

# A CASE STUDY OF CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS-AGE ONLINE LITERATURE DISCUSSION

Hsiao-chien Lee

Dr. Carol Gilles, Dissertation Supervisor

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to investigate the nature of students' reading and writing experiences and the social contexts when students are involved in a cross-cultural and cross-age online literature discussion activity. From late September 2007 through late May 2008, twenty-two students (nine fifth graders from the U.S. and thirteen tenth graders from Taiwan) used blogs to post responses to literature. Multiple sources of data were analyzed by using the constant comparative method and through critical discourse lens. The findings suggest that students gained deeper understandings of another culture and the texts. They also developed more critical thinking as they were reading about thought-provoking, multicultural picture books and interacted with people of a different culture. The instructors' supports and scaffolding helped contribute to that growth. The social contexts formed within the student groups as well as on the blogs came into play when students participated in the blogging activity. Pedagogical recommendations include creating a supportive and encouraging learning community, providing idea-sharing opportunities for students to respond about and from literature, and using the blog wisely to motivate students to read, write, and think.