



***English: An anthology that brings the world into the classroom and the classroom into the world***

A course in creative writing by Dr. Patrick Parks, Professor of English at Elgin Community College, Illinois (1997)

**Course Design:**

Dr. Parks invited Richard Jackson, a poet and a professor at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, to share his scholarly and artistic experiences in the former Yugoslavia with Parks' creative writing class. The students were incensed by the ongoing atrocities and prompted Parks to devise a way through which they could assist the victims. The class decided to compile an anthology of contemporary American authors, to sell the anthology to libraries, bookstores, churches and schools, and to donate the profits to a reliable relief organization. Students solicited manuscript contributions, retyped them, raised money for printing costs, designed the book's cover and layout, made promotional contacts, and chose the charity organization.

In addition to the invaluable hands-on experience for creative writers of compiling, publishing, and successfully marketing the manuscript, students realized how the world could come into the classroom, and how the classroom could in turn contribute to the world. In addition, students learned vast amounts of information about the war in Bosnia and discovered the need for continued involvement in relief efforts in countries around the world. The project also provided thousands of dollars for food, fuel, and relocation for victims of the war. Although the project's genesis was a guest lecture, the course framework and focus are replicable.

**Higher Level Learning:**

Parks' students learned not only about how to create and market a manuscript (**Acting**) but also about their potential role in helping relieve the victims of the Bosnian atrocities (**Caring, Others**). The project emphasized the feasibility of small groups of individuals contributing to significant positive change, leading students to reexamine their perspectives on the global community, war and literature. (**Caring**).

**Active Learning:**

Students organized each step of the project's progress and collaborated extensively with others inside and outside the classroom (**Doing**). Outside interactions ranged from those within the local community to those with national writers, publishers, colleges, universities, and booksellers, and to international charitable organizations (**Dialogue with Others**).

Parks, P. (1997). The Community in the Classroom/The Classroom in the Community. In J.K. Roth (Ed.), Inspiring Teaching (pp. 148-157). Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.