



***Children's Literature
as a Means to
Global Cultural Connections***

Future of Education Conference

Florence, Italy

June 2018

Deb L. Marciano, Ph.D.

Valdosta State University

Valdosta, GA USA

Rural, comprehensive university in USA (Georgia)

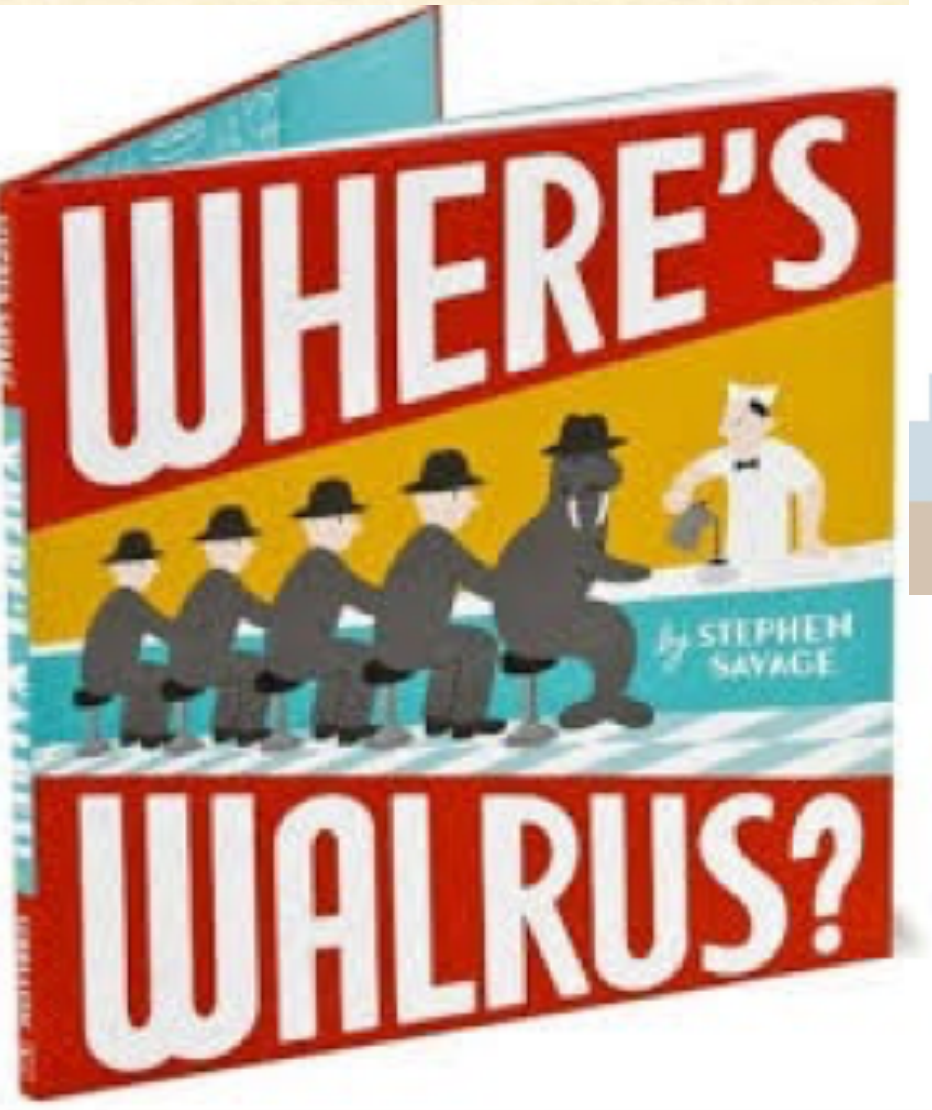
Study Abroad – 1 month in Italy from USA (2015)

5 Future Teachers (FT) in 4-week Study Abroad Program

8 Classes - 200+ Italian students, ages 7-16

Valle D'Aosta / Marano sul Panaro (Reggio Emilia) Italy

***Where's Walrus?* by Stephen Savage (Scholastic 2011)**



**Wordless picturebook:
a text where the *visual image*
carries the
weight of the meaning.**

Valdosta, Georgia, USA to Valle D'Aosta, Italy





**We explored: children's literature
learned about one another
other environments
natural resources
cultural differences and similarities**

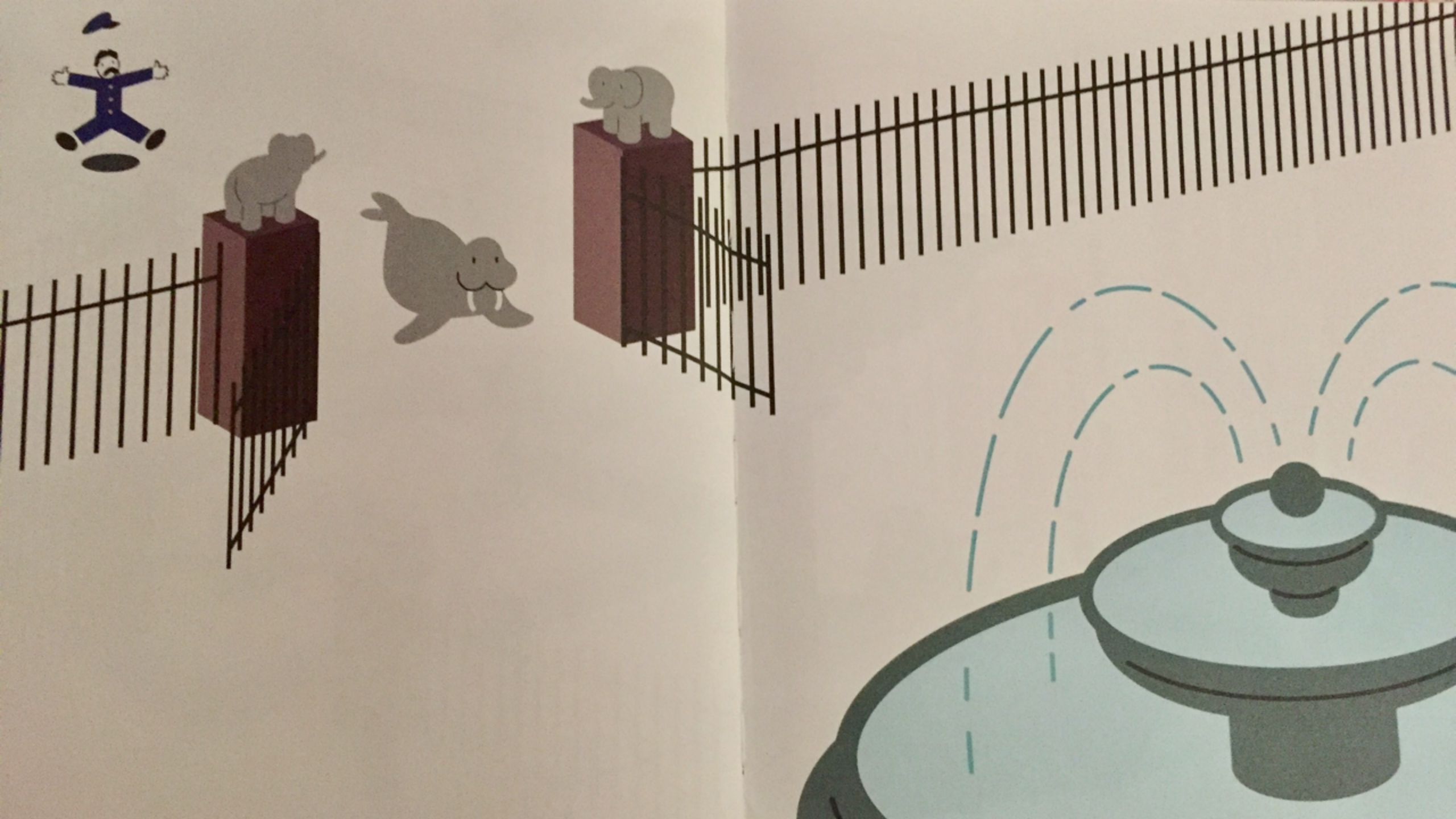
Due to USA copyright laws,
I am not allowed to reproduce the book
in this presentation.

However, I include several of the pages
as a sample.

Because this is a wordless picturebook,
be sure to pay careful attention to the illustrations,
as that is where the story happens.

Walrus is bored
and escapes from the zoo.

He hides in clear sight,
but the zookeeper cannot find him...







What did you think as you “read” the story?

**Draw where you
see Walrus.**

**Share your sketch and comments
with someone near you.**

Share with whole group.

**Who imagined Walrus here, in Florence,
at the conference?**

In your home neighborhood?

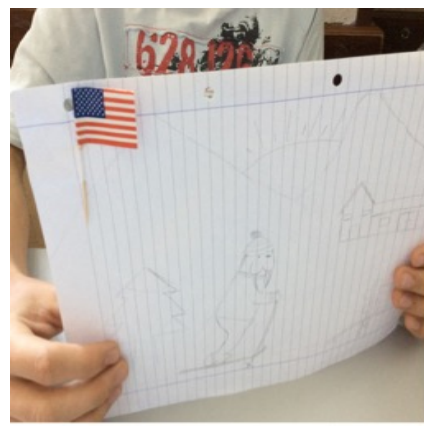
Where you teach?

Elsewhere?

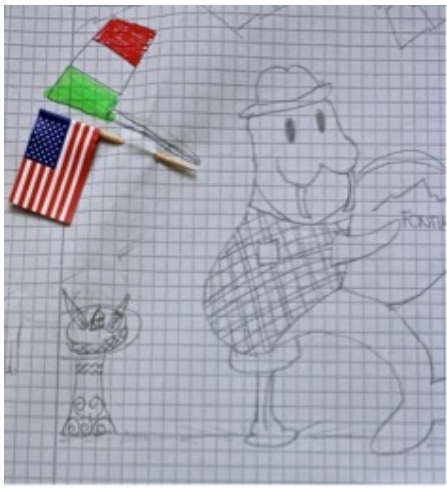
Walrus even tricks his creator, author/illustrator Stephen
Savage:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4IPmdsOuLgM>

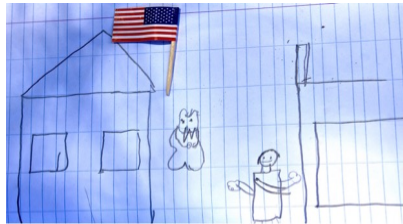
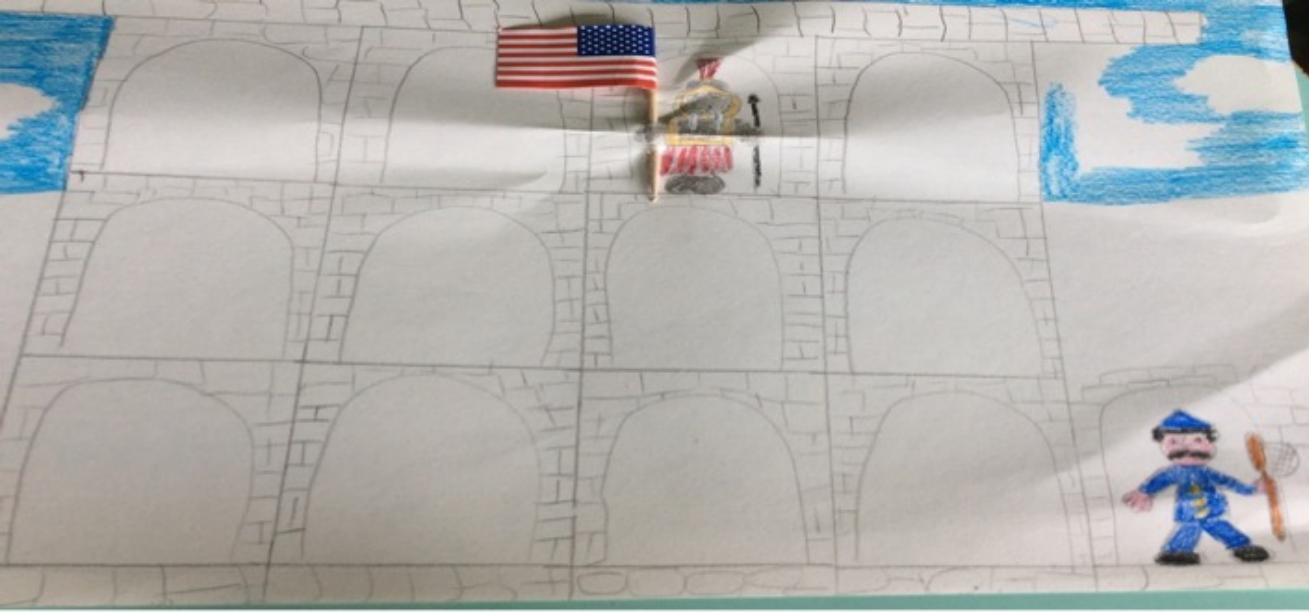
**We use what we already know
(prior knowledge)
to construct new meaning
and connections to the familiar
(constructivism, scaffolding).**



Samples of students' drawings –
What do you see?







How does this connect to what you teach?

Two professional publications relating to this presentation:

Marciano, D. L. “Opening Eyes by Opening Classroom Doors: Multicultural Musings of Study Abroad in Italy”. *Journal of Multicultural Affairs*, 2017. 1(2) Article 3.

Marciano, D.L., Rackley, J. M., and Vaughn, G. L. “An American Wordless Picturebook in Italian Classrooms: Inspiring Global Connections of People, Places, and Environments”. *The Social Studies*, 2017.

Utilizing a simple children's book helped 5 future teachers learn about children and schools half a world away. The children in these classrooms became the teachers, showing that everyone has knowledge to share.

These future teachers learned life lessons about similarities and differences of cultures, beyond the rural communities of their upbringing.

They learned that despite 3,000 miles of geographic locations, the students were excited to tell us about what they know about their way of life, natural resources, and traditions and activities of their town.

The world is really very small and we are all closely interconnected.

Find a children's book that opens doors and opens eyes.



**There is only one way
to look at things**

until

**someone shows us
how to look at them
with different eyes.**

- Pablo Picasso -

The background of the slide is a faded, light-colored photograph of a university campus. In the center, there is a large, ornate fountain with multiple tiers and a central dome-like structure. The fountain is surrounded by numerous tall palm trees that frame the scene. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny, with a clear sky. The text is overlaid on this background.

Thank you.

Questions? Comments?

dImarciano@valdosta.edu