

Introduction and Editor's Note

This issue of WOW Stories: Connections from the Classroom includes vignettes from three global literacy communities in Arizona and Tennessee, including a private school in a rural community and public schools in urban areas of the South and Southwest. Educators in these communities are committed to the use of global literature with children to explore language and culture across global contexts. The communities are connected by their focus on carefully selecting global books for their classrooms and on spending time as teachers exploring and discussing these books together as a study group before bringing them into classrooms.

Global Literacy Communities are small groups of educators who engage in professional inquiry around innovative practices with global children's and adolescent literature to build intercultural understanding. These communities meet regularly to consider global literature, world languages, and ways of using these books in preK-12 classroom contexts. Although the communities may be school-based, district-based, community-based, or university/school collaborations, they share a commitment to thinking together as professional learning communities and to transforming their practice in classrooms.

In 2021-2022, three Global Literacy Communities received grants from the Worlds of Words Center of Global Literacies and Literatures to support their work with global literature. The members of these communities shared their work on Padlet and were supported by Cynthia Ryman as the Global Literacy Coordinator. Each community has written a vignette for this issue of WOW Stories.

The Global Literacy Communities project is supported by CERCLL, the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (<https://cercll.arizona.edu/>), at the University of Arizona. This Title VI Language Resource Center supports research related to language teaching and learning and provides quality teaching resources and professional development to encourage the meaningful integration of culture, literacy, and world language study.

The first vignette focuses on the Drachman Global Literacy Community in Tucson, Arizona. In this public K-8 school, teachers working with middle-grade students wanted to expand the variety and quality of the novels that students were reading within each of their theme cycles. They also documented the types of novels that were the most engaging for students.

The second vignette focuses on the J.E. Moss Global Literacy Community in Tennessee and their challenges due to a scripted literacy program and community attempts to ban books. Their focus was on developing teacher knowledge around text selection by critically examining books through the lenses of reader connections, evaluation criteria, and instructional possibilities. They documented how and why they evaluated specific global picturebooks through these lenses and the ways they engaged students with these global books.

The final set of vignettes focuses on the Vail Global Literacy Community, a community of educators in a faith-based school for young children, ages 2-9, in Vail, Arizona. Their goal was to continue their work with creating a global literature curriculum that invites young children to take on intercultural perspectives (see Volume 8, Issue 1 [<https://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/volume-viii-issue-1/>] and Volume 9, Issue 2 [<https://wowlit.org/on-line-publications/stories/ix-2/>] for their

previous vignettes). They also wanted to continue developing writing and art experiences to deepen children's cultural understandings in Storying Studio.

The vignette by Prisca Martens and Ray Martens, the facilitators of this group, provides an overview of their work as a study group and in classrooms to carefully select books and to plan curricular engagements for engaging children across the curriculum. The vignette by Jennifer Hook focuses on engaging preschool children in explorations of identity through story and music. The vignette by Lacey Elisea and Jane Metzger describes their inquiry with first graders using read-alouds to explore family origins, favorite childhood stories, and a cross-cultural study of China. The final vignette by Cassandra Sutherland and Lacey Elisea shares a collaborative inquiry across classrooms and disciplines connected to the Olympics through art, physical education, and books.

We invite you to read these vignettes and learn about the innovative work occurring in school-based study groups that support teachers in their intentional selection of global books for their classrooms and in their instructional planning. These vignettes provide examples of picturebooks, novels, and curricular engagements that encourage children to reflect on their place in a world of rich diversity.

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