

# INTERCULTURAL LITERACY THROUGH THE LENS OF RUSSIAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## Abstract

*Considering the cultural impact that globalization processes are having on youth communities around the world, and mindful of the importance, as educators, of being attuned to learners' distinctive idiosyncrasies, this research aims to gain an understanding of intercultural literacy from the perspectives of contemporary Eastern European youth.*

*The paper examines intercultural literacy, the competencies required to 'read' sensitively a second culture, to interpret its symbols and negotiate its meanings, through the lens of Russian university students. Participants in the study were asked to reflect critically on what constitutes a culture, how identity is constructed across cultures, what cultural variables influence behavior and shape relationships, and what role community plays in defining culture. The paper also examines how language impacts the construction of the self, and participants were asked to examine their beliefs about language and language use, and reflect on how their own sociocultural identity affects speech interactions in which they are involved.*

*The research was conducted at the Saint Petersburg State Polytechnical University, Institute of Applied Linguistics in Russia, under the auspices of the United States Fulbright Scholar Program that supported author's academic activities at the institution during the academic year 2014-2015.*

**Keywords:** Intercultural literacy; cultural identity; language and the construction of the self; Eastern European youth

**Brief biography of each author** (one paragraph, no more than 100 words):

**Nuria Alonso García** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Language Studies and former director of the Global Studies Program at Providence College. Her current research is in the field of sociolinguistics, more specifically in second language acquisition, language and identity, and TESOL. She has authored a number of textbooks and other pedagogical materials for foreign languages, and she is also involved in creative writing projects for youth and teachers that promote bilingual literacy and cultural awareness. Nuria has conducted workshops for educators and presented her studies at a number of academic conferences in Europe, Latin America and United States. She has been recently awarded a Fulbright Award to collaborate with the Institute of Applied Linguistics at the Saint Petersburg State Polytechnical University, and she is currently teaching and conducting research in Russia.

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