice. The teachers who were part of the study all three years were able to embed an intercultural perspective across the year. It became recursive, where the concepts of culture, personal cultural identity, multiple perspectives and taking action were

woven through discussions. This can only happen when the teachers' conceptual thinking about a framework has had time to settle and become an integral part of their thinking. Just as the Madeira teachers realized that intercultural thinking took repeated discussions across time, the ART teachers had the time and support to embed an intercultural perspective into their practice.

Interestingly, as their thinking became more conceptual, their writing dropped educational jargon. It is a sign of thinking more conceptually when one can voice what happens without resorting to educational phrases.

Engaging in open un-scripted dialogue. Dialogue was key in transformation, and transformative thinking occurred when discussion was not limited. Ernie Bond (2006) acknowledges how much teachers can be gate-keepers in children's inquiry. His point was demonstrated in the WOW groups as teachers worked with the limits imposed by their goals, and realized their lesson plans were framed by their perceptions of childhood and ideas of appropriateness. This was a significant tension in the groups because of some of the social issues and global hostilities that are addressed in global literature. Teachers have the privilege of deciding which stories children hear, and an important understanding for some groups was that children could engage with subject matter teachers would previously avoid. Teachers learned to share control with students and engage with questions that were significant for students. It was uncomfortable, but teachers reported that the raw conversations were the most transformative.

Open dialogue was stunted by the stress and limits imposed on teachers by district decisions, prescribed curricula, and monitored faithfulness to prescribed

lesson plans. However, through the dialogue in the study group, teachers were able to engage in transformative dialogue, finding spaces for global inquiry within the imposed limits of a curriculum.

It was a breakthrough in teacher's ways of thinking about control that helped the WOW communities adopt transformative teaching practices that supported the development of intercultural understanding. When teachers were willing to let issues arise organically, they and their students gained understandings into other cultures that other more "controlled" groups did not gain. However the teachers were quick to point out that this flexibility does not mean a total loss of control. They intentionally taught the skills of dialogue, they used texts that incorporated tension so were naturally engaging, and they listened carefully to what students were saying so they could discuss, challenge and support the question with which the students were wrestling (Eastern Oregon/MR/I, Tri-Cities/ST/V).

Dialogue was transformative when it was organic, surfacing from questions that arose from teachers and students as they discussed what they had read. When teachers were willing to go where the conversation led, they discovered how thoughtful and competent their students were in asking questions and wrestling with issues. Often, but not always, the conversation was critical in nature as teachers and students asked questions of the text regarding power and social issues.

Transformative dialogue was also safe. Missy Rinker (Eastern Oregon) and Simeen Tabatabai (Tri-Cities) purposefully taught students how to dialogue so they knew what to expect: listen carefully, respond to a comment instead of just adding to it, and disagree respectfully. Safety also meant that both students and teachers

could ask questions they genuinely wondered about, even if it involved ethnicity, race and religion. Portrayal of Muslims was discussed across several groups. In the case of Aveson, it became part of the inquiry because of a hurtful remark made to a Muslim student. In the Willamette Valley group, stereotypes of Muslims entered the discussions because of assumptions that students made about Afghan citizens and their connections to terrorist groups. In each of these discussions, the subject matter was a genuine question generated by students who felt safe enough to ask.

Transformative dialogue enabled teachers and students to synthesize their own experiences with experiences encountered in books. The internal dialogue of reflecting on paper was supported with the external dialogue with colleagues or classmates. The shift in paradigms needed dialogue in order for it to happen. Bakhtin calls dialogue ontological, a way of life. "It expresses a fundamental orientation to the other, a desire to understand and be understood in relation to an other" (Shields, 2007, p. 64). It is this shift in orientation, seeking to understand the "why?," that made dialogue transformative.

Revising the framework for the development of intercultural understanding. Following an immersion in the literature around the development of intercultural understanding, I drew a diagram that best represented how I understood the process (see chapter two). Following the analysis of the interaction with the WOW communities, I found I needed to modify my diagram to reflect the development that actually took place.

On the diagram (Figure 8.1) there are still two lines of inquiry, but one now has a focus on information (facts) and the other on humans (values and beliefs that

inform ways of being and doing). Both lines of inquiry begin with curiosity and gathering information (knowing the world), important elements at the beginning of any global inquiry. I originally thought both could lead to intercultural understanding, but the interactions in the WOW groups did not support that assumption. The human-focused inquiry moved toward intercultural understanding as teachers and students engaged in open inquiry, dialogue, and conceptual thinking. They gained complex understandings of culture and an awareness of

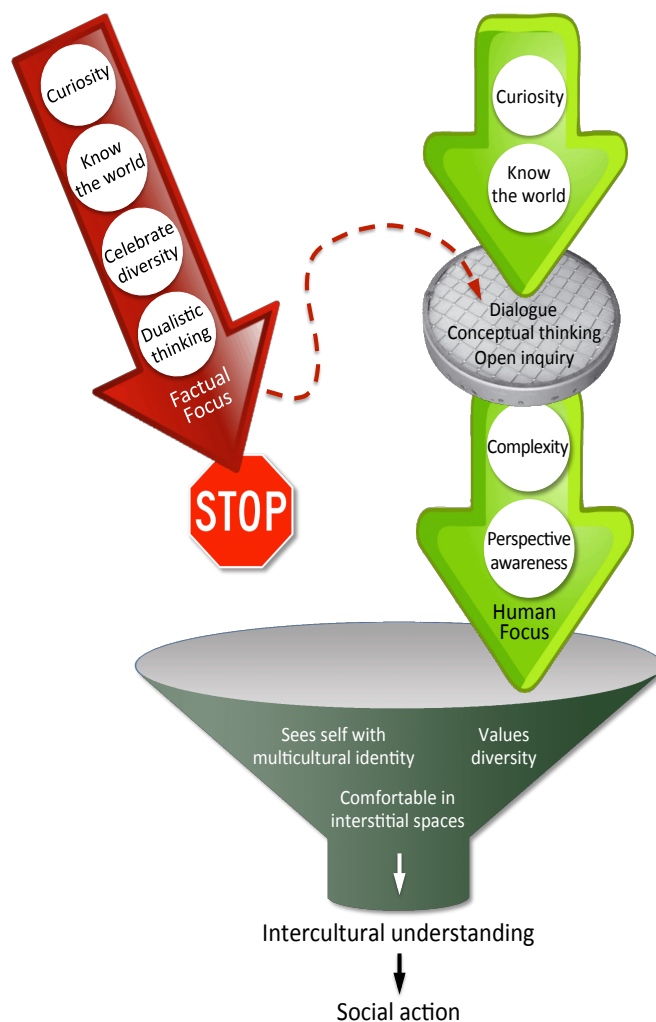


Figure 8.1. Revised framework for the development of intercultural understanding.

multiple perspectives. A factual inquiry led to celebrations of diversity and dualistic thinking and did not lead to intercultural thinking unless the groups shifted to a human focus, which was stimulated by open inquiry, dialogue and conceptual thinking.

My definition of a multicultural person did not change; if anything, it became more solid because of the intercultural development I observed. The groups that engaged in un-mapped dialogue and allowed their inquiry to develop based on the questions that surfaced were the groups that became more comfortable in the interstitial spaces, the messy places where growth is not predetermined. Teachers and students who looked at the cultures that shaped their beliefs and values, began to see themselves as people with multicultural identities. Finally, groups that acknowledged diversity in the ways the members and students thought, were groups well on their way to valuing diversity.

Pedagogical Understandings

Pedagogy, or classroom practice, is informed by what a teacher values. There were two understandings that had a profound impact on how teachers engaged in their professional and school communities. The first was their understanding of competence and the increased value they put on themselves, their students and the families. The second was an increased understanding of how global books impact student learning. This raised the value of interacting with international literature in future classroom discussions.

Viewing educators, students and parents as highly competent. It is important to note that intercultural competence is a two-word expression, so I have

chosen to consider both words separately since the educators made big strides in their understanding of intercultural relationships (discussed in the previous section) but also in terms of their understanding of competence. Their view of competence impacted how much they were willing to let go of the control and be uncomfortable. During the analysis of the groups, group members repeatedly acknowledged a growth in understanding of competence in three areas: the teachers' own professional competence, their students' competence as inquirers, knowledge-seekers and meaning-makers, and the families' competence as players in their children's education.

Teachers began to see themselves as competent to shape curriculum in a way that fit their view of best practice. They were empowered. Teacher Talk members described how they were able to 'take back' the curriculum. ART teachers no longer depended on group leaders; they designed engagements, found books, and became researchers and analysts.

Teachers also began to see the students as competent. Tri-Cities and Aveson teachers noted that when they became more silent and let their students speak and ask questions, they realized how engaged students can become, and how much they can interact with ideas. In Willamette Valley, students generated understandings that were so profound the class was silenced. Classmates also changed their perceptions. ESL students at Tri-Cities and Hobgood changed their self-perception as other students began to see them as cultural and linguistic experts who were to be admired.

Families became more involved in the inquiries in groups. In the Spokane

and ART communities, they contributed to the work by being experts, presenting their home cultures, or giving an opinion on authenticity of texts. Through the backpacks used by the Hobgood and Spokane groups, the parents engaged in global conversations with their children. Jeanne Fain (Hobgood) noted how expansive the process was because parents often gave children different understandings than those gained in classroom conversations. Spokane members commented on how happy the families felt with the global focus, whether the focus was on their home country or another. Involving the parents meant that their abilities, their funds of knowledge, were valued and "worthy of pedagogical notice" (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005, p. 42).

Impact of global literature on learning. Teachers across the groups noticed increased student interest and engagement with global books. There were several reasons for this, one being children's natural interest in story, and another the curiosity they have with something that is different from their own experience. Using that interest and feeding that curiosity led to increased engagement. The color and layout of trade books also helped engage student interest. The MLK teachers noticed that students kept reading trade books as opposed to textbooks, evident by the dog-eared corners and stained pages. Connections also led to increased engagement. Short (2009b) points out that connections are an important part of open inquiry, and the ease with which global literature crossed and connected disciplines, helped increase both teacher excitement and student interest.

Increased engagement increased students' academic achievement. This was particularly demonstrated in the rich writing that ART teacher Jenna Loomis

discussed in her 2012 vignette, the harnessing of literacy skills that Maggie Burns' students used in designing their service project (Tri-Cities), and the dramatic increase in standard test scores with the LSHS English Lions. The high school students in Lithia Springs were in a school that had a mandated improvement plan. Following their year of intense reading of global texts, the students not only scored higher at mandated state levels but doubled their previous scores. As Robert Clemente noted, that increase was phenomenal for that school (Clemente, personal communication). While the heavy emphasis on reading and the hard work of the English teachers was certainly part of the process, it cannot be ignored that interactions with global texts, that challenge ways of thinking, knowing and being, increased student engagement with a story. The improved engagement led to increased skills in reading and the comprehension of the text. MLK students also demonstrated that global literature helps increase student achievement. The teachers noticed that the redundancy of looking at multiple trade books supported the comprehension of material.

In chapter one I discussed the connection of the development of imagination with empathy for others, leading to action. There were several groups that experienced that process and took overt action, prompted by the development of empathy after reading global books. Other groups planned for action. The ART group read books and charted a range of actions in order to stimulate creative thinking about action.

While teacher-thinking was pushed primarily through reading professional literature or dialogue with colleagues, the books themselves also prompted deeper

thinking and dialogue around social issues. The Eastern Oregon teachers had access to the personal collection of an award committee member for the *Notable Books for a Global Society*. Seeing the books helped teachers make book choices that supported a more critical stance, which in turn promoted dialogue and deeper thinking about beliefs, values and issues. The same access to issue-oriented global books prompted the transformation in intercultural understanding and pedagogy in the teachers at Garden Hills.

After interacting with global literature in their classrooms, teachers understood the importance of using global books in their instruction. Teachers in several groups mentioned that global literature needed to be part of every inquiry or spread across the curriculum, and others thought it needed to be front and center in their work.

Study Group Understandings

Michael Palmisano (2013) described one of the benefits of educator study groups as a place to build the understanding needed for implementing new programs, models or strategies. Study groups also offer a chance to engage in depth of learning and thinking in order to create a shared purpose for change. This process of building, thinking and creating was demonstrated in WOW groups, and helped produce transformative understandings, which in turn led to changed practice. There were several elements that created the climate for that process: a safe zone for open inquiry, reflecting on and theorizing what was taking place in the classrooms, and the support structure within the group.

Open inquiry and feeling safe. The understandings discussed earlier in this chapter regarding dialogue could easily have been placed here in the study group understandings. The groups who had the greatest insight into intercultural understanding were the groups that had a willingness to go where it was not 'safe,' whether that was a hard question, a difficult text, or the process of taking back the curriculum. Kathy Short (2009b) discusses the inquiry stance as a combination of uncertainty and invitation. "Invitation beckons us to feel some safety in taking the risk to pursue these possibilities by thinking with others" (p. 12). This is inquiry that has no map, yet the group made it safe. Especially important was the willingness to go explore the zone of human emotion, beliefs and values, instead of staying in the zone of facts. The end result was transformative change. This in turn allowed the teachers to support that same level of safe inquiry in their classrooms.

Change is something that has been thought about and theorized. Paul Watzlawick, John H. Weakland and Richard Fisch (2011), in their book entitled *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution*, use the classic illustration of connecting nine dots to demonstrate that if you want to change something you have to think outside the box, think outside the normal situation. The groups that experienced the most change were those who engaged in thinking that led them outside the box. They were not afraid to ask hard questions of themselves, the texts and their students. They were positioned in the classroom as fellow learners so that the dialogue was open.

The willingness to change was cultivated by the study group. Several groups experienced transformative change through the group interaction. Jeanne Fain

(Hobgood) relates that in the beginning, it took a lot of encouragement from the professors leading the group to help the teachers move beyond their fears, restrictions, and boxed-in thinking. She and Bobbie Solley had to demonstrate using the books to help teachers see the potential of the books. Joan Zaleski (Teacher Talk) acknowledged the vital role study group encouragement and support played in helping the teachers realize they had the competence to take back the curriculum. But she also expressed concern for all the teachers who do not have that kind of support group. Prisca Martens (ART) related how her teachers were empowered through interacting in the study group, so they no longer looked to her for ideas on how to use the books. In each of these cases, there was a member in the group who knew the potential of literature, who did not feel hemmed in by a curriculum or a teacher-evaluation system, and so could walk alongside and dialogue with teachers, helping them stretch into new ways of thinking with books.

The freedom to inquire in a study group or a classroom also needs outside support. The principal of Douglass hand-picked teachers who were already thinking about social justice and planned to keep teaching with that framework. However Lenny Sanchez pointed out that she had to keep advocating with the school district to keep that freedom for her teachers. At Madeira, the administration encouraged innovative teaching, so there was freedom to think. At Aveson, innovative teaching was not only encouraged but required.

It is easy to understand some of the tension this desire to explore can cause with the school districts. Our present-day educational system is built around high-stakes testing that supports thinking in terms of a correct answer rather than

multiple perspectives. The teacher-scrutiny, prescriptive curricula and teaching-to-the-test do not encourage wide inquiry. This makes the journey of some of the WOW groups all the more wonderful because they took the risk to ask questions that both they and their students wondered about.

Reflecting on what happened and theorizing why. The groups who met on a regular basis and supported their inquiry with professional reading, were able to step back and understand what was happening to their thinking and their practice at a theoretical level. The groups who met only to discuss lesson plans or just share books did not experience the same transformation in their thinking.

Merryfield (2000) noted that global experience prompted change in teachers' attitudes toward multicultural education. Several groups had members who had lived overseas, however the experience may have prompted their inquiry but did not necessarily deepen their thinking. What did deepen thinking was engaging with theory because it helped them reflect on their practice and understand what was happening in their classrooms. Their capacity to add theory correlated with the depth of their analysis. The groups that had members with doctorates, or who were professors, generally thought more theoretically. Members who were aware of research, be they professors (e.g. Tri-Cities, Willamette Valley, Teacher Talk, Garden Hills) or teachers (e.g. Shaker Heights, A to Z), were instrumental in bringing articles and ideas that helped group members reflect on and write about what took place during the year.

Hart (1992), in his essay on taking action, states "A very important role for the researcher is to use whatever knowledge or understandings she may have of the

larger causes influencing the problem" (p. 16). Those understandings (and theory) played an important role in groups like Garden Hills that began the year aiming for cultural awareness. The members were able to change their process and engage in more critical thinking because of Karla Möeller's familiarity with Banks and his framework for multicultural education. She used her knowledge to challenge the teachers to move beyond just adding global elements to their units, but rather to read global books that encouraged thinking about water and the societal issues around access. Groups like Madeira were able to change their thinking as they reflected on what was happening in the classroom. However it was the groups like Garden Hills and Shaker Heights, with members who were critical and theoretical thinkers, that made the most movement toward thinking critically themselves and with their students.

The theories groups thought about were from a variety of sources. Garden Hills and ART read James Banks on multicultural education; Harllee read Ladson-Billings' culturally relevant pedagogy; Aveson used intercultural goals from the Asia Pacific society; Tri-Cities discussed positioning theory and critical literacy; the LSHS English Lions and Saturday Book Group used writings like that of Rudine Sims that demonstrate the need for young people to see themselves in literature.

Supporting educator inquiry in personal and professional ways. Besides theory, support from fellow members played a part in helping group members think deeply about their experience. The support was different in each group, but at the core there was a respect for each person as a professional educator. University professor Kelly Wissman (Tri-Cities) described the stance when she said that she

positioned her fellow members as intellectuals and agents of change. As a result she saw teachers, who were experiencing tremendous stress in their workplace, feeling empowered to keep teaching well. The respect they felt in the study group was an important element in the development of their professional confidence.

The practical support looked different in each group. Access to books was important so group leaders used personal collections to give teachers easy access to global and multicultural books. As discussed above, access to theory helped teachers understand what was happening within the study groups and the classrooms. Different kinds of reflection also supported the inquiries: whole-group discussions, individual meetings with group leaders, and spring or summer meetings set aside to reflect and write.

Maggie Burns eloquently summed up the power of the study group support when she wrote:

The group broadened my perspective on teaching and learning. This occurred not only in terms of deepening my knowledge and understanding of global literature and the many and varied ways to use it across grade levels and curriculum, but also in terms of opening up the sense of isolation many teachers feel in general. The sense of urgency and worry associated with the adoption of the Common Core and the new teacher evaluation system was minimized for me with the exposure to other teachers, schools, and perspectives (Tri-Cities/MB/V).

As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, I was not expecting to write a conclusion to the study that focused on process over content. Yet it was the tension

and "messiness" of open inquiry and dialogue that allowed multiple perspectives to be considered and intercultural understanding to develop. As teachers and students asked "why", they were then able to engage in the process of imagining the "what if" of planning for and taking action.

So What?

With any project of this size, the final question revolves around "so what?" What is the lasting impact on schools, teachers, students, families, communities and eventually the world? The impact of this kind of project is hard to measure. It is not particularly quantifiable unless one counts books added to a collection or a curriculum and counted minutes spent discussing world issues. What is more significant is the lasting impact on people's thinking and practice. Some of the changes were evident now. The long-term impact is not yet evident. However school administrators have noticed change. Teacher's thinking, pedagogy and goals have shifted. Students' thinking has changed in many ways.

One of the conclusions that surfaced in many of the group reports and interviews was that the inquiry and work with global literature will continue past the life of the WOW grant. I believe the inquiry will continue because of what Palmisano (2013) calls a habit of the mind. Once teachers feel the impact of their own inquiry, they begin to develop that curiosity and sense of responsibility for their own learning and practice that pushes them to keep learning more.

Implications

The stories in this dissertation are valuable examples that support theoretical understandings regarding intercultural understanding and the way in

which global literature can stretch worldviews. The likely audience for this dissertation is teacher-educators since they are the ones who routinely step back and think about theory and practice. The findings are also important for administrators who are seeking to support teachers, and who are concerned about creating the optimal learning environment.

As I think about the "so what?" of this study, there are two areas that are still of concern, given what the WOW communities learned. One is the need for continued engagement in the schools in developing intercultural understanding. So the first set of implications addresses the ways that practitioners can support classroom inquiries in intercultural understanding. The second area of concern is the need for teacher inquiry through study groups. The literature and the stories support the power of this type of professional development. In this educational climate where teachers are heavily scrutinized and evaluated, the study group can help teachers regain some of the creativity, feeling of competence, and stature of being a knowledgeable professional.

Practitioners Supporting Classroom Inquiries: Intercultural Understanding

This study was not structured to teach educators about global literature in a top-down manner. It was meant to support teachers in their use of global literature through grants, through local study groups, and the large group via the online site. The interaction with the groups was not meant to be directive; it was in itself an inquiry to discover key elements that foster intercultural understanding through using global literature. However, the limited dialogue on the website, and the wide range of intercultural thinking that developed would indicate that there is room for

improvement. So what are some of the implications for supporting teachers in this kind of inquiry?

Deepening the open inquiry. Some groups did not realize that their approach was limited in scope, so they did not feel the need to expand on their thinking. Simply sharing the thinking of other groups through forum digests was not enough to help them push their inquiry for more depth. The touristic approach needed to be named (Shannon, 2002), verbalized and described so they would they know that they could move beyond awareness. Teachers need a revised version of intercultural understanding so they knew what to aim for. That is what happened when the Madeira group read the *Reading Today* article about the Notable Books for a Global Society (Short et al., 2011). They realized their approach was touristic and worked to reshape their inquiry. Offering grants that specifically mention in the RFP that critical thinking about global books will be a focus, would allow administrators to set the stage and intentionally push groups beyond simple cultural awareness. Defining and discussing the vocabulary will in itself push group thinking. Key terms to define would be intercultural understanding, critical thinking, open inquiry. Care needs to be taken not to define words that would dictate the shape of the inquiry, just the depth of the inquiry.

One of the most effective tools in encouraging deeper thinking was the interaction with professional reading. Not only did articles and books challenge group members' current thinking, but it also gave them a way to understand theoretically what was taking place in their discussions. Professional reading gave them tools with which to build a framework. Palmisano (2013) points out that study

groups potentially build the capacity of the group participants to adapt and create innovative strategies that respond to local needs of classrooms. In other words, study groups can help teachers develop a theoretical framework that moves in and out of different learning situations and across disciplines. Asking each group to engage in some professional reading as part of the grant requirements can at least make it possible for the moderator to suggest reading as opposed to just making resources available. The issue is that teachers are not just busy, they are swamped, and so the value of the reading needs to be emphasized. In the Hobgood group, giving teachers release time to participate in the study group placed value on the study group process. Similar ways to signal the value of professional reading are an important consideration.

Theoretical knowledge (e.g. the 5Fs, or issues of cultural authenticity) can cause tension that is paralyzing, and educators need support to get through that phase. They know enough to worry, and need time and support as they think through the practical implications of the theory. As the WOW groups read and interacted with professional literature, tensions emerged. Identifying and engaging with these tensions at the outset would have supported teachers while they wrestled with the problem.

The first tension was how to engage with 5F information, yet challenge students to go into a deeper understanding of culture. ACLIP member Genny O'Herron realized that what was important was not avoiding 5F information, but moving beyond it. People need basic factual knowledge before they can think about beliefs and values. A side benefit of discussing the role of information in inquiry

around intercultural understanding is that it can help other teachers recognize that they are stuck in a 5F mode.

A second tension was questioning the cultural authenticity of books.

Teachers realize there are issues with some books and become nervous about using books that have not been approved by a cultural expert. It was a particular issue for the ART group in their study of India, and for the Shaker Heights group as they sought to learn about the Silk Road from a non-Western viewpoint. Many groups used the book reviews on the WOW website as a resource, and so that resource needs to keep increasing in visibility and comprehensiveness. A network of cultural experts would also help, however, in giving their opinion, they should be sensitive to the diversity that exists in their own culture.

Engaging in dialogue. Dialogue about intercultural issues was attempted on the website forum but was not very successful. However dialogue is critical in order to prod teachers into thinking about complexity instead of dichotomies, about issues instead of celebrations, and cultural values instead of pedagogical strategies. In a classroom, large group discussions are more successful with some priming, allowing students to think with a partner before sharing in a large group. Pairing the study groups so they can dialogue with each other could help teachers open themselves up to new perspectives, which in turn can give them something to contribute to online discussions. This is especially important when there are "experts" who are group members: teacher-educators, world travelers, and authors. Care needs to be taken to position all participants as intelligent, thinking practitioners who have valuable thoughts to contribute to the dialogue.

Large questions did not prove to be useful on the discussion forum.

Presenting information through digests and posting resources was helpful in study group discussions, however it did not stimulate discussion across groups. What did stimulate cross-group discussion was posting about a particular book. Global books that included social issues in the narrative acted as stimuli for deeper thinking for Garden Hills and Eastern Oregon, so discussing a book online, such as *A Long Walk to Water* (Park, 2011), could foster more large group discussion. Care would need to be taken that large voices not dominate the discussion, so reviewing Rosenblatt's theory of reader response, and having a moderator who actively invites multiple perspectives could act as a corrective for domineering personalities.

To engage in transformative dialogue requires trust and a feeling of safety. At one point in the grant cycles, an interesting discussion was started across the communities around a picture book set in Canada. The discussion was lively until one strong opinion dismissed other perspectives and effectively shut down the exchange. Since dialogue is critical in the growth process, purposefully discussing the process of dialogue (or Netiquette) will facilitate two goals. It will set up guidelines for online discussion, but also encourage teachers who are reluctant to lose control, to open themselves up to organic dialogue in their own groups and classrooms, where the direction and conclusion are not necessarily known.

Many groups from the critical thinking, social justice and embedded intercultural perspective clusters expressed that action was an end goal. Emphasis on viewing discussion as action could put increased value on participating in a forum.

Taking the time and emphasizing process over product. The growth in the ART teachers' conceptual understanding, and their ability to weave the concepts throughout the year increased each year they were involved with the grant. In-depth inquiry takes time. Teachers need the recursive practice of thinking, taking action, reflecting, and changing action in order to grow in their conceptual understanding.

One of the understandings the Madeira teachers reported was that they needed to pay attention to the process rather than be focused on a product. If this is important in a classroom it is even more important when encouraging the work of a study group. When WOW groups were working on a product, for example a cross-curricular unit, the creation of the product limited the time available to reflect on what had happened in classrooms, and develop new understandings. The Madeira teachers also acknowledged that intercultural understanding takes time to develop, and the pressure of producing a product does not give group members the space to think deeply about what they noticed.

Facilitating in an intentional way. As the online facilitator, I learned that I needed to be proactive in making connections between groups, asking questions that can deepen their thinking, and pointing out resources specific to their inquiry. While leaving them to shape their inquiry was important, they also needed more support so they could deepen their inquiry and engage in dialogue.

Facilitators for online study groups need to be intentional in suggesting resources. Email conversations with the leaders suggesting articles or books would help them choose reading that is both interesting and engages their group members

with professional literature that relates to their inquiry questions.

Study groups enabled teachers to "take back the curriculum," discover spaces in their prescribed curriculum for global literature, and realize how easily global literature aligns with Common Core State Standards. A moderator could highlight these understandings in the forum digests so that more study groups are able to engage in that liberating thinking. Referencing particular WOW stories would support groups in making those leaps in their thinking.

Providing resources. Teachers did not seem to lack strategies and ideas, probably due to the rich creative thinking that can happen in a group. In many groups, part of sharing books included sharing ideas for engaging with books. What did seem lacking were strategies that encouraged deep thinking about books (e. g. cultural x-rays). The moderator of a similar inquiry could make some of those discussion strategies available.

Garnering opinions of cultural experts and having electronic book discussions brings up another tension, that of the electronic sharing of resources. Copyright issues on picture books prohibit creating electronic versions that can be sent to cultural experts or shared more widely for book discussions. This is a large issue that needs to be discussed in publishing and educational forums.

One final implication is the continued need for the publishing of global books. A related need is creating awareness both for the books and the powerful thinking (not just reading) that can happen with the books. As a tired overworked teacher, I did not tend to read research articles, so a story could have been a more effective window into better practice. Websites from organizations like Worlds of

Words and Rethinking Schools are publishing teacher reflections and stories as a way to bridge theory and practice. Those resources should continue to expand.

Practitioners Supporting Classroom Inquiries: The Study group Process

Lewison et al. (2002) surveyed the teachers who participated in their workshops, and the components that were the most instrumental to growth were teachers' stories of putting theory and ideas into practice. These WOW stories are excellent illustrations of theory with practice, demonstrating powerful ways of engaging with world cultures in classrooms and study groups. To make them even more accessible for use in professional development, the stories should be indexed.

The stories are not just great illustrations of practice. They also have implications for changes in future practice. Cynthia Coburn looked across the literature on reform implementation, and suggested four interrelated dimensions of what counts as change: *depth, spread, shift in ownership, and sustainability* (Palmisano, 2013, pp. 4-6). *Depth* is reached by uncovering underlying assumptions about students' capacities, the subject matter, and what constitutes effective instruction. *Spread* relates to the extent in which the principles become embedded in procedures, instruction and professional learning. *Shift in ownership* occurs when the authority for and expertise in change resides with the teachers. Finally, *sustainability* relates to a constancy of purpose in spite of challenges such as competing priorities, changes in resources, and teacher turnover. Coburn believes these dimensions are indicative of deep and consequential change.

Analyzing the data from the ART community demonstrated that deep change can occur over time. Intercultural thinking became embedded in classroom

interactions. Assumptions of what teachers and students were capable of doing were examined and changed (depth). Teachers became empowered and took charge of the instruction to the point that the principal released them from using required curriculum (shift in ownership). And in spite of changes in school locations and teaching staff, the goal of embedding an intercultural perspective remained steadfast (sustainability).

The effectiveness of study groups has been documented in the literature, and demonstrated in this study, yet there are some challenges to their use. They are not well-known as possible tools of professional development, so some teachers do not know that they can direct their own learning around questions that intrigue them. So an important question is how principals and school administrators can open their staff up to transformative sustained inquiry through study groups. Another challenge to the effectiveness of study groups is the variety in inquiry styles. The WOW communities demonstrated a range of interactions within the study groups. Some teachers were solely focused on classroom practice, whereas other teachers looked at themselves as researchers and spent time reading, reflecting, and reshaping their own practice. Some styles were more effective in fostering deeper intercultural understandings.

Based on what I observed of the interaction of the study groups, I believe there are several important areas that should be added to pre-service teacher and administrator training.

- Open inquiry should be demonstrated; people need to experience inquiry to understand what it is. There are many definitions of inquiry, but I am

referring to the wide inquiry that is transformative because it originates in organic questions, is grounded in dialogue, and is not afraid to go into the unknown. When teachers and students realize they can develop their own questions and collaboratively gain new understandings, they are empowered to take control of their own inquiry and action.

- Models for professional development should be presented. Specifically, the inquiry process of study groups should be discussed. Most teachers are only familiar with top-down workshops, so they need to be aware there are other models. The idea of study groups is critical in our educational climate because it focuses on teacher competence instead of teacher evaluation. Highly trained leaders are not required because WOW groups with and without experts, professors or graduate students gained transformative understandings through the study group inquiry process.
- An important element of professional development is the expectation of continued learning. When I finished my Masters in Library Science, the final portfolio assignment had questions about the journals I planned to read, and what I expected to contribute to the field (not just my place of employment) in the following five years. There was an expectation that I would keep learning. The expectation of continued theoretical growth could prompt educators to think beyond the next week, and open themselves and their students up to authentic inquiry.
- Critical literacy and critical pedagogy need to be demonstrated. It was obvious in the WOW communities that there were multiple definitions of the

word critical, and the groups that interrogated texts grew in their intercultural understanding more than those groups that equated critical with close reading and comprehension. Beliefs, values and issues deepened the dialogue. In order to understand the importance of critical pedagogy and the value of thinking about issues, pre-service teachers should be challenged to engage with a variety of social issues such as power, force, gender, race, class, the flow of money, silence and voice, multiple interests and perspectives, fairness and justice, respect, otherness, hegemony, freedom, collectivity and interdependence, and the social sources of ideas, attitudes and languages (Bomer & Bomer, 2001).

From this study it was clear that global books had a profound impact on the worldview of students and teachers. It is also clear that open inquiry and dialogue in a safe environment helped the readers ask the deeper questions that prompted the most growth in intercultural understanding. Study groups of teachers and study groups in the classroom facilitated that rich dialogue. The amazing work of the groups and the transformation that occurred needs to be applauded and continued, but one large question still remains. Tension creates an environment where change can occur, but how tense do world events have to become in order for educational administrators and policy-makers to realize that intercultural understanding needs to be a foundational part of education? Systemic change is not part of the scope of this dissertation. However, teachers' feel plenty of tension around testing, assessment, and teacher evaluation, so it is not surprising that world tension does not take a prominent place in their thinking, planning and classroom interaction.

Global issues are far from their minds. The challenge in making intercultural understanding an element in most classrooms is enormous. Increased access and use of global literature can begin the process of moving intercultural thinking up higher on the curricular priority list. Study groups can give teachers the support they need to engage with world tension instead of the tension around assessment.

Future Research Questions

This study was rich with findings about using global literature to support the development of intercultural understanding. But it also brought up new questions that need to be researched.

This study identified open inquiry, dialogue and conceptual thinking as elements that helped move teachers to think more deeply and critically about world cultures. The data sources that were the most helpful in the analysis were from teachers who documented carefully their thought processes and that of their students. Necessary to the analysis on intercultural understanding was learning the backstory of the groups including how their personal histories and the group dynamics shaped their proposals, inquiries, and discussions. Several of the study groups recorded their sessions, and studying that data in light of positioning theory could give additional understandings into effective ways to support dialogue, inquiry and thinking at a conceptual level. It would also add one more study that supports the importance of teacher study groups, positioning them as intelligent and capable practitioners.

This study was mainly focused on the adult WOW community members because they were the people reflecting, writing and creating the data used in the

analyses. Needed is a study over the course of several years that looks at the growth of intercultural understanding of the students.

Online education is becoming more available. It holds tremendous potential for dialogue across cultural borders that will contribute to the development of intercultural understanding. However, the potential of online work is hampered by the busyness and stress of teaching contexts. Needed are studies that look at various structures for online work or methods of delivery in order to design effective professional development that uses the strengths of collaborative study groups cited by NCLE (2012) and Palmisano (2013) and the flexibility of purpose described by Birchak et al. (1998).

Teacher preparation is one of the areas in the United States that is under close scrutiny. Beyond taking teachers to other countries as part of their coursework, what other coursework and professional experiences would help pre-service teachers understand the importance of intercultural understanding, and help make that inquiry focus become part of their habits of mind? While many of the studies done have been small, a large-scale survey could produce ideas that can help university educators shape teacher education with increased emphasis on intercultural understanding.

Libraries are historically forums that support the development of democracy, so should be natural places to engage in the critical thinking that develops with global literature, dialogue and open inquiry. Yet that does not happen. What are ways that critical thinking through global children's lit can be supported in a public library?

Final Thoughts

It is hard to aim for something you have never seen. When I began my studies at the University of Arizona, I knew I wanted to use children's literature to help people cross borders, but I had no idea how to do that. The journey with these educators has been a hands-on lesson on what happens when teachers get together around global books, their idea of culture, and work toward the goal of knowing and understanding others. This project has helped me synthesize my view of culture, and the power of literature to help strangers enter into and understand other people's lives.

This dissertation is about using children's literature to gain intercultural understanding, so it is fitting to use an illustration from a story to try and encapsulate one of the more important understandings I gained. In one of the final scenes of Madeleine L'Engle's (1962) novel *A Wrinkle in Time*, Meg is fighting to rescue her little brother Charles Wallace from "IT," a brain on a dais in the futuristic land of Camazotz. Her one weapon is something that IT does not have. Meg uses her love for Charles Wallace to rescue him from an impersonal life with IT.

This scene, in a sense, represents the difference between the groups that gained some deeper understanding of culture, and those who remained at the tourist level. When cultures were seen as a list of facts and celebrations, instead of vibrant, blood-throbbing stories of humans, culture was reified, becoming an IT, something impersonal to look at and study. When the engagements connected humans to humans at the heart level, there was a difference in what the groups

understood. Culture is not a list. Culture is the messy and complex story of humans interacting with other humans, hearts responding to hearts.

To interact with a different culture, i.e. another way of speaking, knowing and being, is to move into a dynamic zone where we can be reshaped. The transforming dialogues demonstrated that greater intercultural understanding was gained in the more uncomfortable hybrid zones with the more potential for change. To put a toe in is better than nothing, but jumping in the pool will allow you to move to a new place.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONS FROM APPLICATION, REPORTS AND INTERVIEWS

This appendix contains the questions that the groups answered for their proposal, the mid-term and final reports, and the interviews. They are listed below in the order in which they were submitted.

Proposal (Grant Application)

Worlds of Words Grant Application Global Literacy Communities: Gateways to Innovation

DUE: August 15, 2012

Grant Description:

Worlds of Words is excited to announce the availability of \$1000 grants for literacy communities to explore the use of global literature to build international understanding. Global literature provides an opportunity for teachers and students to explore understandings about global cultures that go beyond surface information to explore the values and ways of living within those cultures. The current public interest in global education creates a potential space for innovation within K-12 classrooms. Engaging in that innovation within a professional community provides support and challenge through dialogue and shared explorations. The funding for these grants was made possible by the Longview Foundation for Education in World Affairs and International Understanding

Grant period: September 2012-May/June 2013

- 10-12 literacy communities will be funded from September 2012-May/June 2013. These communities can be elementary educators or middle and/or high school educators. The community can involve university educators as well but must be focused on innovations in K-12 classrooms in the United States.
- Any literacy community of 5-10 educators can apply. The group of educators can be school-based, district-based, or community-based.
- The literacy community commits to meeting on a regular basis as a study group from September 2012 to May/June 2013
- The literacy community commits to engaging in innovation using global literature with students in K-12 classrooms from September 2012 to May/June 2013.
- Each community will post regular entries on a members-only forum established for the communities to exchange ideas and share experiences. In addition, an online coordinator from Worlds of Words will offer support, resources, and suggestions and send regular digests about the work of the communities and resources from other communities.
- Each community will complete a short final report that is due on June 30, 2013.
- Each community will create several classroom vignettes about their

experiences for a special issue of WOW Stories as a way to share their experiences with other educators. The vignettes are due on July 30, 2013 and can be created in a range of forms, such as a written story with student artifacts, a podcast, or a video.

- The money from the grant can be used for global literature, supplies for classroom work or study group meetings, technology support, or stipends for summer work on vignettes.

Grant Application

Global Literacy Communities: Gateways to Innovation.

Name of primary contact _____

Position _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Nature of the group

Describe your group. Indicate whether your group is school-based, district-based, or community-based and whether the group has a past history together and previous relationships or is newly formed. Also indicate whether members of the group have previously worked with global literature in their classrooms.

Names of participants in the group

Provide the names, positions, and emails of the group participants and indicate the age levels and student populations in the classrooms of group members. If possible, provide a brief description of the demographics of the school communities.

Proposed Goals and Activities

Indicate what the group proposes to do, why and how as well as when and where the group will meet. The goals and activities should address both study group meetings and activities within classrooms.

Many school communities are deeply involved in the implementation of the Common Core Standards and so these standards will influence your work. Indicate which of your goals connect to or address the standards in some way.

Time Line of the Group

Provide a time line for the group's activities and meetings, including the vignettes for WOW Stories.

Proposed Budget

Provide a proposal for budget expenditures (global literature, supplies for classroom work or study group meetings, technology support, summer stipends for vignettes).

Mid-term and Final Reports

The mid-term and final report templates were emailed to the group leaders several weeks before they were due. The mid-term reports were collected in February 2012 and 2013. The final reports were collected in June 2011, 2012, and 2013.

Mid Term Report to Worlds of Words Global Literacy Communities as Gateways to Innovation

Name of Group _____

Report submitted by _____

Date _____

1. Provide a list of the meetings for your group and the focus for these meetings (bulleted list of dates with a brief statement of the focus or activity for that meeting).
2. Indicate any changes in your goals and the reasons for these changes.
3. List the ways in which your group has worked at integrating international literature into classrooms. What types of classroom work have members engaged in? (Provide a brief bulleted list).
4. List the ways in which your group used the on-line forum.
5. What is one major insight for your group as you look back over the fall semester? What is one major obstacle that you have encountered?
6. Any suggestions for us related to the ways in which we can better support the literacy communities? What changes do we need to consider in our process and in the on-line forum?

Final Report to Worlds of Words Global Literacy Communities as Gateways to Innovation

Name of Group _____

Report submitted by _____

Date _____

1. List the major goals for your group based on your initial proposal. Also indicate any changes in your goals and the reasons for these changes.
2. List the activities in which your group participated within the study group meetings
3. List the activities in which your group initiated in the schools or classrooms.
4. For each goal, provide an evaluation of your work toward meeting that goal, along with support for your evaluation of the ways in which you did or did not meet that goal.
5. Given the current national focus on Common Core Standards, in what ways did these standards influence your work in classrooms or discussions as a group?
6. Indicate the ways in which your group used the on-line forum and monthly digests.
7. List any changes in the names and positions of group members from the

- original proposal.
8. List the final budget expenditures for the grant.
 9. What suggestions do you have for us related to the ways in which we can better support the next group of literacy communities? What changes should we consider in our process and in the on-line forum?
 10. While the major focus of this grant was K-12 classrooms, we know that your participation may also influence your own work at the university. How has your participation in this community influenced your teaching and courses at the university?

Interviews

Two sets of interview questions were used. The first set was used with selected members based on the need for additional information about what took place in the group. The oral interviews were done in person, via telephone or with Skype. The interviews were recorded for purposes of listening again in order to take precise field notes. The second set of emailed interview questions were sent to all the group leaders.

Oral Interview

Group Genesis:

- How did you find out about the grant opportunity?
- How did the group get started? Who first saw the grant possibility and dreamed up the idea of starting a WOW community?
- What triggered the interest?
- How were group members invited or 'selected'?

Group Function:

- How did the group function?
- Was there a visible leader or facilitator?
- Were there assigned roles?
- Who set the agenda?
- Was there a structure or pattern to your study group meetings?
- If your group had a university prof who instigated the group, how did the group function - as fellow investigators, as prof/students?
- How often did your group meet face to face?
- What additional tools did you use to communicate? Email? Separate blog?

Group learning:

- How did your group record what you discussed or were learning?
- How did you share what you were learning with other educators or a larger community?
- Are there outside resources (books, articles, guest speakers) that you used that were not shared in the postings, the reports or the vignettes?
- How did your group create a safe environment for discussions and risk-taking?

Lasting Understandings:

- As you have continued to teach and reflect, what are one or two lasting

understandings from the WOW work that have informed your teaching or interactions with students?

- What has been the lasting impact of working together in a WOW community study group?

Email Interview

- What time of day did your study group meet?
- Where did the group meet?
- How often did your group meet?
- Did your group have a set routine for the meetings (e.g. browse books, then discuss classroom engagements, etc.)? If so, what was the routine? Could you please list the kinds of activities that took place during the study group meetings?

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