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**“Why Can’t We Just Read American Books?”
Aiding Reading Comprehension and Engagement of Global
Literature in the High School English Classroom**

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ABSTRACT

This teacher action research study examined the observed and reported experiences of 11th grade students when implementing inquiry-based lessons to aid in the comprehension and engagement of global literature. The 42 participants were comprised from two sections of College Preparatory English classes enrolled at a rural high school of approximately 3,000 students in central New Jersey. To begin the unit, students selected a global memoir of their choice, set reading goals and rates, recorded their reading progress, and reflected on their frustrations. In order to aid students in understanding and enjoying global literature, four inquiry-based lessons were completed throughout the course of the ten-week study. Reading conferences were also employed as a means to better understand students' comprehension and engagement struggles. Data was collected through reading conference notes, student surveys, completed inquiry activity handouts, completed reading logs/reflections, and observations. These data were analyzed through analytic writing, participant observation, coding, binning, and theme statement writing. Findings suggest that student engagement and comprehension are closely related. In general, the students who best understood their selected memoirs were more likely to meet reading goals. The inquiry activities helped to increase student understanding, allowing for higher goal attainment. Findings also suggest that students are capable of self-

monitoring, adjusting to feedback, and employing new reading strategies to enhance their understanding and engagement of global literature.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
RESEARCHER STANCE	11
Introduction	16
The Benefits of Global Literature	16
Reading Comprehension	20
Reading Engagement	22
Reading Strategies	25
Pre-Reading Strategies	26
Building Background	28
Inquiry-Based Learning as a Vehicle for Engagement	30
<i>Generating Questions</i>	30
<i>Answering Questions</i>	32
<i>Technology</i>	33
Conclusions	34
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	35
Research Goals	35
Setting and Participants	36
Planned Intervention	37
Data Collection Methods	40
<i>The Field Log</i>	40
<i>Observational Methods</i>	41
<i>Interview/Survey Methods</i>	42
<i>Student Work Collection</i>	43
Trustworthiness Statement	43
THIS YEAR’S STORY	46

The First Impression	46
The Initial Survey	47
Establishing a Class Culture for Global Literature	53
<i>Introducing the Study</i>	53
<i>Beginning Reading Routines</i>	57
It's Okay to Be Confused	61
Talking it Out	65
<i>Explaining the Process to Students</i>	67
<i>I Get Confused, But it's Not a Global Thing</i>	70
<i>I Get Confused, But I Use the Strategies to Get Through It</i>	72
<i>I'm Not Confused, I Just Don't Have Time</i>	73
<i>Adjusting to Student Feedback</i>	75
Traveling Across the World	76
Identifying Troubling Vocabulary	84
Continued Reading Practices	91
<i>SSR</i>	91
<i>Reading Conferences</i>	93
<i>Matthew's Conference</i>	93
<i>Victor's Reading Conference</i>	94
<i>Madison's Reading Conference</i>	96
Reading Logs and Reflections	98
The Final Survey	102
Summary	109
METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS	110
Participant Observations	111
Mid- Study Reflection	111
Analytic Memorandums	112
<i>My Study and Dewey</i>	112
<i>My Study and Freire</i>	113

<i>My Study and Delpit</i>	113
<i>Figurative Language Analysis</i>	114
Coding and Binning	115
Themes	116
FINDINGS	117
Engagement and Motivation	117
Reading Strategies	120
Inquiry-Based Learning Strategies	122
Self-Monitoring Behaviors	125
Lack of Engagement and Reading Comprehension	126
NEXT STEPS	128
REFERENCES	133
APPENDICES	137
Appendix A: HSIRB Approval Letter	137
Appendix B: Principal Consent Letter	138
Appendix C: Parent Consent and Student Assent Form	140
Appendix D: Start of Year Reading Survey	142
Appendix E: Reading Conference Requirements and Rubric	143
Appendix F: Reading and Reflection Log	146
Appendix G: Why Do we Read Global Literature Activity	148
Appendix H: Academic Article from “Why do We Read Global Literature?” Activity	149
Appendix I: Memoir Beginning Background Inquiry	153
Appendix J: Setting Inquiry	154
Appendix K: Vocabulary Inquiry	157
Appendix L: End-of-Unit Reading Survey	162

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Student responses to concerns about reading global literature.....	39
Figure 2. Student responses to most used reading strategies.....	40
Figure 3. Pie chart detailing student responses to feelings about the global focus of the course.....	41
Figure 4. Positive student responses to ability to enjoy/understand global literature.....	42
Figure 5. Uncertain student responses to ability to enjoy/understand global literature.....	42
Figure 6. Global reading strategies chart.....	56
Figure 7. Reading conference talking stems.....	58
Figure 8. Reading conference evaluation criteria.....	59
Figure 9. Student generated questions from Setting Inquiry.....	71
Figure 10. Student responses to helpfulness of Setting Inquiry.....	73
Figure 11. Confusing terms in Sherman Alexie’s “My Indian Education”.....	76
Figure 12. Model of completed Vocabulary Inquiry Chart.....	79
Figure 13. Side-by-side of student feedback for Vocabulary Inquiry.....	80
Figure 14. Layered Story for Reading Log and Reflection Collection.....	89
Figure 15. Completed Reading and Reflection Log Sample 1.....	91
Figure 16. Completed Reading and Reflection Log Sample 2.....	92

Figure 17. Pie chart detailing the amount of reading students completed this year compared to previous years.....	94
Figure 18. Pie chart detailing student response to feelings about global readings.....	95
Figure 19. Student responses regarding enjoyment and understanding of global literature.....	96
Figure 20. Student feedback regarding the inquiry activities.....	99
Figure 21. Binning Graphic Organizer.....	106

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Student responses to the importance of building background when reading global literature.....	97
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RESEARCHER STANCE

Some of my earliest memories of books smell of musk and the librarian's too-generously applied perfume. As a first grader, my favorite elective day was library day. I would anxiously squirm in my seat during the first fifteen minutes, which were always set aside for the librarian to talk to us about a few new books we might like to try. I would already be halfway across the room by the time she announced that we were free to browse the shelves and make a selection. I loved the feeling of running my hand over the book spines, deciding which adventure I would take next.

Harry Potter made his way into my life sometime towards the end of elementary school. Middle school was consumed by his adventures, and high school was consumed by revisits to his adventures along with first visits to the worlds of *Twilight*, *Divergent*, and other similar series. I became biased towards fantasies, and I decided that I wouldn't read anything else— including those texts that were assigned as part of the high school curriculum. I read voraciously— just not the texts that were assigned. Sure, I skimmed *Gatsby*, *The Fountainhead*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *In True Blood*, but I never really felt that these books were worth my time. They required too much thought and, in some cases, too much context that I just didn't have and honestly did not care to find. My teachers didn't seem to mind, since I still did extraordinarily well in my AP Language classes. Since every student read the same text, I was able to get by as a careful observer

and a minimal participant. When it came time to write an essay, I would go back to the “significant passages” that I had marked during whole class discussions and analyze them in context with the summaries I had heard. I was a savvy pretender.

Despite my resistance to teacher-assigned texts, I still did well in school. As such, I didn’t feel the need to challenge myself to move on to different genres and more complex writing styles. This became a problem in college where I found that I was mostly unprepared for the level of reading required. Historical fiction was uncomfortable for me. Nonfiction was even more so. These genres took me longer to read as I had to reread several times in order to understand the author’s claim. They often contained references like cultural events or geographic locations in which I was unfamiliar. Unlike my safety net, fantasy genre, the worlds were not laid out entirely. Instead, I was expected to bring with me a background knowledge sometimes so demanding that it felt as if a steel wall had been built— preventing me from finding any true meaning.

Overall, freshman year English courses knocked the wind and the confidence right out of me. I was used to skimming, but that level of effort just would not be enough to get me through Post-Colonial Literature. I was overwhelmed by the amount of historical context that I lacked when entering Chinua Achebe’s *When Things Fall Apart*, and having always been a savvy independent reader, I found that when I finally came up against a task that I couldn’t breeze through, my frustration became my worst enemy. I had

strategies, but none that seemed like they would get me through *Bless Me, Ultima*, especially not in the three nights that were allotted to read it. The course became my first and only grade under a *B*, which stained my transcript like a sloppy teacher's late night coffee stain.

I have learned through my own educational experience that choice is sacred, because every student wants to feel like his personal preferences are valued, but choice alone is not the answer. Students also need to be pushed in directions that will sometimes make them uncomfortable. I can't help but question what might have happened if my teachers had allowed me to read and write about a book I truly loved? Even more so, I wonder what might have happened if they had pushed me to read something out of my comfort zone, like nonfiction?

I know what it feels like to be met with a task that feels impossible, and yet, I still found myself surprised at my students' level of reading resistance as I entered my teaching career. In most cases, students had been beaten down by a system that does not value choice, creativity, nor passion. Their image of reading had become a series of short passages followed by multiple choice questions. I was a part of this system, and I know the damage that it can cause. I vowed to teach with a passion — to model a love for reading and learning that my teachers did not always model for me. The first step I took was to create several units based around choice reading in which the students chose the books, authors, and genres in which they wanted to invest their time. But as I've stated before, choice

alone is not enough. I began to focus on specific reading strategies that students could employ to help increase their reading comprehension, especially when trying out new genres for the first time. While I have noticed that my new learning plans have led to some increase in engagement throughout the unit, I began to notice other issues, particularly in my junior-level English class.

This particular English class has a global focus — imagine my dismay at being assigned a course riddled with nonfiction and culturally relevant reading. Even better? One of the text choices was none other than *Things Fall Apart*. The course affords students choice in some respects, but the one mandate is that these texts either a) focus on an area of the world other than the United States or b) are written by a non-American author. The goal of the course is to make students more global citizens. While this is an admirable goal, it presents several issues. The students complain that they have difficulty comprehending and engaging with texts. They say things like, “Why do we have to read about other cultures? Who cares? How am I supposed to relate to a character living in a prison camp? I don’t even get what they’re doing in this chapter. Why are they burning a horse? How am I supposed to enjoy a book when I can’t even pronounce the character’s name?” When I hear these questions, I can’t help but think back to the younger version of myself— the girl who tossed aside *Gatsby* to run off with *Harry Potter* for the fourteenth time. How could I make these students feel that they have choice while still teaching the curriculum, and how could I do this while also

pushing the students to challenge themselves but making sure to provide whatever support is needed?

In listening to my students, I have found that background knowledge and the inability to connect to characters are the two greatest roadblocks when reading global literature. While we tend to focus on themes, which are relevant to all human beings regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or religion, it still seems near impossible for a well-fed, well-clothed, seventeen-year-old American student to feel truly connected to a beaten, starved, twelve-year-old, African slave.

It seemed that the only logical barrier to work on was the lack of background knowledge. Because of this, I arrived at my research question: *What are the observed and reported experiences of students reading Global Literature with the help of multiple reading comprehension and engagement strategies?*

With my support, students will learn to choose books, set goals, identify areas of confusion, and apply strategies to alleviate confusion. I will teach them how to ask questions, research answers, and apply their findings to their texts. In doing so, I hope to create an environment that affords choice while still pushing each student to grow. These skills are those that will allow students to better comprehend texts well into the future, and it is my hope that as their ability to comprehend texts increases, so will their engagement, creating lifelong readers.

THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

It's the first day of school and the students have just found their seats. They come as a mixed bunch. Some hate reading. Some tolerate it. Some have become so good at skimming that they think they are good readers. A handful admit to reading in their spare time. Some others look around in awe that any high school student could possibly have spare time. They read the course description, and the defenses go up. The discomfort ensues. *Global literature is strange. Global literature is not related to me. Global literature is hard. I don't want to read. Can I fake read global literature? It will be harder. This is going to be awful.* You see, when “students who don't already know something about what they are reading can't make connections...what they read seems disconnected and unimportant” (Tovani, 2000, p. 19). Students cannot engage with what they deem unimportant, and they cannot understand what they deem disconnected. It is our job to make them understand that yes, reading can be hard, but understanding and engagement are achievable. Instilling the importance of global literature and providing students with the tools to understand new genres of reading can aid in this process.

The Benefits of Global Literature

Global literature is “a comprehensive term that honors and celebrates diversity and includes literature within the United States as well as throughout the

world” (Martin, Smolen, Oswald, and Milam, 2012, p. 158). There are several known benefits of reading global literature in the classroom, and some of these benefits relate directly to a student’s response to global ideas, while others relate directly to reading improvement.

First, literature, in general, is seen as a way to expose students to the types of situations, tasks, and trials they will most likely face in their lives. Kelly Gallagher (2009) coined the phrase “dramatic rehearsals,” referring to the relationship between reading about an event and allowing that reading to prepare us for the so-called real-world. Gallagher further argues that “we read [literature] to find out what is happening in our world today. We read it so students can use it as a vehicle to think about their world” (p. 81). In most cases, students are unable or unwilling to travel throughout the world in a single lifetime. Books provide students an opportunity to do so, further allowing them to witness those events with which they may not face in real life.

In providing space for students to read global literature, educators allow students “the opportunity to read, to write, to argue about these issues in a modern context” (Gallagher, 2009, p. 69). Students are therefore more likely to develop a sense of interconnectedness, and be more suited to evaluate their own prejudices and biases as well as the causes of such. Harvey and Goudvis (2007) further this point, claiming that “When children understand how to connect the texts they read to their lives, they begin to make connections to the larger world. This

[connection] nudges them into thinking about bigger, more expansive issues beyond their universe of home, school, and neighborhood” (p. 92). Lisa Bernstein (2013) of the University of Maryland University College, supports the use of global literature in the classroom, stating that “ [it] raises issues for teachers and students of selecting and critically evaluating texts; of relating contemporary writing to our daily lives; and of situating ourselves in relation to writers and texts from other countries, languages, and cultures” (p. 54). In an interconnected world, it seems that now, more than ever, it is imperative for students to be exposed to various cultures and backgrounds. As high school English teacher, Valerie Brunow adds, “Active, successful participants of the 21st century global society must be able to: ...build intentional cross-cultural connections and relationships with others so to pose and solve problems collaboratively and strengthen independent thought” (Brunow, 2016, p. 63). How better to begin building cross-cultural connections than through literature?

Reading global literature can take students beyond basic understanding and allow them the space to develop empathy for others. Thomas Hoerr (2017) states that “without empathy, we tend to divide people into ‘us’ and ‘them,’ which leads to suspicion, miscommunication, and conflict” (p. 38). Students can learn from a young age that there is no “us” and “them,” but instead there are just people with different beliefs and values. Once they understand this, they can begin to advocate for and empower others. In a world that calls for leadership,

“Students need to understand the extent to which their own lives and fates are tightly tied to those of powerless and victimized groups in society (Banks, 2003, p. 13). Global literature allows students a window into the world they have not yet seen and to feel for those they have not met.

When we, as educators, allow students to read only those texts with which they identify, we allow them to remain self-absorbed and we prohibit their emotional, social, and intellectual growth. After all, if one goal of literature is to expose us to new ideas, then shouldn't we be pushing students to explore the unknown rather than remaining in their comfort zones? Barnard (2016) calls into question the lack of global literature used in today's classrooms, stating: “Can we only understand something or someone that/who is the same as us?...Is it true that our egos by definition can only recognize others in relation to self?...Can we find interest or pleasure in something that we find alien or that we don't identify with?...Isn't there also value in experiencing and recognizing something as completely alien?” (p. 58). Selfishness is a trait that we, as a society, seem to deem inappropriate. Global literature allows us to show students that they are just a small part of a much larger, interconnected society. Reading global literature will also teach students that the unknown is not always “bad.” We will be teaching them to take risks and, in most cases, be rewarded for those risks.

Others argue strictly for the reading comprehension benefits of global literature. Yasin Aslan (2016), a faculty member of the Education Department at

Sinop University, Turkey believes that reading comprehension will only increase with frequent and varied exposure to texts. He states that in order to “increase understanding, students should gain experience in reading a variety of texts, including narrative and expository literature as well as real world’ materials such as brochures, magazine articles, maps, and informational signs” (Aslan, 2016, p. 1797). This variety will prepare students for the types of tasks that they will be sure to face during their adult lives. While Aslan (2016) argues for a variety of text types, a variety of text content will also yield improved reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

The act of reading itself is defined as “a receptive skill in which meaning is extracted from the discourse” (Al Rasheed, 2014, p. 79). In other words, reading is not merely decoding text, but also being able to derive meaning from the text. It can also be described as “a guessing game or hypothesis testing in which the reader makes some guesses in the former and tests them later on” (Al Rasheed, 2014, p. 84). This describes an interaction between person and text in which the person is responsible for creating ideas and supporting them with textual evidence as he or she advances through a particular piece. Regardless of the definition, it is clear that reading is a multi-dimensional process in which students read and make sense of the text. According to Tovani (2000), good

readers “ask questions about the text before, during, and after reading...monitor their comprehension...and use ‘fix-up strategies when meaning breaks down’” (p. 17).

A key component to understanding a text has to do with the knowledge that a person possesses when he first enters the reading. This is known as schema, or “a hypothetical mental structure for representing generic concepts stored in memory” (p. x). It’s a sort of framework, or plan, or script. Schemata are created through experience with people, objects, and events in the world. Ajideh (2003) compares schemata to a restaurant experience, stating “when we encounter something repeatedly, such as a restaurant, we begin to generalize across our restaurant experiences to develop an abstracted, generic set of expectations about what we will encounter in a restaurant” (p. 4). In other words, our previous experiences dictate what we will expect in our current experiences.

So what happens when a student enters a non-native text without the proper schema? The student’s “limited historical and cross-cultural knowledge and exposure...creates an obstacle to reading and understanding texts from different countries and cultural traditions” (Bernstein, 2013, p. 55). This is because for “nonnative readers, some content schema does not exist; as a result, readers cannot achieve a reasonable overall understanding” (Al Rasheed, 2016, p. 83). As Gallagher (2009) puts it, “What the reader brings to the page is often more important than the ability to read the words on the page” (p. 33). Without

the proper schema, a reader is simply pronouncing words, but not creating further meaning. When these words are not “connected to a reader’s background knowledge and prior experience... [or] When information is read in isolation and not connected to existing knowledge, it is forgotten and deemed unimportant” (Tovani, 2000, p. 64). Students disregard unimportant information, which may lead them to dismiss global literature entirely.

To remedy these comprehension barriers, some educators call for teachers to avoid reading materials with which students are not familiar. For example, Huckin (1997) emphasizes the importance of assigning reading material that pertains to a subject and culture with which students are familiar. While this may lead to an increase in comprehension in the immediate time, it does not provide the student with the various benefits of exposure to global literature.

Reading Engagement

Gallagher (2009) has suggested that a lack of reading engagement is largely the effect of the current schooling systems in place. He has coined the term *readicide* as “the systematic killing of the love of reading, often exacerbated by the inane, mind-numbing practices found in schools” (Gallagher, 2009, p. 2). Among these mind-numbing practices are test-prep, limited authentic reading experiences, and both the over-teaching and the under-teaching of books (Gallagher, 2009). He further lists the major contributors to readicide, including

the lack of interesting reading materials; the lack of long, challenging works; and the lack of time to read in schools. Though he believes that reading engagement is important to overall learning outcomes, he denies that a student has to like a book in order to become engaged. Instead, engagement can be the effect of simply seeing the value in the book “a value that will help them become smarter people long after [he] leaves school” (Gallagher, 2009, p. 57).

Guthrie, Wigfield, and Perencivik (2004) argue that there is a clear connection between a student’s ability to comprehend a text and his engagement level. They, too, list the various factors responsible for engagement, most notably: “cognitive strategy use, reading motivation, and reading comprehension” (p. 404). In other words, if a student is unable to utilize strategies to further his understanding, reading engagement may suffer. They also state that this perspective on “reading development suggests that students’ amount of engaged reading correlates with achievement in reading comprehension” (p. 404). The relationship seems to be reciprocal. A student cannot engage if he does not understand, and he cannot understand if he does not engage.

Cantrell, Pennington, Rintamaa, Osborne, Parker, & Rudd (2017) agree that there is a connection between reading comprehension and reading engagement. To them, an engaged reader is both motivated to read and strategic in using cognitive processes that enable them to comprehend what they read” (p. 65). They also claim that students have noted that “their ability to comprehend

texts more deeply than influenced their motivation to read” (Cantrell, et. al. , p. 67).

Willis (1998) examines yet another key factor in reading engagement. He states that “When students view their learning as having personal relevance, they put more effort into their schoolwork and achievement” (p. 8). An inability to relate to those characters, settings, and events in culturally-different texts is another barrier to student engagement. In other words, when students are provided with reading materials in which they can relate, they are more likely to engage in the reading. Since comprehension is an active process between reader and text, it would seem that connecting to the text is a strategy designed to activate the reader’s engagement, thus increasing his comprehension. Conversely, this would suggest that when students are unable to make a connection to a text, they are more likely to be unable to engage with and comprehend the reading.

Due to the many components which factor into it, a student’s reading engagement is often difficult to measure. Usually, engagement is measured by behavioral factors including “the amount of reading in which individuals engage or...by the time an individual spends reading” (Cantrell et. al., p. 56). The behavioral aspect is given the most attention by researchers due to its ability to be easily measured and the known correlation between time spent reading and level of reading achievement (Cantrell et. al., 2017). This is not to say that there are not several other, unmeasurable components to motivation at play.

Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are those methods that good readers employ to make sense of the text. Reading strategies help students know what to ask the text and how to analyze it (Fox, 1994). Such strategies help to increase reading comprehension as students find ways to interact with the text that they are reading. We can think of these methods as “tools” for grappling with difficult texts. While these strategies are often taught at the elementary and middle levels, Beers (2003) argues that it is the job of teachers to continue to model reading comprehension strategies throughout the high school years. She states that “struggling or dependent readers do not view reading as an active process, but rather as a passive one” and this fact remains the same regardless of student age (Beers, 2003, p. 1). Reading strategies are a way for teachers to make these struggling readers more conscious of the practices employed by good readers.

While the use of reading strategies holds obvious benefits to the language arts classroom, reading strategies are truly beneficial to all disciplines. Fox (1994) claims that, “strategies that are useful for one type of reading should be useful for the other type as well” (p. 511). A struggling reader will not only have difficulties in language arts, but he or she will also likely struggle in other reading-intensive courses, such as history. These strategies will help alleviate reading frustration wherever he or she is asked to read. With the proper instruction, “Students might later continue the process of internalizing these techniques so that they would

eventually be able to choose, with little or no conscious thought, among the various strategies as needed” (Fox, p. 507). In other words, learning to use such strategies is the equivalent of learning to drive a car. New drivers, like new readers, must consciously think of every step of the process to get from point A to point B, while seasoned drivers complete these steps with little to no conscious thought.

Tovani (2000) mentions three sub-groups of reading strategies, including pre-reading strategies, during-reading strategies, and post-reading strategies. Pre-reading strategies are those that are completed prior to beginning reading and typically involve activating background knowledge. During-reading strategies are sometimes referred to as “fix-up” strategies that allow students to make sense of the text in the moment. Finally, after-reading strategies are usually those that ask a student to analyze the text further.

Pre-Reading Strategies

Gallagher (2009) claims that when we teach difficult books “what we do before students begin reading is paramount” (p. 95). When confronting a text with which most students have little to no valuable background experience, the work to increase comprehension and engagement comes before the reading even begins. Studies have consistently shown “that the utilization of pre-reading strategies in reading classes enhances comprehension regardless of the pre-reading strategy

applied” (Al Rasheed, p. 80). Beers (2003) states that pre-reading strategies help students “access their prior knowledge, interact with portions of the text prior to reading...predict, identify vocabulary that might be a problem, and construct meaning before they begin reading the text” (p. 74). All of these processes are paramount to student understanding, especially in the case of global literature.

While pre-reading tasks have long been in existence, they “have tended to focus exclusively on preparing the reader for likely linguistic difficulties in a text; more recently attention has shifted to cultural or conceptual difficulties” (Ajideh, p.6). This shift in focus is referred to as the top-down approach to reading comprehension, or focusing on the major cultural and conceptual difficulties versus the minor linguistic difficulties (Ajideh, 2003). This view agrees with that of Al Rasheed (2016) who claims that when “learners are not prepared with conceptual and cultural allusions in addition to the ability to use some skills related to vocabulary, their comprehension may be impaired” (p. 84).

Auerbach and Paxton (1997) suggest the following schema-theory-based pre-reading strategies:

“Accessing prior knowledge, Writing your way into reading (writing about your experience related to the topic), Asking questions based on the title, Semantic mapping, Making predictions based on previewing, Identifying the text structure, Skimming for general idea,

Reading the introduction and conclusion, Writing a summary of the article based on previewing. (p. 259)

All of these suggested activities clearly indicate a desire for students to access existing schema and create new schema prior to beginning a task. When compared to those traditional pre-reading activities which “simply consist of questions to which the reader is required to find an answer for the text” these activities are considered superior in providing students with increased comprehension and engagement (Ajideh, p. 9).

Gallagher (2009) reviews the various pre-reading strategies that are needed in order for students to make sense of difficult texts. He suggests that students “think about what they already know/search their prior knowledge” (p. 103). But what happens when a student does not have prior knowledge to search. What happens when the world presented in a text is entirely new?

Building Background

Al Rasheed (2016) states that “While reading a text or listening to a narrative, our comprehension is usually guided by our existing knowledge, which can possibly affect our understanding of the text” (p. 83). When students approach a non-native text, their existing knowledge is often limited. The schema, discussed earlier, is not present, and therefore creating meaning becomes an increasingly difficult task.

To begin building background, students must understand what they do not understand. They can start by “brainstorming ideas they wish to explore or notions they find intriguing” (Aslan, p. 1799). Fox (1994) found that by “examining...issues in advance of their appearance in the story, students were more likely, once they began reading the text, to compare the fictional events with their own experiences and to absorb the fictional realm” (p. 508). All of this furthered their ability to build new schema.

How then can this schema be built? Al Rasheed (2016) believes the “use of pictures, discussions, vocabulary pre-teaching, previewing, and pre-questioning” (p. 80). This pre-questioning, is actually a conventional pre-reading strategy that focuses on brainstorming and idea formation about the incoming text (Al Rasheed, 2016). A study conducted by Khansir and Dashti (2014) tested the effects of the question-generation strategy on Iranian EFL third year high school students’ reading comprehension. The treatment provided was direct instruction in pre-questioning as well as repeated practice. The data “revealed that question-generation strategy led to significantly better performances of the participants” (p. 44). This would suggest that when students are questioned prior to beginning a reading, their overall comprehension of the reading will improve.

Inquiry-Based Learning as a Vehicle for Engagement

The inquiry-based learning model dates back to Dewey, but has recently been implemented into classrooms across the world. The model is said to improve student engagement, autonomy, and authenticity.

Tovani (2000) cites the many benefits to the inquiry-based learning model. She believes that “If we teach our students to inquire, we will have a well of information from which to teach and our students will have a purpose for learning. It is our obligation to renew our students’ curiosity and guide them toward inquiry” (p. 93). In doing so, teachers can push students to give up their role as passive listener and move towards the role of active questioner, researcher, and evaluator. Clayton, Kilbane, and McCarthy (2017) support this view, as they believe that providing students the opportunity to take ownership over the learning process improves both student engagement and learning outcomes. They also remind teachers that inquiry does not have to be a massive undertaking, but can, instead, come in the form of several small lessons over the span of the school year.

Generating Questions

In an inquiry based classroom, questions are the driving force. In particular “student-generated questions drive instruction and encourage engagement....[and] when readers are encouraged to ask questions, classrooms

perk up and more than a handful of kids participate” (Tovani, 2000, p. 81). Student questioning has been known to hold a number of benefits on both comprehension and engagement. Dole, Duffy, Roehler, and Pearson (1991) claim that “...promoting student-generated questions will lead to improved comprehension” (p. 246).

Correia (2006), believes that the questioning should be a task that students are primarily responsible for, thus furthering the need for an inquiry model during pre-reading activities. In her study, students were “asked to prepare in groups two questions they thought would be answered in the text” prior to beginning a reading (p. 18). Correia (2006) found this method to be more motivational than the traditional method of responding to questions set forth by the teacher or the text. The student ownership over the process increased their willingness to read and answer the questions.

Additionally, this particular strategy is known to improve reading engagement. Tovani (2000) supports this notion stating, “Questioning engages readers especially in relation to difficult or uninteresting material” (p. 85). Global literature can often be seen as one or both of these, and as such, it seems that questioning would help to improve the students’ overall understanding and engagement. Additional benefits to student-generated questions include “focusing distracted readers, fostering curiosity and commitment, clarifying confusions, and improv[ing] inferencing” (p. 86).

Answering Questions

The teacher's role in answering the questions is to guide student learning. The students should not only be in charge of generating the questions or the focus of the research, but they should also be responsible for conducting the research. As Aslan (2016) so eloquently puts it, this inquiry based learning "lets students contemplate problems and situations that reflect the world as they know it. For teachers and students alike, exploration and discovery become paramount: the teacher as the dispenser of knowledge is secondary. Learning is interrelated and information is connected" (p. 1800). While good teachers will guide students by "...consider[ing] what about the text might cause students to lose their way...[they do not] overwhelm students with too many suggestions" (Tovani, 2000, p. 27).

William and Leahy (2015) state that, "When students are owners of their own learning, all the other strategies fall into place" (p. 169). Since students are responsible for generating questions, it seems that they should then take ownership in finding the answers to those questions. Allowing students to research unknown questions improves student engagement. As Gallagher (2009) has stated, "Authentic interest is generated when students are given the opportunity to delve deeply into an interesting idea" not when teachers "sprint" to cover the curriculum" (p. 10).

Clayton, Kilbane, and McCarthy (2017) found through various high school mathematics and science classrooms that providing students the opportunity to take ownership over their learning improves both student engagement and learning outcomes. The teachers in the study also reported that they were able to “redirect students towards ways to search for their own answers” rather than providing all of the necessary information themselves (p. 16). Finally, they found that student research led the “adolescents to think in more complex ways about content” while also improving student engagement” (p. 14).

Technology

The exploratory nature of inquiry-based learning is what is said to engage students. Additionally, Bernstein (2013) mentions that there are an abundance of electronic tools available for students to conduct inquiry-based research. She also finds that “by incorporating open-source web resources such as online texts, social forums, and multimedia into such a course, instructors can help connect world literature to current affairs and social issues, and to students’ lives in contemporary society” (p. 58).

Of course, technology can help make these connections more apparent for readers. Bernstein (2013) argues that interactive, online resources must be incorporated into situations in which students lack the background or context necessary to make a human connection to the text. In these cases, technology can

“establish a framework for instruction that engages students and connects the subject matter to their daily lives and interests” (p. 55). In other words, technology can be leveraged as a means to encourage readers to think beyond self and make more of a global connection.

Conclusions

Global literature serves several purposes in the modern classroom. Learning about other cultures through literature can allow students to develop empathy and learn skills that will help them approach difficult and unfamiliar text types in the future. This is not to say that those reading global literature will immediately understand the importance and relevance of such texts. Students may struggle with the inability to relate to the texts, as well as a general lack of background knowledge needed to fully comprehend the characters and their situations. That being said, employing reading strategies, such as building background and questioning, can make global literature more accessible. With this increased accessibility will likely come an increased engagement, since it has been proven that there is a clear link between understanding and enjoyment. Inquiry-based strategies such as generating questions, researching, and utilizing technology can provide students with a sense of ownership in this meaning-building process, again improving engagement.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Goals

Nearly four years ago I was in a faculty meeting where my supervisor handed me my preliminary schedule for the upcoming school year. I was excited about the idea of a new class. There were so many instructional choices that I could make. What I didn't foresee was the resistance I would face when telling students that the course was globally focused, meaning that their reading, writing, and speaking and listening activities would stem from global sources. I spent the next three years puzzling over how I could get my students engaged-- specifically in reading. It was the absolute lack of answers that lead me to research how to make global literature more accessible to high school learners.

I started by including some components that I was already utilizing in my English I course. We set up reader's workshop. We started each day with ten minutes of silent reading. Students selected books based on preference and just two requirements: it must be a memoir and it must be global. Each student calculated a reading speed that was comfortable, set three reading goals, and kept a log of time spent reading, frustration levels, and culturally-relevant questions. Each class, one or two students would meet with me to talk about their books, demonstrate their use of reading standards, and self-reflect on progress or lack thereof.

In addition to these routine procedures, students participated in four inquiry activities in which they asked questions, researched answers, and shared findings. These activities were meant as a way for them to acknowledge that reading global literature is confusing and to learn coping strategies to work through that confusion.

I was eager to learn what frustrated students. I was more eager to see how they handled that frustration. Would they use the strategies taught throughout the unit, or would they succumb to the feeling of helplessness? Could these interventions end the issue of inaccessibility of global texts? I certainly hoped so.

Setting and Participants

The study was implemented at a large, rural high school located in central New Jersey. There are five middle schools which feed into the high school. As such, the high school has a population of 3,043 students. The minority enrollment is just 15%, much less than the statewide average of 52%, and the economically disadvantaged percentage is just 7%. The teacher to student ratio is 13:1.

The participants in my study are students currently enrolled in my College Preparatory English 3 Course. This is a required, junior-level English course. The two sections that I teach are in the second half of the day, blocks three and four. The third block section has 23 students while the fourth block section has 19. Of these students, just three have 504 plans. There are 30 males and 12 females in

total. This is not representative of the school wide male to female ratio, which is 52% to 48%. The ethnicities of my students, however, do seem to fall in line with low minority percentage.

Planned Intervention

In general, English 3 is broken into four major learning units. The order in which these unit are conducted vary depending on the teacher of the class, however, the standard focuses of it is consistent. The order of units for my particular sections included: Unit 1- Narrative, Unit 2- Literary Analysis, Unit 3- Synthesis, and Unit 4: Argument. Each unit has a major writing assignment requirement, as well as several speaking and listening requirements. The readings for each unit range from wholly independent to literature circles, to whole-class novels.

My interventions were set to take place for about ten weeks during our Narrative Learning Unit. In this particular unit, students had the option of reading one, or several global memoirs independently. While my study focuses solely on the reading component of the unit, students were also analyzing reading and analyzing samples of personal narratives, practicing narrative technique in their own pieces, and working towards a completed draft of a personal narrative essay. Below is a chart detailing those reading activities that occurred during the unit and the frequency of which they occurred.

When?	Intervention/Data Collection
Start	Explanation of Study Start of Year Reading Survey (appendix D) Memoir Selection
Ongoing	SSR Reading Conferences (appendix E) Reading and Reflection Log (appendix F)
Bi-Weekly	Inquiry Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Why do We Read Global Literature? (appendix G) ○ Beginning Background Inquiry (appendix I) ○ Setting Inquiry (appendix J) ○ Vocabulary Inquiry (appendix K)
End	End of Unit Reading Survey (appendix L)

Before beginning my study, I explained the interventions to the students and provided them with consent forms. The students also completed the Start of Year Reading Survey (appendix D) to provide me with an image of themselves as readers, especially in terms of their ability to read global literature. During this first week, they were also asked to browse a list of available memoir titles, selecting those that they may like to read for the start of the unit.

In the second week, students completed the first activity (appendix G). This activity addressed the common question of “Why do We Read Global Literature?” The students read/viewed several sources to help them answer this question. Students also received their memoirs this week and began to read a few pages to ensure that the selections were fitted to their interests and reading levels. In order to better support the students, I implemented a new seating chart that grouped students reading like books near one another. I had hoped to establish a

cooperative learning environment in which students were able to informally discuss their books and any confusions when necessary. In the third week, the students were also asked to complete our first book-related inquiry, called “Beginning Background Inquiry” (appendix I) to improve their background knowledge for their memoirs.

I introduced students to the Reading and Reflection Log. To begin, we read for ten minutes, calculated our weekly reading goals based on our individual speeds, and set goals for the unit. I also implemented Sustained Silent Reading, which occurred the first ten minutes of each class. During this time, students would silently read their memoirs, track their progress in their “Reading and Reflection Logs,” and stop to ask questions where they were confused.

Once students had begun tracking, we reviewed the six reading strategies that I pre-selected as those that would best help students understand global literature. We also reviewed the requirements and grading criteria for the Reading Strategies Reading Conferences (appendix E) that would begin the next week. To prepare for the conferences, students were asked to select one strategy and utilize it for that week’s readings. Their mastery of said strategy would be proven in their reading conferences. In order to continue supporting the students’ understanding of their memoirs, a Setting Inquiry (appendix J) was completed to help them better understand the historical, geographical, and cultural context.

About two weeks later, students learned how to approach unfamiliar cultural terms in the Vocabulary Inquiry (appendix K). We completed a model lesson using Sherman Alexie's, "My Indian Education," and then students replicated the learned strategies using their memoirs.

In the final week of the Narrative unit, students completed an End-of-Unit Reading Survey (appendix L). The survey followed up on some of the questions asked at the start of the unit, including those that had to do with the students' feelings towards reading global literature. In addition, I also solicited responses regarding the helpfulness of the various inquiry activities. While I continued to implement inquiry-based learning activities into the next unit, the Literary Analysis Unit, I decided to stop the data collection at this point.

Data Collection Methods

The Field Log

My greatest tool in the data collection process was my field log, or the careful collection of notes identifying what I witnessed each day (Ely, et.al. 1991). My daily jottings helped me to identify student confusion as well as plan for further activities to help alleviate that confusion. I also used my log as a place to capture screenshots of student work completed through Google Classroom and notate on their successes or areas of weaknesses. In this way, the field log became a careful collection of all of the data that I collected throughout the course of the

study. It was organized by date, so that I was easily able to find the observations, student work, surveys, or interviews.

Observational Methods

My classroom mostly follows a workshop model in which we have whole class instruction for just twenty of the sixty minutes each block. The remainder of the block, students dedicate time to practicing reading and writing skills either independently, in pairs, or as groups. I would take observational notes during most classes, especially those at the beginning half of the study. As students conversed in groups, practiced a reading skill independently, or strayed off task, I would make sure to circulate the room to capture these behaviors on a lined piece of paper. After the class, I would return to my electronic field log to add the day's happenings and my reflections.

I conducted participant observation less frequently, usually during our whole class discussions. As the leader of the discussions, I would pose questions and jot down student responses on a piece of lined paper. These responses were later added to my field log along with my interpretations.

Interview/Survey Methods

Interviews took place in the form of reading conferences. Each student participated in one reading conference during the first unit of instruction. During the conferences, I would take notes on the student's use of reading strategies, self-assessment, and needed adjustments. These notes were taken directly in the students' shared Google Document, where they would also prepare for the reading conference (appendix E). Later, I would review the comments in the document, copying and pasting any of those that I felt were significant to my study into my field log. The interviews allowed me an opportunity to see the story from the participants' eyes (Seidman, 2006).

I conducted two formal surveys. I gave students the first survey at the beginning of the study to help me identify pre-existing reading attitudes and strategy use (appendix D). The second was given to students at the end of the study to reassess student reading attitudes and their view of the interventions (appendix L). Using the surveys in conjunction with what was learned by observational and interview data allowed me to capture a more complete picture of the student as a reader of global literature. I was also able to find trends and patterns (McNiff & Whitehead 2009).

In addition to the formal surveys, there were several informal surveys gathered throughout the course of the study. These surveys were typically completed at the end of the inquiry activities and focused on questions about the

students' familiarity with the strategy prior to the activity and his/her beliefs about the helpfulness of the activity. Also, there was a single survey provided in the form of a Google Classroom Question asking students to respond to the following question: "Would you prefer to have SSR at the beginning of the block or the end? Please explain why."

Student Work Collection

Though there was much to be learned by the aforementioned data samples, student work was, perhaps, the most important component to my study. Students' written responses to each of the inquiry activities served as a way for me to evaluate their thinking and their overall understanding of the learned strategies. Along with the inquiries, the reading and reflection logs (appendix F) were a way for me to gauge the amount of reading the students completed, their level of frustration, the obstacles causing frustration, and their ability to pose culturally-relevant questions. Though nearly all of the student work was completed in written form, there was one student-created video that was used in the data collection.

Trustworthiness Statement

Prior to beginning my study, I underwent several steps to ensure that my study was appropriate. The Human Subjects Internal Review Board at Moravian

College reviewed and approved the study and all of its materials (appendix A). It was also reviewed and approved by several of the professors in the Moravian College Education Department. My supervisor, curriculum director, building principal, and superintendent were briefed, and the study was approved by Hunterdon Central Regional High School's board at an August meeting (appendix B). My students and their guardians were provided with a consent and assent form detailing the reasoning behind the study as well as the learning activities that would take place as a part of the study (appendix C). The letter made clear that I would use student data as a part of my written thesis if permission was granted. It also clarified that students and their parents could refuse involvement or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. Finally, I stressed that privacy would be upheld as all students would remain anonymous through use of pseudonyms and files containing data would be stored on my personal laptop, which is password protected.

My study ran for about ten weeks. This period of time was adequate to see if student comprehension and engagement had, in fact, increased as a result of the interventions. To substantiate my claim, I used various sources of data including: student observation, student self-reflection, reading conferences, student reading log, inquiry background building activities, and practice reading responses. In using a variety of data tools, I was able to triangulate my findings (Hendricks, 2013). The frequency with which I gathered data was also a significant tool in

validating my study. I met with my students two to three times per week as we worked under a rotating schedule. I made sure to log some type of data each meeting so that there was a clear progression of the study and its results. These logs were stored in a clearly labeled folder in Google Drive, which is accessible for review by anyone who may desire to do so (Hendricks, 2013).

Validity was also upheld by involving my students and peers in my study. The reading conferences conducted acted as a way for me to incorporate member checks (Hendricks, 2013) into my study, making sure that what I recorded actually aligned to students' thoughts and beliefs. Student self-reflections and surveys were additional tools used to ensure that my understanding of students was accurate. In addition to conferring with students, I was involved in peer debriefing through learning communities both within my graduate course and my school (Hendricks, 2013). These learning communities allowed me to hear diverse perspectives regarding the implementation and outcomes of my study, leading me to further question my own instruction through critical self-reflection (McNiff, 2013).

I engaged in critical self-reflection throughout the process in order to ensure that I was being unbiased in my research reporting. As I have alluded to earlier, I believe that students can be successful readers if they are awarded choice and provided with the support and space to grow. That being said, it may have been easy for me to overlook the students not positively impacted by the study.

To ensure that my bias did not overshadow the results of my study, I took care to focus on any students not impacted by the study through negative case analysis (Hendricks, 2013). In doing so, I was also able to focus on the interventions that were effective versus those that were ineffective, revise instruction, and move forward with the study.

THIS YEAR'S STORY

The First Impression

I anxiously awaited my first group of English 3 students to enter the classroom. I had taught resistant classes for three years, and I refused to let this be the fourth, so I came prepared with an arsenal of new approaches, a more open mind, and a hope that perhaps this year's students would be more empathetic than those who had preceded them. The warning bell rang, and the students entered. I looked around at a group of students who looked similar to those that I had taught in the past. Several of the boys had greased hands, no doubt from their morning auto-tech program, the girls were few and far between, and the class was slightly larger than I had become accustomed to, 23 to be exact. The late bell rang, and I began.

I shared the typical overview of the course, the expectations for behavior, the explanation of block breakdowns, and major assignments. Many of the

students groaned when they heard they would be completing four major essays and reading at least four full-length books in addition to a generous helping of short stories, sample essays, and poems. One student asked which books we'd be reading, and I responded with, "Well, that's up to you, for the most part." There was some nodding of heads, and after the obligatory ice breaker exercise, the end of block bell rang, and the students left the room.

The Initial Survey

Two days later, those same students were already comfortable enough to ask what we were going to do that day as they entered. I pointed to the board, where a clear lineup of activities was written in red expo marker. The first item on the list read: Reading Survey (appendix D). As the bell rang, I began my speech.

"So, when I last saw you, we talked a little bit about the reading that you would be doing in this class. Most of you have already confessed that you are not readers. That's okay. I'm not a fan of math, and I wouldn't want you to judge me too harshly because of it. What I would like to do today is get a better picture of you as a reader. I want to know, more specifically, what it may be that has prevented you from enjoying reading in the past. For those of you who like reading, I'm looking for more information about your style. What types of books have you read and enjoyed? I told you that the reading that you'll be doing for the first two units is choice reading so long as it meets our curriculum goals. For the

first unit that means that you will be reading a global memoir. You'll notice some questions on the survey about your openness to global literature. All of this information will help me make book suggestions and create activities to meet your needs. Please be honest, but respectful.”

The students appeared eager to fill out the survey, at least until they came to question #4, which asked them which titles they've enjoyed reading. Many of them began to shout across the room to students with whom they shared an English class the previous year as they were trying to remember titles they'd read. I shouted out some of the core sophomore texts, which seemed to help some of them. Others continued to search for books they'd read independently by typing in the descriptions in a Google search bar. The survey took most students about fifteen minutes. At the end of that time, they submitted surveys electronically, with the exception of the four or so students who'd completed a paper copy. Though I was genuinely interested in the students' responses to all questions, these five were of most interest to me as I began my study:

Question #5 stated: *What concerns do you have about reading in general? You might talk about some specifics that you have struggled with in the past. You might name something like, finding the main idea, getting into the “zone,” finishing a book, imagining the setting, etc.* Below are two responses worth analyzing:

- If I really like a book it's simple for me to read for hours but the most difficult thing about reading is really imagining the setting. I don't like reading fantasy novels because I'd rather read about something that I've experienced or heard of.
- I feel like now it'll be harder to pick up a book and get really into it because of my lack of time and other things I can do like I feel as though I will constantly get distracted with my phone and other things.

Figure 1. Student responses to concerns about reading global literature

The first response, has to do with the reader's inability to connect to a book.

When this is not possible, he or she does not find the reading to be "possible."

The second response, has to do with the reader's lack of time. This particular problem was common throughout the study. Students often remarked on a lack of time to complete the reading. Both of these problems are those that may not necessarily be affected by the study.

Question #6 inquired: *Do you have strategies/skills that work for you as a reader? Think about predicting, connecting, summarizing, etc. Which do you use most often?* For this particular question, I was interested in which learning strategies students were most dependent upon when reading. My guess, when generating these survey questions, was that most students would rely on summarizing, predicting, visualizing, and connecting. This guess was validated by the following responses:

- I typically am good at connecting
- If it is a memoir, sometimes connecting, depending on the book, but other than that, if fantasy books are easy to predict, I try to come up with different scenarios for the ending
- As I read, I make a movie of the story in my mind. I use this technique every time I read.

- Predicting is usually a thing I do a lot while reading.
- When reading I usually end up having certain predictions and I also connect details with other stories and life incidences.
- I try to picture what the author is trying to portray so I have a better understanding of the mood
- I predict and try to connect what is happening in the book with what my life.
- I use connecting to understand what I'm reading.

Figure 2. Student responses to most used reading strategies

While the most common strategies employed included those that I originally guessed, there were several other strategies mentioned. One student mentioned choosing texts in which he is interested, another talked about note-taking during the end of each chapter, yet another talked about pausing and rephrasing what had been read. None of the students, however, mentioned questioning or building background as strategies they employed. This information showed me that the strategies I would be teaching would be new to the students.

Question #7 stated: *The readings for this course are primarily non-American. We read various titles from cultures that may be unfamiliar to you. Please use the scale below to show how you feel about the global focus of this course.* A scale of 1-5 was provided for students with the following descriptors: strongly dislike, dislike, neutral, enjoy, and love. In the pie graph below, it is evidenced that about 25% of the students dislike or strongly dislike the global focus of the course. Another 46% of the students indicated that they felt neutrally about this focus, while about 24% either liked or loved this focus.

How do you feel about the global focus of this course?

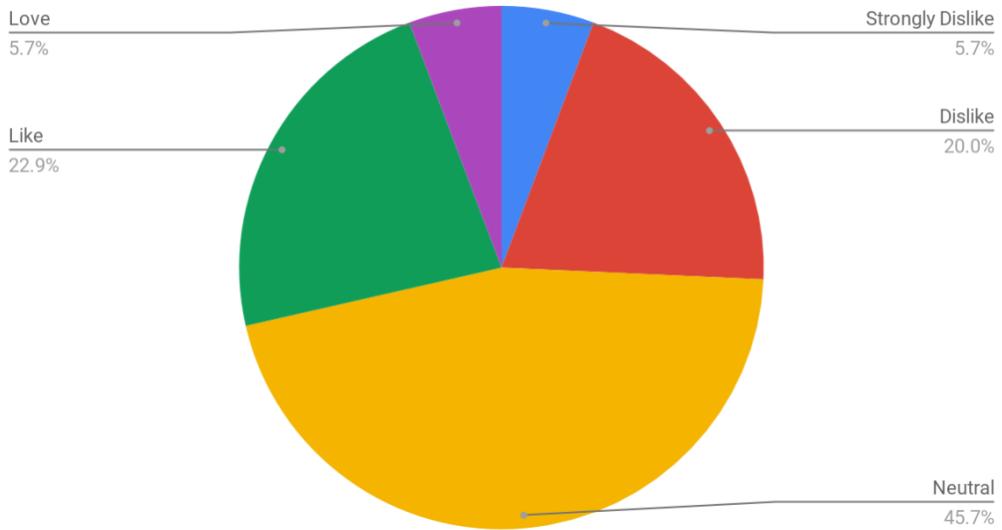


Figure 3. Pie chart detailing student responses to feelings about the global focus of the course

Question #8 inquired: *Do you think you will be able to enjoy and understand books from a culture other than your own? Why or why not?* The student responses ranged from positive to uncertain. Some positive responses included:

- Yes, only because if they are struggling with immigration and not being able to speak English I can relate to that myself, but even if it is not about that topic, I think it would be interesting to read a book from different countries.
- I think I'd enjoy or understand books from a different culture because it will be interesting to learn about other places and other people's thoughts and feelings from different countries and times.
- I believe I will be able to enjoy and understand books from a culture other than my own because I have read a couple books in the past like that and have enjoyed them such as Under the Persimmon Tree.

- I feel I will be able to enjoy and understand books from a culture other than my own because, I think I'm accepting of other cultures

Figure 4. Positive student responses to ability to enjoy and understand global literature

The positive responses seemed to mention ideas such as being understanding of other cultures, having previous experience with these types of books, or having a genuine interest in learning about new cultures. While there were not any purely negative responses to this question, there were several that proved uncertainty or hesitation. The following are examples of such responses:

- I'm not really sure how I'll feel about the books because I haven't read many about other cultures but I do like to learn about different cultures so it really depends on the situation.
- Maybe if I learn more about the culture, then yes. But otherwise, unless it really interests me, no.
- I think it will be interesting to read books from other cultures but I don't have the patience

Figure 5. Uncertain student responses to ability to enjoy and understand global literature

From the responses, it seems that some barriers to positive response is lack of experience with this particular type of reading, lack of cultural background, lack of interest in reading in general, and lack of motivation.

Finally, Question #9 asked: *What concerns do you have about reading cultural texts? You might mention things like: connecting to the characters, understanding cultural events/references, finding genres that interest you, pronouncing names, etc.* This question, more specifically, asks the students to identify their concerns prior to beginning the reading. In gathering this

information, I was better able to plan lessons around those aspects that students pre-identified as potential struggles.

After viewing the responses to the initial survey, I found that students mostly fell into three categories. For our purposes, I'll refer to them as "the enthusiast," "the uncertain," and "the resistor." The enthusiast, ranked his ability to read and enjoy global literature at the high end of the scale (4 or 5). He expressed interest in learning about new cultures, and sometimes referred to himself as open-minded or accepting. He has perhaps one or maybe even no concerns about comprehending the literature. The resistor, on the other hand, ranked his ability to read and enjoy global literature at the low end of the scale (1 or 2). He claimed not to be interested in learning about other cultures, foreseeing difficulties in comprehension. Then, there were the uncertain, who used a neutral number (3) to rank his ability to understand and enjoy global literature, claiming to find learning about unfamiliar places and people interesting, but also voicing some concerns in regards to comprehension.

Establishing a Class Culture for Global Literature

Introducing the Study

On the third day of class, I introduced my study to the students, providing them with the necessary consent/assent forms, explaining their rights as

participants or nonparticipants, and giving them a brief overview of how I would provide them with a positive experience of reading global literature. I told them “In the past I’ve had students who’ve had a lot of difficulty understanding and enjoying the reading for this class. I am hoping that I can make your experience more enjoyable and more meaningful than theirs.

After providing an overview of the study, I told students to take a look at their initial surveys, on which I had made electronic comments. Right away, Finn spoke up: “Wait, you mean you actually read them? Usually teachers just have us fill this stuff out and then never actually read it.”

“Of course I read them. Why would I make you do them if I didn’t intend to read them?”

“But you actually commented? Like, you read them and responded to all of them already?”

“I wanted to know what you thought. I told you that information was going to determine our course of learning.”

“But we didn’t think you actually meant it. You mean you’re actually taking into consideration how we feel?”

“Isn’t that my job as your teacher?”

“So, you mean we can really read any book we want?”

“Well, any book that is a memoir and global.”

“What does that even mean?”

“What does what mean?”

“Global?”

“Oh, well, it means a memoir that focuses on another part of the world.

This year’s curriculum is all about you having a chance to expand your horizons. It’s about learning about other cultures and places that you normally wouldn’t get the chance to visit.”

“Well, what if I just want to read American books?”

So here it was, stated boldly and at the onset. Every year it has been the same question, and every year I’ve struggled for an answer. My first thoughts: *Because my boss told me so. Because the curriculum demands it.* When I started teaching this class I didn’t really think about the “why.” I mean, I took British Literature in high school and didn’t think to ask my teacher why we had to focus on British Literature. I knew that the following year would be American Literature, so I just stuck it out, and I even liked Shakespeare, well, kind of.

So, I started to consciously think about the *why*. That word danced in my head, taunting me with no answer. One lazy December afternoon a commercial interrupted my binge watching of *Law and Order: SVU*. The Amazon commercial included an imam and a priest, both of whom had developed sensitive knees after a lifetime of kneeling to pray. They sent each other a pair of knee pads using the Amazon Prime service. Finally, the *why* hit me. You might think it strange that such a realization could come from a 60 second commercial, but I had found the

answer that I had been looking for—a way to show the students why we read global literature, a way to show them what empathy truly looks like.

Six months later, here I was again at the front of the room, and I explained the goal, which was for the students to answer the question: “Why do we read global literature?” using the sources presented (appendix G). One of the sources was the Amazon Prime commercial detailed above. The other, was an academic article explaining the various reasons why we read literature (appendix H). The students selected a partner and set to work.

As I walked around the room, I heard comments ranging from “it’s heartwarming” to “what does this even have to do with literature?” to “I don’t get what’s going on.” I patiently asked the students to continue watching until they saw some kind of connection to reading global literature. The videos played another two to three times per group. The students bobbed their heads to the music and visibly smiled as they began to understand my rationale for watching.

After all of the students had a chance to watch the video and read the article, I asked them to share their conclusions with the class. “So what did you see in the video?” I asked.

“Well, they are friends and know what each other needs,” one student responded hesitantly.

Another student yelled out, “yeah, but they also represent two different religions and cultures and still come together as friends!”

“Excellent ideas. So what might be the larger message here? Other than using Amazon prime, of course.”

“They can learn from each other. We don’t always have to fight, we can be friends,” a third student offered.

“So how might this apply to what we’re doing in this classroom? What does this have to do with our reading focus?”

A quiet student in the back called out, “Wait, can I just say one more thing? There’s this saying by Charlie Chaplain that says ‘we want to live by each other’s happiness, not by each other’s misery. I think that really applies here with the video and with the reading we’re gonna be doing. Doesn’t it?”

Beginning Reading Routines

On the next class day, students were provided with a list of available titles in a Google Document. Each title was hyperlinked to a webpage, describing and reviewing each book. In addition to browsing the online reviews, students were provided with about twenty minutes to page through the hard copies of the texts. Some asked for suggestions based on preferences from previous years. I mentioned that *A Long Way Gone*, *Machete Season*, and *Escape from Camp 14* were those that were most popular, but that each student should try to make his own decision based on personal preferences. I also suggested that the students

read the first few pages of any interesting titles to ensure that the writing style and level was appropriate to their understanding.

Once the students had selected their books for the first unit. Prior to completing the first of the reading inquiries, I had to establish some of the routine procedures that would occur throughout the next two units. These routines included: SSR, reading conferences, and reading logging and reflecting.

The next time the students entered the room, the abbreviation SSR was the first item on our daily to-do list. One student asked, “What does SSR stand for anyway?” After an explanation, he asked, “Well why do we do it? Can’t we just do the reading at home?”

I explained that there would be a weekly goal of about two hours of reading per week. This was to be the only homework in most cases, but it was a non-negotiable. I told the students all about the studies I’d read that demanded students read at least two hours per week in addition to their every day, academic reading in order to be prepared for college. I also told them that they could think of it as a ten minute break to lose themselves in another world, or as a way to get a jump start on their homework, which I knew would be tempting to those with sports, jobs, and other after school responsibilities.

This first session of SSR held another purpose, to record each student’s rate of reading, a piece of information that would be essential in calculating how much reading each student should complete each week. I would later use this

information to better understand if students were meeting their weekly goals (i.e. reading the amount that they were capable of reading in two hours) or if they were not meeting those goals. This information would prove important in my analysis of engagement and comprehension. Where students met their goals, I could infer engagement and understanding, where they did not, I could follow up with questions to better understand what kept them from their goals.

I told the students to read for ten minutes at a steady pace. All of the students read, or at least this is what I surmised by watching their behaviors, for the entirety of the ten minutes. At the end of the ten minutes, I asked the students to enter the number of pages read into a calculation found in their Reading and Reflection Log (appendix F). The equation was as follows:

$$\text{Pages Read in 10 Minutes} \times 6 \times 2 = \text{Reading Goal For the Week.}$$

Some students had calculated goals as low as 48, while others calculated goals as high as 168. This would mean that in a span of two hours, one student might read 120 pages more than his or her peer.

Once the students had calculated their reading rates, they created three, specific reading goals and completed the information for their first book of choice including the author, title, and the amount of time it would likely take him or her to complete it. We reviewed the weekly recording process, one that most students said was preferable to the daily recording process most had used in the past. The chart required the following information each week:

- The date
- The span of pages read
- A yes or no indication of goal achievement

In addition, the student was asked to complete two reflective tasks including, identifying and explaining areas of frustration as well as posing researchable questions. These two tasks were phrased as follows:

- Explain your level of frustration. What, in particular, frustrated you this week? Was it lack of time, lack of comprehension, or something else? You can also use this space to note anything else that you'd like to let me know :)
- What are some cultural, historical, social, etc. questions that you had while reading this week? Be sure to include page numbers for reference.

Upon reaching this portion of the document, one student said quietly, "It's nice that you're actually asking why we might not be meeting our goals. Most teachers just grade us on whether or not we hit a number. They never really asked us what might be keeping us from getting there."

"I need to know what is tripping you up, so I can help you make sense of it. It doesn't seem fair to ask you to meet a goal without asking you for your input."

"So you actually care what we think," another student called out, "and you actually know that we have lives other than this class?"

"Yes. I know you're busy people, but I want you to make time for this. And if you can't, I need to know why so we can come up with a fix."

“But is this a grade?” the first student yelled out again.

I explained the grading procedure, one that I’d taken from Penny Kittle. The students who read any amount of reading would earn half credit. Those who completed their goal would earn full credit. Those who fell somewhere in between would earn credit accordingly. The reflections and the questions also counted towards their weekly reading points. My hope was that in awarding these points for the process, the students would understand that I valued more than simple completion of the reading. I also valued their ideas and even their frustrations. Yes, I valued the whole student.

It’s Okay to Be Confused

On the fourth day of English 3, the students filed into the room. One stopped on the way in to tell me that he started reading, but didn’t understand any of what he’d read so far. “There’s all of these names that I can’t pronounce, and I don’t get what’s happening. I think there’s a war going on, but none of it is making sense.”

A few minutes later, the bell rang, and I stood at the front of the room. I listened as others commiserated about their book choices, claiming that they all seemed confusing. I used this as my entry point. “So I understand that some of you are confused by your books already?”

They nodded their heads in response. A few shook their heads no. “I know that the reading can be frustrating. It’s the main complaint that I’ve had in the previous years. You know, when I was a student, I would get frustrated when I didn’t understand a text right away, too. I’d skip over the parts I didn’t understand, and sometimes that would be okay, but other times I don’t think I got the full message. Sometimes I would get so angry that I’d stop reading the book altogether. I know how hard it can be, but I also know that I’ve done a lot of thinking about how you can have a better experience. Can you remain open-minded and try something with me today? I want to show you how you can find answers to questions you didn’t know you had before you even start reading a book.”

I held up the book *A Long Way Gone* and explained how a good reader can usually identify what he needs to know before he starts reading. The students groaned in response. “I know, I get it. I don’t like to do work before reading either. I love reading so much that I just want to tear open the cover and get down to it, but sometimes a little work upfront can make the reading more enjoyable. Let’s try.” I read the back cover of the book, pausing to ask some questions like: Who are the rebels in Africa and what do they want? Why is the government recruiting small boys? What is the purpose of UNICEF? I opened the front page of the book and noticed a map. I asked, “What is the weather like? Do they have access to basic needs?”

I told the students that before they ask questions about what they do not know, they should identify what they do know. This usually includes the characters, setting, and conflict of the story. Wherever they cannot answer, might be a good place for them to ask some questions. The students started to work in their Google docs. After about ten minutes, most had begun to generate a list of questions. To my dismay, these questions were often related to the plot. The students asked things like: I wonder how she became a slave? How will the boy make this invention with no resources? Will Shin escape the camp?

I ran to the white board and jotted those plot based questions furiously. “Everyone pause!” I yelled. You’re asking really good questions, but can someone tell me how these questions, pointing to the newly jotted list, differ from the ones that I asked during my model thinking? One of the few girls in the class raised her hand.

“Those questions are not about like the culture and stuff. They’re just about the story and what we think might happen.”

“Great! So let’s remember to focus on the aspects of the story that we can research and find an answer to. You’ll want to ask questions about the culture, the geographic location, and the social conditions. If you won’t be able to get the answer from research, then the question isn’t the kind that we’re looking for today.”

The students set back to work, correcting some of their questions. Once all of the questions were crafted, they identified three that they would like to research further. Some asked me to pick for them. In these cases I usually responded by asking the students to recall the conflict of the memoir and which pieces of information would be most important to their understanding of that conflict. The weather conditions of the setting may not be as important, for example, as the rivalry between two religious groups.

In reviewing student responses, the following trends became apparent. First, students asked questions that were mostly related to the government structures and beliefs in place. These questions were excellent points to begin building understanding of the setting and conflicts of the stories. Second, the answers to these questions were mostly one sentence or less. Rather than fully exploring a topic, the students would respond with the fewest words possible and then move on to his next question. Third, the sources used to find these answers were typically Wikipedia and/or the first “hit” on Google when typing in the question. From these facts, I surmised that students were capable of identifying those pieces of information essential to their understanding prior to beginning a book. I realized that the students were eager to complete tasks, but may not always see the benefit of investing more time into questioning and researching. Finally, I concluded that the students’ research skills needed further honing to

allow them to branch out beyond basic Google searches and reliance on Wikipedia.

Talking it Out

About two weeks into the study, I felt students had enough time to begin questioning their texts. It was appropriate to, therefore, begin the implantation of reading conferences. I had begun to conduct reading conferences with my lower classmen about three years ago, at the same time that I had implemented more choice-based reading. The reading conference focused on readings strategies and reading habits. These five to ten minute conversations were a way for me to gage a student's comprehension and analysis levels when reading independently. As I moved towards a more choice-based English 3 curriculum, it only made sense that I incorporate these one-on-one talking opportunities there as well. What would be the focus, though? Was it really necessary to have junior level students demonstrate understanding of all twelve reading strategies? With these questions in mind, I began the process of refining reading conferences.

I looked at the list of twelve strategies, and asked myself which of these would be most appropriate for students to use when approaching global literature. Obviously, strategies like connecting and visualizing were going to be difficult to apply to global literature. Using this same thought process, I created the following list of six strategies along with a brief, student-friendly description of each.

Reading Strategies for Global Literature	
Building Context	Before and during the reading, a good reader pulls forth what he/she knows about the text: “Do I know this author? What do I know about the time period/culture/social conditions? What about the events?”
Summarizing	Summarizing means reducing the text down to the fewest possible words while keeping the essential meaning. What happened in a nutshell?
Questioning	Good readers ask questions the whole time they’re reading. The better they are at coming up with questions, the better they read. “Why did the author do that? What are the characters doing? What does that word mean?”
Visualizing	A reader makes a movie in the mind, literally seeing the scene inside the head. What do you see as you read? Why?
Interpreting	Good readers read between the lines. They peer behind the text to see more than what’s literally there. An interpreter says: “I wonder if this author believes in _____. Maybe the character’s motives are _____. The big picture might be _____.”
Evaluating	Readers evaluate what they read—comparing the values they interpret in the text to their own belief systems. Evaluators read between the lines to find out the themes; then they relate these themes to their own values. An evaluator is metacognitive: thinking about oneself as a thinker and learner.

Figure 6. Global Reading Strategies Chart

I believed that these strategies were those that would best increase the accessibility and understanding of students while reading literature about unfamiliar cultures and geographic locations.

Explaining the Process to Students

I shared this list with students and asked them to describe what each of the strategies meant in their own terms. Group members collaborated to come up with examples of each that they had used in previous years of reading. We then discussed misconceptions, which were, surprisingly few. Many of the students had used the strategies in previous years. From the disgruntled muttering, however, their experiences had not been particularly fruitful.

Next, we reviewed the logistics of the reading conferences, as well as the grading criteria (appendix E). All was not smooth sailing, however. “Why are we even talking about strategies? Isn’t this like a middle school thing,” an annoyed student asked.

“These conferences are a way for me to see if and how you actually utilize the strategies while you read. I hand-selected the ones that I think are going to be most important to your understanding of the texts. You might find it childish, but strong, independent readers really do use these strategies. Using them can and will make you a better reader.”

“So, we’re basically proving to you that we know how to read? If we can’t read, how would we even be in this class?” Victor replied.

“I have no doubt that you can read, but reading and truly understanding and analyzing the text are not the same. Also, strategies are not all we will be talking about in our conferences. I also want a chance to check in with you to

discuss your progress towards your goals, your struggles, and your reading habits.”

The conferences were not only a means to identify the students’ proficiency of strategy use, but also to discuss progress towards the goals that they set in their initial “Reading Log and Reflection.” In these discussions, I hoped to better understand how and why students did or did not meet their reading goals. I also hoped to have real-time access to their struggles, so that I was better able to tailor the instruction to their needs.

“So, we’re really just gonna talk? That’s all?”

“That’s all. Let’s take a look at how a typical reading conference might happen,” I said as I projected the following talking points:

- One goal that I have worked towards since our last meeting is....
- I have doneto progress towards that goal
- I am still having trouble/still need to improve on
- An area of frustration that I had this week was....
- The reading strategy that I chose to focus on for this meeting is....
- It means to me that....
- Here is an example of a passage where I used the strategy. (Model thinking aloud)

Figure 7. Reading conference talking stems

Once the students read over the talking points, another asked the familiar question, “Is this a grade?” I responded by projecting the following list of standards on the screen, all of which are NJ ELA 11-12 Speaking and Listening Standards:

SL.11-12.1. A.

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

Did you bring it?

SL.11-12.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

Did you use it?

SLSA.SL4.

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

Did you present it logically?

Figure 8. Reading conference evaluation criteria

Notice that beneath each standard, there was a question written in student language to make the category clearer. These were the same questions that I asked students at the end of the conference when we completed a shared evaluation. Simplifying the standard typically helped the students make sense of what was being evaluated.

Though each reading conference was unique, there were several commonalities founded throughout the process. First, students were nearly always surprised when they were asked to share in the grading of their reading conferences. Many made remarks like, “Wait, you mean you’re actually going to

take my opinion into account?” Students were reminded that as long as they could support the achievement of the standard, their opinions would absolutely be taken into account. Another commonality existed in the preparation of the students. It was not uncommon for students to forget the steps required of the reading conference. The most common mishap was that a student would talk briefly and vaguely about his use of strategies, but fail to support that usage with specific, textual examples from his current text. In these situations, I took one of two approaches depending on the severity of lacking preparation. First, I might ask the student to take a moment and look back in the text for a time when he recalled utilizing the strategy. Second, if the student was unable or unwilling to do this, I might ask him to prepare for an additional conference to be held on an alternative day. Then, together, we reviewed the requirements of the conference, clarifying any areas that were unclear.

Below, are three reading conferences that occurred throughout the course of the study. Though each is specific to a student and his/her memoir, there are common themes that can be sighted.

I Get Confused, But it's Not a Global Thing

Here is an excerpt of Evelyn's reading conference. She was reading the book called, *I Am Nujood*. I learned during the conference that Evelyn was an ESL student, which was not noticeable from her earlier speaking and writing

activities. As an ESL student, Evelyn stated that she was open to learning about different cultures. She even described herself as empathetic.

“So, how is the reading going? Are you liking your book?”

“Yes, I really like it. It’s interesting.”

“Are there any areas that are tripping you up?”

“Well, it switches back and forth between times. Sometimes I get confused about what is happening when.”

“What are the two times that are used?”

“There’s the time that’s happening during her marriage, and then there’s the time that’s happening after her marriage. I was also confused at first because the main character doesn’t mention the name of her husband. Sometimes I didn’t know she was talking about him.”

“Why do you think she leaves his name out of the story?”

“Probably to show how much she hates him. He abused her, so I guess she doesn’t think he deserves to be called by his name.” The conversation continued several minutes more. Evelyn told me that she exceeded her weekly rate, that she was interested in the book, and that she needed to see how it ended. Since she finished her book ahead of schedule, she began searching for a new title to read.

In reflecting on Evelyn’s conference, her misunderstandings are not those that are specific to global literature. Alternating time and perspective is a common source of confusion when reading any type of text. This particular conference

leads me to believe that for Evelyn, and several of her classmates, the lack of interest and understanding of global literature did not, in general, impact meeting weekly reading goals. Instead, it appeared that an overall lack of time and/or interest in reading in general were to blame. Regardless, in conducting the conferences, I had an opportunity to better understand those barriers to reading and work collaboratively with students to alleviate them when possible.

I Get Confused, But I Use the Strategies to Get Through It

In another interview with Ricky, I was pleased to find that students were using the strategies taught during the “Initial Background Building” lesson. The following is the partial conversation that occurred on the day of his reading conference. We were discussing his understanding and enjoyment of a text called *Machete Season*.

“I like the book. I’m understanding it okay, and when I don’t I just do what you showed us.”

“What’s that?”

“Well, I just stop and look it up.”

“Is that something you would normally do?”

“Not really, but I usually don’t read books that are like this. You know, that have stuff in them I don’t already know about.”

“What’s an example of something you had to stop and look up?”

“For one, I wasn’t really sure why they were killing people with machetes. I get that there was some kind of conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis, but I didn’t really understand what the problem was.”

“So, what did you find?”

“It’s complicated, but I got that it was about a difference in religious belief. So, they run around killing people because they believe different stuff. Kind of like with the Holocaust.”

This brief conversation proved that Ricky not only used the skills that were taught in a previous lesson and independently applied them, but that he also made connections between the present text and his prior knowledge. He was activating schema in a way that led to increased understanding of the new text. Several others remarked on their ability to better understand the text by identifying what was confusing and then stopping to “look it up” like we had done in our lessons together.

I’m Not Confused, I Just Don’t Have Time

So far it seemed that the students were managing the comprehension aspect of the reading, so I wondered why so many students had not met their weekly reading goals. The following conversation with Sara helped me begin to answer this lingering question.

“Tell me about the reading. How has it been going for you?”

“I haven’t been meeting my goals. I really thought I would be more on top of it, but I just haven’t been.”

“Are you talking about the number of pages you’re reading each week?”

“Yes. I am not getting anywhere near where I need to be.”

“Well, let’s talk about why you’re not getting there. What’s going on?”

“It’s just been hard with tests, and projects, and other homework. It’s like I tell myself I’m going to read after I get done with that other stuff, but then by the time I get done with that other stuff I’m wiped.”

“Is the cultural aspect making it difficult for you to read as much as you thought you would?”

“No, that part is totally fine. The book seems to know what I don’t know. There’s like these descriptions right after they mention something that I might not understand. I only had to look up one or two things, and that didn’t take me much time because I just use my phone.”

“I’m glad you’re using the tools you’ve learned to better understand the book. Now, what are you going to do about meeting that weekly reading goal?”

“Well, I came up with a stricter reading schedule. I’m going to make it so that I have to read 20 minutes every night of the school week. If I do that and use my SSR time in class, I should be able to meet my goal.”

“That sounds like a good plan. I can’t wait to check back in with you to see how it’s working.”

Adjusting to Student Feedback

Conferences like Sara's were the most common type. These students had minimal trouble understanding the text. They were indeed able to use the strategies to break through barriers when they appeared, but they still did not meet their weekly reading goals. I began to question if the two hours of required weekly reading truly was too much for the students in my classes. After all, more than three fourths of the students had part-time jobs or participated in extra-curricular activities. Near the end of the study, I decided that the new weekly reading requirement would be just one hour per week. I justified this by adding more whole class reading practices into our class meetings. We'd read short stories together during class, and the students would read their independent texts outside of class. This combination would still allow for about the same amount of reading practice, an amount that most reading proponents agree is necessary for college-level success. Despite this knowledge, I still felt conflicted. Perhaps the amount I was asking students to read was just too much for their daily schedules. I wanted to find a point at which students were being challenged, but not overwhelmed. This is a struggle that I would continue to grapple with throughout the following units of study.

Traveling Across the World

Though the reading conferences had shown me that most students were not suffering cultural comprehension blocks, I decided to continue to implement background building strategies into the course, since I knew from past experience that even if students were not struggling with the context of their current selections, they might struggle with the next selection, or they may begin to tire of having to stop and look up those pieces with which they were not familiar. Practice, I had learned, would make the process more automatic, and hopefully prevent student frustration.

Earlier in the year, I had discussed my study with my supervisor, telling him that I thought one of the pieces lacking was the students' abilities to empathize with those whom they knew so little about. He suggested using virtual reality experiences as one way to boost empathy, citing several studies that showed the impact of such experiences on participants. We were also lucky enough to have acquired a class set of Google Cardboards, which allow students to turn videos on their smartphones into 3D experiences, and I met with my supervisor several times to discuss the technical and pedagogical implications. The activity that we developed would act as not only an empathy-building activity, but also as an extension to the previous Beginning Building Background inquiry (appendix I).

Together, we decided to use the *New York Times* Virtual Reality App, which was available for download on most smartphones. This application, houses 365 videos that immerse students in cultural experiences. The next question became, how do we make sure that there is a video relevant to each student's memoir? We browsed the list, attempting to connect each of the choice titles to a related video. It seemed that there was something for everyone, even if the connection was not quite as specific as I had hoped.

In my final phase of planning, I created an accompanying handout. I did not want to overwhelm the students with paperwork, but I did want there to be some record of their experience. The handout detailed the steps of the process as well as prompted the students for their objective and subjective observations during the process. There was also a point at which the students were asked to pose new questions and note their level of empathy.

The students were prepared a few days before our lesson was set to take place. I tried to pump them up, telling them that they'd be engaging in a virtual reality experience to bring to life the setting of their books. One student called out, "Wait, you mean like 3D goggles?"

"Yeah," I responded, "kind of like that. You'll be using your phones to access the videos."

"Well, what videos are we watching?" another curious student asked.

“Those that are in some way related to your book. We’ll get to talk about it more that day, but to give you an idea, if you’re reading *Escape from Camp 14*, you might be interested in watching this one video about Fallujah, where you’re touring a place where prisoners of war were kept. There are a lot of different options, so I’m sure you’ll all be able to find something that not only connects to your book, but also gains your interest.”

The students broke off into excited side conversations. Some began to download the app on their phones, so that they could browse the list ahead of time. They seemed excited for the lesson, and I was elated.

We met in the IMC on the day of the lesson. I taught the class twice this day, with the help of my supervisor. I will relay the second run of the lesson here, which was refined after we realized some areas for improvement during the first run.

The students were corralled into a classroom at the middle of the IMC. There, they were asked to pull up the NYTVR app, which was downloaded in advance of the lesson. We spent a couple of minutes talking about the assignment objectives. The goal, as relayed to students, was to improve their empathy for their characters by immersing them in a similar setting or situation. As an introduction to the technological component of the activity, we asked all of the students to open the video called “Pilgrimage to Mecca.” Once there, we allowed them to plug in their headphones and get used to the application’s functions. They

moved their heads around. Some remarked on how “cool” it was to see in 3D. A few others said it felt like they were actually there in Mecca.

Once students adjusted to the orientation, we provided time for them to search for a video that was in some way related to their independent books. Several students had a difficult time, so I circulated the room, providing ideas. For example, those reading *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind*, were unable to find any videos related to solar energy. One such student remarked, “The kids that have the war books have it easier. There’s all kinds of stuff on here that works for them.”

“Well, there aren’t any videos on solar energy, but you could look at videos about other technological advancements.”

“What does that even mean?” he barked back.

“Think about it. What made the character’s creation of the windmill so important in the story?”

“The fact that he was the first one to do it.”

“That’s right! So do you see any videos in which the person is the first to do it? It could be about any new piece of technology, not just windmills.”

“Well, there’s one about these new robot things, but that wouldn’t count right?”

“I think it would. They’re talking about someone making something new, right? And that new thing is most likely going to have positive impacts for society just like William’s windmill.”

“Oh. Well that’s a lot easier.”

I left this student and continued to check in with others. When about half of the students were ready to proceed to the viewing/listening portion, my supervisor took them out into the main area of the IMC where they could disburse. I stayed behind, helping other students to make the connections between the video options and their texts. After a while, all of the students had gone off to watch their videos.

Most of the students were engaged in the activity, sitting silently, alone, and moving their heads around. Others walked in circles, attempting to take in every inch of the video screen sights. I noticed one student was sitting at a nearby table, his phone in his hands, but his goggles on the table. He appeared to be texting, judging by the movement of his fingers. I approached him and asked, “Hey, did you get to watch your video already?”

“Yeah, I don’t need the goggles to watch. I just watched it like this.”

“I’d really like for you to use the goggles one time. They really enhance the experience. Why don’t you just try it?”

“They look stupid, and I already know about the Middle East.”

“Could you please try wearing the goggles? I think you’ll find it’s much more interesting that way.”

He huffed and mumbled a few unkind words before putting on the goggles and inserting his earbuds. On the next rotation, though, he stopped me to tell me about his experience: “That was really cool. And you were right. It’s a lot better with the goggles. You can see stuff that you couldn’t see just watching it normal.”

As students completed the viewing portion, I gave them the accompanying handout. Many of the students reported negative feelings when asked to subjectively describe the video. Terms like “sadness,” “loneliness,” “helpless,” “anger,” and “frustration” were commonly used in this section.

One of the final components of the handout required students to generate 2-4 new questions based on their viewings. Some examples of questions included:

- Why is Yemen so poor? Has the country always been like this?
- How can society change through scientific improvements with Africa?
- Why don’t the males in some countries allow for females to be educated?
- Are the prison camps still around and what are the prison camps like compared to U.S. prison?
- Where did most Bosnian/Croatian refugees flee to? Why did Yugoslavia break up? How long was Yugoslavia a nation for?

Figure 9. Student generated questions from Setting Inquiry

These questions demonstrated higher order thinking and an interest in the context of various regions of the world. There was a clear relationship between the video that each student watched, the book that he or she was reading, and the questions

he or she generated. The ability to make these complex connections was one of the more positive findings of this activity.

For example, one student explained his reasoning for selecting the video “Fight for Fallujah” as follows: “I picked the video he Fight for Falluja, which is about Iraqi forces taking back an ISIS controlled city. This connects to my memoir because although it isn’t about the Bosnian Wars, it is about the civil war in present day Iraq, which shows the effects of a different civil war because of a similar situation. Rather than the religious clash of Sunni versus Shia Islam, the Bosnian Wars resulted from the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and the many jaded opinions on forming a new government.” Later, when he was asked to generate questions about his memoir after having viewed the video, he asked: “What was it like to be a soldier in the Bosnian Wars? What caused the fall of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia? How did citizens escape the Bosnian Wars?” Even though the student recognized that the video was not about the direct location/topic presented in his memoir, he was able to take his reactions and repurpose them to form questions related directly to his memoir. This synthesis of ideas is quite sophisticated for a student at this level.

Perhaps the most important question of the handout was this: *Research has shown that virtual reality experiences can increase empathy. Explain if you think this experience has increased/decreased/not impacted your empathy.* The

following is a list of the most notable student answers organized by overall opinion.

<u>Yes</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “It increased my empathy because I felt like I was living the real experience. It made me realize how not everyone has the same living conditions.”• “It has increased my empathy for people in these situations. It is one thing to read about a terrible experience, it is another thing to see and hear it for yourselves.”• “This experience is so real and powerful, you learn to think and put yourself in other people’s place and feel anger, pain, happiness. All the emotions they’re feeling.”• “Yes, because it seems a lot more real than just watching a video.”
<u>Maybe</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “The video made me feel helpless or incapable of helping the people in need due to the people who are trying to gain power.” States that he has “only done it once” in regards to the virtual reality activity so it’s not enough to impact his empathy yet.• “I don’t think that this video necessarily increased my empathy because I was already pretty empathetic for immigrants and refugees, but I think that this video gave me a better idea about what they have to go through to leave their country. “
<u>No</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “I don’t really think this has increased my empathy, but I got to experience what it’s like through the story and the artworks.”• “I’m pretty indifferent about it b/c in the end, it’s still just a video and it’s not like you’re actually there experiencing it.”• “I feel that VR has not impacted my empathy, this is because I cannot relate to the topic on any level to begin with.”

Figure 10. Student responses to helpfulness of Setting Inquiry

What does the student’s ability to empathize with a given culture or experience have to do with his ability to comprehend and engage with global literature? At this point in the study, it seemed that those students who’d noted a sense of empathy were those who were more consistently reading and meeting

their goals. I would continue to track the progress of students and incorporate the inquiries to see if such trends continued. That being said, I acknowledged that even though a correlation clearly existed, causation was not definite.

Identifying Troubling Vocabulary

My second year teaching English 3 was, perhaps, the hardest. I was frustrated, and I was unsure of how to alleviate both my frustration and the students' frustration. I recall a conversation between a colleague and me:

“I just don't know how to help them. They're refusing to do the reading. It's miserable.”

“My guys too,” Margaret replied. “I don't blame them. Have you tried reading one of those books? They're not exactly enjoyable. They're hard for me. I can only imagine how they feel.”

“But where do we even start?” I replied.

“I've been trying some stuff. You know that Sherman Alexie short story? The one that is broken down by grade level?”

“Yeah, I use it with my freshmen. They love it.”

“Well, I use that to show them that there are some terms that you can't understand without the proper context.”

“What do you mean?”

Margaret went on to explain how she taught cultural vocabulary skills using the short story. She said that she has the students identify terms with which they are not familiar. She then has them explain how they can make sense of them. Some terms can be deciphered through contextual clues, some don't really impact meaning, and others require further research. With Margaret's permission, the following activity was developed.

Students clicked on a link to an electronic version of the short story, "My Indian Education," by Sherman Alexie. The link, <http://prism.scholarslab.org/>, transported students to an online tool called PRISM. For those who are not familiar with this particular program, it allows students to "mark" any text using three different colors. The teacher designates the meanings of each color in advance. While each student marks his own copy of the text, the results are then compiled into a single marked copy, making teacher analysis of what students have marked quick and easy. The students signed up using Google with a single press of a button.

Once they were into the document, I explained the purpose of the day's inquiry. I asked the students to raise their hands if they had come across an unfamiliar term in their texts. In particular, I questioned about those terms that have obvious cultural relevance. The majority of the students in the class raised their hands. I continued to explain how today's lesson was going to provide them

with tools for how to overcome those unfamiliar terms as they come across them in the text.

There were two colors designated for highlighting. Green was to be used for fresh language. We had been learning about narrative writing during this first unit of study, and I wanted to incorporate that component into today's lesson. Blue was to be used to mark those references that would be confusing to those having limited knowledge of Native American/American culture, history, etc. The students read and highlighted independently. The confusing terms included:

- U.S. Government glasses
- Top-yogh-yaught
- Missionary teacher
- Eagle-armed
- Cut my braids
- Dragged their braids across Betty Towle's desk
- H.U.D. house
- Heard their Indian tears

Figure 11. Confusing terms in Sherman Alexie's "My Indian Education"

Once students had completed the marking, I posed the following question: "So, what do you do when you come across these terms? How might you make sense of them?"

One student raised his hand, "Well, I know I usually just skip over them."

"Sometimes that works. The reality is that you don't have time to stop at every word, so you have to be selective. That's just smart reading. Which ones could you skip over?"

“I mean, I don’t think it’s that important to know what the government glasses are. We get that the kid is nerdy looking. Same thing with the teacher. We get that she’s mean, so yeah.”

I crossed out the two terms on the board and asked how we would figure out the rest.

“A lot of times you can just use the words around it. You know, to figure out what it means.”

“True! That’s called using context clues. Which ones could we do that for?”

“The dragging the braids across the desk one. We know the parents don’t like how the teacher treated their kids. I’m pretty sure that’s just a sign of disrespect. Like they’re rubbing it in her face that they have long hair, because they know she doesn’t like it.”

“You’d have to look up the answer for some of the others. Like I have no idea what a H.U.D. house is,” another student calls out.

“That’s a good point. Sometimes there just isn’t enough information for you to make an educated guess. I think that part is pretty important to the story too. Let’s take a look at how you can make some meaning for that term.”

At this point in the lesson, I broke into a think aloud activity. Using the chart below, I explained to students how I would make sense of the term “H.U.D. house.” Below is the visual that I used to walk students through my thinking. I

began by defining the term literally through a quick google search. I then generated three questions about the term. This step was meant to lead students beyond defining and into a more inquiry-based line of thinking. If the term was important enough for them to look up, I wanted them to really dive into understanding it on a deeper level. Next, I conducted brief research to answer the questions I had created. I explained how some sites are more credible than others, and I requested that students veer from Wikipedia. In the final column of the organizer, I used the information and applied it to the text at hand. I told students that this was the most essential step, because the point of looking up these items was to improve understanding of what they were reading. I told them that connections should go beyond the level of “now I know what the word means.” Instead, I asked the students to explain exactly what they learned about the characters, plot, or setting that they did not know previously and how that would impact their future understanding. All of this would be completed using the student’s current independent read.

Title:	"Indian Education"	
Term:	They sat in separate, dark places in our HUD house and wept savagely.	
<p>What was I able to find from a basic google search?</p> <p>HUD stands for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The mission is to provide affordable housing for all regardless of income.</p>	<p>What are <u>at least 3</u> questions I would like to ask to further expand my knowledge of the term? What are the <u>answers</u> to these questions?</p> <p>How much does a HUD home cost? Are they cheaper than "regular" homes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to the HUD website, there are homes for sale in Spokane, Washington for around \$60,000. <p>How does a person qualify for a HUD home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to the HUD website, it sets the lower income limits at 80% and very low income limits at 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which you choose to live. Income limits vary from area to area so you may be eligible at one HA but not at another. The HA serving your community can provide you with the income levels for your area and family size, or you can also find the income limits here on the internet. <p>What is the median income in Spokane Washington?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$44,350 per household according to censusreporter.org 	<p>How has this improved my understanding of the text?</p> <p>I know now that Junior's parents would make less than a combined \$35,000 per year. The desperate financial state is most likely the reason why his parents are depressed, leading them to ignore him. It could also be his motivation for attending a better school, even if he has to walk a great distance to get there. I am thinking that Junior must not want to live the same life that others on his reservation have lived. He seems to want to better himself.</p>

Figure 12. Model of completed Vocabulary Inquiry chart

The next figure is a compilation of feedback provided by students when asked: *Was this activity helpful and did you learn any new strategies today?* The left hand side represents the positive feedback, while the right hand side represents the negative feedback. Notice that there is italicized writing on the right hand side, but not on the left. The italics demonstrate the bits of conversation that I heard whilst circulating the room during the activity. I tried to capture the feelings invoked by those students who did not find the experience to be helpful. The basic text, on the other hand, is information that was written by the student in his or her document.

The Positive	The Not-So-Positive
<p>I've never been encouraged before to search up words and find more about them.</p> <p>I have never asked questions about a word in a book in order to understand it better.</p> <p>This activity was useful because typically I wouldn't search these types of things when I am reading at home. It helped reinforce what to highlight and that not everything needs to be highlighted.</p> <p>I learned more about my book</p> <p>Everything I learned in this activity was new and helpful to realize new aspects of the story.</p> <p>it gave me further understanding of the intensity of the situation the family is in</p>	<p>I usually look up words I don't know when I read.</p> <p><i>Why is she having us do this?</i></p> <p>I don't have any questions. All of the words I don't know are pretty much defined right after they're used.</p> <p><i>It's taking so much time to find a term.</i></p> <p><i>Why didn't she tell us we'd be doing this in advance?</i></p> <p>I still won't search them when I'm at home. I don't need to.</p> <p><i>Even once I have a term, I can't find a thing about it on the internet.</i></p> <p>I didn't learn any new strategies today.</p> <p><i>I guess I'll just pick something I already know and ask a bunch of questions that I can answer. I'll get this done quick.</i></p>

Figure 13. Side-by-side of student feedback for Vocabulary Inquiry

In creating the side-by-side, I was able to gain further insight into why specific students did or did not find the vocabulary inquiry helpful. In general, those who responded positively, seemed to describe the strategy of identifying, researching, and apply findings to their texts to be a skill that they did not typically complete on their own. They also found that the outcome of the activity helped them create more meaning for their memoirs. Conversely, the students who responded negatively, are those who thought that the activity did not offer them a new strategy. Their response was to complete it in as little time as possible, like they would any other “busy work.”

Continued Reading Practices

SSR

As I neared the end of the study, I began to call into question the SSR portion of the class. I had noticed that the students were not utilizing this time to make progress in their independent reads. I began to take observational notes, and I found that more than half of the class was actually distracted during this time in a variety of ways, including checking their phones, staring at the book without turning the page, and attempting to communicate with classmates. In discussing this problem with trusted colleagues, I decided that perhaps ten minutes seemed so inconsequential that the students didn't mind wasting it. I increased the SSR

period from ten minutes to twenty, and I implemented in every other day rather than daily.

As I explained the new SSR procedure to students, one exclaimed, “Well, it’s not the amount of time that’s the problem. It’s when we do it.” I pondered this new revelation. The student continued, “We come from lunch and we’re all revved up, and you just want us to pull a book out and start reading.” The next day, I asked students to respond to the following question on Google Classroom: *Would you like to have SSR at the beginning of the block or the end of the block? Provide a reason.*

My third block section largely stated that having SSR at the beginning of the block would be best, because it would get them focused for the class and “calm them down” from lunch. Fourth block students, on the other hand, wanted to end their day with SSR, because it was an “easy end to a long day,” and they found that they were never able to concentrate when they first got into class. From that point onward, SSR took place for 20 minutes, every other day at the start of block three and at the end of block four.

Once this change was made, there was a decrease in student distractibility. From my observations, I noted that only three to four students were off task at any given time, rather than the ten to twelve students that were off task under the original SSR system. It appeared that listening to the students’ ideas regarding a more successful SSR period had proven useful.

Reading Conferences

While students partook in SSR, I conducted one to two reading conferences. These conferences provided me with an opportunity to check in on the students' reading progress, goal attainment, strategy use, and areas of frustration. These interactions helped me to reaffirm the data that I attained through the student work. In speaking with the students, I was also able to gain further insight into their engagement with their memoirs and any comprehension difficulties related to cultural references. Below, I detail some of the conference interactions with specific students.

Matthew's Conference

“So, tell me how the reading is going. What's been good, bad, in between so far?”

“Everything has been pretty good. I'm really into politics and everything. Reading this book doesn't seem like I'm reading nonfiction. I know it's nonfiction, but it's not like a textbook. It feels like the experience of the author. It's different from what we read in History class, because it's told like a story.

“Great, so how did you do with meeting your weekly reading rate?”

“I don't always meet the rate, but then I just read more the next week.”

“That's a good strategy. How about understanding the text? You seem to enjoy it, but do you understand it?”

“Yeah. I think this book is less confusing than some of the ones my group mates are reading. Nothing really confuses me. The book explains things pretty well.”

“Like what?”

“Well, this one time there was a word that meant a Korean guard that maintained the camps, but the author explained the term right after.”

“And how have you been doing with meeting your goals?”

“One goal I had was to keep track of my reading, which I obviously did. Another goal I had was to finish a book, because I usually don’t do that. I finished *Escape from Camp 14*, which is pretty big for me.”

Matthew’s experience seems to be the typical experience of the students who found the reading enjoyable, or at least attainable. In retrospect, I would say that about one-third of the class felt this way. Another third, however, would probably best identify with Victor.

Victor’s Reading Conference

“So, tell me how the reading is going. What’s been good, bad, in between so far?”

“This book is terrible. I mean I thought it would be cool because I usually enjoy learning about the Holocaust, and this kind of reminded me of that, but it’s just not working for me.”

“What’s not working for you, exactly?”

“The book is repetitive, and sometimes they use words I don’t even understand. How am I supposed to like reading a book like that?”

“I remember from your survey earlier in the year that you do not like to reading in general.”

“Yeah, that’s right. I just feel like it’s a waste of time. I’d rather be doing something more important. I’m not stupid. I can read. I just choose not to.

“I know you can read. I’ve seen you do it. Let’s talk about some of what makes this book confusing for you. What seems to get you stuck?”

“It’s not that I get stuck. It’s just that they switch time a lot. Like they’ll be in the present and then all of the sudden the kid is talking like he is reflecting on the past. It’s just annoying to keep up with.”

“I’m sure it requires quite a bit of attention on the reader’s part to know which time they’re in.”

“Exactly. I could do it if I actually tried. I just don’t like putting that much effort into the reading.”

“Can I ask you how often you read? Are you splitting the reading up over several days, or are you completing it in one big sweep?”

“I try to do it the night before it’s due. I push it off until then, because I really hate doing it. I try to read, but I usually end up staring at the book for half

an hour before I get annoyed that I still have an hour left to read. Then I go do something else.”

“Sometimes, I’ve found that if you devote full focus for ten minutes, it’s much more effective than devoting half focus for twenty minutes. Maybe if you set smaller time goals, but really, really focus on understanding the reading in those increments you might not get so frustrated. What do you think?”

“Yeah, I’ve been thinking about doing something like that. I guess I could try it.”

“Great, let’s meet again to discuss strategies. I’d prefer you were a bit farther into your book before we do so.”

Victor, who has shown resistance to reading since the start of the year, came unprepared to his reading conference, like several of his classmates before him. He mentioned time and difficulty as obstacles to completing the reading, but upon further discussion, it seemed that the true obstacles were motivation and desire. The in-class activities were meant to stimulate comprehension, and in turn, engagement, so it is not surprising that he did not find them to be particularly helpful.

Madison’s Reading Conference

“So, I see here that you finished one book already. That’s awesome! Which book were you reading?”

“I read *I am Nujood* first,” Madison replied.

“And how was that? Did you find it enjoyable? Were you able to comprehend it?”

“Yeah, it was pretty easy. It was simple and short. A ten-year-old girl told the story, so I think that made it pretty easy.”

“I see. The writing style was probably simplistic. Did you have any trouble with the cultural aspect of the text?”

“Sometimes she would use words that I didn’t understand, but it didn’t really stop me from reading.”

“Did you find that you could just “read around” the words?”

“Not really. I mean I could have, but I felt like I’d be missing something important. I chose to stop and look them up like we did with the vocabulary inquiry in class.”

“Is that something that you normally do when you’re reading independently?”

“No, not until we did it here. I guess I don’t usually read challenging books either though by myself, so maybe that’s why I never had to do it before.”

“I’m glad you’re trying out the strategies we learned. Can you tell me a bit about your new book?”

“Oh, yeah. I’m reading *The Fisherman* now. It’s...um...kind of weird. It starts off slow, and I’m just not sure of it yet.”

“What’s weird about it?”

“Well, there’s the way the characters speak. It’s kind of different from how we would talk. It’s written a bit like a...dialect...is the word I think?”

“Can you show me what you mean?”

Our conversation continued a while longer. Madison showed me some areas of text where the language might be confusing. She read several aloud, and restated what she thought was being said. I told her I agreed with her interpretations. Madison is the final one third of the class. This one third does not always find the reading easy, but is willing to work through the confusion to meet the goals. Furthermore, this final group shows an internalization of the strategies learned in class, as they continue to use them independently.

Reading Logs and Reflections

At the end of the unit, students were asked to turn in their reading logs, detailing five weeks of reading. I asked the students to take a final look at their logs to ensure that everything was completed to date prior to hitting the “turn in” button on Google Classroom. The layered story below details the thoughts that I had in comparison to the thoughts that students had at the time of turning in the assignment.

Me

They're going to turn in their logs now. This should be an easy grade. If they've been doing any reading at all, they'll get half credit. I'm even awarding them points for the goal setting and the reflections each week. I just need them to show a little investment and they'll get at least a C.

Student A

She wants us to turn this in. How many weeks were we supposed to read for?
Turns to student next door: "Hey, how many weeks should we have?"

Me

How could they not know how many weeks they should have? I gave them ten minutes every week to fill out their logs. I even wrote the dates on the board for each week that should be recorded. So, did they just not read?

Student A

"I did the reading. I just didn't fill out the log. I'll do it now. Can we have a few more minutes?"

Me

A few more minutes? For what? To falsify the log? Fill in random page numbers? It doesn't really work that way. "What were you doing when I gave you ten minutes to fill this out each week? I'm not sure how you could have missed that reminder every time?"

Student B

Looking around. What is taking some of the others so long? All we had to do was hit "turn in." She gave us time to fill it out. She reminded us all the time. "I'm done. I did it when you told us to. What should I do now?"

Me

Okay, so I'm not going crazy. I really did remind them. Student B remembered, but then how did so many others not?

Student A

I'll just fill in some numbers. I doubt she really calculates them anyway. She won't bother looking at the reflections. Those are probably just there for the heck of it. They're not worth points. Why do them?

Me

Maybe this isn't going as well as I thought. I really thought the majority of the students were reading. Maybe they weren't? Is it really possible that they read, but didn't fill out the log? Sounds odd to me. I don't know what to believe.

Figure 14. Layered Story for Reading Log and Reflection Collection

The layered story was meant to capture the confusion that ensued at the time of turning in the reading log. Despite this confusion, the students, in general seemed to score well on the reading log. The average grade was a B-, including several incomplete logs. Students met their weekly reading goal more often than not, but in the reflection areas, most attributed a lack of time to increased frustration during the process. For example, in the figure below, it is clear that the frustration level is entirely the effect of the lack of time to read. It is the only variable mentioned in the “Why?” column. Even with the student’s acknowledgement that there was a lack of time to complete the reading, he still manages to meet his weekly goal. Even more impressive is the student’s ability to generate inquiry-based questions each week.

Week Date the weeks.	Which pages did you read? ex. 30-45.	Did you meet your weekly reading goal? Y/N	Frustration Level 0 (none)- 5(beyond annoyed).	Why?	Questions
9/25	1-73	Y	2	Sometimes during the week I struggle for time but I can catch up on any reading I missed over the weekend.	How common is travel from the US to Bosnia? (P. 72)
10/2	73-145	Y	3	While I struggled for time during the week, having SATs on Saturday made it a little harder to catch up over the weekend.	What are some effects that the holocaust had on the Bosnian genocide? (P. 141)
10/9	145-217	Y	2	I didn't find much trouble. I was able to catch up over the weekend.	Would different views of the war and genocide change how the story is told? (P. 215)
10/16	217-289	Y	2	I had a busy weekend but the day off on Friday helped.	Is it typical for people with genocide or other bad backgrounds to meet? (P. 255)

Figure 15. Completed Reading and Reflection Log Sample 1

On the other hand, there were some students whose lack of time kept them from completing the reading. Below is an example of another student who did not manage to meet his weekly reading goal, despite being able to fully understand the text.

Week Date the weeks.	Which pages did you read? ex. 30-45.	Did you meet your weekly reading goal? Y/N	Frustration Level 0 (none)-5(beyond annotated).	Why? Explain your level. What, in particular, frustrated you this week? Was it lack of time, lack of comprehension, or something else? You can also use this space to note anything else that you'd like to let me know :)	Questions What are some cultural, historical, social, etc. questions that you had while reading this week? Be sure to include page numbers for reference.
9/26	1-100	N	1	The book was not too hard to read in my opinion. The pages are very small and short. There are some topics in the book I don't really understand; like the issues that go on in Yemen. I didn't complete my reading goal because I feel like reading 144 each week will get me through the book too fast. I feel like I am rushing through it.	Why is the judge so surprised about Nujood? I thought it was normal and legal for girls to married this young in Yemen. (pg.47).
10/2	100-168	N	1	I was not very frustrated with this book. I find it pretty easy to read. Sometimes, I don't understand the italicized words that have to do with the culture or food in the story. I did not meet my reading goal this week because I've been very busy and I haven't had as much time to read as much as last week.	How do the severity of the laws in Yemen differ from the laws in the United States? (pg. 134)
10/9	168-end	Y	1	I was not frustrated with this book. It is very easy to read minus the arabic vocab used every once in awhile. I finished my book. I only had a few pages left. I took an extra week to read the book.	

Figure 16. Completed Reading and Reflection Log Sample 2

The Final Survey

While I planned to continue interventions throughout the next unit of study, the Literary Analysis Unit, I decided it was an opportune time to stop and

reflect on the reading that had been completed thus far. My study was, formally, coming to an end, making this reflection necessary for analysis. I told students that they would be taking a moment to think through the progress they had made so far and provide me with feedback concerning the content and the activities of the course. They completed an eight question survey on Google Classroom. The survey was meant to mirror the survey taken the first week of school. It asked similar questions about likes/dislikes, but it included some new questions about student progress and the interventions that had been implemented throughout the first unit.

Question #1

The first question asked students if they had completed more or less reading than they would have in previous years. I believed that this question would provide me insight into changes in reading habits/attitudes. Below, is a chart showing the self-reported amount of reading students completed in comparison to previous years. Only 14% of students reported completing less reading than they had done in previous years. This amounts to just five students, two of whom reported reasons other than the material for their decline in reading. One student noted that he had taken Honors classes previous to this year, where the focus had always been on the amount of reading rather than the understanding of reading. Another student, determined to graduate early, explained that the

workload of several other electives impeded her ability to complete as much reading as previous years.

Amount of Reading Completed This Year in Comparison to Previous Years

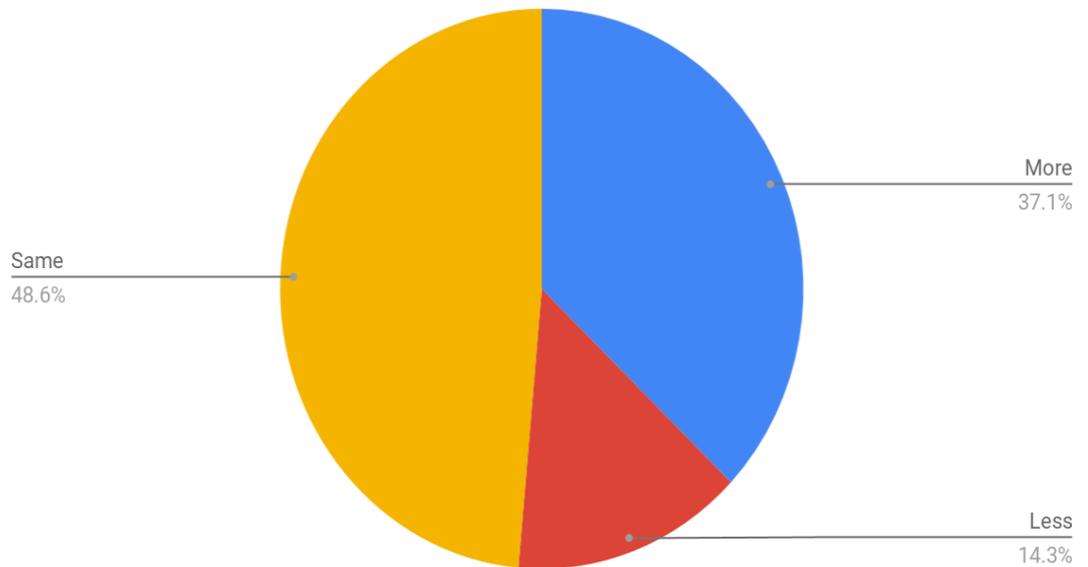


Figure 17. Pie chart detailing the amount of reading students completed this year compared to previous years

Question #2

The next question on the survey, asked students to remark on their feelings towards the global focus of the reading. Students were asked to rank their feelings on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the most negative and 5 being the most positive. Below is a chart showing the number of students responding at each level. The minimal number of students at the negative end of the scale suggests that the global focus of the reading is not the greatest barrier to reading completion.

How did you feel about the global focus of the readings?

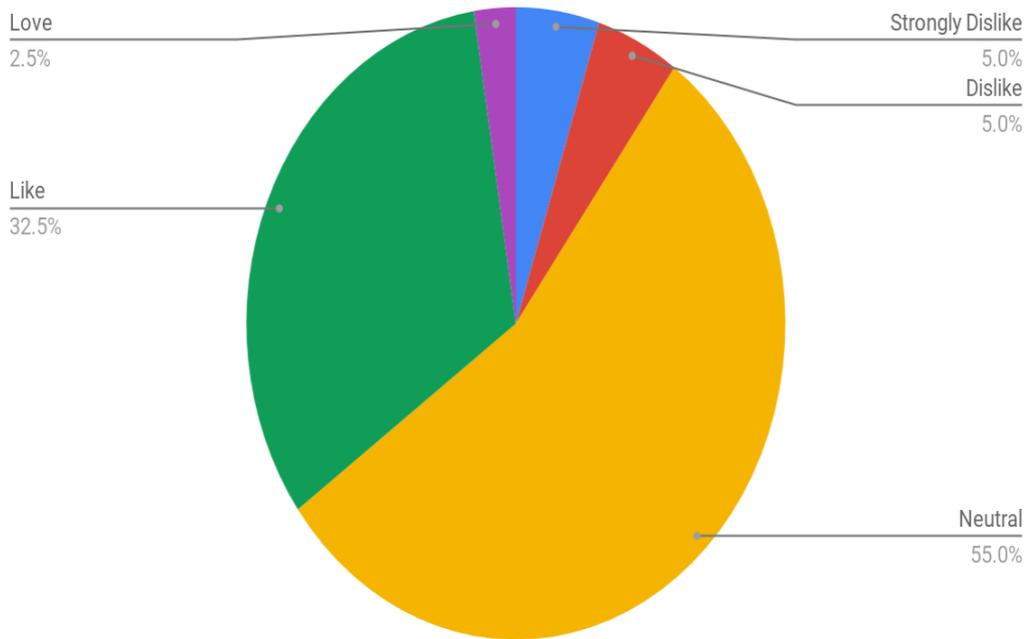


Figure 18. Pie chart detailing student response to feelings about global readings

The majority of the students feel neutrally about the global focus of the readings for the course. Just 10% still dislike or strongly dislike the global readings. This is an obvious improvement from the survey completed at the beginning of the study.

Question #3

The third question of the survey asked students if they had been able to enjoy and understand texts from cultures different than their own. Some of the notable responses included:

- Yes I can enjoy another culture Literature because it's different than my life so it's something new that I haven't experienced
- I would have to say that I do not enjoy reading books of a different culture because I don't know what any of it is like, so I can't necessarily relate to it, and when I am reading something I like to be able to relate to the story someone.
- I have, for the most part, enjoyed books of other culture, because I enjoy learning about history, and since the book about another culture was about a war, I really found an interest in reading the book.
- I have been able to enjoy and understand my book because it's an interesting story and also interesting to learn about a different culture.
- I like having focal points that I'm not familiar with so I enjoy these different cultures
- I just don't enjoy books I am forced to read. Otherwise the book doesn't really matter, unless it is a monologue or something.
- Nah, they're confusing and not very interesting
- I kind of do because I like learning about other cultures and people, however I do not like having to look up terms and references every so often to understand what I'm reading.

Figure 19. Student responses regarding enjoyment and understanding of global literature

In general, the majority of students seemed to note that learning about different cultures was interesting. Those students who did not find the cultural aspect interesting, seemed to note inability to relate and lack of interest as the key reasons why they did not enjoy the texts. These reasons are congruent to those provided by students in previous years.

Question #5:

Students were asked: *How important do you think building background has been in terms of understanding your global texts?* I provided a scale of 1-5 for students to use in their responses. Those who indicated a 1 thought that the background building was not important, and those indicating a 5 thought the

background building was extremely extremely important. Below is a chart indicating the students' responses. Their responses indicated that all of the students found some importance in building background when reading global literature.

Table 1.

Student Response	Number of Students
Not at all	0
Not usually	0
Somewhat	11
Important	19
Extremely Important	10

Student responses to the importance of building background when reading global literature.

The data suggests that all of the students found building background to be at least somewhat important to their understanding of global literature. Furthermore, about 25% of the students indicated that this particular strategy was extremely important to aiding their comprehension. The students clearly saw the value in the inquiry activities as a means to boost their background knowledge.

Question #6

This question asked students what they thought about the inquiry activities that had occurred throughout the first unit. They were asked how helpful the activities were in improving their understanding and how enjoyable the activities were to complete. I have separated out the feedback into three categories. The

first category, “The Good,” focuses on wholly positive feedback. The second category, “The Mixed,” focuses on the feedback that is a mixture of both positive and negative or feedback that is mostly neutral. The final category, “The Bad,” focuses on the feedback that is mostly negative.

Feedback	Student Responses
The Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The activities increased my learning about other countries. It was a good use of time. I found it fun because it gave me a real look of what they happened in those countries. • I enjoyed them and they helped me understand the poverty level better and what it was like during the war. • I found the research and VR very helpful. In fact, before this class I’d never heard of Bosnia. Through research, I was able to get a good context of what happened and let the story tell the rest. • Yes they are extremely helpful. Like, for example, the virtual reality helped me build empathy for the experience I was watching. It was a very good and helpful use of time. It was also very fun and interesting • Yes, they have because they help me understand and connect to the book and the characters a little bit. They are fun too because you get to see different things from another person’s P.O.V. • I think it was a good activity to do because I got to see something- an issue I didn’t know was an issue so I was able to see that things are different in so many ways and people are struggling to get through one day at a time.
The Mixed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I found them helpful even though they weren’t exactly fun. I do think they were a good use of time and helped me understand the book a little bit more since it forced me to look up things I might not have cared to look up. • They’re cool but kind of pointless because it doesn’t really help with the actual reading part. • I think that the activities in class were okay. I didn’t find them particularly helpful, and for some of them I found them to be confusing. I think that they were a good use of

	<p>time though, because I feel like the more that I work with these things and see them used in examples, the better I will get at them. I didn't find them to be particularly fun, but I also didn't find them to be the worst thing I've ever done in class. I thought this because I thought that they were average, regular class assignments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think they are helpful and a good use of time because we usually have to research for them so I find a lot of information about my book. The only thing I don't like is looking in the book for quotes. • I think the activity that helped the most the background inquiry. Going into the book I had a basic understanding of what was going on in the country and area that Kenan lived in. This made it much easier to understand what Kenan was going through. I think the virtual reality was interesting and helped a little bit. I do not think the vocabulary inquiry helped very much. • I believe that the background inquiry was helpful in the understanding of our texts however the virtual reality and vocab inquiry are less useful but fun. This is due to the background inquiry answering particular questions while the VR and vocab inquiry are not specific to our books.
The Bad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the activities in class aren't too helpful towards my understanding of different types of readings, I just have a hard time enjoying reading something that I can't relate to.

Figure 20. Student feedback regarding the inquiry activities.

While there may appear to be bias in that there is only one “bad” response, there was truly just one student who responded wholly negative. All of the others that appeared to be negative, included at least one positive note.

Summary

Reading is just one component of the English 3 curriculum. During the time in which this study took place, students were also studying writing style and

narrative techniques as they drafted a college entry essay. Students also partook in various speaking and listening opportunities in which they were responsible for providing peer feedback on writing. I mention this so as to make it clear that while I was collecting data on the reading component of the unit only, this is not to say that other curricular facets did not exist. Still, I was able to collect enough data in this first unit to begin to draw conclusions about the comprehension and engagement of students reading global literature. This information would prove helpful to me as we moved into our next unit, the Literary Analysis unit, in which students would read and study the themes of global texts.

METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Throughout the study I collected various data to document and analyze student progress in reading global literature. To begin the study, students took a survey to indicate their incoming reading attitudes and habits. Through several inquiry-based lessons, students delved into the cultural aspects of their chosen memoirs. They tracked their reading progress using a weekly reading and reflection log (appendix F). Reading conferences were also implemented as a way to verbally defend what students did or did not understand whilst reading the text. Finally, students took a survey at the end of the first unit to describe their reading attitudes and habits as they related to the texts for the course. All of these data

required meaningful reflection and analysis. I engaged in the processes of reflecting and analyzing throughout the study in the following ways.

Participant Observations

An important part of the data collection process is making the time to stop and reflect on the data at various intervals in the process. I used my field log as a way to capture every day events in the classroom. After each lesson, I would write a short entry in the field log, explaining what I saw and heard during the day's lesson. I would then return to the log several days later to analyze the lesson in further detail. This analysis led to several memoranda in which I commented on the students' reactions to the lesson, changes that would need to be made to future lessons, and other such ideas.

Mid- Study Reflection

At the midway point of the study, I stopped to reflect on the progress of the study. This process allowed me to take note of what had already been accomplished and what changes needed to be made to make the remainder of the study successful. I was able to see gaps in specific types of data that had been collected and refocus my goals. For example, I realized that I had not conducted enough of the inquiry activities that I had planned to be the bulk of my

interventions. I also noticed a lack of student feedback elicited throughout the processes.

Analytic Memorandums

Whilst conducting my study, I read several texts written by learning theorists. These texts allowed me to further analyze my study in relation to known learning theories. I wrote analytic memoranda for each of these readings, which lead to realizations about the effective and ineffective components of my study. I also participated in figurative language analysis where I had an opportunity to analyze student and teacher language during the study.

My Study and Dewey

Before and during my study, one difficulty I found was being able to identify which data was important and which was not. I wanted so badly to focus in on one specific learning outcome. Dewey helped me understand that learning cannot always be pinpointed to a specific experience and/or outcome. He claimed, “Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a student learns only the particular thing that he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or the lesson in geography or history that is learned” (Dewey, 1938, p. 48). This particular sentiment helped me realize that all

data collected in the process might be meaningful in my final analysis of the study.

My Study and Freire

As a way to teach students to be active, independent learners, I required them to generate questions throughout the reading of their global texts. Freire (1970) believed that the practice of questioning is vital to human growth stating, “For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). In other words the creation of knowledge can exist as students question the world both individually and collaboratively. Though I had already found questioning to be an important component of engaging readers in unfamiliar texts, Freire made me reconsider which types of questions students should be asking as well as their need to sometimes ask them in a collaborative, rather than independent fashion.

My Study and Delpit

In reading Lisa Delpit’s text, “*Multiplication is for White People*”: *Raising Expectations for Other People’s Children*, I found that the resistance to reading and critical thinking is not uncommon in the world of teaching and

learning. Delpit (2012) states, “There are times when students, overexposed to worksheets and minimal thinking, resist being pushed to think. It is as if they have reached an agreement with their teachers- don’t ask for much of me and I won’t make any problems for you...Although they resist they often want, need, and expect the teacher to push them beyond their comfort zone, and to continue pushing despite their resistance” (p. 124). Delpit reminded me that most students are content to remain passive learners rather than take on the responsibility that comes with choices. She also remarks, however, that even in students appear to want this cycle to continue, they are in need of the teacher to push them to new ways of thinking. Delpit’s ideas reaffirm the inquiry activities that I had students complete during their reading of global texts.

Figurative Language Analysis

Near the completion of my study, I was required to analyze language used throughout the study. I returned to my field log, which had a detailed record of the daily happenings in the classroom as well as some of my previous memorandums. In reviewing the language used by students throughout the study, I was able to better understand their attitudes when approaching and completing specific activities. For example, in the virtual reality activity, one student remarked on those pieces of information that he did not know as “holes.” This negative term helped me realize that many students consider lack of knowledge to be a problem

rather than an opportunity. I was also given a chance to look at my use of language, particularly the language I used when reflecting on a day's lesson. I was better able to see how my use of language reflected my attitude towards the students and their learning.

Coding and Binning

Throughout my study, I coded data as it became available. All of my data was collected via my field log, which was a Google document. I used the comment feature of the Google document to add terms/phrases to the data, as suggested by Saldana (2009). These terms/phrases were developed based on the outcomes that I wished to see. For example, I commented on student engagement, goal completion, understanding, questioning, etc. At the conclusion of the study, I revisited my codes, adding new codes when needed. I then created bins based on the codes used throughout the field log. The five bins were labeled as follows: Inquiry-Based Learning, Motivation and Engagement, Student Self-Monitoring, Reading Strategies, and Lack of Engagement and Comprehension. Beneath each of these bins, I listed those codes that were related. For example, beneath Reading Strategies, the terms pre-reading, evaluating, inferencing, connecting, visualizing, etc. were listed. Completing these two processes allowed me to visually organize my collected data and better identify those components which were most crucial to my study.

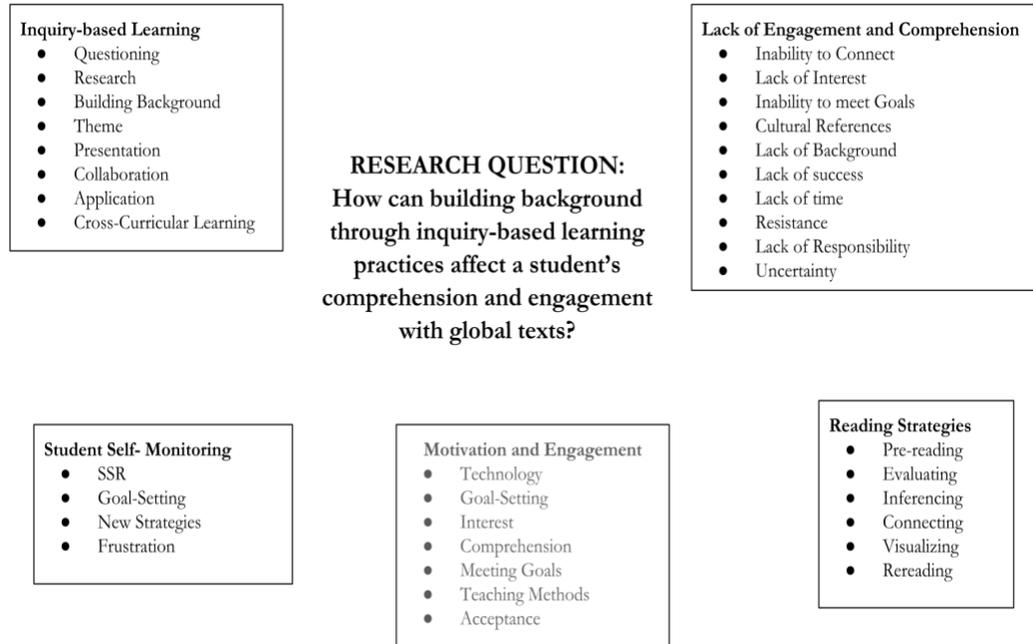


Figure 21. Binning Graphic Organizer

Themes

The coding and binning processes further led me to develop thematic statements, or big ideas, from my study's findings. Using each bin, I created a statement indicating what I had learned about that particular component of the study. These findings will be further discussed in the "Findings" section.

FINDINGS

The purpose of my study was to explore the effects of inquiry-based learning activities on student comprehension and engagement of global literature. While my study initially began as a means to find how to increase student comprehension, I recalled what Dewey (1938) said:

“Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a student learns only the particular thing that he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes, may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or the lesson in geography or history that is learned.” (p. 48)

That being realized, I expanded my data collection to include evidence of both understanding and engagement. The collected data allowed me to analyze correlations between inquiry activities, self-monitoring behaviors, comprehension, engagement, and motivation while reading global literature. Below are the theme statements that were developed as a result of the coding and binning procedure described in the previous section.

Engagement and Motivation

Student engagement and motivation are highest when reading a text which is interesting and comprehensible.

To start, the Start of Year Reading Survey (appendix D) asked students to remark on their reading attitudes and habits. At first glance, the class appeared to be mostly non-readers. In fact, many students indicated that they only read when there was a book they were really interested in reading. These results align to what Huckin (1997) emphasizes when he claims that assigned reading should pertain to student interest if comprehension is expected to occur.

In the same survey, students were asked to identify their feelings towards reading global literature. In short, the questions provided me with a baseline of student attitudes towards such readings. I noticed that the students mostly responded “neutral” when being asked if they could understand and enjoy texts from a culture other than their own. In fact the neutral responses made up about half of all responses. 10% of the students responded that they either “strongly dislike” or “dislike” the global focus of the course. This led me to believe that the students, in general, did not have strong feelings regarding this question, or that they answered safely to avoid judgment.

At the end of the unit, students were asked to complete the End-of-Unit Reading Survey (appendix L), where they again responded to their feelings about the global focus of the course. The data suggest that the number of students who marked either “strongly dislike” or “dislike” decreased from 25% to 10%. This 15% decrease in the number of students can be interpreted as an overall decrease in resistance to reading global literature. In addition, the number of students

marking “love” or “like” when asked the same question increased from 28% to 34%, indicating that the number of students who enjoy reading global literature increased.

These data, in and of themselves, do not prove that the activities in this unit are solely responsible for the positive change in student opinion. It should, however, be accounted that the student response to the helpfulness and enjoyment of the inquiry activities was mostly positive, with some mixed responses, and very few negative responses. This led me to believe that the interest in the activities, as well as the increase in comprehension created by those same activities, helped to increase overall engagement with the memoirs. I surmise that this engagement, in turn, affected the students’ motivation to complete the memoirs.

Engagement and motivation were further analyzed through the students’ completion of their Reading Logs and Reflections (appendix F). In general, students who met their weekly reading goals were those that also verbally claimed to be genuinely interested in the book. Those students noted very few comprehension-based frustrations during their independent reading of the memoirs. Likewise, those students who struggled to enjoy and/or understand their memoirs were more likely to fall short of their weekly reading goals. This would prove that there is, as Cantrell, Pennington, Rintamaa, Osborne, Parker, & Rudd (2017) a connection between comprehension and engagement. Though the outcomes varied, all of the students selected a memoir based on their personal

interests. This fact helped generate energy at the start of the unit, but this energy decreased for some when presented with comprehension difficulties.

Reading Strategies

Students rely initially on connecting and visualizing as key reading strategies, but, when taught to use additional strategies such as questioning and building background, the students may find increased success in comprehending challenging multicultural texts.

Before beginning any kind of instruction, I wanted to know which strategies students relied on most heavily. Based on the survey results, I concluded that connecting, visualizing, summarizing, and predicting were those strategies on which students most depended when reading. These same students were most concerned about the inability to connect to the characters. In order for students to better comprehend global literature, they needed to increase their use of other strategies not mentioned such as: building context, questioning, interpreting, and evaluating. These strategies would help aid in the comprehension of the literature when students were unable to utilize their other strategies.

Through reading conferences, students demonstrated that there were able to utilize the new reading strategies to make better sense of the text. In fact, several commented on their increased inclination to use questioning and building background independently as an effect of having utilized those skills in class

activities. As Ajideh (2003) found, the students realized that in improving their schema prior to and during reading, their comprehension would likewise improve. The reading logs completed by the students provided further evidence that they were, indeed, considering which information they needed to know in order to better comprehend the text. While this thinking was not always culturally, historically, or socially based, as was desired, the questions proved students were pausing to reflect on their lack of understanding.

In the final survey, the students acknowledged that building background was most important to their understanding of global literature. This use of this strategy, which was not a strategy utilized by the majority of the students at the start of unit, proved that the students were capable of utilizing new strategies to help improve their comprehension of global texts. It appears that the students learned what Al Rasheed (2016) acknowledged as a connection between our existing knowledge and how it may impact our understanding of a text.

This is not to say that all students found these new strategies to be the most helpful in comprehending and engaging with the literature. In the final survey, several commented on the frustration they felt when they were unable to relate to the characters in the text. This frustration was also apparent in these students' reading logs/reflections and reading conferences. While they tried the new strategies, they preferred to rely on those strategies with which they were most comfortable. Their preferences, however, are not seen as a negative outcome

to the study. Regardless of their resistance it is clear that the students were capable of learning and employing new strategies when required.

Inquiry-Based Learning Strategies

With practice, students are capable of asking researchable questions, finding answers through reliable sources, and applying their new knowledge to the text at hand to increase comprehension.

In asking students to inquire into their reading, I meant to increase engagement and comprehension. My intention was, as for “the students— no longer docile listeners—[to be] critical co-investigators in dialogue with the teacher” (Freire, 1970, p. 80-1). The investigation process began with posing questions related to the students’ texts. At the start of the unit, there was some confusion as to which types of questions students should ask when reading culturally-different texts. Many of the students attempted to ask prediction-type questions such as “I wonder what happens to Shin at the end of the book?” With some further instruction, students became more likely to ask those questions which were conducive to inquiry. These questions included those that were cultural, social, or historical in nature.

During the Beginning Background Inquiry (appendix I), the students were asked to pose three questions prior to reading a global memoir. With assistance, all of the students were able to pose three inquiry-based questions. A few of the

students even created tiered questions, meaning that their second question elaborated on their first and so on. These types of questions showed genuine engagement on the part of the student. Rather than asking the three most simplistic questions, these students typically asked more complex questions that required sub-questions to fully understand the idea.

Unfortunately, the majority of the students asked those questions which were more simplistic and answered the question in a single phrase. For example, one student asked, “Where is Yemen?” The response was, “Near Africa.” Rather than to continue to research and validate the answer to the above question, the student was content to grab the featured Google response. This kind of effort was common amongst the students in this first inquiry-based activity, but the effort seemed to improve as we moved through the unit.

As noted earlier, the students’ Reading and Reflection Logs (appendix F) provided them space to pose questions each week. These questions began as those that were plot-based, but once reading conferences occurred, there was an obvious shift towards more inquiry-based questions. I could begin to see that the questioning was engaging the students “especially in relation to difficult or uninteresting material” (Tovani, 2000, p. 85). Many of the students even noted that they had begun to research the answers to these questions during their independent reading. The application of these inquiry methods outside of the

classroom may indicate that the students found the process of posing, researching, and applying a meaningful strategy to help make sense of the text.

In a subsequent activity, students were asked to research an unfamiliar, culturally-significant term in the Vocabulary Inquiry (appendix K) by posing questions to further understand the term. Some students found difficulty finding a term that was not already defined in the text. Others found a term, but may not have dissected the term to the degree that would help improve comprehension of the text. The majority, however, seemed to comment that the activity was helpful in allowing them to make better sense of the text. The application portion of the students' responses showed a genuine ability for the students to relate their findings to the larger scope of their memoirs.

The inquiry activities provided further insight into the students' abilities to utilize these new strategies as a new means to build understanding and engagement. For example, one student remarked how posing questions and researching for information helped him make better sense of the text. This speaks to the use and effectiveness of questioning and building background, two of the strategies introduced and implemented to help increase student comprehension when reading global literature. Another student remarked on what Tovani (2000) claimed to be a connection between asking questions and driving student curiosity and engagement, when he claimed that the Setting Inquiry (appendix J) allowed

him to better visualize Bosnia when reading, leading to an increased engagement with the text.

Self-Monitoring Behaviors

Students need practice in self-monitoring their reading progress and comprehension. After some time, they are capable of identifying frustrations and eliciting strategies to solve these frustrations.

Through observation and the initial reading surveys (appendix D), it was immediately apparent that the students did not find meaning in monitoring their reading comprehension and progress. About two weeks into the reading, I did an informal check in with students to see their progress towards their weekly reading goal. Many of the students were behind in completing the goal. Several were visibly annoyed at the prospect of tracking page numbers each week. Even more had left the “frustration level” and “explanation of frustration level” sections of the Reading and Reflection Log blank (appendix F).

Since the students’ progress and reflections were to be key pieces of data in my study, it was essential that I instill the importance of self-monitoring during the reading process. Furthermore, I wanted the students to become “owners of their own learning, [so that] all the other strategies f[e]ll into place” (William and Leahy, 2015, p. 169). With prodding, during the SSR portion of the class and reading conferences, students began to fill their logs in more completely. The

majority of students were able to acknowledge when they were frustrated during in the reading, but few pinpointed specific, textual sources of their frustration. For many, the greatest frustration was lack of time. In fact, this was often the central discussion point in reading conferences- how would we find the time to read?

Over time, students became more accustomed to completing the Reading and Reflection Log (appendix F) weekly. They also created more specific reading schedules to accomplish their weekly reading goals. A fair number of students met their goals, reading their texts by their suggested deadline. For many, however, their accomplishment was made to fulfill a school requirement. That is not to say that the students did not enjoy their memoirs. Several students exceeded their weekly pace, completing their books ahead of their scheduled deadline. These students were, mostly, those who came to the class with a desire to read.

Lack of Engagement and Reading Comprehension

Some students may remain resistant to global literature, resisting reading in general, or encountering continued comprehension struggles.

Despite my best efforts, it is clear that some students did not respond positively to my study and its interventions. This population of students of is considerably smaller than those who responded neutrally or positively. Still, it is worth discussing the negative cases.

In terms of completing reading, there are several students who did not finish their memoirs over the course of ten weeks. Many of these students who did not finish their books were scheduled to do so within the first five weeks. This means that in nearly double the amount of time, they were still unsuccessful in completing their goal. For some, the lack of interest in reading, in general, was a factor. For others, the lack of reading literature with which they could not connect was a factor. In some cases, a general lack of time to complete reading with the various other commitments, such as jobs, clubs, and sports, was a contributing factor. One student did not complete a Reading and Reflection Log (appendix F) throughout the entirety of the unit, so there was no information here from which I could draw conclusions.

During SSR, there was a noticeable number of students resistant to reading for the allotted ten minutes in class. These students would gaze at the wall, attempt to communicate with other students, or stare at the book without turning any pages. When these students were questioned about their lack of reading, they responded that they just didn't like to read, or that they didn't like the book they had chosen. In some cases, I allowed students to drop a book in which interest had been lost as an attempt to re-engage those readers. While this was successful in some cases, in others, the students remained resistant to completing the reading.

While the inquiry activities mostly garnered support from the students, several found them to be unhelpful or boring. In the Final Survey (appendix L),

some students commented on the Setting Inquiry (appendix J), for example, as one that was fun, but not particularly helpful in providing further comprehension of their memoirs. Others found that the Beginning Background Inquiry (appendix I) was most helpful in providing context for the reading, but the least fun to complete. In observing student behavior during these activities, there were several students who were not engaged during the process and/or completed as little of the process as possible to earn credit. I believe this speaks to what Lisa Delpit (2012) wrote when she said, ““There are times when students, overexposed to worksheets and minimal thinking, resist being pushed to think. It is as if they have reached an agreement with their teachers— don’t ask for much of me and I won’t make any problems for you...Although they resist they often want, need, and expect the teacher to push them beyond their comfort zone, and to continue pushing despite their resistance” (p. 124). I choose to believe that the negative reactions to the global readings and associated activities are residual effects from years of such “agreement.”

NEXT STEPS

At the end of my data collection period, I decided to continue implementing opportunities for students to stop, question, research, and apply findings to their global texts. I still found, however, that even with the continued

interventions, students tended to struggle more with the texts for the Literary Analysis unit than the Memoir Unit. This is a finding that I want to discuss further with my Professional Learning Community in the months to come. We will, perhaps, continue to search for more accessible titles for this second unit, or develop more inquiry activities to help alleviate comprehension barriers. Another possible solution, as presented by my thesis committee, is to focus on a whole class text in this particularly challenging unit. All of these options will be considered as I move forward.

In thinking ahead for next year, I would also like to be more consistent in conducting reading conferences. The reading conferences were, perhaps, my most valuable source of information, yet I did not always completed them as consistently as I'd hoped. Though it was my intention to complete two of these every class, there were some classes in which I had to cancel both, or one conference. This particular activity also seemed detached from the other learning activities that were occurring in the classroom. The students would often question the purpose of the reading conferences. Rather than utilizing the strategy throughout their reading, they would simply pull a page, pick a strategy, and use it for their conference.

I would like to make these conversations more meaningful and engaging. Some ways in which I may be able to do so include using the students' frustration levels as the deciding factor as to which students get to conference on which days.

Too often, I would review a student's reading and reflection log several weeks after he or she had noted a high level of frustration. Using the frustration level to dictate which students get priority for the day's conferences, would allow me to catch frustrations earlier, hopefully leading to an increased level of understanding and engagement. Another possible solution, is to train students to conduct student-to-student reading conferences. In this model, students would help one another identify and combat frustrations as they arise in the text. This buddy-system would allow the students more access to help than just one teacher. This will be one of my focuses as I revise my curriculum this summer.

I would also like to improve the students' quality and quantity of reflection during the reading process. Though there was a spot for the students to reflect on their frustration level for the week, many did not complete it in detail. Perhaps tying together the reflection process and the inquiry process by way of requiring students to inquire into the frustrations in their logs, specifically, I can make these learning activities appear more connected and meaningful. In turn, this may increase student buy in.

Since there were certain inquiries that students felt were more helpful than others, I would like to implement more of what they noted as helpful and less of what they noted as unhelpful. For example, the vocabulary inquiry seemed to be the activity that students noted as most unhelpful, while the setting inquiry seemed to be the activity that students noted as most engaging. I believe that

students found the latter to be so engaging due to the technological component of the activity. Next year, I would like to either a) incorporate more opportunities to use the Google Cardboard as a part of the inquiry activities or b) incorporate other technology-based lessons to increase student engagement.

In addition to increasing student engagement, I would also love to increase student collaboration. Near the end of my study, I was reminded that a key component to the inquiry process is that students have an opportunity to collaborate and/or share their findings once they've researched. This is an opportunity that I seldom allowed, mostly due to time constraints. A fellow colleague of mine hosted an inquiry-fair in her Advanced Placement classes this year. I would like to "steal" this idea, allowing my students to select their findings from one of their inquiries, create a visual representation of those findings, and share them with their peers. In adding this collaborative aspect to the inquiry process, students may find increased motivation to complete the inquiries. They would also be exposed to others' ideas, possibly leading them to discover new ways to research and present their findings.

In addition to making these changes to the Narrative and Literary Analysis Units, I would also like to consider ways in which these methods and activities can be incorporated throughout the remaining two units —Synthesis and Argument. In spreading inquiry and self-monitoring throughout the entirety of

year, I will give students double the amount of opportunities to understand and engage with their texts.

I am thankful to have had the opportunity to develop a solution to several of the barriers affecting student comprehension and engagement of global literature. That being said, I know that no single solution will work with every student in every class. Moving forward, I hope to continue to be a reflective teacher— the kind of teacher who sees a problem and is unafraid to run towards it.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: HSIRB Approval Letter

Dear Amanda,

Thank you for submitting your revisions and your consent form. You have addressed all of the concerns listed in your conditional approval. The HSIRB has completed its final review of your proposal and is granting approval of this proposal.

Please note that if you intend on venturing into topics other than the ones indicated in your proposal, you must inform the HSIRB about what those topics will be. Should any other aspect of your research change or extend past one year of the date of this email notification, you will need to file those changes or extensions with the HSIRB and receive approval of the changes before implementation. If you need a hard copy letter indicating your approval status for record keeping purposes, please let me know. One last step. We need to collect your electronic signature(s). If (each of) you could respond to this email with your own name and the project title in the subject line, that will serve as your **electronic signatures**. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Good luck with your research!

Take care,
Dr. DesJardin

Appendix B: Principal Consent Letter

To Whom it May Concern:

I am currently pursuing my M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The classes associated with this degree require me to inquire into my own teaching practices and employ research-based actions to improve learning outcomes of my students. In the course that I am currently taking, Education 702: Reflective Practice Seminar, I will conduct an action research project in my 11th grade ELA classroom during the Narrative Unit. The research question I will be studying is: How can I increase student engagement and comprehension while reading in global literature through various reading workshop approaches including empathy building activities, reading strategy mini lessons, written self-reflection, and student-led reading conferences?

The goal of my action research project, which will take place from approximately September 11, 2017 to December 22, 2017, is to increase reading comprehension and engagement throughout the Narrative unit, ultimately helping students become more comfortable with independently approaching global literature. To do this, I will assess each student's areas for growth in individualized reading conferences, provide structured mini lessons focused on reading strategies, and monitor and assess student growth based on achievable, self-set goals. For example, students will be responsible for setting and updating reading goals throughout the unit. Mini lessons based on reading strategies will be conducted at least once per week to provide students with the necessary tools to delve into unfamiliar texts. Assessment of these skills will take place during one-on-one reading conferences and through various written responses.

I suspect that this approach will create several positive changes in student reading comprehension. Since comprehension is one of the key factors to enjoyment of literature, it can be expected that overall engagement will increase in congruence with comprehension. Both comprehension and engagement are key factors that will allow students to be more willing and able to read the challenging, global texts offered as a part of the English III course.

Throughout the unit, student self-reflections, reading conference transcripts, student reading responses, student surveys and interviews, and other observational teacher notes will be used to assess the success of these actions. To maintain student anonymity throughout the collection process, pseudonyms will be used. All electronic notes will be stored on my laptop, which is password protected.

Please note that every student will be expected to participate in the learning activities associated with the Narrative Unit. In signing this form, parents will simply allow me to collect and analyze the above mentioned items (self-reflections, observational notes, etc.). Once consent is given, the student may choose to withdraw from inclusion in the data collection at any time without penalty. Notice of withdrawal can be presented in either verbal or written form. If a parent does not wish for his/her student's data to be included in the study report, he/she may deny consent. This does not exclude the student from the responsibility of completing classroom activities throughout the unit, but it will prohibit me from reporting the students' data as a part of my study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the nature of this assignment, you may contact me at amanda.deluca@hcrhs.org. Contact may also be made with my Moravian College professor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, by phone at 610-861-1482 or by email at shoshj@moravian.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Amanda DeLuca

Please check off, sign, and return.

_____ I give Amanda DeLuca permission to conduct an action research project with her 9th grade ELA students to meet the requirements of her graduate course, Education 506.

_____ I do **not** give Amanda DeLuca permission to conduct an action research project with her 9th grade ELA students to meet the requirements of her graduate course, Education 506.

Supervisor Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C: Parent Consent and Student Assent Form

Dear Parents/Guardians and Student,

I am currently pursuing my M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction at Moravian College. The classes associated with this degree require me to think about my own teaching practices and use research-based actions to improve the learning outcomes of my students. In the course that I am currently taking, Education 702: Reflective Practice Seminar, I will conduct an action research project in my English III classes throughout the Narrative Unit and the Literary Analysis Unit. The research question I will be studying is: How can building background through inquiry-based learning affect a student's engagement with global literature?

The goal of my action research project, which will take place from approximately September 11, 2017 to December 22, 2017, is to increase reading comprehension and engagement. In previous years, I have noticed that students often struggle in understanding and enjoying the texts in our English III curriculum. They find the unfamiliar settings, cultures, and events to be a barrier to their comprehension and enjoyment while reading. To help fix this, we will take an inquiry approach in which students will learn to ask questions while reading, research answers, and apply these meanings to the text. They will also learn to work independently and collaboratively to define unknown references and better understand historical, social, and political contexts. I will meet with students frequently throughout these processes to help assist them in these tasks. My hope is that the strategies learned in this unit will help students become more comfortable in reading global literature independently, making them more willing and able to read the challenging, global texts offered as a part of the English III course.

Throughout the unit, I will gather student self-reflections, reading conference transcripts, student reading responses, student surveys and interviews, and other observational teacher notes, which I will use to assess the success of these actions. Student identities will only be known by me. In conversations and written reflections, the students will be represented by pseudonyms. Any data collected throughout the study will be stored electronically on my password-protected Google Drive account to further protect the privacy of students.

The actions described above are those that would normally occur in the classroom and, as such, students will be expected to participate in all activities associated with the Narrative Unit. I am asking that permission be granted to allow me to collect data in the forms mentioned above throughout the process. In signing this form, you are allowing me to collect and analyze said data. Please again note that

your student will remain anonymous throughout the process. If you grant permission, but later decide that you would like to withdraw from the study, you may absolutely do so without penalty. Notice of withdrawal can be presented in either verbal or written form. If you do not wish for your personal data to be collected and included in the study, you may also deny consent without penalty.

There are no foreseen risks to participating in this study, but if you have any questions or concerns regarding the nature of this assignment, you may contact me at amanda.deluca@hcrhs.org. Contact may also be made with my Moravian College professor, Dr. Joseph Shosh, by phone at 610-861-1482 or by email at shoshj@moravian.edu.

Thank you for your consideration,
Amanda DeLuca

Please check off, sign, and return.

_____ I give Amanda DeLuca permission to gather my (student's) work throughout the Narrative Unit to be used as a part of her written action research study. I am aware that this data will remain anonymous.

_____ I do **not** give Amanda DeLuca permission to gather my (student's) work throughout the Narrative Unit to be used as a part of her written action research study. I am aware that this does not exempt me (him/her) from the learning activities of the unit.

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Student Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix D: Start of Year Reading Survey

Start of the Year Reading Survey

Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible. BE HONEST, but not overly negative. The more information that you provide, the better prepared I will be to help you make choices about your independent reading and progress towards goals.

1. Use the scale below to show how much you enjoy/do not enjoy reading?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Enjoy	Love

2. Explain the rating above. Why do you like/dislike reading?

3. Which specific genres are you typically most interested in reading?

4. Which specific titles have you enjoyed reading?

5. What concerns do you have about reading in general? You might talk about some specifics that you have struggled with in the past. You might name something like, finding the main idea, getting into the “zone,” finishing a book, imagining the setting, etc.

6. Do you have strategies/skills that work for you as a reader? Think about predicting, connecting, summarizing, etc. Which do you use most often?

7. The readings for this course are primarily non-American. We read various titles from cultures that may be unfamiliar to you. Please use the scale below to show how you feel about the global focus of this course.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Enjoy	Love

8. Do you think you will be able to enjoy and understand books from a culture other than your own? Why or why not?

9. What concerns do you have about reading cultural texts. You might mention things like: connecting to the characters, understanding cultural events/references, finding genres that interest you, pronouncing names, etc.

10. How important do you think building background is when reading global literature? Feel free to explain.

Appendix E: Reading Conference Requirements and Rubric

English III Reading Conferences

Overview: Every three or so weeks, we will have a one on one conversation regarding your independent reading. These conferences help you learn to verbalize your understanding and help me find ways to better meet your needs. Each time we meet, you should be prepared to discuss:

1. Progress towards goals, explaining what steps you have taken and how those steps have improved your work as well as how you can continue to improve. This is also a good time to talk about what has frustrated you this week and why.
2. Evidence of mastery of ONE focus reading strategy. You can discuss the strategies in any order you choose, but you **MUST have textual evidence** to show during the conference.

Talking points may include:

- One goal that I have worked towards since our last meeting is....
- I have doneto progress towards that goal
- I am still having trouble/still need to improve on
- An area of frustration that I had this week was....
- The reading strategy that I chose to focus on for this meeting is....
- It means to me that....
- Here is an example of a passage where I used the strategy. (Model thinking aloud)

Strategy	Notes <i>You can use this area to write down page numbers/thoughts for your upcoming conference as you read ☺</i>	Date
Building Context Before and during the reading, a good reader pulls forth what he/she knows about the text: “Do I know this author? What do I know about the time period/culture/social conditions? What about the events?		
Summarizing Summarizing means reducing the text down to the fewest possible words while keeping the essential meaning. What happened in a nutshell?		

<p>Questioning Good readers ask questions the whole time they're reading. The better they are at coming up with questions, the better they read. "Why did the author do that? What are the characters doing? What does that word mean?"</p>		
<p>Visualizing A reader makes a movie in the mind, literally seeing the scene inside the head. What do you see as you read? Why?</p>		
<p>Interpreting Good readers read between the lines. They peer behind the text to see more than what's literally there. An interpreter says: "I wonder if this author believes in _____. Maybe the character's motives are _____. The big picture might be _____."</p>		
<p>Evaluating Readers evaluate what they read—comparing the values they interpret in the text to their own belief systems. Evaluators read between the lines to find out the themes; then they relate these themes to their own values. An evaluator is metacognitive: thinking about oneself as a thinker and learner.</p>		

English III Reading Conference Rubric

Each conference will be worth 9 speaking and listening points (3 points per category).

Standard	Advanced Proficient (3)	Proficient (2)	Developing (1)
<p>SL.11-12.1. A. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. Did you bring it?</p>	<p>Comes with multiple passages to prove mastery of reading strategy. Has notes/ obvious familiarity with goals, achievements, and areas for growth.</p>	<p>Prepared with a single passage. Has notes/some familiarity with goals, achievements, and areas for growth.</p>	<p>Comes to discussion without passages and/or notes. Is not prepared to discuss goals, achievements, and areas for growth or does so in a way that lacks concrete detail.</p>
<p>SL.11-12.1.C Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives. Did you use it?</p>	<p>When challenged or questioned, provides evidence to support or further explain ideas.</p>	<p>Responds to questions with minimal evidence or explanation.</p>	<p>Minimally responds to questions with no evidence or explanation.</p>
<p>SLSA.SL4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks. Did you present it logically?</p>	<p>Presents reading strategy and goal information in a logical way that is easy for the listener to follow. Highlights both strengths and limitations, connecting to learning style and habits outside the classroom.</p>	<p>Presents reading strategy and goal information in a way that the listener can follow. Clearly explains strengths and limitations of skills, connecting to learning style and habits within the class.</p>	<p>Presents reading strategy and goal information but lacks clarity and precision. The supporting information and findings lack connection. Only speaks to strengths or limitations.</p>



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Appendix F: Reading and Reflection Log

Step One:

Calculate your hourly reading rate:

I read pages in 10 minutes. This means that I will read (multiply # in first space by 6) pages in one hour. My weekly goal of 2 hours would mean that I will read pages per week (double the number in the second blank).

Step Two:

Set three goals for yourself as a reader. Goals may begin with stems such as...

- I will read _____ books by _____.
- I will read at least _____ books of _____ genre.
- I will read at least one of _____ (author's name) books.
- I will develop an at home reading habit by _____.
- I will increase my number of pages read per hour from _____ to _____.
- I will learn and utilize reading strategies like _____/to_____.
- Or any other goal you'd like to set :)

Goal #1	
Goal #2	
Goal #3	

Step Three:

Complete the chart below for the first book that you will read.

Book Title:	
Total # of Pages in the Book:	
Reading Rate (use calculation above):	
Estimated # of Weeks to Complete: If a book has 200 pages and my weekly reading rate is 50 pages, my estimated weeks to complete would be 4.	
Date Starting:	
Date Ending:	

Step Four:

Complete the weekly log indicating # of pages read as well as frustrations/strategy use.

Week Date the weeks.	Which pages did you read? ex. 30-45.	Did you meet your weekly reading goal? Y/N	Frustration Level 0 (none)- 5(beyond annoyed).	Why? Explain your level. What, in particular, frustrated you this week? Was it lack of time, lack of comprehension, or something else? You can also use this space to note anything else that you'd like to let me know :)	Questions What are some cultural, historical, social, etc. questions that you had while reading this week? Be sure to include page numbers for reference.

Appendix G: Why Do we Read Global Literature Activity

Why Do we Read Global Literature?

Step 1: Revisit your response from your reading survey as a pair. How do you feel about reading Global Literature? Do you see a purpose? If so, what is the purpose? If not, why do you feel that way? Be HONEST, but RESPECTFUL.

Step 2: SKIM [this article](#). You'll want to read more thoroughly the section titled "On Literary Criticism". Answer the following questions:

1. What are the reasons why we read literature?
2. Which of these reasons do you feel to be the most important/relevant to our class? Why?
3. What warnings does the writer offer in terms of analysis?

Step 3: Watch the [Amazon Commercial](#). You've probably seen it before, but look again. What do you see? What's happening?

Step 4: To which of the reasons for reading literature might this video connect? How?

Step 5: What is a potential message that you can take away? Think deeper than the intent of advertisers i.e. "everyone should buy Amazon Prime."

Step 6: Write a few sentences here to reflect on this process. What connections did you make? What did you learn? What are your takeaways? Think in terms of reading in general, but also in terms of reading books outside of your own culture.

Appendix H: Academic Article from “Why do We Read Global Literature?” Activity

Why Do We Read Literature?

First, Literature Defined:

- "The creation of literature is a uniquely human activity, born of man's timeless desire to understand, express, and finally share experiences."
- Literature is "a concrete artifact -- a story, a poem, or a play"
- "The medium of translation, of course, is language, the written and spoken word."
- "When we speak of literature, however, we have in mind a special kind of language that differs from the ordinary discourse with which we conduct our daily affairs. The term *literature* . . . refers to language that is deliberately structured in such a way as to have identifiable artistic qualities."

1.) Reading for Vicarious Escape

- Literature can offer "exciting narratives that can be read uncritically simply because they allow us to escape the problems and responsibilities of our everyday lives and to participate, however briefly, in a world of experience that differs radically from our own."
- Examples: the spy or detective story; science fiction; historical novels
- We read for the fun of it.
- "Many works of literature, classics as well as paperback pulps, survive precisely because they succeed in temporarily detaching us from time and place and transporting us to some imaginary world that we otherwise would never know."
- "Although some people tend to regard such a motive as adolescent or even anti-intellectual, the fact remains that literature flourishes, in part at least, because of the freedom and escape it affords our imagination."
- *And for those works which do not seem like "escape," we should ask what they have that have led them to "survive" over time!*

2.) Reading to Learn

- "Literature offers the reader 'knowledge' in the form of information . . . information that at the time is all the more fascinating because it is part of the author's re-created world."

- "Literature read in this way serves as a social document, giving us insight into the laws, customs, institutions, attitudes, and values of the age in which it was written or in which it is set."
- Literature "broadens our knowledge of the world. [However,] not all of this 'knowledge' is particularly valuable; and much of it will be forgotten quickly. Some of it may, in fact, turn out to be misleading or even false, and as such must always be checked and verified against other sources."

3.) Reading to Confront Experience

- "One of the most compelling aspects of literature is its relationship to human experience. Reading is an act of engagement and participation. It is also, simultaneously, an act of clarification and discovery. Literature allows us, as perhaps no other medium can, the chance to overcome the limitations of our own subjectivity and those limitations imposed by sex, age, social and economic condition, and the times in which we live. Literary characters offer us immediate access to a wide range of human experiences we otherwise might never know. As readers we observe these characters' private as well as public lives, and become privy to their innermost thoughts, feelings, and motivations. It is the very intimacy of this access that explains why psychologists have traditionally found imaginative literature a rich source for case studies to illustrate theories of personality and behavior." [For example, the Oedipal complex!]
- "The relationship between literature and experience, however, is a reciprocal one. Just as literature allows us to participate in the experience of others, so too it has the power to shape and alter our attitudes and expectations. To know why we identify with one character and not another may tell us about the kind of person we are or aspire to be. If we are sensitive and perceptive readers, we have much to learn from these encounters, which can enrich the quality and affect the direction of our lives, though the precise effects of these encounters are impossible to predict and will vary from one reader to another. One mark of a 'great' work of literature is its ability to have an effect on the reader. In the same way, it is this affective power of fiction, drama, and poetry that helps to explain the survival of those works we regard as classics. [Works] survive as classics because they have offered generations of readers the opportunity to clarify and perhaps even modify their views of life and also because they shed life on the complexity and ambiguity of human existence, including the reader's own."

4.) Reading for Aesthetic Pleasure

- "Literature can also be read for the sheer aesthetic pleasure we take in good craftsmanship of any kind. 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever' is a phrase the poet John Keats has given us; well-ordered and well-chosen words are one of the few forms of immortality. Despite its other uses, a poem, a play, or a novel is a self-contained work of art, with a definable and describable structure and texture: it can be approached and appreciated on terms that are uniquely its own. What distinguishes literature from other forms of artistic expressions is its reliance on structure and style in language. Sensitive and experienced readers will respond to well-chosen words, though they many not be initially conscious of exactly what they are responding to, or why. When that response is a positive one, we speak of our sense of pleasure or delight, in much the same way that we respond to a painting, a piece of sculpture, or a musical composition. If we push our inquiry farther and try to analyze our response, we begin to move in the direction of literary criticism."

On Literary Criticism:

- "Rumor to the contrary, literary criticism is not an exercise in human ingenuity that professors of English engage in for its own sake. Neither is the word *criticism* to be confused with the kind of negativism and fault finding we sometimes encounter in caustic book reviews. The fact of the matter is that the more we learn about how to approach a story, poem, or play, the greater our appreciation of a truly great work becomes, and greater still the sense of pleasure and enjoyment we can derive from it. Literary criticism is nothing more, or less, than an attempt to clarify, explain, and evaluate our experience with a given literary work. Properly understood and properly employed, literary criticism allows us to raise and then answer, however tentatively, certain basic questions about an author's achievement and about the ways in which he or she achieved it. It also allows us to form some judgments about the relative merit or quality of the work as a whole."
- "Like all organized fields of academic study, the study of literature rests on at least three key assumptions that critics and readers must be willing to accept.
 - Literary criticism, first of all, presupposes that a work of literary art contains certain significant relationships and patterns of meaning that the reader-critic can recover and share. Without such

prior agreement, of course, there can be no criticism, for by definition there would be nothing worthy of communication.

- Second, literary criticism presupposes the ability of the reader-turned-critic to translate his experience of the work into intellectual terms that can be communicated to and understood by others.
- Third, literary criticism presupposes that the critic's experience of the work, once organized and articulated, will be generally compatible with the experience of other readers. This is not to imply that critics and other readers will always see eye to eye, for of course they do not and never will. It *is* to say that to be valid and valuable the critic's reading of a work must accord, at least in a general way, with what other intelligent readers over a reasonable period of time are willing to agree on and accept."

A Warning about Analysis:

- "The analytical method, it should be noted, is just one of a number of approaches taken by critics in their exploration and study of literature. It is true that by focusing our attention exclusively on the literary work we run the risk of minimizing, or ignoring altogether, many other factors that might otherwise contribute to our understanding. With the analytical method, for example, we tend to overlook
 - the author's intention in writing the work,
 - the relationship between the work and the author's life and experience,
 - or the even broader relationship between the work and the historical culture in which it was written and to which it was originally directed.
 - The analytical method also tends to ignore the vital relationship of literature to human experience in general and to the reader's own experiences in particular."

Source: Concise Companion to Literature, by James H. Pickering and Jeffrey D. Hooper, New York: Macmillan, 1981, pages 1-7.

Appendix I: Memoir Beginning Background Inquiry

Memoir Beginning Background Inquiry

Yes, I know we all hate having to do “work” before we begin reading a book. Oftentimes we just want to start reading and get it over with. I’m guilty of this, too. This can be tricky, however, with global literature. There are settings, characters, and conflicts that we just don’t have the knowledge to fully understand and, as a result, we lose interest. In an attempt to prevent this from happening, we will be completing several background inquiries to help us become more invested in our books. To start:

1. Look up a summary/overview of your book. You could also use the back of the book or the inside jacket for summary details if available. Try to answer these questions:

- Where and when does the story take place? Note: There may be more than one setting and time period in a single text.
- Who is the main character (almost always the narrator for this unit).
- What is the major conflict(s)?

2. Ask some questions. You were probably able to find the answer to one or more of the above questions. Almost always, these answers will lead you to more questions. What do you want to know about the setting(s), character(s), and conflict(s) that couldn’t be obtained through the summary. There are no WRONG questions! Feel free to ask as many as you please. You won’t be responsible for answering ALL of them :)

3. Select at least three of the above questions and find the answers. You’ll want to prioritize by selecting those that you think will be most central to your understanding of the memoir. For example, the weather conditions in Syria may not be as important to the story as the war occurring in the time period. Be sure to cite your sources!

Question	Answer	Source

Note: As you conduct your inquiry, you may find that there are new questions to be answered/ideas that you would like to explore. Feel free to jot them down here for future activities:

Appendix J: Setting Inquiry

Setting Inquiry

STEP ONE:

You should have downloaded the [Google Cardboard App](#) and the [NYTVR \(New York Times Virtual Reality\) App](#) to your smart phone prior to today's class. You will be accessing the school's guest wifi so be sure to have connected your phone. Remember your earbuds.

STEP TWO:

Take 10 minutes to browse the [available videos](#) on the NYTVR app. You are looking for something that relates to your book. Here are some examples of connections that you may make:

- a. Geographic Location→ If you get lucky, you'll find a video that takes place in the same area as that of your text. It may be the same city, country, or general region.
- b. Social norms → You can think about some of the social norms demonstrated in your text. For many of you, this may include treatment of women, views of education, etc.
- c. Theme→ You may notice that a video has a similar theme as your text whether it be war, religion, slavery, etc.

These are just some examples of connections. Feel free to make a connection of your own!

Write your video title here:

Why did you select this video? How might it connect/relate to your memoir?

STEP THREE:

Place your phone in the cardboard, plug in your headphones, and immerse yourself in the sounds, sights, and feelings. You may want to view the video more than once to notice details. While watching you'll want to think about:

1. What do I see?
2. What do I hear?
3. What do I feel?

Write about the experience objectively (see/hear). What sights and sounds stood out?

Write about the experience subjectively (inferences/feelings). What emotions or feelings does the video evoke?

STEP FOUR:

Find a classmate(s) to discuss your finding. If possible, find someone who viewed:

- a. The same video
- b. A video from a similar geographic location
- c. A video with a similar social norms/ideologies
- d. A video with a similar theme

STEP FIVE:

Answer the following closing questions.

Research has shown that virtual reality experiences can increase empathy. Explain if you think this experience has increased/decreased/not impacted your empathy.

What new questions (historical, cultural, religious, geographical, etc.) does this experience raise about your memoir that you would still like to research? Try for at least three.

Appendix K: Vocabulary Inquiry

Vocabulary & Style/Language Inquiry

Purpose: Good readers identify problems that impede comprehension. As we continue to read global literature, you will come across references that may not make sense to you. It is important that you learn how to identify and explore these references. Good writers look for fresh/engaging lines as they read and begin to develop their own writing by mimicking such lines.

Directions:

1. Mark in GREEN references that would be unclear to a person having limited knowledge of Native American/American culture, history, etc.
2. Mark in BLUE lines that are fresh/engaging for readers. Think back to our discussion of style/language.

My Indian Education

By Sherman Alexie

First Grade

My hair was too short and my U.S. Government glasses were horn-rimmed, ugly, and all that first winter in school, the other Indian boys chased me from one corner of the playground to the other. They pushed me down, buried me in the snow until I couldn't breathe, thought I'd never breathe again.

They stole my glasses and threw them over my head, around my outstretched hands, just beyond my reach, until someone tripped me and sent me falling again, face down in the snow.

I was always falling down; my Indian name was Junior Falls Down. Sometimes it was Bloody Nose or Steal-His-Lunch. Once it was Cries-Like-a-White-Boy, even though none of us had seen a white boy cry.

Then it was Friday morning recess and Frenchy SiJohn threw snowballs at me while the rest of the Indian boys tortured some other top-yogh-yaught kid, another weakling. But Frenchy was confident enough to torment me all by himself, and most days, I would have let him.

But the little warrior in me roared to life that day and knocked Frenchy to the ground, held his head against the snow, and punched him so hard that my knuckles and the snow made symmetrical bruises on his face. He almost looked like he was wearing war paint.

But he wasn't the warrior. I was. And I chanted *It's a good day to die, it's a good day to die*, all the way down to the principal's office.

Second Grade

Betty Towle, missionary teacher, redheaded and so ugly that no one ever had a puppy crush on her, made me stay in for recess fourteen days straight.

“Tell me you’re sorry,” she said.

“Sorry for what?” I asked.

“Everything,” she said and made me stand straight for fifteen minutes, eagle-armed with books in each hand. One was a math book; the other was English. But all I learned was that gravity can be painful.

For Halloween, I drew a picture of her riding a broom with a scrawny cat on the back. She said that her God would never forgive me for that.

Once, she gave the class a spelling test but set me aside and gave me a test designed for junior high students. When I spelled all the words right, she crumpled up the paper and made me eat it.

“You’ll learn respect,” she said.

She sent a letter home with me that told my parents either cut my braids or keep me home from class. My parents came in the next day and dragged their braids across Betty Towle’s desk.

“Indian, indians, indians.” She said it without capitalization. She called me “indian, indian, indian.”

And I said, *Yes I am, I am Indian. Indian, I am.*

Third Grade

My traditional Native American art career began and ended with my very first portrait: *Stick Indian Taking a Piss in My Backyard*.

As I circulated the original print around the classroom, Mrs. Schluter intercepted and confiscated my art.

Censorship, I might cry now. *Freedom of expression*, I would write in the editorials to the tribal newspaper.

In the third grade, though, I stood alone in the corner, faced the wall, and waited for the punishment to end.

I’m still waiting.

Fourth Grade

“You should be a doctor when you grow up,” Mr. Schluter told me, even though his wife, the third grade teacher, though I was crazy beyond my years. My eyes always looked like I had just hit-and-run someone.

“Guilty,” she said. “You always look guilty.”

“Why should I be a doctor?” I asked Mr. Schluter.

“So you can come back and help the tribe. So you can heal people.”

That was the year my father drank a gallon of vodka a day and the same year that my mother started two hundred quilts but never finished any. They sat in separate, dark places in our HUD house and wept savagely.

I ran home after school, heard their Indian tears, and looked in the mirror. *Doctor Victor*, I called myself, invented education, talked to my reflection. *Doctor Victor to the emergency room.*

Questions:

After reading, consider the ways in which we can create meaning when terms/phrases are unclear- especially those that are related to the culture presented within a text. In other words, what can you do when you come across unfamiliar references?

Choose one term/reference from your text that you did not understand thus far. The term/reference should be significant to the culture/history/etc. of the story. If you have been keeping notes in your reading log, this would be a good place to look for a term to use 😊

SAMPLE:

Title:	“Indian Education”
Term:	They sat in separate, dark places in our HUD house and wept savagely.

What was I able to find from a basic google search?	What are <u>at least 3</u> questions I would like to ask to further expand my knowledge of the term? What are the <u>answers</u> to these questions?	How has this improved my understanding of the text?
<p>HUD stands for U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development</p> <p>The mission is to provide affordable housing for all regardless of income</p>	<p>How much does a HUD home cost? Are they cheaper than “regular” homes? -According to the HUD website, there are homes for sale in Spokane, Washington for around \$60,000.</p> <p>How does a person qualify for a HUD home? -According to the HUD website, it sets the lower income limits at 80% and very low income limits at 50% of the median income for the county or metropolitan area in which you choose to live. Income limits vary from area to area so you may be eligible at one HA but not at another. The HA serving your community can provide you with the income levels for your area and family size, or you can also find the income limits here on the internet.</p> <p>What is the median income in Spokane Washington? -\$44,350 per household according to censusreporter.org</p>	<p>I know now that Junior’s parents would make less than a combined \$35,000 per year. The desperate financial state is most likely the reason why his parents are depressed, leading them to ignore him. It could also be his motivation for attending a better school, even if he has to walk a great distance to get there. I am thinking that Junior must not want to live the same life that others on his reservation have lived. He seems to want to better himself.</p>

Title:	
Term in Context:	

What was I able to find from a basic google search?	What questions would I like to ask to further expand my knowledge of the term?	How has this improved my understanding of the text?

Reflect: Answer the following questions in a quick response.

- Did you find today's activity helpful?
- Were there any new ideas/strategies explored that you either a) didn't know previously or b) didn't use previously?
- Anything else you want to tell me?

Grading Criteria:

Did you find a term from the text that has cultural relevance?

Did you ask three thought-provoking questions?

Did you research and find at least one source to answer each of those questions?

Did you apply your new knowledge to the book in a specific way?

Appendix L: End-of-Unit Reading Survey

English III End-of-Unit Reading Survey

1. How much reading have you completed (pages/books)? Is this more/less/the same as you would typically complete during the school year?

2. We've spent several weeks reading global texts. At the moment, how do you feel about the global focus of the course?

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Enjoy	Love

3. Have you found that you've been able to enjoy and understand books from a culture other than your own? Why or why not?

4. What new/unresolved concerns do you have about reading cultural texts. You might mention things like: connecting to the characters, understanding cultural events/references, finding genres that interest you, pronouncing names, etc.

5. How important do you think building background has been in terms of understanding your global texts?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Not Usually	Somewhat	Important	Extremely

6. What do you think about the activities (virtual reality inquiry, vocabulary inquiry, background inquiry) that we have completed to help increase your understanding/enjoyment of the texts? Are they helpful? Are they a good use of time? Do you find them to be fun? Why or why not?

7. What, so far, has helped to motivate you to complete reading? Interest in the stories, interest in cultures, due dates, chunking the reading, reading check ins, reading conferences, collaborating with peers, etc. Please explain.

8. Anything else you want to tell me about your reading experience thus far?