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**WOW Stories: Connections from the Classroom** is a regular on-line publication of WOW containing vignettes written by classroom educators about children's experiences reading and responding to literature in the classroom setting.

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## Connecting to Global Cultures through Literature, Art, and Collaboration

In a poignant article about the importance of the arts in developing and transforming the minds of students, Eliot Eisner (2003) makes the following claim,

Given the value we accord artistry in our work, we might even say that the major goal of

education is the preparation of artists, people who can think artistically about what they do, who can use their imagination, who can experience their work as it unfolds, who can exploit the unexpected, and who can make judgments about its direction on the basis of feeling as well as rule. (p.343)

The Artists Reading and Thinking Literacy Community is a powerful example of what happens when the goal of literacy learning is expanded beyond conventional, language-based curricula to include the preparation of artists in the fullest sense. This unique, three year collaboration between teachers, artists, students, and university professors represents the incomparable potential of teacher inquiry that is rooted in collaboration, problem-posing, and commitment to a community of inquiry.

In the following vignettes, members of the ART Literacy Community at Pot Spring Elementary School describe how they continue to explore the relationship between art, global children's literature, and inquiry into global issues for the purpose of developing intercultural understandings to prepare globally minded citizens. Their work over the last three years has been supported by grants from Worlds of Words, made possible by the Longview Foundation for World Affairs and International Understanding. The vignettes from their first year can be found [here](#), and their second year [here](#).

As you read this issue, we invite you to consider how to engage students of all ages with literature, art, and cross curricular collaborations that promote intercultural understandings. We at *WOW Stories* hope you will consider sharing your innovative practices by submitting a vignette to this journal that describe engagements with literature in classrooms and libraries at preschool through graduate levels. See our call for manuscripts and author guidelines for more information.

Eisner, Eliot W. (2003). The arts and the creation of the mind. *Language Arts*, 80, 340-344.

Tracy Smiles, Editor, *WOW Stories*

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## **Artists Reading and Thinking: Developing Intercultural Understandings through Global Literature**

by Prisca Martens and Ray Martens

2012-2013 was an exciting year for our ART (Artists Reading and Thinking) Literacy Community! Our purpose was to explore the development of young children's intercultural understandings through experiences with global picturebooks, children's views of themselves as agents of change in the world, and children's representations of their understandings/ideas through art. Teachers and