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It has been a great pleasure to develop an issue of *Social Studies and the Young Learner* that draws together diverse approaches to accessing and teaching voices from the world. This issue's authors demonstrate the power of learning from the ideas, experiences, and perspectives of people across the planet.

In several articles we learn directly from authors in other countries. Jing Gao's article, "One Day with a Second Grader in Beijing," provides a diary-like description of one day in the life of a child in Beijing, a capital city that will be on display to the world this summer as the Olympics unfold. The article can be used to help U.S. students appreciate the pressures and opportunities of growing up middle class in the new China.

In "Understanding Islam: Perspectives of a Turkish Educator," Elvan Gunel, who worked with Muslim students in Ohio schools for several years, describes what she would like to see American elementary students learn about Islam. Having taught in a Muslim country where I witnessed misinformation and misunderstandings about Christianity, I appreciate Elvan's wish to share her personal insights and recommendations with American teachers.

Many American children believe that Africa is a place where people commonly encounter elephants, lions, or other big wild animals in daily life. Barbara B. Brown and Alicia Carroll's article "Beyond Wildlife: Teaching about Africa and Stereotypes," counters such misinformation with the experiences of several people who explain that, in their countries, such animals are in zoos or game parks.

Several articles provide resources for lesson ideas to infuse voices from the world through literature and experiential learning. In the Pullout, "Global Connections and Family Book Bags," Judith Cruzado-Guerrero and Todd W. Kenreich share ideas for using literature from other countries to enhance social studies teaching and learning.

In "Becoming Conscious of Different Perspectives," a team of teachers—Beth Cullinan, Tim Dove, Robert Estice and Janet Lanka—demonstrate how to scaffold multiple activities to build student awareness and understanding of diverse cultural perspectives.

In "Teaching Chinese National Identity to Elementary Students in Hong Kong," Joe Tin-Yau Lo and Merry M. Merryfield share two lessons taught by Hong Kong teachers to help their students come to know and appreciate the history and cultures of Mainland China several years after its governance was transferred from Britain to China in 1997.

Kenneth Sider, in "Understanding India Through Experiential Learning," illustrates how multiple methods and resources provide a synergy for learning about culture.

The final article, "Including Voices from the World Through Global Citizenship Education" by Elizabeth E. Heilman, examines the big picture of how elementary teachers can contribute to developing young people who have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective citizens in a global age.

The articles in this issue share several commonalities that characterize exemplary teaching about the world:

- Using sources from other countries (including literature, primary documents, educational materials, news reports from other countries, and other online resources).
- Demonstrating interconnectedness across cultures, daily lives, beliefs and values, political ideals, and shared concerns.
- Balancing cultural universals/commonalities and cultural differences.
- Integrating student reflection, discussion, and experiential learning (interaction with people from other countries, simulations, etc.).
- Replacing misinformation, stereotypes, exotic images, and media constructions of other places and people with current scholarship from a variety of sources, some of which are from other countries.
- Thinking critically by recognizing points of view, detecting bias and unstated assumptions, and using skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The use of voices from beyond our own borders is critical in preparing elementary students to develop global awareness. The United States makes up less than 5 percent of the world's population. In a world where they will be increasingly affected by global interconnectedness, our students must come to understand the perspectives, issues, and experiences of the other 95 percent of the people with whom we share a very finite planet. [merryfield.1@osu.edu](mailto:merryfield.1@osu.edu)