



# Cultural Sensitivity and Global Citizenship: Using Authentic Literature Assessment in English Language Teaching

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**Abstract.** In our increasingly globalized society, cultural sensitivity and global citizenship have gained paramount importance in the realm of education. This paper explores the integration of authentic literature assessment into English education to enhance students' cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. Authentic literature assessment encourages students to engage deeply with literary works, fostering a deeper understanding of real-world issues, cultural elements, and global perspectives. This approach not only enriches the study of literature but also promotes cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. Cultural sensitivity entails understanding, respecting, and appreciating diverse cultures, enabling students to adapt to a multicultural society and engage in cross-cultural communication. Global citizenship involves focusing on global issues, advocating for social justice, and embracing multicultural understanding. Both concepts are complementary and essential in nurturing students with a global perspective. The paper delves into the concept of authentic literature assessment, its application in English education, and its role in enhancing cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. It also discusses research methods and empirical studies confirming the impact of authentic literature assessment. The study aims to provide a fresh perspective on English education, empowering students to actively engage in the global community, promote cross-cultural understanding, and contribute to peace.

**Keywords:** Cultural Sensitivity, Global Citizenship, Authentic Literature Assessment, English Education, Phenomenological Research Method.

## 1 Introduction

In today's increasingly globalized society, cultural sensitivity and global citizenship have become crucial concepts within the field of education. Globalization not only interconnects our world but also prompts a deeper understanding and respect for diverse

international communication and cross-cultural exchange, offers unique opportunities to nurture students' cultural sensitivity and global citizenship.

This paper explores how integrating authentic literature assessment into English education can enhance students' cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. Authentic literature assessment is an educational approach that requires students to engage in deep reading, analysis, and critical thinking of literary works to address real-world issues. Through this approach, students are encouraged to connect literary works to real-life contexts, comprehend cultural elements within the works, and reflect on global issues. This not only deepens their understanding of literary works but also fosters cultural sensitivity and global citizenship.

Cultural sensitivity involves the ability to understand, respect, and appreciate different cultures. It helps students adapt to a multicultural society and promotes cross-cultural communication and collaboration. Global citizenship includes a focus on global issues, advocacy for social justice, and embracing multicultural understanding. These two concepts complement each other and provide essential tools for nurturing students with a global perspective.

In the upcoming sections, we will delve into the concept of authentic literature assessment and its application in English education, as well as how it can be used to nurture students' cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. Through this study, we hope to offer a new perspective on English education to better cultivate students with cultural sensitivity and global citizenship, enabling them to actively engage in the global community and promote cross-cultural understanding and peace.

## **2 Theoretical Framework for Cultural Sensitivity and Global Citizenship**

In order to comprehend the concepts of cultural sensitivity and global citizenship and their significance in the field of education, it is crucial to delve into their definitions, theoretical foundations, and their vital role in shaping educational practices.

Cultural sensitivity refers to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, appreciate, and respect the values, beliefs, customs, and perspectives of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. It involves acknowledging the existence of cultural differences without judgment and developing empathy for people from various cultural groups<sup>[1]</sup>. Cultural sensitivity fosters an environment of inclusivity, where individuals from different cultures feel valued and respected.

The theoretical foundations of cultural sensitivity are rooted in various theories, including cultural competence and intercultural communication. Cultural competence theory posits that individuals can acquire the skills and knowledge needed to effectively interact with people from diverse cultures. This includes understanding cultural differences, overcoming cultural biases, and adapting communication and behaviors to respect cultural norms. Intercultural communication theory focuses on the ways in which people from different cultures interact and communicate. It emphasizes the importance of effective cross-cultural communication and highlights the challenges that can arise when individuals lack cultural sensitivity.

Global citizenship is a concept that extends beyond national borders and emphasizes the interconnectedness of the world. It entails a sense of responsibility and active engagement in addressing global challenges, promoting social justice, and embracing cultural diversity. Global citizens are individuals who are aware of complex global issues, such as climate change, poverty, and human rights, and are committed to taking action to bring about positive change on a global scale [2].

The theoretical underpinnings of global citizenship can be traced to the works of scholars in the fields of global studies, international relations, and citizenship education. It draws from theories such as cosmopolitanism, which advocates for a sense of belonging to a global community, and post-nationalism, which challenges the dominance of national identities. These theories emphasize the interconnectedness of the world and the importance of transcending national boundaries to address global issues. Additionally, global citizenship education draws from transformative learning theory, which suggests that individuals can undergo profound cognitive and emotional shifts through critical reflection and active engagement with global challenges [3].

Cultural sensitivity and global citizenship are of paramount importance in the field of education. They empower students to become informed, empathetic and engaged individuals in an increasingly interconnected world. In education, fostering cultural sensitivity enhances students' ability to interact respectfully with peers from diverse backgrounds and appreciate the richness of different cultures. Global citizenship education equips students with the skills and knowledge to address global issues and actively contribute to a more just and sustainable world. These concepts not only enrich students' academic experiences but also prepare them to be responsible global citizens who can positively impact society.

### 3 Authentic Literature Assessment

Authentic literature assessment is an educational approach designed to inspire students to deeply understand, think critically, and analyze literary works to address real-world issues. This assessment method emphasizes the connection between literary works, students' daily lives, and global challenges, with the aim of cultivating literary appreciation, cultural sensitivity, and global citizenship [4].

Authentic literature assessment requires students not only to read literary works but also to explore the themes, characters, plots, and symbols within the works. Students are encouraged to contemplate the deeper meanings of the works and the thoughts and emotions expressed by the authors. This method underscores the importance of connecting literary works to real-life experiences. Students are prompted to reflect on how the themes and plots of literary works mirror contemporary societal issues and challenges. This enables them to recognize the relevance and significance of literature in their lives.

Authentic literature assessment contributes to the development of cultural sensitivity [5]. By analyzing literary works from diverse cultural backgrounds, students gain a better understanding of and respect for the values and customs of different cultures. They

learn to appreciate the cultural elements within literary works while expanding their cross-cultural understanding.

Authentic literature assessment also helps nurture students' global citizenship awareness [6]. Through reading literary works that address global issues, human rights, social justice, and other pertinent topics, students become more informed global citizens who actively engage in addressing global challenges.

In teaching practice, there could be various approaches for teachers to adopt in authentic literature assessment. Some of the approaches have been verified as successful interventions in this study. The intervention is a combination of group discussion, creative projects, and literary role-playing.

In English classrooms, students can be organized into groups to collaboratively read literary works and discuss the themes, characters, and cultural elements within them. They can explore questions related to cultural differences, social issues, and global challenges presented in the works, promoting cultural sensitivity and global citizenship.

Students can engage in creative projects, such as writing, drama performances, or multimedia presentations, to express their understanding of literary works and their connections to the real world. These projects can emphasize the social and cultural significance of literary works, fostering students' creativity and expressive skills.

Students can assume the roles of literary characters to gain a deeper understanding of the characters' motivations and emotions. This role-playing activity promotes emotional intelligence and empathy, helping students better comprehend people from diverse cultures and backgrounds.

Through authentic literature assessment, students not only learn to appreciate the beauty and artistry of literature but also acquire the ability to relate literary works to real-life experiences, thereby promoting the development of cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. This approach makes literature study more meaningful and provides students with a more profound learning experience.

## 4 Research Methodology

To address our research problem, we have set the following research questions: How can the use of authentic literature assessment methods promote cultural sensitivity and global citizenship awareness in English education? Have students demonstrated improvements in cultural sensitivity and global citizenship awareness through their participation in authentic literature assessment educational interventions?

We have chosen to employ the phenomenological research method to answer the aforementioned research questions. Phenomenology is a research approach that delves into individual experiences and subjective perceptions, emphasizing how individuals perceive and understand the world [7]. This method is well-suited to conduct in-depth investigations into people's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, extending beyond mere quantitative data collection. The primary objective of phenomenology is to explore and describe the essence of individual experiences, encompassing their cognitive perceptions, emotional responses, and the meanings they ascribe to specific themes or phenomena.

In this study, we have randomly selected a complete natural teaching class as our research subjects and conducted baseline measurements using surveys to record their initial levels of cultural sensitivity and global citizenship awareness. Following this baseline measurement, we implemented interventions during the course. We collected data through various methods, including in-depth interviews, observations, and text analysis. The collected data mainly include interview transcripts and observation records. To facilitate understanding and analysis, we developed a coding framework for organizing the data and extracting important concepts, categories, and themes from the text. These themes serve to interpret our understanding of the research questions.

This phenomenological approach allows us to explore and describe the essence of students' experiences in the context of cultural sensitivity and global citizenship awareness, helping us gain a deeper understanding of the impact of authentic literature assessment on these dimensions of education.

## 5 Findings

The phenomenological approach resulted in the following research findings: First, students' understanding of and respect for different cultures improved through authentic assessment of literature. They may be better able to adapt to a multicultural society, actively participate in cross-cultural communication, and demonstrate respect and tolerance for their classmates from different cultural backgrounds. Second, authentic assessment of literature encourages students to pay attention to global issues such as climate change, poverty, and human rights. Students are more inclined to actively participate in social justice initiatives, pursue actions that address global challenges, and demonstrate a greater sense of global civic responsibility. Third, the authentic assessment approach to literature helps students to understand literary works more deeply. They are better able to analyze themes, characters, plots, and cultural elements, thus enriching their literary experience. Fourth, by reading deeply, thinking critically, and engaging in literary assessment, students perform better in English education and improve their academic performance. Finally, authentic assessment of literature may help develop students' interdisciplinary skills, enabling them to connect literature to the real world and understand complex social and cultural issues.

## 6 Conclusion and discussion

Authentic literature assessment can promote students' cultural sensitivity and significantly contribute to nurturing students' global citizenship awareness, which is a pivotal aspect of its application<sup>[8]</sup>. Students can delve into the cultural elements within literary works, including language, traditions, values, and social structures. By doing so, they gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of different cultures. Engaging in discussions about the cultural differences and commonalities portrayed in literary works helps students recognize the diversity and similarities among different cultures. This, in turn, contributes to reducing biases and fostering cultural inclusivity<sup>[9]</sup>. Encouraging students to read and explore literary works from various cultural

backgrounds exposes them to different expressions and literary traditions. This allows them to better understand and respect the diversity of cultural expressions. By reading literary works that address global issues such as climate change, poverty, and human rights, students gain a more profound understanding of the complexity and urgency of these global challenges. Many literary works delve into themes of social inequality and justice. Analyzing these works empowers students to actively engage in advocating for social justice and driving change. Literature often covers diverse cultures, traditions, and backgrounds. Through reading and discussing these works, students develop a deeper understanding and respect for multiculturalism, a crucial component of global citizenship.

Authentic literature assessment enriches literary education by providing opportunities for students to develop cultural sensitivity and global citizenship. This, in turn, equips them with the tools to become global citizens who actively participate in the global community, promoting cultural diversity, social justice, and sustainable development.

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