

**Elizabeth:** Hi, I am Elizabeth Crawford and these are my colleagues, Nancy Luke and Jo Lamas. Nancy and I are both teacher educators at Armstrong Atlantic State University in Savannah, Georgia, and Jo Lamas is the principal at St. Andrews Preparatory School for pre-K through 12th grade. We've all been elementary educators at some point, and what we're going to do today is share how we're taking *Building Bridges* and adapting that to pre-K to fifth grade, because that's a bit of a challenge when you think about how do you teach culture to young children starting at four years old.

And so what we did about a year in a half ago is we, Nancy and I were working with Jo at St. Andrews, and we were interested in doing this, and the Peace Corps again was a perfect match for that so we could partner our teachers with a Volunteer in the field. And we also wanted to look at what their existing curriculum was, because we don't believe that curriculum can exist as a one-size-fits-all package, and so we wanted to look at how we could internationalize their existing curriculum, so that was something we kept in mind.

Nancy is our technology guru so she is a great partner for me with that because she's going to show you how we integrated technology as a 21st century skill with the curriculum. And then finally we have probably the best part of the show, some authentic videos of children.

Again global education can't exist as a Friday afternoon activity; it has to be seamlessly integrated into the curriculum, so that's what we were aiming to do. Nancy and I actually spent an entire year just working with the school, observing the teachers and the students, before we even attempted to look at how to adapt *Building Bridges*. So we wanted to actually develop a scope and sequence of everything they were doing before we even attempted to do this. We wanted to keep in mind, again, best practices for young children in terms of what's developmentally appropriate, especially with the use of technology and how we were developing the curriculum.

You're familiar, more than likely, with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory [indicated diagram on screen.] This actually was an "ah-ha" moment for us because we were starting with *Building Bridges* and we were thinking about, "okay, how is a four year old going to understand this?" and then we had to work backwards and you have to start with the self first, which is, you know, clear but it was sort of an "ah-ha" moment after we were trying to look at culture first. And that didn't make sense for four year olds through third graders, so you have to start with the self first, so a child has to look at who am I before understanding someone else, and then followed by what does it mean to be a family, what does it mean to be a community, and then finally you can address culture at the end of that, so this is the foundation that we laid before even developing the curriculum.

**Nancy:** Okay, and I'm always a little hesitant to call myself a guru, that's never true, but I work with good people so I'm real fortunate. But you can see here in terms of the timeline, as Elizabeth said, and Jo will talk about a little bit later, that you really want to give this time, you don't want to rush it, you don't want to say "well in six months we'll be finished," you really want to take time, reflect, reflect collaboratively with the teachers that you're working with. And we had the opportunity to do that both working with an administrator, as well as the teachers and

also talking to the kids, that was very important as well and they are very forthcoming about sharing. You'll have a chance to see some of them a little bit later.

But we initially started with the school, Elizabeth did some professional development workshops, and sort of laid out what resources are available for teachers to help their students develop a global awareness and the teachers chose from the options that they had at their disposal: the Peace Corps Correspondence Matching. So this was something that they initially, from the beginning, bought into and that was wonderful because from there we were just able to work with them on building on that. They made the Correspondence Match with the Peace Corps, we did some initial interviews, observations of them working with their kids and again, as Elizabeth said, we wanted to make sure that everything was in alignment with what they were already doing. We weren't people coming in saying, "Now you have to do this too." It was, "you're already doing the things with your students, how can this seamlessly integrate into all interdisciplinary aspects of your curriculum?" And that was very important.

We did some initial curricular pilot lessons to get an idea of where the kids were developmentally in terms of technology as well as the curriculum and then we offered, as I said before, some development workshops for the teachers. Elizabeth initially did the *Building Bridges* iceberg culture lessons with the teachers to give them sort of a frame work and grounding in the direction that we were thinking that we would move in. And again, like anything, the road hasn't been just straightforward; it's woven a little bit and that's been good. We've had the opportunity to be flexible based on what the kids and the teachers were giving us in terms of responses.

During summer we did a digital story-telling workshop, again the teachers requested that. Many of them were interested in developing technology proficiency so that they could do some digital artifacts with their students, and then at the beginning of the fall we also did a workshop with the teachers on inquiry-based instruction, which again is very much part of that and I so appreciate you talking about the 21st century skills. Technology is not separate from all of that, it's inquiry-based, it's global awareness. The technology is not something again that you do on Friday afternoon; it's a tool that you use to make sense of your world and all of these things will sort of come together.

The other thing that we've done with technology to support the teachers is we set up a blog for the teachers, so that they could share resources and their responses to what we were doing in collaboration with them and we've also, as we've come across resources and materials and so forth, we use the blog as a means to communicate that to them, too, so it's a central place for them to share ideas. As far as the technology tools, again we wanted to make this very customized for the school. So we looked at developmental levels of the students, we looked at the current curriculum and what would lend itself to good tools for the teachers to use with their students. Access and availability, obviously you don't want to suggest something that they can't do because it's not available, and also the student interest.

We did some observations of how kids were using technology as well as curricular lessons that they were doing with their students. We kind of came up with this, just again it's sort of spiral curriculum, spiraling curriculum for technology. A lot of the younger kids are doing learning

centers and independent work, and so we thought we would take advantage of that by doing some technology integration, knowing that about the way the teachers teach and the way kids learn because we also wanted to be respectful of the teachers' teaching style as well, and then we continued with that and added to that as the kids got older. So we also added some digital story telling opportunities as well as integrating science and math using some digital tools for charts and graphs, Google Earth, that kind of thing as well; because it's all about integrating, it's not just about social studies, it's about multiple topics. We also wanted to look at some teacher tools that the teachers could use. We set up an online video sharing account so that video we're putting together can be shared, password-protected and shared with the teachers, the students, and also their parents so we get the parent and family involvement kind of going as well.

**Elizabeth:** Last year we spent the entire year doing the pre-pilot, where we created a scope and sequence curriculum and we wanted to start small, you don't want to overwhelm people and we wanted to look at where this would fit naturally. So they were already matched with their Peace Corps Volunteer, so we looked at the curriculum and we said, "Well, where would this naturally fit?" There were a lot of really good fits with third grade and the environment being matched with Belize, we looked at different environmental issues, second grade was matched with El Salvador and they studied animals in the rain forest, so we wanted to find a really good fit. We felt that was appropriate to do a few pre-pilots lessons where we didn't explicitly mention the word culture. We just talked about people around the world and we integrated geography skills and science skills and social studies and so forth.

We piloted those throughout the whole year to sort of get an idea of what students could do, and also one of the fun parts too is researching children's literature to see where natural fits were, and there are just so many great books out there and we found books that were actually a good segue into the actual pilot of *Building Bridges* for young learners, children around the world, you know really age-appropriate pre-K and K. *Where do people live? What do I like to do? How do other children play?*

*Material World* worked really well for third grade, studying environmental issues. We taught a lesson on Earth Day and so we looked at consumerism and *where does all this stuff that we generate go?* And that worked really well in terms of children's developing, you know distinguishing between wants and needs, which was already a part of their curriculum, and so everything sort of fit together, everything was integrated. We also, when we piloted we determined what would work best for certain lessons in terms of grouping: individual students working, small groups, and whole groups. We found that you learn very quickly what you think you can cover in 45 minutes with four years olds, it's like the most humbling experience, you know where it goes off on some tangent, which is really always fun, but that's why this pre-pilot was really necessary for us. We'd been teachers, but it has to be appropriate for your school and your classroom so it is again not one-size-fits-all.

The third grade lesson on ecology, Nancy 's great because she always walks around with a video camera when we do pilots, and all the kids love to be on camera. So we looked at, after we had read parts of *Material World* and wants versus needs, where does all this stuff come from, where does it go? We asked children at the end you know what can you do for the environment?

**Nancy:** Some people wear a watch, I just have a camera at the end of my hand, and the kids are kind of used to that. So again, Elizabeth did this lesson on the environment and at the end I said, "What did you think about this?" and so this was just very impromptu. The kids just responded. [Click link to see PowerPoint]

So again it's just a very little snippet, 22-seconds, of video but it's something we can show the kids. It reminds them, "Well that's right, I remember doing that on Earth Day," and it creates an archive as well as an artifact for assessment purposes but also sharing with families and so forth, we were kind of excited about that and so were the kids. So it was a nice way to integrate technology.

**Elizabeth:** So back to our framework. After the year of the pre-pilot we actually have started this year with a formal pre-assessment of what is culture. We actually interviewed pre-kindergartners and kindergartners about who they are, what does it mean to be a family, so we learned pretty quickly what their preconceptions were. With the older children, *what does it mean to be a community?* And then the big question of *what is culture?* for third graders, which was very fascinating because we haven't explicitly used the word "culture" during the pre-pilot; we just talked about people around the world.

So again: thinking about what's developmentally appropriate, being guided by the NAEYC Guidelines and National Standards, and St. Andrews uses the *Understanding by Design* model, so that worked out really well. We created two kind of "big ideas" for the lower grades and then the upper grades. Lower grades: *We're more alike than different.* We find that is really important, because young children are quick to point out how we're different: skin color, clothing, those kinds of things, but really getting down to how human beings have very similar wants and needs around the world. The subtopics were chosen by the teachers, which we felt was very important. So pre-kindergartners, the teachers wanted to look at schools around the world. They were matched with Bulgaria so we did research on that. Nancy and I actually taught all of the lessons. We gave them the choice and they allowed us to teach, which was fun for us, but was also good modeling for them so they could kind of see what we intended with the written lesson plans, and so that's been a good process. How children play around the world: *do you like to do those kinds of things too?* "Yeah, I do," so we're more alike than different again and home life and family life.

For second and third grade, more connected to the environment and that matched really well with their social studies standards. So then this is third grade with the pre-assessment, what is culture? That's a hard question to answer even for adults.

**Nancy:** It is. And we asked the students, and the thing that was really kind of useful for us again is that there aren't any wrong answers, and we could honestly say that. *What do you think when you hear this word?* So we asked the students, we kind of warmed them up a little bit talking about themselves and then: *What do you think culture is? How would you define that? How would you describe that idea?* And then *how would you describe or define your culture to someone else?* So this has kind of two pieces. But again these are third graders and were kind of use to being on camera, so they were really forth coming with their ideas. [Refer to PowerPoint]

**Nancy:** Again, thanks. We really like those kids a lot, and we're kind of astounded by their insights into a really hard question.

Next we want to hear from Jo, and to be honest with you, if you're working with teachers you know how important leadership is with getting a project going. And so she's not only been a real strong supporter, she's kind of been a champion of the project at this school, so we're very fortunate to hear from Jo Lamas.

**Jo:** I just love hearing those children talk. You can tell I'm an early childhood educator at heart. At St. Andrews, we have for a long time recognized the need to have global education and we've come up with various programs: we're an IB school in our high school, we've got various programs that we're doing. But none of them truly address the needs of the elementary level, and in talking with Elizabeth and Nancy, and some of my teachers, we decided that we were going to begin to explore this area.

One of the things that we did as a school was to try and decide what were the characteristics of developing global competency? As we defined those skills, we found that those skills were best practices in general education in the elementary level. So right away we got excited about this and we said, "This is not something that's an add-on, this is just a way to weave this global awareness, those skills to just use what we're doing and give it just a little bit of a spin to broaden it a little bit." So we use those basic—we use a backwards design at our school—we use those basic things in our design, and we also work very hard to model the kind of behaviors that we want our students to acquire. So we use collaboration, interdisciplinary approach to knowledge, authentic learning and purposeful tasks, various forms of communication; we try not to limit ourselves to just one or two forms of communication and dialogue. *Respect*, that's a very big word in our school. Respect for ideas and for individuals, also how to focus your attention to a task and stay on task...all of those big ideas in education were very carefully defined.

My advice to anyone who is trying to implement this is to develop, in a collaborative way, the mission of what you are trying to do. Once you have the mission in place—and it needs to be clear, it needs to be concise, and it needs to be on target. Saving the world is too big. You know, you've got to bring it down to something that you can use but if you can come to a collaborative definition of where you're going, that is what you use to bounce all the rest of your goals and your strategies off of. So we did that, then we worked how to define what we were going to do and come up with our goals and our strategies. It was very easy to come up with some of the skills that are needed in global society. Those are the things we've been hearing about all morning, and I got so excited and I thought I had nothing to say, they've all said it all, because we're all saying the same things over and over again, perhaps in a different context. The language was very obvious. We've always been pushing for more language study. But then we wanted technological proficiency and we wanted geographic awareness and we wanted inter-disciplinary thinking, not just learning but *thinking*, so that the students at the four-year-old level are beginning to think as a whole. We wanted problem solving skills, those are things—we wanted more—but those are things we were aiming for.

Then, using those, how do we implement our strategies to reinforce those skills? Those are things that early childhood people do *all* the time and all we had to do was call up Marjorie and

her gang, and use the Coverdell World Wise Schools to take that framework and apply it to the young children. Now this has been an ongoing process, a very long ongoing process, because it's not finished. It's also invigorating and exciting and anyone that's trying to do this, one of the things that I want to caution you about is that you need to spend time on it.

I know you mentioned about giving teachers release time. Whoever is in charge of this has got to have time to not only implement the curriculum that you want to do, but they need time to change it, to adjust it, and they need to have people who are supporting them, that'll allow them to reflect and make changes as we go because it is a process and if we review the whole thing in five years we're going to perhaps have something else we're headed for.

And lastly I really recommend you find a way to celebrate innovation in your teaching. Find a way to let them know that what they're doing is important, and that you celebrate what they've done, and soon enough those that are down the hall that may be the nay-sayers will begin to pick up enthusiasm that's taking place when they get their hands on this very significant and meaty subject. Thank You.

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**About the Author:**

Dr. Elizabeth Crawford, Dr. Nancy Luke and Ms. Jo Lamas are members of a university/school partnership and collaborators in a global education curriculum project in which PreK to 4th grade educators are partnered with Peace Corps Volunteers through the Coverdell World Wise Schools program.