

# Awareness: Shifting Mindsets to Grow Awareness Video Transcript

**Note:** Transcripts from this video are machine generated. Please contact the WIDA Client Services Center at [help@wida.us](mailto:help@wida.us) for accommodation needs or questions.

## Yulia Akulshina-Prys

**Ukrainian:** Однак завдяки розмовам з родинами, з родинами моїх учнів я почала переосмислювати важливість підходу, орієнтованого на родину та спільноту. Один із моментів, який змінив мій погляд, стався під час батьківських зустрічей, коли кілька мам висловили думку, що їхні діти були б більше зацікавлені в навчанні, як би в уроках частіше згадувалася їхня культура.

Я почала запитувати себе: "Як я можу створити більше простору для ідентичності, історії та інтересів моїх учнів у нашому навчальному середовищі?" Це питання змусило мене переосмислити одну з наших щорічних шкільних традицій - "Місяць читання у березні". Зазвичай ми замовляємо одну й ту ж книжку для всіх учнів та вчителів з метою читати по одному розділу на день. Цього року я запропонувала обрати книгу, яка б відображала ідентичність багатьох наших учнів.

Ми зупинили свій вибір на романі британської мусульманської авторки бенгальського походження про хлопчика біженця із Сирії. У книзі йшлося про головного героя, який, як і багато наших учнів, прийшов до англomовної школи, не знаючи мови, і виглядав та звучав інакше, ніж інші діти. Основна думка книги - це дружба, що не має кордонів, а також співпереживання та співчуття, є надзвичайно важливими.

**English:** Through ongoing conversations with families, I began to reflect more deeply on the importance of a family and community-centered approach. One powerful moment of change came during parent-teacher conferences when several mothers expressed that their children would be more engaged and interested in learning if there were more lessons and stories that reflected their own cultures.

I began to ask myself: "How can I create more space for my students' identities, histories, and interests in our shared learning environment?" That question led me to

rethink one of our annual school traditions—Reading Month in March. Traditionally, we order the same book for all students and staff, with the goal of reading one chapter per day.

This year, I suggested choosing a book that would reflect the identities of many of our students. We selected a novel by a British Muslim author of Bangladeshi origin about a refugee boy from Syria. This book featured a protagonist who shared similar experiences with many of our students, such as arriving in an English-speaking school without knowing the language and who looked and sounded different from other students. The main idea of the book is that friendship has no borders, and empathy and compassion are extremely important.

## Pushpanjali Sengupta

Over the years, and with my experience [with] my own students, my own students have grown, and they've come back, and they've talked to me about how it felt for them to go through the system, or I've connected more with families. It has been evident that what I used to think was not equitable, because communication has to be two way[s] with families, especially to make sure that we are including the cultural and the language knowledge of our families and bringing them into our classroom and our school system.

## Beverlyn Villanueva

**Filipino:** Dahil sa pagkakaiba-iba ng aming lengguwahe at kultura, ang aking naging pananaw ay magiging mahirap ang komunikasyon at pakikipag-ugnayan sa kanilang mga magulang. Sa halip na manatili sa gano'ng sitwasyon at pag-iisip, naghanap ako ng paraan upang mas mapalalim ang koneksyon at pakikipag-ugnayan sa mga magulang. Doon ko nakita ang Carolina Canvas Awards para sa ML Creative Writing and Visual Arts Contest, kaagad kuong kinausap ang kanilang mga guro homeroom teachers upang makipag-collaborate. Habang isinasagawa ang aming mga entries, kasabay nito ang pakikipag-ugnayan sa kanilang mga pamilya.

Bagaman may mga hamon sa pakikipagtulungan at komunikasyon dahil sa hindi magkakatugmang oras at schedule, napatunayan kong walang imposible kapag malinaw ang layunin. Ang aming pagkapanalo ay naging tulay ng tiwala at koneksyon. Ngayon, naniniwala ako na ang kolaborasyon at komunikasyon ay hindi mahirap, at ang pagkakaiba-iba ng wika ay hindi hadlang, kundi ito ay susi ng tagumpay.

Nang magsimulang makilala ang mga multilingual learners sa kanilang tagumpay, nakita ko kung paano masaksihan ng paaralan at ng kanilang mga magulang na kaya nilang magtagumpay at lagpasan ang kanilang potensyal.

Dagdag pa rito, nang inilunsad namin ang cultural exhibit, culminating activity ito ng Innovative Language Experience Grant na aking napanalunan, hindi lamang sumuporta ang mga magulang, kundi aktibo silang tumulong mula sa pag-aayos, dekorasyon ng stage mula simula hanggang matapos. Napakasaya ko sa kanilang suporta. Dito ko lubos napatunayan na kung tayo ay magtutulungan, mas marami tayong kayang gawin. Ngayon, masasabi kong ang pagkakaiba-iba ay hindi magiging hadlang sa tagumpay kung tayo ay may pagkakaisa.

Lubos akong nagpapasalamat sa pagkakataong ito. Nais kong ipaalala sa lahat na walang imposible, walang mahirap. Ang bawat pamilya ay mayaman sa kultura at kakayahan, na kapag nakita at pinahalagahan ay magiging susi ng kanilang tagumpay.

Maraming salamat. Hanggang sa muli.

**English:** Due to our language and cultural differences, I thought that communication and engagement with their parents would be difficult. Instead of waiting for an opportunity, I began looking for ways to deepen the connection and engagement with parents, school, and community. That's when I saw the Carolina Canvas Awards for the ML Creative Writing and Visual Arts Contest. I immediately reached out to my students' homeroom teachers to collaborate. As we worked on our entries, I was also engaging with their families.

Although there were challenges in communication and collaboration, due to conflict of schedules, I have proven that nothing is impossible when there is a clear goal. Our victory became a bridge of trust and connection. Now, I believe communication and collaboration are not difficult, and language differences are not obstacles, but rather keys to success.

When the MLs started to be recognized for their success, I saw how the school and parents saw that their children could succeed and exceed their potential.

In addition, when we launched the cultural exhibit—the culminating activity of the Innovative Language Experience Grant I won—the families not only supported but actively helped by setting up and decorating the stage from start to finish. I was very happy with their support. This proved to me: when we work together, we can do more. I can say that diversity will not be an obstacle to success if we are united.

I am very grateful for this opportunity. I would like to remind everyone that nothing is impossible, nothing is difficult. Every family is rich in culture and abilities that, when seen and appreciated, will be the key to their success.

Thank you very much! Until next time

## Pushpanjali Sengupta

(cont.) With that experience of really understanding and reflecting on my practices, now we have advisory groups and monthly MLL coffees at our building, where parents come in and they give us feedback on what topic they would like to discuss or learn about or share about.

And we have advisory groups that talk about our programs. We have heritage programs in our building. So, they're able to tell me what is going well from their perspective, what else we can do, what kind of books we could read, or is there someone who could come and talk to us about it.

The families feel much more empowered. They are more confident speaking up in spaces outside our building, where decision-making is happening for our programs or for their children. And I see that in those spaces where it was only [or] mostly the white parents talking. Now, our multilingual parents are also asking questions.