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NURTURING GLOBAL MINDSETS THROUGH CREATIVE WRITING: USING CALLIGRAMS TO DEVELOP WORLDVIEWS IN EFL

This article explores innovative pedagogical approaches for integrating Global Citizenship Education (GCED) into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university classrooms. The authors suggest that combining GCED ideas with creative writing projects can effectively cultivate students' global perspectives while enhancing their language skills.

The study highlights the necessity of promoting thoughtful conversations and contemplations on international concerns and their domestic consequences to cultivate learners' belief in their ability to make a difference and take initiative.

It highlights the potential of integrating writing into art-based projects to develop students' critical, creative, and caring thinking skills, drawing upon the work of scholars such as Matthew Lipman.

The paper presents specific art-based writing project in the form of a calligram describing a disappearing or endangered place. The project aims to enhance cultural awareness, empathy, and understanding of global issues.

The article discusses the challenges and opportunities of implementing calligrams in EFL classrooms, including student resistance, varying artistic abilities, and the need for new pedagogical approaches.

The authors suggest that the long-term implications of fostering global citizenship through such projects are significant for students' personal and professional growth, enabling them to become engaged and effective global citizens.

The article provides useful insights and strategies for EFL educators seeking to integrate calligrams into their classrooms. It emphasizes the importance of connecting global and local perspectives, fostering critical thinking skills, and promoting creativity and self-expression through art-based writing projects.

Key words: global citizenship, calligram, teaching writing, critical, creative, and caring thinking.

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ГЛОБАЛЬНЕ МИСЛЕННЯ ЧЕРЕЗ КРЕАТИВНЕ ПИСЬМО: ВИКОРИСТАННЯ КАЛІГРАМ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ СВИТОГЛЯДУ В КОНТЕКСТІ ВИКЛАДАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ ЯК ІНОЗЕМНОЇ

Дана стаття досліджує інноваційні педагогічні підходи до інтеграції ідей розвитку громадянської активності у навчання англійської мови як іноземної у вищій освіті. Автори вважають, що поєднання ідей глобального громадянства з проектами творчого письма може ефективно формувати у студентів широке світобачення, покращуючи їхні мовні компетенції.

Дослідження підкреслює необхідність сприяння роздумам про міжнародні проблеми та їх внутрішні наслідки для розвитку віри учнів у їхню здатність змінювати ситуацію та проявляти ініціативу.

Стаття висвітлює потенціал інтеграції письма в мистецькі проекти для розвитку навичок критичного, творчого та етичного мислення студентів, спираючись на роботи таких вчених, як Метью Ліпман.

У статті представлено конкретний мистецький письмовий проєкт у формі каліграми, що описує місце, яке може зникнути. Проєкт має на меті підвищити культурну обізнаність, емпатію та розуміння глобальних проблем.

У статті обговорюються виклики та можливості впровадження каліграм на заняттях з англійської мови, включаючи небажання та опір студентів, різні рівні розвитку художніх здібностей у студентів та потребу в нових педагогічних підходах.

Автори вважають, що довгострокові наслідки виховання глобального громадянства через такі проєкти є значними для особистого та професійного зростання студентів, даючи їм змогу стати активними та ефективними громадянами світу.

Стаття надає корисні ідеї та стратегії для викладачів англійської мови, які прагнуть інтегрувати каліграми у свої заняття. Вона підкреслює важливість поєднання глобальних і локальних перспектив, розвитку навичок критичного мислення та сприяння творчості й самовираженню через мистецькі письмові проєкти.

Ключові слова: глобальне громадянство, каліграма, навчання письму, критичне, творче та емпатичне мислення.

Introduction. In an increasingly interconnected world, fostering global mindsets and cross-cultural understanding has become a crucial goal of education. English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms offer unique opportunities to promote global citizenship and develop students' ability to navigate diverse perspectives. This paper explores the potential of integrating creative writing, specifically calligrams, into EFL classrooms to cultivate students' global perspectives while enhancing their language skills. By investigating innovative pedagogical approaches that bridge the gap between global and local contexts, this research aims to provide valuable insights and strategies for EFL educators seeking to create transformative learning experiences for the next generation of global citizens.

The concept of global citizenship transcends traditional nation-state boundaries, emphasizing a shared sense of belonging to a common humanity (Gaudelli, 2016:3). Global citizenship education seeks to empower learners to become agents of change while equipping them with the criticality necessary to evaluate their plans of action (Andreotti, 2014: 36). However, teaching writing in EFL classrooms is often perceived as challenging due to factors such as varying skill levels, limited vocabulary, and students' lack of interest (Byrne, 1993: 4). This paper proposes the use of calligrams as a powerful tool to address these challenges and develop students' critical, creative, and caring thinking skills, drawing upon the work of scholars such as Matthew Lipman (2003).

Integrating critical, creative, and caring thinking is essential for fostering multidimensional thinking in learners. According to Matthew Lipman, these three dimensions are interrelated and should be cultivated in a balanced, interdependent manner. Critical thinking focuses on standards of reasoning and judgment, while creative thinking involves originality and inventiveness. Caring thinking, on the other hand, is appreciative, respectful, and values-based, encompassing affective, active, normative, and empathic thinking (Lipman, 2003: 271).

The integration of calligrams in EFL writing instruction represents a novel approach to fostering global mindsets. According to Stenner, a calligram is the name for words that are arranged into some recognizable shape. A calligram thus fuses the seeable and the sayable into a unity (Stenner, 2018: 114). By engaging students in the creation and interpretation of calligrams, educators can encourage them to think critically about the relationship between language and meaning, explore multiple perspectives, and express their own ideas in an imaginative way.

This research contributes to the methodology of EFL by providing a framework for using calligrams

to develop students' worldviews and promote global citizenship. The paper presents a specific art-based writing project in the form of a calligram describing a disappearing or endangered place, aiming to enhance cultural awareness, empathy, and understanding of global issues. Through the process of creating and reflecting upon their artwork and writing, students can deepen their understanding of the interconnection of global and local issues and their role as active agents of change.

Moreover, this research highlights the importance of integrating visual arts into the learning process to equip learners with essential skills that seamlessly transfer to their writing endeavors (Eisner, 2002: 81). Arts integration lessons offer a comprehensive approach to developing students' skills in critical, creative, and caring thinking, helping them understand the connections between visual and written communication (Burnaford et al., 2007: 13).

In summary, this paper presents a novel approach to nurturing global mindsets through the use of calligrams in EFL writing instruction. By integrating critical, creative, and caring thinking skills through calligram-based activities, educators can help students develop the worldviews and competencies necessary for effective communication and collaboration in an interconnected world. The research contributes to the methodology of EFL by providing a framework for using calligrams to promote global citizenship and offers insights into the importance of innovative approaches to teaching writing in higher education.

The calligram writing project description

The project draws inspiration from the artwork «First letter home from New York» (1978) by Martin Wong, housed in the MoMA Museum in New York (Figure 1). This piece serves as a prototype for the project, as it effectively integrates drawing and meaningful writing as part of the image. The artwork is a hand-drawn illustration depicting a city block in New York, specifically South Street and the surrounding area. It features intricate sketches of buildings, street names, notes, and musings written in a stream-of-consciousness style. The handwritten text fills the entire page, creating a chaotic, diary-like atmosphere that captures the artist's spontaneous thoughts and observations about the location. The writing touches on themes of change, memory, and personal connections to place, inviting viewers to consider their own attachments to places at risk of being lost or transformed beyond recognition. Wong's personal and emotionally charged writing style serves as a powerful example of how artwork-based writing projects can evoke empathy and understanding of global issues on a deeply personal level.

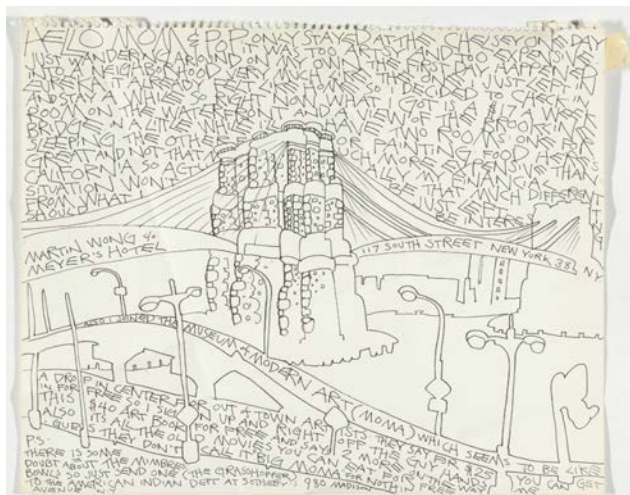


Fig. 1. «First letter home from New York» (1978) by Martin Wong (MoMA Museum in New York)

The artwork-based writing project, designed to explore the theme of disappearing or endangered places, challenged first year university students (A2 – B1 levels of language acquisition according to CEFR) to create a compelling visual representation and a written piece that seamlessly integrated with their artwork. The project allowed students to choose between focusing on a local (Figure 2) or global context (Figure 3), enabling them to draw upon their personal experiences and knowledge while connecting to broader global themes.



Fig. 2. Students' calligrams focusing on local (Ukrainian) context featuring disappearing or endangered places



Fig. 3. Students' calligrams focusing on global context featuring disappearing or endangered places

The places that were chosen for the projects by the students themselves included local context: Chernobyl, Soledar salt mines, lakes Svitiyaz and Synevyr, Crimea, among all. Other students wrote about the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Comodo island in Indonesia and the Maldives, etc, which provided global context.

As a follow-up activity, the students shared their writing with the class and reflected on the experience of using creative writing to explore the theme of disappearing places. The majority of the students were very emotional because they described the places which were also personally significant to them.

After implementing the multi-faceted evaluation approach for the calligram writing project, the results demonstrate a significant positive impact on students' writing skills, global citizenship competencies, and personal growth.

The qualitative analysis of students' calligrams revealed a deep understanding of the theme, with most students successfully integrating visual and written elements to express their ideas creatively. The content of their writing showed improved language proficiency, appropriate vocabulary usage, and coherent sentence structure. Many students demonstrated empathy, and personal connections to the topic of disappearing places.

Student reflections and feedback were overwhelmingly positive. In their written reflections, students reported gaining a deeper understanding and an increased sense of empathy and responsibility towards preserving vulnerable places. The survey indicated high levels of enjoyment and engagement with the project, with a majority of students perceiving significant benefits to their writing skills and global awareness.

The pre- and post-project writing assessments provided quantitative evidence of improvement in students' writing abilities. Scores on the post-project assessment were consistently higher, with notable gains in vocabulary usage, grammatical accuracy, organization, and coherence. The use of the rubric

allowed for targeted feedback and a clear tracking of progress over the course of the project.

Classroom observations and discussions further supported the project's success. Students demonstrated increased confidence in sharing their work and ideas, actively collaborating with peers and engaging in thoughtful discussions. They exhibited creativity in their approach to the project and critically analyzed the themes and issues raised.

In summary, the comprehensive evaluation of the calligram writing project indicates substantial success in achieving its goals. Students demonstrated significant improvements in their writing skills, a deeper understanding of global citizenship, and personal growth in areas such as empathy, creativity, and critical thinking. The project's doesn't show immediate impact but, with time, it can extend beyond the classroom, with students applying their learning to new situations and engaging in meaningful civic participation. These results highlight the value of integrating creative writing and visual arts in EFL university classrooms to nurture students' ability to express themselves with confidence, think critically about global issues, and take responsible action as engaged citizens.

Discussion. The calligram writing project, which integrated visual arts and creative writing, offered a comprehensive approach to developing students' writing skills in an EFL context. By focusing on the theme of disappearing or endangered places, the project aimed to enhance students' language proficiency while fostering cultural awareness, empathy, and critical thinking.

One of the primary objectives of the project was to encourage students to explore the interplay between visual and written communication. By creating a compelling artwork and a written piece that seamlessly integrated with their visual representation, students developed their ability to express ideas through multiple modalities. This process helped them understand how visual elements can complement and enhance their writing, making their message more impactful and engaging.

The project also emphasized the importance of personal connections and experiential learning in the writing process. By allowing students to choose between focusing on a local or global context, the project encouraged them to draw upon their own experiences and knowledge while connecting to broader themes. This approach fosters emotional engagement and helps students develop a more profound understanding of the subject matter, which leads to more authentic and meaningful writing.

Throughout the project, students had the opportunity to reinforce and apply their previously

learned language skills in a creative and purposeful way. By engaging with the theme of disappearing or endangered places, students expanded their vocabulary on the topic, practiced their sentence structure, and developed their ability to organize and express their thoughts coherently. The project's integration into the «Geography» topic further enhanced students' writing skills by providing a rich context for language use and encouraged them to apply their language knowledge to real-world issues.

Collaboration and peer learning were also essential aspects of the calligram writing project. By sharing their artwork and writing with the class, students had the opportunity to learn from one another's perspectives and experiences. This process fostered a sense of community and collaboration within the classroom, encouraging students to provide constructive feedback and support each other's growth as writers.

Moreover, the project's emphasis on critical thinking and creativity helped students develop their problem-solving and analytical skills, which are crucial for effective writing. By exploring the factors contributing to the vulnerability of disappearing or endangered places, students engaged in research, evaluation, and synthesis of information. This process helped them develop a more nuanced understanding of complex issues and encouraged them to express their ideas in an imaginative and thought-provoking way.

Guidelines for writing practice

– Introduce the theme of disappearing places and its relevance to geography. Discuss examples such as threatened natural habitats, cities impacted by climate change, or neighborhoods undergoing rapid development.

– Present the artwork and give students time to examine it closely. Provide any necessary vocabulary support related to the content.

– Have students describe what they observe in the artwork. Prompt them to identify key themes, emotions, and personal connections expressed by the artist.

– Discuss how the artwork's creative writing style (unfiltered, personal, emotive) differs from traditional academic or journalistic writing about places. Ask students to consider the potential impact of this style on readers.

– Assign a creative writing task in which students choose a place that is personally meaningful to them and at risk of disappearing. Encourage them to adopt a similar stream-of-consciousness style as the artwork, capturing their memories, observations, and emotions about the place to create a calligram.

– Have students share their writing with the class and reflect on the experience of using creative

writing to explore the theme of disappearing places. Discuss how this approach could deepen people's understanding of and connection to these places.

Conclusion. The calligram writing project offers a multifaceted approach to developing students' writing skills in an EFL context while fostering their global citizenship skills. By integrating visual arts, fostering personal connections, encouraging collaboration, and promoting critical thinking and creativity, the project helps students become more confident, expressive, and skilled writers. Throughout the project, students have opportunities to reinforce previously learned language skills and apply them in a creative way to make a statement about the theme of disappearing places.

The project's focus on a specific urban location and its vulnerability to change serves as a compelling starting point for exploring the broader theme of taking care of our planet. By engaging with this theme in a personal and expressive way, students develop their English writing skills, geographic knowledge, and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of global and local issues.

Implementing creative writing art-based projects in EFL classrooms presents both challenges and opportunities. Educators must navigate student resistance, varying artistic abilities, and the need for new pedagogical approaches. However, by providing

clear guidelines, fostering a supportive classroom environment, and incorporating peer feedback and collaboration, teachers can create an engaging and effective learning experience that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and self-expression.

The long-term implications of fostering global citizenship through these projects are significant for students' personal and professional growth. By developing skills in critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and intercultural communication, students become better equipped to engage with diverse perspectives, critically reflect on global issues, and express their own experiences and insights through creative means. These skills and dispositions enable students to become effective global citizens, leaders, and change-makers in their communities and beyond.

In conclusion, the calligram writing project demonstrates the potential of integrating creative writing and visual arts in EFL university classrooms to develop students' writing skills while fostering their global citizenship competencies. By embracing innovative pedagogical approaches that bridge the gap between global and local perspectives, educators can create transformative learning experiences that empower students to become confident, expressive, and socially responsible communicators in an increasingly interconnected world.

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