

Introduction: Road to the Future Discussion for Developing the International Children's Literature Course

Mary Ann Harlan (Associate Professor, San José University)

Yuriko Nakamura (Professor, Rikkyo University)



(Nakamura) We held a symposium in 2019. Few dozen of people gathered in Sapporo and some people watched online the symposium “Road to the Future: School and Children’s Librarianship.” We’ve exchanged information about the education for school and children’s librarianship in each school in Japan, Canada, USA and Spain. The record was published in print

and online. I am sending you the link by chat.

https://rikkyo.repo.nii.ac.jp/index.php?action=pages_view_main&active_action=repository_view_main_item_snippet&index_id=2182&pn=1&count=50&order=17&lang=japanese&page_id=13&block_id=49

After the symposium, the presenters had a chance to discuss the future collaboration and agreed on working together for developing a syllabi for International Children’s Literature course, because we thought it’s a good topic for our international collaboration as it was meaningful to every school and it was the most effective and efficient topic for collaboration.

Purpose of this symposium

- *Road to the Future: School and Children’s Librarianship was held in Sapporo in 2019.*

Meeting Objectives:

- Understanding each other’s LIS courses for school and children’s librarianship
- Exchanging ideas for future collaboration to improve school and children’s librarianship in each country and in the world

Reports from:

- Rikkyo University (Dr. Nakamura); University of Alberta (Dr. Branch); San José State University (Dr. Hirsh and Dr. Harlan); Autonomous University of Barcelona (Dr. Correro)

- Agreed on the future collaboration among the presenters, for developing a syllabi for International Children’s Literature
- Today: Exchange our teaching experience about children’s literature and find a clue for future collaboration

meaningful to every school and it was the most effective and efficient topic for collaboration.

Today, we will exchange our teaching experience about children’s literature and we would like to find a clue for future collaboration.

Now, we are introducing the today’s event. We will try to keep it within 5 minutes.

Four presenters from the world are following.

- 1: “An experience of teaching children's literature course in the Department of Education in a multilingual society” (Lynne Wiltse, University of Alberta)
- 2: “Introducing Issues in Children’s Literature Course in LIS school” (Leah Phillips, San José State University)
- 3: “Children's Literature Teaching Experiences from a Glocal perspective. The example of the UAB creating academic offerings and international networks” by Cristina Corro (Autonomous University of Barcelona)
- 4: “Education about Children’s Literature in the Rikkyo University Librarian Course” (Keiko Aoyagi, Rikkyo University)

Today’s Agenda

Introduction to “Road to the Future: Discussion for Developing the International Children’s Literature Course” (Mary Ann Harlan and Yuriko Nakamura)

Reports: 20 minutes of presentation and 5 minutes of Q&A

1: “Teaching Children’s Literature to Education Students in a Multicultural, Multilingual Society” (Lynne Wiltse, University of Alberta)

2: “Introducing Issues in an International Children’s Literature Course in a LIS school” (Leah Phillips, San José State University)

3: “Children’s Literature Teaching Experiences from a Glocal perspective. The example of the UAB creating academic offerings and international networks” by Cristina Corro (Autonomous University of Barcelona)

4: “Education about Children’s Literature in the Rikkyo University Librarian Course” (Keiko Aoyagi, Rikkyo University)

Discussion: 15 minutes



At the end, we are having a chance for free discussion for about 15 minutes.

Before we start to exchange our teaching experience, we want to do a quick overview of the keyword of today’s symposium.

The word “international children’s literature” is relatively new. It has been the subtitle of the journal of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) since in the No. 2 issue of 1998.

Discussion about “International Children’s Literature”

- *Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature*
 - The subtitle of the journal of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) since in the No. 2 issue of 1998

The subtitles appeared on the cover of <i>Bookbird</i>	Appeared first	Last issue
<i>World of Children's Literature</i>	no. 3, 1993	no.1, 1998
<i>International Periodical on Literature for Children and Young People</i>	no. 1, 1987	no. 2, 1993
<i>Literature for Children and Young people, Problems of Juvenile Reading, Best Books from All Over the World</i>	no. 1, 1972	no. 3&4, 1986
<i>Literature for Children and Young People, News from All over the World, Recommendations for Translation</i>	no. 1, 1965	no. 4, 1971
<i>News Bulletin of the International Board on Books for Young People</i>	no. 1, 1963	no. 5, 1964

- *The Routledge Companion to International Children's Literature*, edited by John Stephens, Celia Abicalil Belmiro, Alice Curry, Li Lifang, & Yasmine S. Motawy, London: Routledge, 2017.



It is interesting to see the changes of the subtitle which appeared on the cover of the journal. As you see, people used to say “children’s books from all over the world” or “children’s literature in other countries” and so on. At the same time, there is much to learn through research and practice on “multicultural” children’s literature and library programs.

Before *Bookbird* adopt the subtitle, the journal *Early Child Development and Care*, volumes 48, 1989 was published as a special issue on “International Children’s Literature” edited by Carol Lynch-Brown. The titles of the contributions to this volume include “Using international children's literature in the content areas,” “Children's literature in the developing nations,” “in Canada,” “in Czechoslovakia,” “in the socialist countries” etc.

The first English book which title includes “international children’s literature” was published in 2017. In the publisher’s webpage of the book, it is said:

- Demonstrating the aesthetic, cultural, political and intellectual diversity of children's literature across the globe, *The Routledge Companion to International Children's Literature* is the first volume of its kind to focus on the undervisited regions of the world.

According to Tomlinson, “International Children’s Literature, for those who live in the United States, is that body of books originally published for children in a country other than the United States in a language of that country and later published in this country.” And it can be subdivided into the following three.

- (1) books that were originally written in a language other than English and subsequently translated into English
- (2) books that were originally written in English, but in a country other than the United States
- (3) books that were originally published in a country other than the United States in a language other than English

Tomlinson (1998)’s definition of “International Children’s Literature”

- “International children’s literature, for those who live in the United States, is that body of books originally published for children in a country other than the United States in a language of that country and later published in this country.”
- Can be subdivided into
 - (1) books that were originally written in a language other than English and subsequently translated into English
 - (2) books that were originally written in English, but in a country other than the United States
 - (3) books that were originally published in a country other than the United States in a language other than English

(Tomlinson, C. M. (1998). *Children’s Books from Other Countries*. Maryland, The Scarecrow Press, p.4.)



Probably Tomlinson’s definition can be applied to other countries and can be used in today’s discussion.

(Harlan) Based on our experiences so far, we have identified some present difficulties in teaching International Children’s Literature at our schools. These are:

- Identifying experts:
 - Who?; Where to look for?
 - Need a teachers’ community?
- Translations
- Quality of translation
- International circulation of books; publishing/publisher access
- Valuable, but untranslated literature/books for children and young adults

The present difficulties in teaching International Children’s Literature

- Identifying experts
- Translations
- International circulation of books; publishing/publisher access
- Cultural expectations of child/adolescence and students
- University expectations and differences
- Roles of the librarian in different cultural contexts



- Cultural expectations of child/adolescence and students
- University expectations and differences
- Roles of the librarian in different cultural contexts

For the Future of the “International Children’s Literature” Course

- **Did two trial offers — to be reported later today**
 - International Children’s Literature course at Rikkyo University, in Fall 2021
 - International Youth Literature at SJSU – Summer 2021
- **Developing cross cultural communication between students might be a key to improve our teaching.**
 - **But some practical differences matter.**
 - Terms (months and durations)
 - Aims of education programs (different expectations from students/instructors)
 - Instructional languages



Yuriko did a trial offer of International Children’s Literature course at Rikkyo University, in Fall 2021. Her experience is going to be reported later today. Leah did one at SJSU and will talk about her experience as well.

Our common understanding when we agreed in Sapporo on working together for developing a course for International Children’s Literature is that developing cross cultural communication between students might be a key to improve our teaching.

Since the symposium in Sapporo in the summer of 2019, we have kept our communication, but it’s been really hard for all of us to develop the syllabi together, mainly because of COVID-19. At the same time, we have recognized knowing each other, our classes and our teaching philosophies better is very important before we start developing our collaborative classrooms. This is why we hold a symposium today. We also want more collaborative partners such as those who are gathering here today.

We know some practical differences of our programs matter, but we can cope with that since these are practical.

- Terms, such as months and durations of universities differ.
- Aims of education programs mean that expectations from students/instructors differ. This need to be recognized each other before cross cultural communication in classes starts. We need to accommodate our courses syllabus in advance for students’ collaboration.
- Difference of instructional languages will matter as well. Probably, English can be used for the common instructional language. If we use English for our classes, however, students whose mother tongue might be able to contribute less to the class.

We are looking forward to our discussion today for the future collaboration. Thank you.

Acknowledgement. This work was supported by JSPS KAKENHI Grant Number JP18K02592.