Fostering Global Citizenship Through Poetry: Teaching and Learning Interconnectedness in Language, Literature and Culture From Value-Creating Education

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Abstract

This paper explores teaching and learning practices inspired by Value-Creating Education, i.e., the pedagogical commitments and perspectives shared by the Japanese educators and Buddhist activists Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), Josei Toda (1900–1958), and Daisaku Ikeda (1928–2023). More specifically, authors focus on poetry as a key resource in teaching and learning aimed at fostering global citizenship at different levels of the school system, from Middle School to Higher Education. After introducing the main perspectives and commitments of Value-Creating Education, the paper examines the relevance of teaching and learning interconnectedness through examples from the authors' praxis as teachers of language and literature, as well as fellow researchers in the rapidly expanding field of Ikeda / Soka Studies. The first example concerns activities from an intermediate language and culture course Pellizzato co-designed and taught at university level to exemplify how, in Ikeda's view, teachers can foster the wisdom to perceive one's interconnectedness thanks to interacting with poetry and nature. The second example concerns literature in middle school as a tool for exposing students to interconnectedness and empowerment. Through engaged reading of poetry, such as original Cantos from Dante's *Commedia*, Dughera shows how literature and teachers have a crucial impact on the character development of students. The third and last example concerns the fostering of dialogic bridges through poetry to enhance language learning in a higher education Hispanic literature course. Drawing connections between poetic narratives from different global contexts and world languages, Parra enables students grow through detecting interconnectedness.

Keywords: Global Citizenship, Teaching Literature, Poetry, Interconnectedness, Value-Creating Education, Education for Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

This multi-author paper focuses on Value-Creating Education and the burgeoning field of Ikeda / Soka studies. The authors' aim is to stimulate debate and research in international and global education through examples from their teaching practices, which are informed by the pedagogical commitments and perspectives shared by the Japanese educators and Buddhist activists Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), Josei Toda (1900–1958), and Daisaku Ikeda (1928–2023).

The paper begins by introducing Value-Creating Education and outlining the authors' approach to Global Citizenship Education through the teaching of literature, introducing the role poetry can play in teaching and learning from Middle School to Higher Education. Pellizzato introduces the main concepts of the paper and discusses an example of sustainability education activities from the intermediate language and culture course she co-designed and taught at Harvard. Subsequently, Dughera outlines what Ikeda means by poetic mind, or *shigokoro*, discussing her teaching practice of Dante's *Commedia* in middle school as a tool for exposing students to interconnectedness and empowerment. Finally, Parra Téllez focuses on fostering the students' awareness of interconnectedness through poetry and dialogic bridges, to enhance language learning in a university-level literature course.

2. Value-Creating Education, Interconnectedness, and *Shigokoro*

Value-Creating Education is a rapidly expanding field of research (e.g., Goulah 2024; Bosio & Guajardo 2024; Nuñez & Goulah 2021), particularly developed in the perspectives of global citizenship education (see Sharma et al 2023; Sharma 2020, 2020b; Sherman 2019; Goulah 2018; Guajardo & Reiser 2016; Takazawa 2016; Urbain 2013, 2010; Obelleiro 2012; Goulah & Ito 2012) and the teaching of language and literature (see Inukai 2021; Goulah 2019, 2017, 2013, 2012, 2012b, 2011; Ito 2017; Okamura 2017; Gebert 2013; Hatano 2013, 2012). The term refers to the pedagogical commitments and perspectives shared by the Japanese educators and Buddhist activists Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871–1944), Josei Toda (1900–1958), and Daisaku Ikeda (1928–2023). Each one established unique ideas and contributions, but all of them share significant commitments and perspectives (Goulah 2021). The most important among these is arguably the principle of value creation, or *sōka*, which became the namesake of Makiguchi's pedagogical vision.

What is, then, the creation of value in education, according to Tsunesaburo Makiguchi? Goulah (2024) provides the following synthesis:

> Value-creating pedagogy distinguishes truth from value and seeks to clarify the often-confused psychological processes of cognition (understanding something as it objectively is) and evaluation (determining its relevance to life). […] Facticity alone does not make truth meaningful to our lives, Makiguchi argued. Rather, the significance of truth in our lives comes from the subjective and contingent meaning or value we create from it. (5-6)

In short, Makiguchi advocated for a pedagogical practice aimed at fostering the learners' ability to create value, or subjective and contingent meaning, based on enabling them to hone their cognition and evaluation skills (Sherman 2016; Goulah & Gebert 2009; Goulah 2009; Gebert & Joffee 2007; Kumagai 2000).

This will sound familiar to researchers and practitioners of education today, when critical thinking is at the center of scholarly debate (e.g. Cursio & Jahn 2024; Canale 2021; Nardi 2017; Tittle 2011). It should be considered, though, that Makiguchi was active during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth century, at a time when the ideological authority of the emperor and the Japanese state cannot be overemphasized (Goulah 2015; Gebert 2009; Ito 2009). During these very decades, through his four-volume opus *Sōka kyōikugaku taikei* (The System of Value-Creating Pedagogy, Makiguchi 1981-1996, vols. 5-6), Makiguchi maintained that creating personally and socially meaningful value from accurate cognition of truth is what demonstrates agency, opens possibility, and generates genuine happiness, which is the ultimate goal of education, along with the positive advancement of daily human life and living (Goulah 2024).

Today, the views of Makiguchi, Toda, and Ikeda shape a number of schools based in Asia, Europe and the Americas, from kindergarten to university level, and inform the perspectives and practices of thousands of educators in multicultural, multiracial, and multilingual contexts (Goulah 2021oxf). As educators and philosophers of education, Ikeda, Toda, and Makiguchi share a commitment to the ethic and practice of global citizenship, defined by Ikeda as:
- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life.
- The courage not to fear or deny difference but to respect and strive to understand people of different cultures and to grow from encounters with them.
- The compassion to maintain an imaginative empathy that reaches beyond one's immediate surroundings and extends to those suffering in distant places (Ikeda 2021, 6-7).

In this view, interconnectedness – and the perception learners have of their interconnectedness – plays a key role. In Ikeda's cosmic perspective informed by Mahayana Buddhism, dialogical engagement with nature is an interaction between alive and sentient beings, not between a subject and an object. Going beyond a mechanistic conception of nature, Ikeda understands the environment as a "semantic whole" (2010, 173) that holds together humans, their cultures and their natural environment. This understating of interconnectedness is key to environmental education, sustainability education, as well as global citizenship education according to a number of scholars. Ikeda's perspective is unique, though, in connecting one's perception of interconnectedness with what he calls *shigokoro*, or the poet's expansive and all-encompassing heart, mind, or spirit (Goulah 2024).

3. An Example of Sustainability Education and Global Citizenship Education Through an Intermediate Italian Language and Culture Course

I come to Value-Creating Education as a scholar of literary studies seeking to articulate empowering teaching and learning practices for students of language and literature courses at the university level. My teaching praxis is informed by two converging lines: the research I developed in the field of Transnational Literature and Translation Studies, on one side, and the work I carried out as a Teaching Assistant and a Pedagogy Fellow at Harvard, on the other. Both these lines gained further breadth as I developed my pedagogical research through my second PhD, currently ongoing at DePaul University, centered on the value of dialogic interactions with literature and nature in Daisaku Ikeda's educational philosophy.

Through the courses I co-designed and taught at Harvard, I sought to integrate dialogic interactions with literature and nature in my students' learning experiences. In doing this, I

was inspired by Value-Creating Education as well as the innovative language teaching methodology practiced at the department of Romance Languages and Literatures of Harvard University, under the direction of Dr Nicole Mills and Dr Maria Luisa Parra Velasco. As a result, my students obtained higher-than mean results, while my courses obtained higher-than mean student evaluations. I collaborated with my course head, Dr Chiara Trebaiocchi, to revise the Italian curriculum from beginner to advanced level. I won interdepartmental funding for course-innovation, which I used to innovate an intermediate language course, centered on the different facets of sustainability, which is the example will I focus on for this subsection of the article.

Poetry and engagement with literature serve multiple purposes in this course:
- They allow to integrate scientific data with personal experience through the vicarious experience of narration (both in reading and writing);
- They open spaces for collaborative meaning-making and dialogic engagement;
- They afford students with opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations in the target language, igniting one of the strongest drives for proficiency improvement;
- They foster the students' ability to appreciate each other through appreciating their respective contributions to collaborative creative work.

The course is designed to revisit structures, refine speaking, writing, and oral skills, and advance critical and meaningful exchanges through the discussion of environmental, cultural, economic, and social issues of sustainability. Based on evidence from scholarly literature (e.g., Goulah 2017), as well as insights from the departmental Environmental Group I co-founded, the course features a series of practical assignments, meant to assess the students' understanding of specific language structures while guiding them to think critically around environmental, cultural, economic, and social issues of sustainability discussed in class per each module, and to make connections among the various topic discussed in class. Every semester, students engage in these assignments with excitement, commitment, and renewed sense of purpose. From a pedagogical perspective, practical assignments are key in connecting language learning with local communities (Parra Velasco 2013), enhancing the achievement of learning goals through situated learning, and expanding the walls of the classroom (Rodgers 2018).

Based the principles of Value-Creating Education, I restructured some units of the course to afford students opportunities to engage in meaningful conversations in the target language, connect the subject matter with their interests, and meet with activists and professionals in the field of environmental sustainability. To connect language learning related to sustainability and climate issues with the local community, we engaged students in activities taking place out of the university classroom.

Thinking in terms of truth and value based on Makiguchi's philosophy of education mentioned above, in this course "truth" could be identified with the grammar and cultural content, alongside the relationships of cause and effect linking us to society and the environment, while "value" could be identified as what the curriculum means to students, and what become capable of doing through what they learn. To facilitate the students' engagement in terms of value creation, I designed activities in which they could take the lead in the learning process, collaborate to make meaning, and bring in their interests and individualities.

To exemplify how dialogic engagements with literature and nature can be experienced as value-creating education, I conclude by describing a creative collaborative writing activity I designed, based on a poem.

During a lesson, the teacher presents the first half of a poem centered on how human civilization is harming natural and animal life: Giorgio Caproni's *Versicoli (quasi) ecologici* [Almost ecological versicoli]. The teacher works collaboratively with students to clarify the meaning of the text. A grammar focus ensues, based on the PACE model (Shrum & Glisan 2016). Then, working in pairs, students are invited to complete the poem through a scaffolded collaborative writing process:
- Each student writes 10 words that could fit in the continuation of the poem, recalling recently acquired vocabulary;
- Students exchange papers; each students picks at least 3 words from their colleagues' list, and continues the poem including those words;
- Students read out loud their poems and comment on each creation and their collaborative writing experience in the target language.

Each time this activity is performed, when at the end students read what they created, a mutually appreciative sound of amazement resonates in the class, or laughter sanctions successful communication through playful texts. This is just one example of how teachers can foster collaboration and mutual appreciation in the classroom, enabling students to experience and reflect on interconnectedness through playful and shared effort of meaning-making.

My hope is that, through these experiences, students can learn to tune into their *shigokoro*, besides honing their global citizenship skills while learning Italian language and culture effectively, creating more opportunities for experiencing hope and joy in learning (Nuñez & Goulah 2021). As Ikeda writes, reflecting on the work of the Cuban poet José Martí: "The poetic spirit [is] an indispensable bridge between the individual and the whole. I think that the poetic spirit could be defined as that which fuses the pulse of the human heart with the rhytms of nature and the universe. In that vast and eternal plane, our lives are elevated and expanded toward the direction of happiness and peace" (Ikeda 2010, 123).

4. Teaching Literature in Middle School: A Tool for Cultivating the Poetic Mind

Differently from his predecessors, Ikeda has not specified any pedagogy or teaching method (Inukai, 2020). He focuses on the crucial importance of human interactions which nurtures the holistic growth as human beings. Education is this kind of relational process (Goulah, 2015; Inukai, 2020). Keys to realize human education in its broader meaning (and so, keys that have to be present and vivid in the attitude of a good teacher) are mentor and disciple (or teacher-student) relationship and dialogue (Goulah & Ito, 2012). In the opinion of Goulah (2019) Ikeda calls the constant and never-ending transformation of the individual a "human revolution" from the private and isolated "lesser self" (*shoga*), strongly influenced by his own desires, to the "greater self" (*taiga*) of an identity coexistent with all phenomena and universe across space and time, and this inner transformation is what Ikeda intends to become "fully human.". According to Ikeda this type of human revolution takes shape through dialogic value creation and value-creative dialogue (Goulah, 2012). Human revolution could break the spirit of abstraction that is the leading cause of the global economic meltdown (Goulah, 2010b). This change of the individual's heart (and actions) happens through learning. Goulah (2012y) asserts that "human revolution through human education is the

dialogic process of realizing the other in the self and self in the other" and the Ikeda calls students in "learning to learn and to derive wisdom from knowledge" in the path to become fully human.

What does Ikeda himself assert are the defining characteristics of human education? One way to answer this is with the following: "Being born human does not make one a human being. Don't we really only become human when we make tenacious effort to live as human beings? […] That's why education is so important. We need human education to become human beings" (Ikeda, 2021, p. ix). Goulah (2021b) argues that Ikeda's philosophy of human education is twofold: on one hand it calls us to encourage and person right in front of us, believing in everyone's unlimited and precious potential, and on the other hand, it urges our awakening to the full scope of our humanity and humanness. This is what Ikeda calls the never-ending process of being and becoming more and more "fully human". This can be done through a consistent dialogic engagement with others (nature, cultures, people), in this sense Ikeda envisions this through a perspectival shift from *education* to *mutual fostering* (Goulah, 2021b). Drawing a relationship with the concept of mutual fostering, Inukai, and Okamura (2021) stress the importance of the teacher's human revolution as the core of human education. The shift of attitude of the teacher towards students is expressed in the relationship of trust and care between them, thanks to which they become together fully human (Inukai & Okamura, 2021). Quoting Ikeda "As a diamond can be polished only by another diamond, so human beings can be refined only by other human beings" (Garrison et al., 2014).

In a recent work Goulah (2020) underlines that this approach is rooted in the Buddhist principles of causality and ecological interdependence across infinite reaches of time and space. Considering this, even "competition" (*kyōsō*; 競争) becomes the cause of unlimited "co-creation" (*kyōsō*; 共創) of value. This philosophy of human education is not limited to the context of schooling (Goulah, 2021c). In fact, Ikeda pursuing the goal to "becoming fully human" enlarges the concept of education, already in his works in 1960 and 1970s, including every place of the human existence, for example families, intended as a major site of education (Ikeda, 1977). Everyone should seriously try to expand the inherent qualities that make us human in his or her own unique way. For Ikeda ([1996] 2021), these inherent qualities are courage, wisdom, and compassion that are also the three qualities of a "global citizen." Goulah (2021c) asserts that Ikeda advocates for four interlocking commitments and ideals to put in action this kind of transformative human education. They are a commitment to dialogue (*taiwa*), a commitment to global citizenship (*sekai shimin*), a commitment to value creation (*sōka kyōiku*) and a commitment to creative coexistence (*kyōsei*)[1] (Goulah, 2021b, p. 202).

Considering the broader frame of human education and the approach to consider education as mutual fostering, what is the poetic mind (*shigokoro*)? According to Ikeda, poets are "free from the fetters imposed by institutions and ideologies," "perceive the unlimited potential of the individual that transcends the trappings of society," and "recognize the bond that links all humankind and intricacies of the invisible web of life" (Ikeda, 1988, p. 3). He continues

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[1] *Kyosei* has been translated into English as "symbiosis", "coexistence", and "creative coexistence". "Creative coexistence is the most comprehensive translation for Ikeda since it encloses his vision of interdependence. According to this principle, human beings should act in peaceful and harmonious coexistence by creating value (for themselves and for others) in each moment and through every interaction they have with everyone and everything (Goulah, 2021d). I've had this note since the other three commitments are unraveled through this work in different sections.

stating that the poetic spirit "imparts hope to our life on earth, gives us dreams, and infuses us with courage; it makes possible harmony and unity and gives us the power no army can vanquish to transform our inner world from utter desolation to richness and creativity" (Ikeda, 1988, p. 3). Starting from this, through the readings of high-level literature students (even which are considered "low grades") can empathize with the whole (Ikeda, 2010) and be fostered as engaged and committed future citizen who will create a new golden humanity's future. What is called by Ikeda the "poetic mind" (Japanese *shigokoro*) is the expansive and all-encompassing heart, mind, or spirit of the poet (Goulah, 2024), the ability that everyone possesses to appreciate and empathize with the life and the suffering of others. So, what we are calling "the poet" is not defined by a job title or a certain career. We are talking about an attitude, an innate potential that everyone possesses.

5. Literature as a Tool to Cultivate Empathy and Empowerment: A Personal Praxis

I'm a middle school teacher of Italian and History in a non-traditional school in Italy. Moreover, I'm undertaking a second Ph.D. at the DePaul University College of Education in the "Value-Creating Education for Global Citizenship" program. Italian middle school is comparable to 7th-8th-9th grades in US. My students are from 11 to 14 years old, not so little, and not so grown. It is not at all rare that teachers of these subjects restrict themselves to a mere transfer of notions, grammar rules, lives of literatus and events. I personally use my subjects to dig into the human condition with my students, teaching them about cause and effect, human dynamics, and interconnectedness. In doing this, literature is an amazing tool to foster all the abilities above mentioned and let my students experiment true empathy and empowerment. Very often, literature is taught through lecture with the support of recap and synopsis of books and poems. It is quite rare that students are involved in the actual reading of original works. This is way more frequent with very young students, such as middle schooler. Taking into consideration my lessons about Dante and his Commedia, I would like to share how I organize the activity with my students and what I consider as assumptions of my work with them keeping in mind three aspects: 1) the poetic mind if an innate attitude of each human being, 2) students as young human beings instead of "little", 3) "children are poets by nature" (Ikeda, 2006) and they will be fully able to catch the heart of the poet.

My lesson is structured following these steps:
- I read out loud the "canto"
- I read it again
- I make my paraphrasis
- I ask them to try to make some little part of paraphrasis
- We engage all together in a dialogue on the topic (main part of the activity)
- I ask everybody (even me) to write down anything in any forms or shapes. Nobody is asked to produce on the very topic just read together but rather "inspired by"

Personally engaging with feelings, emotions and thoughts of the poet, students naturally interact and build a dialogue in three directions: with the poet (a dialogue trough ages), with themselves (they investigate in the depth of their inner self), with others (they interact with fellows). Dialogue is the door to experiment true empathy, and dialoguing trough these different levels, they experiment what Ikeda calls the "imaginative empathy". They naturally put themselves in other shoes. Others that can have lived centuries ago or in their immediate surroundings. Engaging in this profound interaction, at the end of the activity they can feel "I'm able", "I'm powerful". And they actually do! Recurring implications of this kind of activity (that is set once a week) are that:

- Students experiment the actual imaginative empathy
- Emerging empowerment
- Even "low grades" or "troublemakers" students enjoy and get involved, experimenting a sense of been able, deep and mature

Effects of this activity are tangible even in the dynamic of the group that is directly impacted by these experiences. Of course, middle schoolers remain middle schoolers and of course argues and conflicts are always presents, however the group naturally builds a stronger and deeper bond and in crucial occasions each member can more easily adopt a tool already used and tested. In this sense literature could be used as a precious instrument, not only to know everything about Dante or figures of speech, but to enter in touch with the brave heart of the poet who bears the struggles of his/her society. As results, entering in touch with the heart of the poet is entering in touch with our own poetic spirit, the innate ability to empathize with life and suffers of others. Fostering this ability in young students could lead to future global citizens used to manifest this innate aspect in creating a peaceful coexistence with others.

6. Interconnectedness: Teaching and Learning Latinx Poetic Narratives and the Japanese Poem "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land"

To continue with the dialogue above, another way to cultivate global citizenship in Higher Education is the practice of interconnectedness. During one semester (16 weeks), this study examined how poetic narratives from global and local contexts connected three important parts. 1) students' experiences were based on their cultural background, 2) students choose the readings for the final project on Hispanic/Latinx literature texts, and 3) they made connections with the poem "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land" (1993) by the educator, peace maker and poet Daisaku Ikeda (1928-2023). The purpose of the learning experience was to strive to grow from social justice poetic narrative common encounters.

Within Ikeda/Soka Studies education, scholarly literature explains concepts from the philosophies and practices of Tsunesaburo Makiguchi (1871-1944), Josei Toda (1900-1958), and Daisaku Ikeda (1928-2023) in dialogue with other philosophies and theories (Inukai, 2021). Interconnectedness is a value-creating pedagogical approach that allows to connect the individual with society. In other words, to connect the micro and macro spectrums toward a global citizenship. To this respect, when discussing transformative education approaches, value creating pedagogy is "a knowledge system comprising methods for cultivating individuals capable of creating value" (Goulah, 2021). The goal of education, as aim of the value creating education, is "to enhance this value of human character (Goulah, 2021). When people are empowered to realize the full scope of their possibilities willingly unite in solidarity to confront global issues.

Students connected by practicing critical and friendly dialogue. It is a fundamental Buddhist concept that illustrates the idea that all human beings are in close relation with all others and with all other living beings and the environment. People cannot live isolated; therefore, they reach each other by different means of communication and dialogue. In the 1996 lecture at Columbia University "Education for Global Citizenship", interconnectedness is an element for wisdom to perceive "all life and living" (Urbain, 2010). Dialogue is a means of interconnectedness and coexistence to restore humanity (Urbain 2010; Goulah & Ito 2012; Bradford, 2018, 2021; Sharma, 2018; Rita, 2021; Goulah, 2009, 2010).

In Higher Education teaching and learning world languages, literature has been a tool to contextualize and to apply students' language learning skills. Then, fostering future professionals in world languages within contemporary societies, the focus of this empirical research was the praxis of dialogue as the principle of dialogic connections to design literature-based learning opportunities for diverse Spanish language learners. As a background, Ikeda (2020) discusses that we learn to know ourselves and others when we are trained in the ways of being human. Then, he engages a dialogue with the readers by stating, that it is by immersion in "the ocean of language" and dialogue fed by the springs of cultural traditions (Ikeda & Rees, 2018; Ikeda, 2020). Ikeda believes that dialogue holds the key to understanding each other.

Within secondary literature, in teaching languages, the Socratic dialogue (Socrates 4th Century) is a genre of literary prose that enhances critical thinking. Bakhtin (1981) analyses dialogue in poetry as the internal dialogism of the word. The subjective form of dialogue has the power to shape style and finds the way to express the unstudied present. The dialogue between the reader/listener and poetry creates a dialectical relationship toward an active understanding.

Based on the above information, to answer the research question: what is the purpose to cultivate interconnectedness in teaching and learning experiences? Students participated in a survey answering the following questions: 1) How did you feel about your language skills when talking about interconnectedness (a state of being connected reciprocally) with the social issues that you identified in "The Sun of Jiyu"? 2) How did reading in the Spanish language various literary genres and making connections helped you to practice your language skills? 3) How by being aware of your own goals and audience (GRASP) will help you to apply the Spanish language to your own context?

During one semester, 6 learners were asked to read and to listen to short stories, poems, drama and essays from their virtual text *Aproximaciones* (2022). A selection of three weekly reading comprehension *Questionnaires* was required to prepare for the post-reading discussions with specific scaffold prompts based on the readings. To this regard, the VoiceThread platform was the space for practicing interpretative, interpersonal, and presentational modes of communication, according to the American Council of Teaching Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Nevertheless, the final project asked them to interconnect personal, local and global experiences between two course readings with the Spanish version poem "The Sun of Jiyu in the New Land" (1993) by the Japanese educator, philosopher, poet and peace maker Daisaku Ikeda. For the final project, learners designed the project-based learning GRASP (G-goal, R-role, A-audience, S-situation and P-project) to create connections with personal and global narratives Zehnder, Alby, Kleine & Metzker (2021). Introducing the GRASP was a challenge for Spanish learners who usually expect to follow instructions on how to design a final project. In other words, learners, first practiced, how to comprehend complex Spanish texts while reading and listening; second, they engaged in a multimodal communication in VoiceThread to discuss their ideas and to create an "active negotiation to share information, feelings and opinions." Lastly, they created an independent base-project learning known as GRASP. Thus, learners practiced in a safe space spoken and written information to engage in applying the Spanish language at Intermediate level of proficiency.

7. Interconnectedness: A Personal Praxis Conclusion

The purpose of cultivating interconnectedness in teaching and learning leads to fostering global citizenship. Thus, by facilitating world language poetic narratives content from different Latinx countries and adding the Japanese poem "The Sun of Jiyu Over the New Land", learners designed their own goals, situation and audience in the creation of a written project-based learning tool GRASPs to gain awareness of their own connections to map their own communities. The dialogue in the VoiceThread platform allowed them to realize how the American culture and social justice were perceived from another perspective. Therefore, the surveys were a tool for self-reflecting on their perceptions and discovered ways of interconnectedness with other cultures by finding common points between local and global personal and social experiences. It was an exercise to cultivate global citizenship awareness.

This empirical research findings showed that at the end of the semester, and after students' read the Spanish version of "The Sun of Jiyu Over a New Land", they were able to find connections among multiple genres: poetry, short stories and dramas. Students also found connections among topics such as discrimination, gender, migration and coexistence when comparing fictional characters' stories and poetic voices.

In the dialectical relation, learners' self-reflection focused on the use of the language "to bring communities together." The purpose was "to map communities" (Goulah 2021) and "to embrace a global philosophy" (Ikeda, 2010). Within the learner's comments on the Latinx readings, it was outlined the "need for unity and the knowledge that we are the same in different ways." One learner said, "We are all the same at heart, and while there might be much variation, we cannot help but resemble each other." To this regard, solidarity was the result of connecting "personal narratives" to confront global issues (Goulah, 2021). Among other concerns, it was "the idea of freedom" and how to "contribute their talents to the world." It was also "to focus on who the audience was." In other words, caring for oneself and others. In sum, learners' GRASPs comments and self-reflections evidenced that the goal of education, as aim of the value creating education, is "to enhance this value of human character" (Goulah, 2021, p. 5).

For further research, the survey will include the key words interconnectedness, global citizenship, and its relationship with the interpretative, interpersonal and presentational modes of communication. Each communicative stage could also allow further research in the practice of the language dialogues and conversations.

Another impacting point was the takeaway. One anonymous comment referred to the hope of "incorporating some Spanish literature as a comparison to American texts" based on the experience to compare Latinx literature with a Japanese poem.

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