

Starting with Stories: Leveraging Children's and Adolescent Literature to Teach for Anti-Racist and Global Competence

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Abstract

As we consider the growing number of children from immigrant and refugee backgrounds that our schools serve, the importance of fostering anti-racist educators through teacher education is of the utmost importance. While anti-racist work can be a challenging and ongoing personal journey for every educator, engaging teacher education students with diverse children's and adolescent literature can lead to meaningful self-reflection that can foster empathy and global competence. This article shares how online university course modules were designed, with funding from the Longview Foundation, to support pre- and in-service educators to engage with children's and adolescent literature centered on the lived stories of immigrant and refugee families through scaffolded reading and thinking protocols as a model for using literature to encourage empathy and global competence with young learners. Pre- and in-service teachers reported several benefits, including an increased awareness of the importance of diverse literature, deepened self-reflection and empathy, and meaningful connections to classroom practice, thereby benefiting educators and their learners alike.

Keywords: anti-racist, children's literature, global competence, empathy, self-reflection

*"Books and doors are the same thing. You open them, and you go through into another world."
– Jeanette Winterson*

Setting the Landscape

In both teacher education and PK-12 education, educators are challenged to strengthen anti-racist education. This challenge is a complex one that includes hesitations and barriers to a structured pedagogy of anti-racist education in teacher education programs (King, 2022) as well as current legislation and policies in many states that curtail teachers' freedom to explicitly integrate attention to racial, economic, and social justice in their teaching practice (Woo et al., 2023). Teachers themselves are often uncertain how to identify, understand, and respond to racism in schools (Arneback & Jämte, 2021).

Yet, the reality in our nation's schools is that nearly 80% of the teaching force is white while nearly 50% of PK-12 public school students are children of color (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Moreover, in 2020, more than 300,000 undocumented or asylum-seeking children were enrolled in U.S. public schools, with Virginia among the top ten states in which more than 75% of these newcomers settled (Culbertson et al., 2021). Children from refugee backgrounds have unique socio-emotional and academic needs, yet are often marginalized in U.S. schools, highlighting the urgency of focusing on the needs of refugee children in teacher education (Akay & Jaffe-Walter, 2021).

As teacher educators and scholars, we recognize that there are numerous structural and systemic barriers to enacting anti-racist education in teacher education and PK-12 contexts. We understand that anti-racist education in teacher education programs must seek to interrupt patterns of bias in classrooms through inviting current and future educators to critically reflect on their identities and explore ways to dismantle racist ideologies and systems that affect learning opportunities and outcomes for historically marginalized children and families (Bazemore-Bertrand & Porcher, 2020). We acknowledge that the work we share here represents a small

effort toward anti-racist education through fostering cultural humility and empathy for others whose lived experiences differ greatly from those of the dominant culture.

Teaching for global competence is an approach that invites critical reasoning, curiosity, and problem solving and is useful for developing empathy, perspective taking, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds. As Dr. Anthony Jackson, former vice president of the Center for Global Education at Asia Society, urged in 2021:

If we are to root out racism, if we are to survive as a species, education in America and on a global scale must develop in youth the disposition to act more toward the common good than toward individual gain or group hegemony. (Jackson, 2021)

It is at this intersection of anti-racist and global competence education that we situate the present project.

This paper is a reflection describing a project that the authors undertook with the support of a Longview Foundation Innovation grant. The grant, entitled *Teaching for Anti-racist and Global Competence*, was created to develop stronger preparation of pre- and in-service teachers in developing their understanding of global issues surrounding refugees, immigrants, and racism.

Literature Review

The need to redesign teacher education programs to prepare today's educators for anti-racist pedagogy in racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse classrooms is urgent, complex work. Castro and colleagues (2023) anchor this work in theoretical and pedagogical foundations representing extensive, evolving scholarship that reflects the intersections of critical race theory in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995), culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 2014), culturally responsive teaching (Gay, 2010), culturally relevant and sustaining pedagogies (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2014), critical race pedagogy and praxis (Howard & Navarro, 2016;

Ledesma & Calderon, 2015; Lynn & Parker, 2006, and racial literacy scholarship (Guinier, 2004; Oto, et al., 2022; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021; Twine, 2004). Castro and colleagues posited that these foundations have unique strengths that scholars and practitioners can apply to address issues of equity proposing that:

a set of common teaching practices emerge which might inform teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum developers who adopt equity-oriented pedagogies. These practices include: honoring the cultural and community assets of students; making curriculum relevant for all students; raising critical consciousness and awareness of race and racism; tracing and challenging racist political, economic, and social structures; and challenging racism through counter-storytelling. (Castro et al., 2023, p. 44)

Current anti-racist education scholarship (Muhammad, 2020; Spaulding et al., 2021) emphasizes that “anti-racist education does not and should not begin with teaching about oppression, but rather with teaching the dream of a future in which all people live in their full humanity” (Vlach, 2022, p. 34).

Although beyond the scope of this article, as well as our own positionality and experience as teacher educators and scholars to define anti-racist pedagogy, we are committed to responding to the call to further explore these theories and their implications for teaching and curriculum. We situate the work we share here in the scholarship on ways that children’s literature may be used to foster anti-racism and children’s global competence for life and work in our globalized world.

Integrating Children’s Literature as an Anti-racist and Global Competence Development Tool

Spencer (2022) conducted an action research study to investigate the relationship between the use of diverse children’s literature and a teacher’s development as a social justice educator. In this year-long study, teacher participants met in a Critical Children’s Literature Group to discuss select anti-racist early childhood literature to critically reflect on the texts and enhance pedagogical knowledge. Findings included that teachers embraced the notion of using carefully selected stories to bring an otherwise unfamiliar world into the classroom environment in order to engage in anti-racist pedagogy. Spencer’s work shares valuable considerations and resources for selecting inclusive and nuanced classroom texts that center diversity, equity, justice, and belonging. Similarly, Vlach (2022) emphasized that the standard U.S. literacy curricula are not built on foundations of cultural relevance, criticality, or social justice (Ladson-Billings, 2014) and that integrating anti-racist children’s literature requires deep knowledge of curriculum, learning processes, and social context along with risk-taking to step away from the prescribed curriculum (Flores et al., 2019). Vlach offers examples that illustrate how children’s literature can be integrated in units of study in third and fourth grade social studies and English language arts.

Across our nation and world, teacher education programs are tasked with supporting current and future educators to embrace and be responsive to the strengths and needs of children in increasingly diverse classrooms. This rich diversity demands that educators both develop intercultural and global competencies as well as to nurture these competencies in their learners (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2023; Papadopoulou et al., 2022). One well-developed framework on teaching for global competence defines *global competence* as the capacity to examine local,

global, and intercultural issues; understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others; engage in open appropriate, and effective interactions with people from different cultures; and act for collective well-being and sustainable development (Boix Mansilla & Jackson, 2023; OECD/Asia Society, 2018). This framework prompts educators to critically consider how to nurture the global competence dispositions that can advance inclusive and welcoming societies. Castro and colleagues (2023) argued that “changes in the demographic, educational, and sociopolitical landscape of schooling have made racial and cultural pedagogies vital necessities for the typical classroom” (p. 34). These scholars situated the urgency of this work in the current attacks in numerous states on teaching about race and equity along with the deliberate political conflation of critical race theory with culturally responsive teaching and equity-oriented approaches.

Many scholars have emphasized literature as a powerful way to engage with children around “difficult” topics (Wiseman et al., 2019). Riley and Crawford-Garrett (2016) emphasized the importance of the inclusion of critical texts in teacher education that “highlight salient categories of difference, give voice to those who have been historically silenced, provide examples of social action, explore systems of oppression, and include opportunities for posing questions about how and why societal positioning is maintained” (p. 94). Pfundheller and Liesch (2023) argued that educators must be prepared to critically analyze issues such as the way that race and culture shape children’s learning experiences and that teachers should include children’s literature that reflects the struggles faced by marginalized families. Flores and colleagues (2019) highlighted the possibilities for culturally responsive pedagogies that leverage children’s literature as a resource for “windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors” (Bishop, 1990; Thomas, 2016) in ways that honor the increasingly racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse learners

and families in our schools. This way of thinking about applying children's literature in teacher education and K-12 teaching practice aligns with the development of global competence dispositions and responds to the call to "reconsider and recommit researchers' and educators' efforts toward promoting a more just and equitable world amidst turbulent times" (Castro et al., 2023, p. 35). It is this vision that inspired our current project.

Group Positionality

We approached our project work and wrote this article from the lens of teacher educators, scholars, and PK-12 practitioners who care deeply about equity and justice in learning experiences and outcomes for children and families from historically marginalized groups and communities. We bear witness in our work to the urgent need to nurture teachers' capacity to embrace culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining pedagogies within richly diverse, fully inclusive classrooms. We are cis-gender females from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds. Four of us identify as white and one as Hispanic. All of our lives have been enriched through lived experiences in other countries and/or extensive interactions with culturally and linguistically diverse family members, students, colleagues, friends, and acquaintances. We are united in our dedication to fostering racial and social justice through our work, words, and actions.

Project Description

As a core component of our project, we focused on revising three core courses in a teacher education graduate program at a large university in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In each asynchronous online course, we embedded new modules with guided experiences in children's and adolescent literature centering on immigrant and refugee experiences. The ongoing goal of the work is to engage pre- and in-service graduate students with research-based

strategies for teaching for global competence and anti-racist education. We attended specifically to Global Thinking Routines (GTRs; Boix Mansilla et al., 2017). GTRs are micro-teaching tools that can foster global competencies, such as inquiring about the world beyond one's immediate environment, engaging learners in perspective taking of others' viewpoints, inviting respectful dialog with diverse others, and sparking thinking around acting and advocating for a more just and sustainable world (OECD/Asia Society, 2018). In this manuscript, we share a sampling of the work undertaken in each of the three courses, as well as student responses to the work.

Throughout this paper, we use the term "student" to refer to the graduate students enrolled in each of the three courses described here. These students vary in age, race, ethnicity and language background and include American and international students, as well as both pre- and inservice teachers. Most students in these courses are either current, licensed PK-12 teachers, seeking a master's degree and an add-on ESOL endorsement to strengthen their knowledge for teaching multilingual learners in content areas, or they are preservice teachers, seeking initial licensure as ESOL teachers. Among the preservice teachers, students in these courses may include undergraduates pursuing a Bachelor's to Accelerated Masters (BAM). Each of the courses require 15 hours of fieldwork in accredited PK-12 school settings and include mentorship by an ESOL teacher.

Collecting Student Responses

Although this reflective paper does not share a complete study, university IRB approval was obtained for collection of student data and students who elected to participate provided informed consent. Students enrolled in the three core courses were sent an email during the first weeks of class informing them of the work that was being undertaken and inviting them to participate in providing feedback. Students were given the option to provide feedback through a

survey and interview, as well as sharing their responses from discussion board conversations and activities during the course, or simply sharing their course responses and activities. Students who agreed to participate in providing feedback were not identified to the course instructor until after final grades for the semester had been submitted.

Course 1: Child & Adolescent Development in Global Contexts

In the course ‘Child and Adolescent Development in Global Contexts,’ we revised three learning modules to include activities that utilize children’s literature to enhance anti-racist instruction and global competence. Along with the inclusion of several different texts, we invited students to use three different Visible Thinking Routines (Project Zero, 2022) when analyzing the texts in order to: 1) deepen their personal thinking and analysis of the specific questions posed in relation to the texts; and 2) increase their understanding of how using thinking routines can facilitate their own students’ awareness and understanding of global competence.

One module utilizes the children’s book *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi. This story centers on a new student from Korea whose name is not easily pronounced by her peers and who considers adopting a Western name to fit into her new class. An overarching theme of the text is how families and children grapple with the balance of assimilating to their new environments while simultaneously maintaining their home identity and culture. Using the Visible Thinking Routine, ‘I Used to Think... Now I Think...’ (Project Zero, 2022) we created an individual assignment inviting students to reflect on previous understandings of concepts such as assimilation, identity, immigration, and bullying and then share how this thinking may have changed after reading *The Name Jar*. Students engaged in the following application activity and Discussion Board (See Table 1 for representative student responses):

- Is it better for students from other countries/cultures to assimilate into their new host country - adopt a name, clothing, and other cultural traits that help them fit in? Or is it more important/better to retain their home “identity?”
- What are some issues that might arise in either scenario?
- What are some strategies teachers can use to support the child’s or family’s decision, regardless of which path they take?

In addition to this individual assignment, students participated in an online 'Discussion Board' conversation with their peers, sharing their thinking around the following questions:

- What are some of the unique characteristics of minorities and immigrants that can lead to bullying?
- How can teachers be more aware of these issues and help prevent bullying that targets immigrants and minorities (strategies they could use, lessons/activities, personal experiences (either as a teacher or as a student)?

Table 1

Student Responses to The Name Jar Activities

My reaction to the book was very emotional. When moving to America, a substitute mispronounced my name pretty horribly and I was bullied with that incorrect pronunciation of my name in my new middle school. This small mistake, which might have been a genuine attempt at pronouncing my name, led me to change the way I introduce myself and the name I go by in English settings...A small gesture to attempt to pronounce someone’s name correctly can go a long way. **Stories such as these read from early ages show concrete examples of ways students can cultivate a climate of acceptance and inclusion.**

Rather than believing it was better for students from other countries to assimilate to their new environment, **I used to believe** that it was a natural and inevitable process. I did not consider the immense internal conflict that students would be experiencing to fit into a new and different culture. **Now I think**, especially after reading ‘The Name Jar,’ that students are faced with many internal and external conflicts when they enter a new culture.

Course 2: Introduction to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners

In the course ‘Introduction to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners,’ we begin by inviting teacher education students to consider the importance of teaching for global competence. To engage in this process, students explored the four domains of global competence embedded in the OECD/Asia Society (2018) framework: inquire about the world beyond their immediate environment, seek to understand multiple perspectives, communicate effectively with diverse others, and take action to create a more just and sustainable world. Through supplementary readings and online dialogue, students then examined how children’s literature could be used to foster global competence and anti-racist education with PK-12 learners.

One pivotal activity in this course centers on viewing and listening to a digital version of *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna. This book, endorsed by Amnesty International UK and winner of the 2017 Ezra Jack Keats Book Award Honor, provides an avenue for students to consider how and why deeper knowledge about the experiences of children and families from refugee backgrounds could support their own meaningful work to integrate anti-racist education and foster global competence in their teaching. After reading *The Journey*, students participated in an application activity and Discussion Board (See Table 2 for representative responses). First, students engaged in a Global Thinking Routine (Boix Mansilla et al., 2017), the 3Ys, to consider the book’s themes and practice a strategy that could be applied in their own PK-12 classrooms. The 3Ys Global Thinking Routine asks students to consider the following questions:

- Why might the right to a safe place to live matter to me?
- Why might the right to a safe place to live matter to the people around me (family, friends, city, nation)?
- Why might the right to a safe place to live matter to the world?

We asked students to respond to these prompts through the lens of the book *The Journey*. This individual assignment was then shared with the class through an online discussion board module, where students were asked to read and respond to their peers.

After sharing their responses to the 3Ys, students also viewed a video analysis of *The Journey* and engaged in reflective dialogue with their peers, using the following questions as thinking prompts:

- What is your thinking about the ways that children’s literature may be used to foster global competence and anti-racism education?
- How does the video analysis shape your thinking around the careful thinking that teachers must do to select children’s literature for use in the classroom?
- How might children’s literature be used to foster reflection about and empathy for the challenging emotional journeys and experiences that many people endure?
- How might you make connections to your own students’ emotions and the way that families face adversity in their own lives?
- In what ways does this weeks’ content strengthen your own appreciation for and reflection about families’ cultural/linguistic identities and funds of knowledge? Why do these understandings matter?

Table 2*Student Responses to The Journey Activities*

I noticed that I was able to empathize greatly with the mother in this story, despite it being told from the perspective of her daughter. By listening to and looking at the images in the book several times, I was able to get a better understanding of the mother's perspective in this story. She may be, and likely is, just as scared as her daughter during their journey to what's going to be their new home, but she keeps on a 'brave face' for her children. Most of what I think about as an educator is the experience of refugee children, but it's also important to consider the struggles of their parents. To truly take on the mother's perspective in this story, it requires a reader to look beyond the literal text in the story and see the bigger picture of what this journey really entails for everyone involved.

The book makes us feel the "bad dream" of immigration, the anxiety of not knowing what is to come, the hope of a better life. I think this is why using art (books, paintings, poems, music, etc.) is so crucial to invoking that empathy on these topics. It is a way of deeping (sic) our dimensions of care, an alternate method to heightening our awareness.

Course 3: Language and Literacy in Global Contexts

In the 'Language and Literacy in Global Contexts' course, a key theme is developing understandings of sociocultural perspectives on literacy, literacy learning, and literature. To integrate the goals of the project within this course, we designed three modules to focus on choosing and using children's and adolescent literature in the classroom.

Central to this work is exploring how we choose and then use literature in our teaching. Readings and discussions that draw attention to what the story is, how it is told, and why it is told all matter deeply. After examining research about taking care to be critically conscious of our book choices, students engaged in reflective responses, allowing connections to be made, assumptions to be explored, and new ideas to be examined. The following prompts guided student reflection in a purposeful way (See Table 3 for a representative student response):

- Apply the reading to your own experience as a teacher or learner.
- Express your opinion on the ideas presented in the reading.
- Evaluate the information and ideas expressed in the reading.
- Reflect on challenges to your beliefs/attitudes/worldview.

Students were then assigned the task of selecting a piece of literature that would be poignant in their classroom to help young learners reflect about the lives and experiences of others. Students then developed and shared lesson ideas and classroom discussion strategies with their peers. This activity provided students with an opportunity to consider their reflection process, create meaningful ways to engage learners with the book, and gain other book and teaching ideas from their peers.

Table 3

Student Responses Evaluating Book Selections

I used to think just having diverse books in your classroom library was enough. I made the assumption that having accessibility to a variety of books shows acceptance from the teachers and the schools. I now know that just having them is not enough. I need to find as many ways to incorporate these stories into our learning. I need to elaborate not only on the literacy skill I want to teach but the connections the students can make to their cultures or lives.

Student Reaction, Responses, and Reflections

In this section, we share feedback that students provided after completing and reflecting on the newly integrated modules. This reflective paper shares our project team's initial reflection and discussion around students' feedback. We individually reviewed the collected data, noting individual interpretations, and then collaborated to share our thinking to identify the following emergent themes: promoting self-reflection for educators, building empathy for diverse student bodies, and providing meaningful connections to classroom practices. The themes are fluid and

often overlap but illustrate the span of students' thinking and reactions as they reflected about the immigrant and refugee experience through the use of literature.

Promoting Self Reflection

One major takeaway our students shared centered on the impact of exploring diverse children's and adolescent literature through their coursework and the self-reflection that process entailed. Children's literature is often described as windows, mirrors, and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990), meaning that books allow readers to see into other cultures, to see themselves reflected, and to step into others' experiences. Such literature can, therefore, be powerful for fostering self-reflection among teacher education students (Ness, 2019), particularly as they select children's books, prepare to read them with learners, and simultaneously explore global topics. One student shared:

The children's literature gave me insight into ways issues of global significance can be incorporated into early childhood education. The children's literature we read also allowed me to step into the shoes of someone who is culturally/linguistically different from myself; in this way, I was able to take on diverse perspectives. The modules and discussion boards not only allowed me to gather valuable information about global education and cultural competence/responsiveness, but it also allowed me to dig deeper into my own thoughts and perceptions of the world and of education.

Another student expressed similar sentiments after engaging in the readings and activities: "As a reader, I got to go through the journey of adjusting to life in a new country (something I have no personal experience with), interacting with people of many different backgrounds, and eventually being reunited with his family."

Students found spaces for thinking about challenging global issues that brought the realities of others to light in real and meaningful ways. The stories allowed students to enter the lives and lived experiences of others and to gain insights, not just to the characters, but to themselves in a manner that invited curiosity, introspection, and reflection.

Building Empathy

Another major theme that emerged from student responses centered on the idea of building empathy. Hammer et al. (2003) define empathy as “the ability to take perspective or shift frame of reference vis-a-vis other cultures” (p. 425). Using children’s literature provided an opportunity for students to delve into others’ experiences, if just for a moment, which helped to foster empathy for the personal journeys of others.

Books like *The Journey* not only nurture empathy for others who have experienced forced migration or migration under duress, but also connect readers with incredible imagery that can evoke additional emotions and critical thinking. In reflecting on using *The Journey* in an elementary classroom, one student shared:

I found *The Journey* powerful in its ability to viscerally share an immigrant experience with young audiences. It was emotionally specific to a universal immigrant journey experience, using its illustrations and pace of prose to invoke empathy for the characters' experience of loss, anxiety, anticipation, and excitement.

Another student stated:

Combine stories with illustrations, as we have in children's picture books, and the emotions are compounded, reflecting two delivery methods for emotion, visual and verbal. To me, *The Journey* was absolutely this kind of art, words chosen to convey emotions of immigration meshed with illustrations designed to do the same. As with any

art, for us to connect with it, we must bring ourselves to it, our own interpretation of the emotion(s) it's trying to convey. It's just as important to discuss our own interpretations with others as it is to feel them. In this respect, experiencing and discussing children's literature can be a powerful cultural bridge and method of teaching empathy in the classroom.

Another student reflected on using the GTR 'Step-In, Step-Out, Step Back' in relation to children's and adolescent literature:

As we've seen with our use of the Step in-Step out-Step back GTR, children's literature is a powerful tool for allowing students to step inside a character's shoes and experience situations how the character does. This aids in developing students' perspective taking abilities which in turn will foster greater empathy. When students are able to take on the perspectives of others, they begin to realize that we all have our own individual struggles in life. Teachers can capitalize on the empathy students develop for the story's character(s) to make these connections between students' own lives and the lives of the character(s); this can help create a space for students to share their experiences and emotions about how they may have faced adversity in their own lives.

The visual imagery of children's books like *The Journey* brings themes and implicit messaging to life. Thinking about imagery allows students to connect with, understand, and reflect upon experiences that are new or challenging for them to unpack. Compelling visuals allow students an opportunity to connect with ideas that may elicit uncomfortable and raw emotions, thereby providing a growth moment towards empathy. One student commented:

Reading, or looking rather, at the entire story extended my thinking by enabling me to see a more first-hand view of what it's like to migrate to a new country, where everything

seems entirely different and confusing... Because this story is set in a fictional place and everything is different from how things are anywhere in the real world, it caused me to feel the same feelings of confusion at the main character's new surroundings. As a reader, I got to go through the journey of adjusting to life in a new country (something I have no personal experience with), interacting with people of many different backgrounds, and eventually being reunited...

Building empathy in both educators as well as their learners is critical for the success of anti-racist work and developing global competence within the classroom. In addition to self-reflection, our students gained useful strategies for nurturing empathy for others through children's and adolescent literature.

Connecting to Classroom Practice

The revised course modules were intentionally designed to offer educators immediately usable literature and reading structures adaptable to a variety of grade-levels and subjects. For example, students considered ways that Global Thinking Routines (GTRs; Boix Mansilla et al., 2017), such as 'Step In, Step Out, Step Back,' 'Beauty and Truth Routine,' and 'Think-Feel-Care-Reflect' can be adapted to help learners think critically about key themes and concepts from stories in age-appropriate ways.

Modules also tackled realistic issues faced by children and their teachers, such as bullying diverse others. The National Institute of Health (Maynard et al., 2016) reports that there is a global trend of immigrant youth being bullied more frequently than native born students, which can cause long-term stress and anxiety for targeted youth. As such, our students reported appreciation for the immediately usable literature, such as *The Name Jar* and *The Journey*, and the thinking routines utilized within the modules. One student reflected:

As we've seen with our use of the Step in-Step out-Step back GTR, children's literature is a powerful tool for allowing students to step inside a character's shoes and experience situations how the character does. This aids in developing students' perspective taking abilities which in turn will foster greater empathy. When students are able to take on the perspectives of others, they begin to realize that we all have our own individual struggles in life.

Another student connected the ideas within Eve Bunting's *One Green Apple* with their classroom instructional strategies:

Farah's experience highlighted the need to reconsider my approach when communicating and including students with language barriers in classroom activities. Rather than traditional structures of learning, it may have equal importance to integrate activities in the curriculum that evoke "communities of practice" within the classroom.... I am now very intrigued and looking forward to implementing and expanding upon this principal (sic) in my own art classroom.

A pre-service teacher, likewise, commented on her growing understanding of the role that children's literature can play:

As a pre-service teacher who hasn't yet experienced teaching elementary grades, I had no idea that there was such a vast amount of children's literature that can foster global competence and anti-racism. Being introduced to stories like *One Green Apple* and *The Journey* has shown me how children's literature can be used as a tool for promoting global competence. Although I know I have benefitted from reading these stories -- I've gained valuable knowledge about what the experience of migration is like for refugees,

and how immigrant and/or refugee students may be feeling in their new school environments.

Attaching realistic routines, like GTRs, to reading diverse literature with complex themes can build critical thinking and interpersonal skills between learners that may lead to greater global competence. As one student said:

I will definitely use the anti-racism instructional strategies presented in this course. I see the use of diverse children's literature in the classroom as a particularly point of power to promote a classroom community that is caring and empathetically curious. Introducing students to a diverse collection of literary experiences could help facilitate real-world conversations that might encourage students to seek and create supportive and empathetic communities in their lives going forward.

In addition to providing useful strategies for educators to build empathy and understanding of others, teaching diverse literature centered on immigrants' stories can create a safer and more inclusive classroom for newcomer learners. As one student stated:

I definitely want to use many of the anti-racism instructional strategies that were presented in this course. As a future ESOL teacher, it'll be important for me to make sure that all of my [culturally and linguistically diverse] students feel supported and respected by myself, their classmates, and other educators. This means ensuring that my classrooms are culturally responsive/sustaining and that students understand the impact of their words/actions towards one another.

Including literature reflective of the lived experiences of children and families from immigrant and refugee backgrounds supports the creation of a safe, inclusive, and productive classroom for

all learners. Being able to take these ideas directly to the classroom was frequently cited as a powerful component of the classes by our students.

Conclusions

Working to become an anti-racist educator in both thought and practice is daunting work, requiring diligent and ongoing self-reflection, rethinking pedagogical frameworks, and developing skills not only within educators themselves, but also with their young learners. Furthermore, there is no concrete finish line for this type of work. However, the structures provided in the learning modules within these three core courses offered tangible ways to build anti-racist literature and global competence routines into classrooms.

Given the diversity of students in our classrooms, the lack of diversity within the teaching profession, and the increase in newly arrived students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds into our classrooms, encouraging pre- and in-service teachers to develop skills for anti-racist and global competence teaching, like fostering empathy for others, is a meaningful effort that can benefit our PK-12 learners. The learning activities in the modules not only help current and future teachers build global competences themselves through scaffolded reading and thinking protocols around literature, but also model appropriate ways for using texts and thinking routines with their own learners.

Using books like *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi and *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna with reading structures such as Global Thinking Routines engages educators and their learners in building empathy for newly arrived students and understanding the difficulty that is being an immigrant or refugee. Texts like these also provide children from immigrant and refugee backgrounds with mirrors and windows for seeing themselves in classroom literature. The Visible and Global Thinking Routines provide teachers and their learners with safe ways for

processing texts with complex themes in a way that can build global competencies, namely empathy for others and perspective taking.

Finally, teaching diverse literature through stories that center around newly arrived immigrants and refugees offers educators an opportunity to engage in critical self-reflection. As one student stated, "...being aware of our bias and our own culture and constantly learning about the different cultures we come into contact within our school communities can model acceptance and awareness of diverse students." Young people learn both through formal pedagogical approaches, as well as through informal means, such as modeling behavior. Interacting with diverse texts affords educators an opportunity to build and model empathetic behavior. Embedding the kind of experiences with literature we have shared can encourage teacher education students to move past understanding surface-level themes and content and move into empathy building, perspective taking, and critical thinking skills, all of which are key for anti-racist and global competence initiatives to be successful at the classroom level.

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