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INTERNATIONAL LITERACY ASSOCIATION BRIEF DEFINES THREE LEADING CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY PROFICIENT AND ACADEMICALLY RIGOROUS CLASSROOMS

NEWARK, Del. (July 6, 2017) — The International Literacy Association (ILA) today released a brief stating that self-knowledge, empathy and hope are the leading principles of culturally sustaining and academically rigorous classrooms.

The brief uses the metaphors of a mirror, a window and a doorway to illustrate these three principles, which work in harmony to help students look inward, outward and ahead.

“These three values are inextricable. You have to understand yourself in order to understand others, and you have to understand others to feel empathy for them. The very nature of hope requires a dependence on both yourself and a broader community,” said ILA Executive Director Marcie Craig Post. “You need all three values to create a classroom where all students feel validated, understood and supported in their paths to success.”

The mirror symbolizes a capacity for introspection. The brief says that effective classrooms incorporate books, topics and issues that reflect the collective human experience as well as the unique personal and cultural experiences of every individual student. This self-knowledge enables students to imagine themselves in the narratives of others, which nurtures empathy.

The window serves as a metaphor for understanding others. The brief states that educators have a responsibility to help students comprehend the “the vastness of the physical, social, cultural, and biological worlds,” to encourage a holistic worldview, and to foster an appreciation for diversity.

According to the brief, the most important symbol is the doorway, which represents educators’ responsibility to inspire hope through challenging classwork and intense literacy learning. The brief warns that this doorway will close if teachers do not ensure that students are constantly learning and that they are equipped with the literacy skills they need to fully participate in society.

The full brief is available online [here](#).

About the International Literacy Association

The International Literacy Association (ILA) is a global advocacy and membership organization dedicated to advancing literacy for all through its network of more than 300,000 literacy educators, researchers and experts across 75 countries. With over 60 years of experience, ILA has set the standard for how literacy is defined, taught and evaluated. ILA collaborates with partners across the world to develop, gather and disseminate high-quality resources, best practices and cutting-edge research to empower educators, inspire students and inform policymakers. ILA publishes *The Reading Teacher*, *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* and

Reading Research Quarterly, which are peer reviewed and edited by leaders in the field. For more information, visit literacyworldwide.org.

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