

One of the most powerful ways to grow professionally as an educator is to participate in a study group or learning community. This type of professional development brings together a group of people who engage in sustained inquiry on a question related to their teaching.

In this issue of *WOW Stories: Connections from the Classroom*, one learning community shares their inquiry into how to help children connect with global literature through connecting art and culture. Now in their second year, the Pot Springs Elementary community consists of classroom teachers from the primary grades, the school art teacher, and university professors. Their work this past year was supported by a grant from the Longview Foundation for World Affairs and International Understanding. The vignettes from their first year can be found [here](#).

As you read this issue, think about how you connect students of all ages with literature in ways that promote intercultural understandings. Consider sharing your innovative practices by submitting a vignette to *WOW Stories*. We are interested in descriptions of interactions with literature in classrooms and libraries at preschool through graduate levels. See our call for manuscripts and author guidelines for more information.

Janine M. Schall

Editor, *WOW Stories: Connections from the Classroom*

Learning About Ourselves and Others through Global Literature

Prisca Martens and Ray Martens

In 2011-2012 our literacy community came together to investigate the intercultural understandings young children develop about themselves, others, and the world through experiences with global picturebooks and their use of art to express those understandings. Our community included eight teachers from Pot Spring Elementary School in Timonium, Maryland: Christie Furnari teaches pre-kindergarten; Elizabeth Soper and Darlene Wolinski teach kindergarten; Stacy Aghalarov teaches art; and Michelle Doyle, Jenna Loomis, Laura Fuhrman, and Margaret Clarke-Williams teach first grade. We, Prisca and Ray Martens, are professors/researchers who teach literacy and art education, respectively, at Towson University. As a team, the ten of us met monthly over the year to discuss readings and develop understandings about intercultural learning and global picturebooks, share what was happening related to global literature in each classroom, look at examples of children's written and artistic responses to the literature, and plan for the coming weeks. Our work was supported by a *Literacy Communities: Global Gateways to Innovation Grant* from Worlds of Words and by a *Learning & Leadership Grant* from the National Education Association Foundation.