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Global Education Through Children's Literature

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Global Education Through Children's Literature

Emily Schmidt - Illinois Wesleyan University

Research Question How can I best help students gain a genuine understanding and respect for other countries and cultures? My interest in this subject began as a result of my study abroad experience in Barcelona, Spain.



Why is Global Education Important?

- If students are not exposed to countries and cultures that are different than their own, they will not be prepared to compete or participate in our global economy
- Global education can help create and foster a classroom environment that welcomes and encourages all forms of diversity
- Helps to validate and positively represent the viewpoint and values of a variety of cultures
- Provides students with necessary background knowledge to reconsider cultural stereotypes

Connection to Children's Literature

- Allows students to bring their background knowledge and personal experiences to the classroom
- Children's books serve as a powerful tool to generate classroom discussion and provides students with a safe way to discuss unfamiliar or difficult topics
- Well-written and well-illustrated literature allows students to view the world through an authentic and new perspective
- Builds community in the classroom through shared sessions of discovery

Definitions

- **Multicultural Education:** a total curriculum reform that seeks to achieve social justice by educating students about the racial, economic, religious, gender, ability and ethnic diversity in the country in which the students reside
- **Global Education:** the study of human beliefs and values, global systems, global issues and problems, global history, cross-cultural understanding/interaction, awareness of human choices, the development of analytical and evaluative skills and strategies for participation and involvement (Lucas, 2010)

Implications for Student Teaching

- Interested to see how my predominately white classroom responds to global children's literature
- A great challenge will be teaching the content without applying a Western perspective and an "over there" mentality
- Important to create an environment where all cultures are understood as both different and "normal"