

# Teaching Children's Literature Teaching from a Glocal Perspective

The Universitat Autònoma in Barcelona as an example of  
an institution creating academic offerings and international  
networks on children's literature

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This paper presents an overview of the postgraduate courses and master's degrees in children's literature, reading promotion, and school librarians training offered by Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) over the past 14 years. In this paper I will focus on the history, content, and function of these courses, and also on the tools developed to create a strong children's literature network and multicultural teaching experience from a glocal perspective.

The UAB, created in 1968, it is one of the most important universities in Spain, occupying an outstanding position among Spanish universities in world rankings. Within the UAB, the research group GRETEL, led until 2019 by Prof. Teresa Colomer, was a pioneer in the Iberoamerican context, offering research on children's literature and developing international training programs and networks. What distinguishes the GRETEL research group is diversity and glocalism (global + local). Diversity and internationalism are present in all of its publications, course handbooks, corpus selection, teaching methods, references, and staff. The sixteen members of the research group, as well as the fellows and collaborators, come from different countries, such as Spain, Venezuela, Argentina, and Chile. Moreover, most of the researchers have different career trajectories and types of positions. Only a few of them are full time university professors; the rest of the staff are lecturers, librarians, artists, and schoolteachers. The group constantly receives visiting scholars from various parts of the world, fostering dialogue between other communities and contexts. As mentioned in other papers in reference to countries such as Canada, Catalonia, the region where the University is located, it is also a plurilingual region. Spanish, Catalan, and English are the languages included in school curriculums.

Regarding academic offerings, UAB is involved in several undergraduate and postgraduate programs, in which children's literature courses are present. However, the number of hours, credits, and courses on children's literature included in the Early Childhood Education and Primary Education training is insufficient. Children's literature courses represent only 5% of the ECTS credits (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System). This can lead to several problems. For instance, the lack of training in children's literature might negatively impact the time teachers spend reading in classrooms in kindergartens and schools because they do not know about appropriate books or what to do with them in the classroom. If




### Faculty of Education

- Bachelor's Degrees:
  - EC Education
  - Primary Education
  - Social Education
  - Pedagogy
- Master's Degrees:
  - Secondary Education
  - School Library and Reading Promotion
  - Master on Books and Children's Literature
  - Course on Children's Literature
  - Children's Books from a Global perspective
  - EM Master on Children's Literature, Media and Culture
- Doctoral Program




### Faculty of Education (Plurilingual country)

- Bachelor's Degrees:
  - EC Education (240 ECTS= 4200 h in 4 years)
    - 3<sup>rd</sup> year Compulsory Course Teaching Language and Literature in ECE, 7 ECTS
    - 4<sup>th</sup> year Optional course Narrative and Poetry in ECE, 6 ECTS
    - Insufficient training in CL, 7% of hours and credits
  - Primary Education
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> year Compulsory course Language and curriculum, 6 ECTS
    - 4th Year Optional course School Library, 6 ECTS (Functions, Reading Plans, Corpus)
    - 4th Year Optional course Children's Literature, 6 ECTS (Literary Education, CL, Selection, Activities)
    - Insufficient training in CL, 7% of hours and credits




### Faculty of Education

- Master's Degrees:
  - Secondary Education
  - Master Research in Education
  - Course on Children's Literature
  - Children's Books from a Global Perspective
  - Master on Books and Children's Literature
  - School Library and Reading Promotion
  - EM Master on Children's Literature, Media and Culture
- Doctoral Program

teachers and educators do not read on their own, or they do not know how to select good books, the task of reading in class will be very difficult. They probably will not read, reading habits and literary education will be poor, and consequently, this can cause functional illiteracy in young children. Thus, a bachelor's degree is not sufficient to prepare future teachers or school librarians to promote reading and children's literature in the classroom or a proper literary education.

UAB has been pioneering teaching about children's literature and school librarian training, and has created jointly with other institutions an extensive offering of master's degree courses. In all of them, children's literature has an important role.

The online Master's on Books and Children's Literature had twelve cohorts (from 2007 until 2019). The program fo-

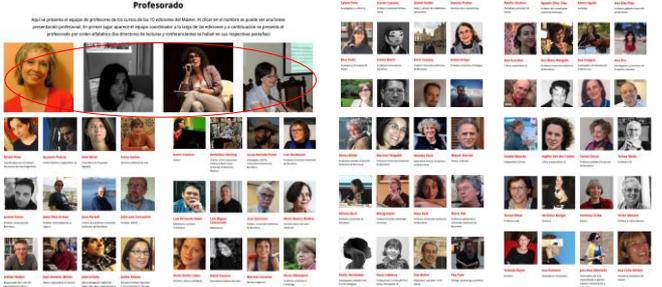
cused on multicultural children's literature as most of the students were international. The course offerings and course materials were diverse and relevant to the field. The corpus was revised annually according to new trends. The master's

allowed several areas of focus, including publishing, criticism, teaching, and reading promotion. The program was also global, as the instructors were affiliated with several international universities. The only objective was to select the best specialist, independent of their geographical location, academic rank and



### Professors

10th Anniversary of the Faculty of Education at UAB



Hirsch index. Students were also selected to have geographical diversity and diverse backgrounds. To foster a sense of community, students and teaching staff were invited to an orientation week in Barcelona. More than 470 students and 135 scholars with a diversity of origins and trajectories participated in the twelve master's program cohorts. The network is still strong and active, with ongoing participation in conferences, book publishing and criticism, and exchanges via social networks between former students and teaching staff.

Linked to the master's program, some other online courses and a MOOC are offered. They focus on children's literature and multiculturalism: the online post-



graduate course "Children's Books from a Global Perspective" or the MOOC "How to Select Books for Children and Young Adults," for example. These courses were shorter than a master's program, less expensive, and constantly offering new content and training to teachers and librarians.

The inter-university Master's degree in School Library and Reading Promotion was created in 2008. It gives training in the most effective ways to organize and operate school libraries as learning resource centers, design school reading plans

**Biblioteca Escolar i Promoció de la Lectura**

- 1 Year Master's Degree
- 60 credits ECTS (48+12)
- Blended program
- Required (Oct–Feb.):
  - School Library
  - Lecture Plans
  - Social Habits and Reading Promotion
  - Cultural Instruments
  - Children's Literature
  - Placements (100 Hours)
  - Dissertation
- Elective (Feb.- April):
  - Information & Documental processes
  - Psychological development
  - Digital School Library
  - Forms & Aspects of Children's Literature
- Cultural Program (Oct. June)
- Dissertation & Placements (May- June)

13th Cohorts (started in 2008)= 280 Students  
 Organised by UAB- UB (2+ 8 Departments)  
 30 Places  
 93% Women- 30 Years Old  
 Students receiving certificate: 97,19%  
 Learning Management System: Classroom-based & distance learning

linked to local communities, do book selection and use books for educating children and teenagers, and search for information, especially online. The master's degree combines face-to-face and distance learning and includes supervised work placements in school or public libraries. The teaching staff are affiliated with eight different university departments and includes the most renowned research and teaching teams in this field. The Catalan Ministry of Education officially recognizes the master's degree diploma for the teaching profile of "School Library and Reading," one of the new specialist profiles public

Module	Credits
Childrens and Youth Books	6
Instruments for Access and Cultural Diffusion	6
Master's Dissertation	6
Reading Plans	6
School Libraries	9
Social Habits and Promotion of Reading	6
Work Experience	9
Digital Media and School Libraries	6
Form and Aspects of Childrens and Youth Literature	6
Processing Information and Documentation	6
Psychopedagogical Aspects of Educational Intervention	6
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Psychopedagogical Aspects of Educational Intervention	6

schools can choose from when requesting new teaching staff. The inter-university Master's degree in School Library and Reading Promotion is the only official master's degree in Spain that deals with this specific subject area, and it leads to PhD research on these areas of knowledge. Multicultural children's literature and diversity are also present in this program through the course content, books assigned, teaching staff, and references.

4rd Cohort September 2022

Enrolled Students last 3 years 104 (67 Scholarship)

Organised by a consortium of 5 Universities

Mostly Women from around the world

- 2 Years Master
- 120 credits ECTS
- Face-to-face program
- Required (Sept.– June.):
  - University of Glasgow
  - Aarhus University
- Elective (Sept.- June):
  - Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
  - Wroclaw University
  - Tilburg University
  - Summer School British Columbia

Some Key Figures

Enrolled Students last 3 years	104
Application requirements	University Degree+ English level
Degree	EM Joint Masters Degree
Curriculum	Required(Electivity courses
International aspects	Teaching Staff+ 3 mandatory mobility periods+ optional Summer school
Course duration	24 months FT Program
Credit System	120 ECTS
Fees	1.599.610 JPY (EU) for non EU students 3.656.400 JPY
Funding	24 Scholarships p.a. (5 for Asian Students!)

La marche de l'elephant by R. Tolman & Marije Tolman

- Theoretical Content
- Corpus selection
- Activities

Corpus selection and evaluation criteria

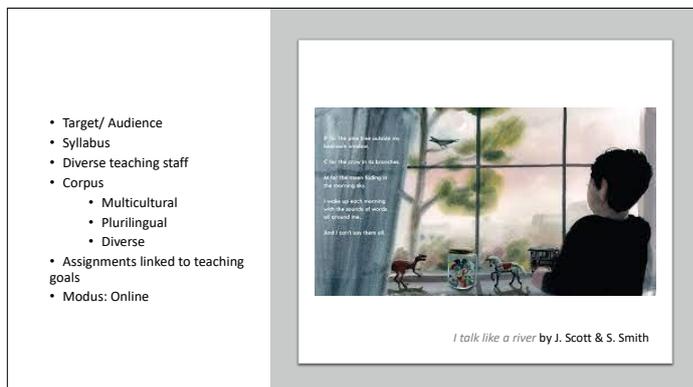
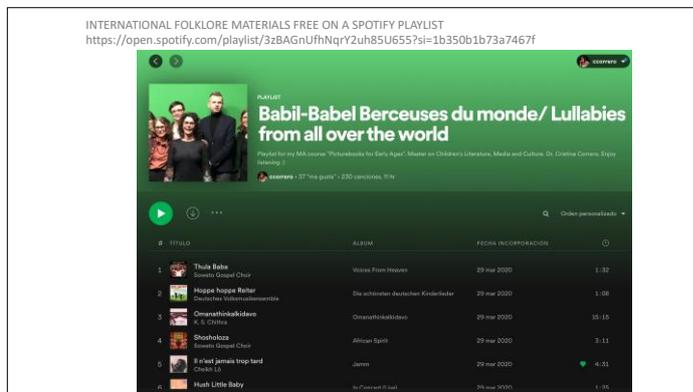
- Audience
- Purpose
- Quality
- Typology

Les Écoliers du Livre Jeunesse  
16. Le bureau de sélection du papi-casa  
Gilles Bachelet

Globalization has affected all of the agents and processes in the book industry. However, the above-mentioned master's did not offer students the possibility to move between different countries. To solve this problem, the International Master's in Children's Literature, Media, and Culture (CLMC) was created jointly with the University of Glasgow, Aarhus University, Tilburg University, Wroclaw University and the UAB. The aim of the program is to build on students' interests and experiences related to children's and young adult (YA) literature, media, and culture in order to deepen their knowledge of the expanding intersection of the fields of literature studies, media studies, childhood studies, and education from an international perspective.

The global mobility of its stakeholders (students and teaching staff), the theoretical content, the course offerings, the corpus, and the activities within the courses enrich students' international awareness. Books and theoretical content are carefully selected according to multicultural criteria for a

diverse audience. For the corpus selection and evaluation criteria, elements such as the audience, the purpose, the quality, and the typology are considered as well as origins.



In terms of quality, besides standard elements, selected books must be diverse, representative, and recipients of international and national awards. Corpus selection in our courses includes folklore materials, books, apps and other digital works and materials. None of the regions must be ethnocentric, hegemonic, or over-represented.

For instance, for the course “Picture Books for Early Childhood,” I have combined local folklore with traditional materials from other parts of the world. For this purpose, I have created a Spotify list with more than eleven hours of lullabies from all over the world. For the book selection I have used books that have received local and international prizes, awards, and other critical praise. In the references and further readings for the course, scholars from different areas were represented, avoiding Anglo-centric bibliographies. International institutions such as the International Board on Books for Young People or the nominations for the Hans Christian Andersen or Astrid Lindgren awards might be very helpful in the selection of a diverse range of books from around the world.

These are only some ideas based on our current master’s degree offering at the UAB.

However, to plan an International Children's Librarian course, the objectives and the target audience should be identified and selected before writing a syllabus. To be executed successfully, diversity and multiculturalism should be the main pillars of the course. The teaching staff, the students, the corpus, and the course materials should reflect this and represent the different regions and cultures of the world. Online platforms, good books, international institutions, and open-minded participants can facilitate this task.

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