

Journal of Folklore and Education



Youth in Community
2015: Volume 2

About the Cover Photo: Skaters performing tricks at the annual Harold Hunter Day skate jam on the Lower East Side of New York City. Photo by Amanda Dargan. See “Kickflip: Expanding Digital Learning Opportunities for Skateboarders and Other Teen Subcultures” for more.

Journal of Folklore and Education

A publication of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Editors: Paddy Bowman
Lisa Rathje

Design: Lisa Rathje

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* is a peer-reviewed, open-access journal published annually by Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. Local Learning links folk culture specialists and educators nationwide, advocating for full inclusion of folk and traditional arts and culture in our nation’s education. We believe that “local learning”—the traditional knowledge and processes of learning that are grounded in community life—is of critical importance to the effective education of students and to the vigor of our communities and society.

The Journal publishes work representing ethnographic approaches that tap the knowledge and life experience of students, their families, community members, and educators in K-12, college, museum, and community education. We intend our audience to be educators and students at all levels and in all settings, folk culture specialists, and other interested readers. As a digital publication, this journal provides a forum for interdisciplinary, multimedia approaches to community-based teaching, learning, and cultural stewardship.

2015 *Journal of Folklore and Education* Publication Committee:

Amanda Dargan ~ Rosemary Hathaway ~ Sandy LaBry ~ Jackie McGrath



Local Learning is committed to fair use and open access of educational materials. We as Publisher also look to protect the work that we publish from unauthorized, commercial use. The Journal is freely available to individuals and institutions and is housed on the Local Learning website, www.locallearningnetwork.org. Authors grant to the *Journal of Folklore and Education* the right to license all work with the exception of only alternatively copyrighted photos under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0>. This license lets others remix, tweak, and build upon your work noncommercially, as long as they credit you the Author and us the Publisher, and license their new creations under the identical terms.

Local Learning

56 East First Street

New York, NY 10003

Paddy Bowman, Director, pbbowman@gmail.com Lisa Rathje, Assistant Director, rathje.lisa@gmail.com

The Local Learning Board:

Betty Belanus, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Amanda Dargan, City Lore

Linda Deafenbaugh, Philadelphia Folklore Project

Mike Knoll, HistoryMiami

Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts

Anne Pryor, Wisconsin Arts Board

Steve Zeitlin, City Lore

www.locallearningnetwork.org



Table of Contents

Youth in Community

2015: Volume 2

Introduction

by Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje, Editors 1

Uses of Hopscotch in Multicultural, Intergenerational Co-existence Education

Children learn the benefit of being open to their own cultural group's or family's traditions and how difference is to be expected and respected rather than shunned, ridiculed, or feared.

by Simon Lichman 3

Classroom Application: Student Games and Play Worksheet 12

Classroom Application: Adult Games and Play Worksheet 13

Kickflip: Expanding Digital Learning Opportunities for Skateboarders and Other Teen Subcultures

Interest-driven, connected learning programs can benefit teen skateboarders for whom school is often not a safe or constructive learning environment.

by Tal Bar-Zemer and Jessica Forsyth 14

Pen Tapping: Forbidden Folklore

Serendipity introduces university students to young students' folklore that reveals deep connections to generations of African American music and movement genres.

by Anna Beresin 19

Building Community as a Cool Commodity: Empowering Teens as Local Changemakers

Teens explore what shapes community, celebrate its subcultures, and discover they have a role to play in fostering community and documenting and participating in its rich expressions of culture.

by Emily Hope Dobkin 22

Discovering Community, Transforming Education

Ethnography sets metes and bounds and establishes the lenses through which people can understand themselves and others. Everyone is the expert of their own lives.

A Conversation with Gregory Sharrow 27

Classroom Application: Putney Central School Case Study (A Discovering Community Project) 31

Classroom Application: Discovering Community Showcase Video 34

What Clicks and Sticks: A Career of Community and Media Arts Programs

Knowing what to ask about a cultural tradition or group represents why the tools and approaches of folklore, anthropology, and oral history teach vital life lessons as well as important skills.

by Judy Goldberg 35

Classroom Application: Four Tips for Youth and Community Programming 41

Bridging Collaborative Ethnography and Democratic Education

Inviting students to treat their bicultural, bilingual experience as an asset in their learning brings their culture to the center of the learning process.

by Alison Kinney 42

Questing with Alan Lomax: Michigan’s Historic Field Recordings Inspire a New Generation

An historic folksong collection with local relevance to students gives them creative voice and connects them to place through an immersive, cooperative project.

by Laurie Kay Sommers and Samuel Seth Bernard

51

Classroom Application: Questing Design Template

58

Community Building from Below-the-Ground-Up: The Co-Op Youth Council in One Tiny Ozark Town

"Success" in rural communities does not mean that young people grow up hearing that it is impossible to make a way "here."

by Rachel Reynolds Luster

63

The Art of Seeing: Visual Anthropology as a Road into Experience

Images evoke deep elements of human consciousness, so photo-elicitation interviews can draw out more compelling information than ordinary interviews.

by Luci Fernandes

66

Classroom Application: Visual Anthropology Strategies for Students

68

Stories from Deep in the Heart

Students learn the importance of teamwork and to appreciate unique traditions found in their families and community by producing audio documentaries.

by Charles Lockwood

70

Developing Relationships with New American Communities

Passing on African dance traditions provides refugee youth in New Hampshire with a cultural lens through which to understand their personal identities more fully.

by Julianne Morse

71

Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities

Increasing student participation in school by calling upon their community knowledge supports students' cultural competency and can positively affect academic achievement.

by Linda Deafenbaugh

76

Topical Index

Games and play Bar-Zemer and Forsyth, Beresin, Lichman

Interviews, documentation, media Fernandes, Goldberg, Kinney, Lockwood, Sharrow

Traditional music and history Beresin, Morse, Sommers and Bernard

Youth-centered community building Dobkin, Kinney, Luster

Cultural literacy and academic achievement Deafenbaugh

Note regarding media: This document has multiple media links throughout. They are often indicated via blue text. To link to unique content that is shared via our *Journal of Folklore and Education* YouTube channel, visit <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKIjpylofFk8NdZzdrz6PAQ>.

Introduction

by Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje, Editors

In this edition of the *Journal of Folklore and Education*, our articles feature school and out-of-school programs that connect young people with community. The toolkit of Local Learning (interviewing, observation, documentation, place-based learning, cultural perspectives) proves to be both utilitarian and philosophical when authors looked at the ways our youth work, learn, and play in our communities. While our authors who teach around the globe provide articles and classroom exercises showing how youth can learn in—and from—community, we saw youth shaping the narrative arc of this issue. Not surprisingly, like the interest-driven learning groups of skateboarders in the article “Kickflip” (Bar-Zemer and Forsyth), the theme of “Youth in Community” worked to “flip the script” of engagement, agency, and learning. It is the youth who are taking the initiative to identify needs in their communities—from gender-neutral bathrooms at a museum (Dobkin) to pathways toward creating a sense of home through farming (Kinney).

Hallmarks of featured programs include the following:

- Teamwork
- Collaboration
- Transparency
- Youth as meaningful contributors
- Connection to the larger community
- Public sharing of research and projects
- Pride of place
- Intergenerational connections
- Tapping youth interests and home cultures
- Technology and media
- Reciprocal learning
- Coaching and mentoring
- Authentic immersive experiences outside formal classrooms

As editors, what we recognized as we read the work of educators in K-12 schools, colleges, museums, and community-based organizations is that at the core of an effective folklore in education program are the students and an understanding of how they need to be active participants in bringing information to bear on their own educational experience. Bruce L. Wilson and H. Dickson Corbett are independent educational researchers who conducted extensive research in the Philadelphia Public School District, assessing its “Children Achieving” program targeting inner-city schools and their students. Their conclusion states simply that reform projects must happen with, and not for, students. They noted that in any reforms, students would be better served as “participants” in change, rather than “beneficiaries” (2001:126). They quote M. Fullan at length, emphasizing his points that:

Educational change, above all, is a people-related phenomenon for each and every individual. Students, even little ones, are people too. Unless they have some meaningful (to them) role in the enterprise, most educational change, indeed most education, will fail. I ask the reader not to think of students as running the school, but to entertain the following questions: What would happen if we treated the student as someone whose opinion mattered in the introduction and implementation of reform in schools? (qtd. in Wilson and Corbett 2001: 127)

Likewise, education researchers Lois Weis and Michelle Fine note in their edited collection *Construction Sites* (2000), that students need and are constructing spaces “in which they engage in a kind of critical consciousness, challenging hegemonic beliefs about them, their perceived inadequacies, pathologies, and ‘lacks’ and restoring a sense of possibility for themselves and their peers, with and beyond narrow spaces of identity sustenance” (3). They also note that “there are no victims here [in these essays examining student spaces], but there are lots of cultural critics” (2).

The articles in this issue can be characterized in multiple ways. On the one hand, some articles demonstrate how careful, thoughtful investigation of students' home and community culture allows youth to discover uniqueness and experience difference as universal. Realizing the importance of a tradition to self, family, school, or community emphasizes its worth. Preparing young people to conduct ethnography teaches ethics, multiple points of view, and the complexities inherent in diversity. It offers content that deeply engages them as researchers and gives students agency.

Knowing what to ask about a cultural tradition or a cultural group represents why we believe that the tools and approaches of folklore, anthropology, and oral history teach vital life lessons as well as important skills. Such study grounds young people in their personal identity and prepares them to encounter others more openly, less judgmentally. This allows them to serve communities and civic life authentically and sustainably. Ethnography also opens a window onto how communities relate to young people. How are they welcomed into communal spaces, civic engagement, and leadership?

What are the signs and sounds of youth on the landscape? Where are they welcome? How tightly woven is the safety net? How can adults foster relationships and opportunities that value students' intrinsic knowledge and cultural expertise? How can we incite young people's curiosity, support their research, and promote their creative responses to wider audiences?

During a recent observation of an afterschool Mexican ballet folklorico class in a public school on Chicago's South Side, the middle-school principal shared her recognition of the importance of connecting youth with their cultural community. She pointed out that almost all students in the ballet folklorico group are also on honor roll. She said, "You know, it is not just that honor roll students enroll in ballet folklorico. What I see is that participating in ballet folklorico creates honor roll students." She sees in her school that learning about their culture and heritage has a positive impact on students' schoolwork and understanding of their cultural identity. We hope that this issue of the *Journal of Folklore and Education* will illustrate not only the impact that youth engaging with community may have on learning, but also the ways in which this impact resonates in the spaces where we all live and work—making them more beautiful, safe, just, and youthful.

Works Cited

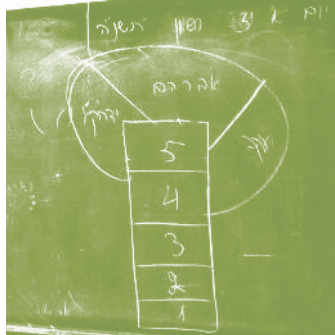
- Weis, Lois and Michelle Fine. 2000. *Construction Sites: Excavating Race, Class, and Gender Among Urban Youth*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wilson, Bruce L. and H. Dickson Corbett. 2001. *Listening to Urban Kids: School Reform and the Teachers They Want*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

To translate this work more directly to K-16 classrooms we suggest that you look at the Classroom Applications noted in the Table of Contents. These activities promote student agency, call upon students' culture and intrinsic knowledge, and tap family and community connections. Incorporating a folkloristic approach to engaging youth with community helps students use and create primary sources authentic to their place and issues of their concern and interest. Such work addresses especially well content standards in English language arts, social studies, English as a Second Language, media, and the arts.

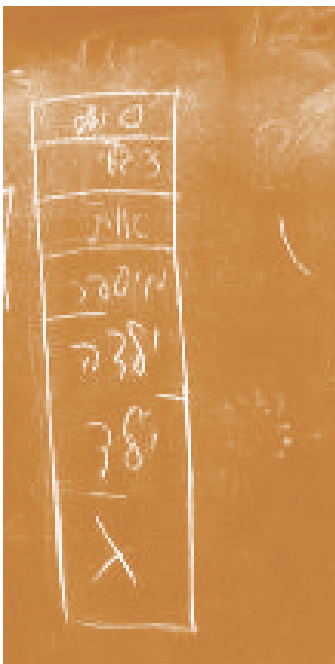
Some classroom applications use a single session (Lichman), and others provide templates for extended studies using research, literacy, and local learning in youth-centered curriculum (Fernandes, Goldberg, Sharrow, Sommers/Bernard).



Uses of Hopscotch in Multicultural, Intergenerational Co-existence Education

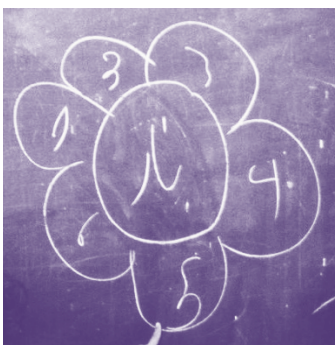


by Simon Lichman



When I grew up in London in the 1950s, Hopscotch was considered a “girls game.” Boys might have joined in for a bit of fun if invited, or to create a moment or two of havoc, but in general children needed to be guarded about crossing game-gender boundaries since playing “girls” or “boys” games could have consequences on their status in the group. Nevertheless, out of school, I spent hours drawing the courts, choosing pieces of slate with the “right feel” from flowerbeds, and playing the game either alone, with friends (boys and girls), or with my older sister and her friends. I loved the throwing, the hopping, the challenge of picking up, and, especially, the two-skip twist-turn that could be achieved with panache.¹

But what is special about Hopscotch? Why is it such a well-loved game? What might children learn from studying it? And what does it offer the process of inter-cultural exchange, the bringing together of neighboring communities between whom there may be ongoing tensions or years of conflict? This article discusses how Hopscotch exemplifies the use of traditional games in a co-existence education program that brings together Jewish and Arab, Israeli and Palestinian, school communities.



Jews and Arabs, even those living side by side in Israel, often find that there is little opportunity of knowing one another in personal contexts. Adults may meet in the workplace, but children hardly meet at all, since, for the most part, there are different school systems.² Negative stereotyped images of each other, frequently exacerbated by the media, are reinforced by successive waves of violence and counter violence, leading to an atmosphere of deep mistrust and fear on both sides. In addition, both Jews and Arabs feel pressure to adapt to a mainstream identity and are often alienated from their own cultural backgrounds while they struggle to balance modernity with tradition, ethnicity with integration, religious observance with fundamentalism.

In 1991 I established the Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage (CCECH) (a registered Israeli NGO) to implement programs that address these issues. Participants' folklore is used as a key for understanding each other and establishing positive partnerships between diverse cultural, religious, and national groups. Arab and Jewish elementary school communities are paired with classes of nine- to twelve-year-olds meeting regularly for Joint Activities over a period of two years. The themes for the program include Traditional Play, Song, and Dance in the first year, and Foodways, Traditions in Religion and Family Stories in the second year. The children also work on the responsibilities of being guests and hosts. However, the programs are flexible to cater for the specific interests and needs of each class-community. The CCECH team, together with participating schoolteachers, plans the implementation of these units of study and how long they will last.

The program is allotted one teaching hour per week in the curriculum of each participating Arab and Jewish class. Background lessons on folklore topics are taught by CCECH staff and teachers in each school separately. The pupils then interview their parents and grandparents, sharing information about their different traditions with their own classes. Every six to eight weeks, each pair of Arab and Jewish classes comes together for a Joint Activity designed around parents and grandparents who lead mixed groups of Jewish and Arab children in playing games and making dolls, toys, pickles, and bread, according to their different traditions and the practices of their own childhoods. When possible, participants visit synagogues, mosques, churches, craft workshops, museums, and parks together. These activities last for a full school morning and are hosted in each school alternately.³

Folklorists working in schools might expect to find cultural diversity, but many children, while being proud of their cultural backgrounds, religious and ethnic origins, also fear the stigma of their family traditions being seen as "old-fashioned" or even "primitive." There is an overwhelming need to fit in, to belong, not to stand out. When asked how many backgrounds we might find in any classroom, the children invariably answer, "We're all the same," despite the many different cultures and mother-tongues to be found in most Jewish classes, and the range of traditions in the more homogeneous Arab schools.⁴

We encourage children to collect their family folklore in the "source" language with as much contextual information as possible. We ask that names and texts be written in transliteration so that the whole class can read it and get a sense of the original language, with a translation of the meaning. This sensitivity and respect for other languages is also an important step toward the meetings between the Jewish and Arab children when all the activities are conducted bilingually in Hebrew and Arabic as a matter of course.

At the beginning of the program the children are asked, "What is folklore—can you give examples?" We introduce key words and concepts such as Tradition, Culture, Custom, Transmission, and explain that our first subject is Traditional Play. Gradually the children understand these key words and concepts as they become aware of how they apply to their own repertoires of play. They study paintings and photographs of different generations of people at play, and then they interview their families about the games they played in their childhoods, sharing the information they bring from home with their own classmates.⁵ They are intrigued by the differences as well as the similarities between the cultural groups that make up their own class communities. Games commonly found in both Arab and Jewish communities are Skipping, Five Stones, Marbles, Football, Apricot Stones, Duck Duck Goose, Elastics, and Hopscotch. We examine some of these games in depth, both in the classroom and the playground.⁶



Figure 1. Photo by Simon Lichman.

With Hopscotch we ask the children what we consider straightforward, fact-finding, opening questions: “Do any of you play Hopscotch? How do you play it? How many types of Hopscotch do you know?” usually receiving a misleading answer, “We all play it the same way.” We then ask, “Who wants to draw Hopscotch on the board?” Everybody puts their hands up and as the chosen one begins to draw, the rest of the class, arms waving wildly unable to contain themselves, burst out, “No, that’s not right,” moving us into an animated discussion of concepts of “right,” “wrong,” “different.” The idea of multiple versions of the “same game,” of “variation” as opposed to “right” and “wrong,” opens a new way of thinking for the children, and often for their teachers too. They begin to pay attention to how versions might be time-, place-, gender-, and religion-bound.

In Figure 1 we see Palestinian children in a small village school southeast of Jerusalem.⁷ The children’s impatience with each other’s “wrong” shapes of Hopscotch courts and their mounting frustrations have led the teacher to permit them to leave their desks and draw their own versions on the board. Apart from the ensuing collections of Hopscotch that it turns out “everyone knows,” the children understand that this lesson is about versions and variation through living examples from their own traditions, and that all these courts are, in fact, part of their repertoire. They also revel in the seeming chaos of the moment when their teacher abandons class discipline.

As they learn how each community and generation has its own Hopscotch traditions, the children invariably comment, “They are the same as us,” in that Hopscotch is almost always clearly Hopscotch no matter the version, and, “Wow, they play so differently,” since there will be versions that each class community will not have seen before.

Many Hopscotch courts described by the Arab children have names that correspond to their patterns. In Figure 2 we see a court known as “Flower,” described by girls from two Arab villages close to Jerusalem, which has the word “flower” or “fire” (as in this court) written in the middle. Players hop from one numbered petal to the other, finally landing in the center where they can put both feet down.⁸



Figure 2. Photo by Simon Lichman.

To the left of the blackboard is a line drawing of the court "Snake." It can also be a full serpentine shape with numbers written into the body of each section going up toward the "head," or a series of circles as seen on the right-hand side of the blackboard in Figure 1. Continuing with the animal theme, another court is called "Tortoise" (second right in Figure 1), which is round with a short ladder (tail) and a divided circle (body). In contrast, very few of the Hopscotch courts we have received from the Jewish communities have names.

Figure 3 shows part of a collection of Hopscotch courts that children in a Jewish school in the mixed Arab-Jewish town of Ramle brought from their parents and grandparents. The central court is one these children often used, consisting of straight up and down squares in which players fill in categories of information according to the sequence: "boy"/"girl"/"number"/"letter"/"color"/end."

The court on the right-hand side, described by a grandfather, was something these children had not seen before. The semicircular section at the top of the ladder is split into thirds, with the names Abraham written in the middle, Isaac to the left, and Jacob to the right. Why should the patriarchs turn up on a Hopscotch court? Does it reflect an over-zealous attitude toward religion, an inability to detach religion from the world of play, an obvious inclusion of Bible stories that are so much a part of the Jewish cultural environment? Or is it an example of children appropriating religious imagery to add the spice of heaven and hell to the game?

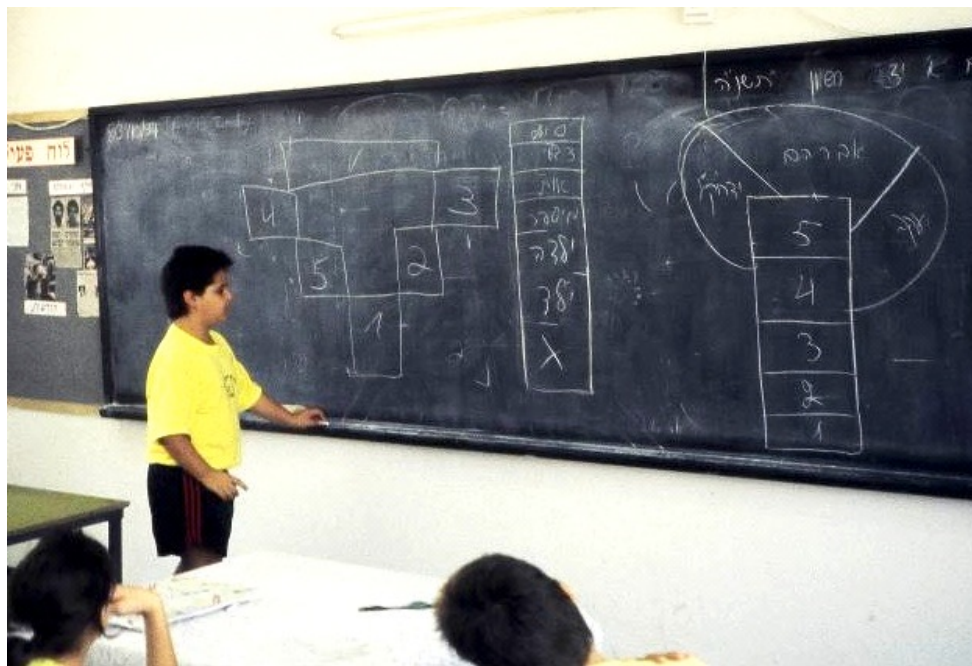


Figure 3. Photo by Simon Lichman.

Folklorists and anthropologists have written about Hopscotch as providing a symbolic move from “the earth” (here) to “heaven” (the imagined perfect elsewhere), with the risk of throwing the stone too far and ending up in hell. There are numerous British and European versions in which “earth,” “sky,” “heaven,” and “hell” are written into the beginning or end of the Hopscotch court.⁹ In a version played by a Jewish mother who grew up in Morocco and France, “Paradise” is written into the semicircle, with “Hell” written into the furthest edge of this section. Lady Gomme writes that Hopscotch “at one time represented the progress of the soul from earth to heaven through various intermediate states, the name given to the last court being most frequently paradise or an equivalent, such as crown of glory.” And in their concluding section on Hopscotch, Iona and Peter Opie remark that “on the Continent the Church seems to have converted the game into a religious exercise, the diagram having assumed the character of a journey through life to death and beyond.”¹⁰



Figure 4. Photo by Rivanna Miller.

Perhaps this Ramle Hopscotch court is a Jewish version of an “earth to heaven” tradition, with heaven represented by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, residing together in the Garden of Eden. When the children are told about such Earth/Heaven/Hell courts they usually laugh and are disinclined to ascribe this journey to their game. Nevertheless, they enjoy thinking about how the meaning of their games is open to academic interpretation and that variations of Hopscotch, for example, could be the subject of research projects.

Apart from the different versions of Hopscotch and the opportunities of playing on each other’s courts, children learn about the interaction with, or intersection between, their “game-worlds” and “everyday life.” We see how the court creates a world of its own as players chalk, scratch, or etch their presence onto the surface of their environment, be it concrete, asphalt, gravel, or earth. The drawn frames in their myriad shapes enclose an internal order that is usually numbered, a carefully contrived and inviting game-world to be jumped into, carved out of mundane surroundings.¹¹

This game-world is superimposed on public spaces, some of which are designated for ad-hoc play such as playgrounds and parks, which may have the paraphernalia of specific games like swings, climbing frames, goal posts, basketball hoops, or permanently painted Hopscotch courts, as opposed to space designated only for specialized play such as tennis courts, basketball courts, and soccer pitches (although, of course, different games will be played there when these spaces are “free”). Other places where children play Hopscotch are designated for civic purposes such as courtyards, pavements, and roads. And since it is not customary for Hopscotch players to “clean up” after play, the courts become signs of child-habitation, sometimes to be used again, maybe by a child nonchalantly hopping through the deserted court en route to somewhere else, a fading splendor of color, shape, number.¹²

With regard to game-worlds generally, grandparents often describe how they had access to more outside spaces because both rural and city environments were less built up and there were few formal play areas. Their game-spaces included fields, forests, empty lots, building sites, the remains of derelict structures, and abandoned building projects. These “dangerous” settings were used when adults were not around. Catch, Hide and Seek, and Dare, for example, were adapted to suit the space and “new games” were invented especially for these physical environments.¹³

Our classwork enables the children to present their individual family’s games and to build a picture of their own class community’s traditional repertoires of play. Although an objective in itself, it is also part of the preparation for the second phase of the program, the Joint Activities, in which the paired Jewish and Arab class communities meet. Parents and grandparents are invited to teach aspects of the home cultures the children have been researching. In the Traditional Play Joint Activities, small mixed groups of Arab and Jewish children move from one play station to the next, learning from parents and grandparents whose expertise as tradition artists is clearly visible and acknowledged in the schools through our programs.¹⁴

In planning sessions with our staff and the teachers, we consider combinations of games and play stations that reflect a range of intercultural and intergenerational variation and will create an overall atmosphere of learning and fun. Our ongoing formative evaluation has highlighted the importance of balancing game situations such as standing, sitting, running, simple and complex rules, complicated and easy moves, constant action versus turns, levels of language skills, and playing in teams, pairs, or as individuals.¹⁵

In role-playing exercises prior to these meetings, the children imagine the type of challenges they might face when learning and teaching new games or versions of games. They concentrate on potential frustrations, potential miscommunication, the behavioral differences they may encounter both in and out of play, and the need for patience and perseverance.

Hopscotch is an especially good way for participants to observe and interpret behavior, while involved in the process of learning about each other, because players are required to watch how the game as a whole progresses as opposed to awaiting their turns more or less passively. The physical game-world is clearly defined and the rules simple enough, despite the range of difference between versions, for players to become proficient quite quickly. The game space (court) is immediately accessible and the rules can be demonstrated rather than explained, without needing a common “verbal” language. It even offers unthreatening opportunities for cross-gender play.¹⁶

The children can learn, for example:

- how each culture decides on the order of the players, or selection of teams;
- what they do while waiting for their turn;
- how they watch other children take turns, whether they ignore, encourage, or discourage the person playing;
- how easily laughter and talking in “the other” language can be misinterpreted as laughing *at* you, and therefore potentially hurtful, regardless of actual intent; and
- whether children are kind, sympathetic, tease, or dismiss players who lose or miss.

At the same time as making these observations, the children also need to learn how to take responsibility for their own behavior and keep the game atmosphere positive.

While we could build the Joint Activities around games that are completely “new” for the children, a mixture of games that include some with which they are familiar contributes toward a sense of security and evolving confidence within play-spaces, which for half the children (those from the “guest school”) will be unknown territory and possibly perceived of as potentially threatening.¹⁷

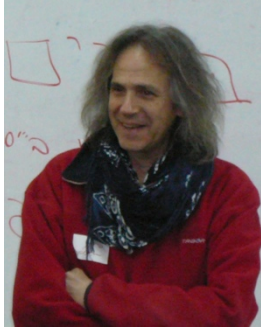
The children respond well to being immersed in each other’s game spaces. They usually come with positive attitudes, having been enchanted by the concepts of variation and version, the idea of “difference” within “the same thing,” and their feelings of pride in the selection of games they will be playing, which have come from their own families’ traditions. They are moved by the patience of the other children, parents, and grandparents who need to teach the moves appropriate to each new version of the games, and they enjoy the moments of sharing the results of their research and the thrill of learning together.

The transmission of home culture inevitably includes family stories that will reflect the history of the people of this region, as well as issues that are central to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In our programs, game-worlds from one country or area are mapped onto the terrain of another, regardless of the delicate question of borders, or the animosity of peoples separated by conflict yet living in the same or parallel space.

Within conflict situations items of folklore can appear to allude to, or raise, delicate topics that may be painful to both “sides,” so that a Hopscotch court or a recipe from a particular area, for example, can evoke negative stereotyped perceptions of the “other,” or the “other’s” ideology, as if a political statement is being made. However, the material, in this instance Hopscotch courts and other games, has been generated as a natural consequence of children exploring their home cultures within a growing and often unexpected “wonder of discovery” and the anticipation of sharing with their counterparts.

From the children’s point of view, as frequently expressed in feedback sessions, once they have overcome the strangeness of being together in each other’s “spaces,” they are just “kids having a good time,” which mitigates the subtle workings of stereotyping, political bias, and social prejudice. Parents and grandparents talk about witnessing a freedom of movement between cultural histories in their children’s play, a crisscrossing over tangible manifestations of each other’s life stories.¹⁸ Where the political issues surrounding specific items of each others’ culture are articulated, the ensuing discussion offers a way for participants to acknowledge that there may be multiple perspectives.¹⁹

Children are shown the benefit of being open to their own group’s or family’s traditions, becoming comfortable with “difference” (“we are *not* all the same”) and the celebration of diversity. They learn how difference is to be expected and respected rather than shunned, ridiculed, or feared; that difference need not be divisive or undermining. They inhabit all points of a game-world’s compass, suggesting a journey beyond conflicting perceptions of who did what to whom, learning the value of an “open mind.” In this context, Hopscotch helps to facilitate the placing of people in each other’s shoes so that they can metaphorically walk around seeing the world from a more compassionate point of view.²⁰



Simon Lichman, PhD, was born in London and has lived in Jerusalem since 1971. He is Director of the Centre for Creativity in Education and Cultural Heritage, which brings together Jewish and Arab communities through education programs based on folklore. He has taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, and Ben Gurion University of the Negev (Beersheva). He currently teaches Multicultural Education at Kaye Academic College (Beersheva). He has published numerous articles on ritual drama and the application of folklore to multicultural and co-existence education, including his Presidential Address to the 2014 Meeting of the American Folklore Society (forthcoming in the *Journal of American Folklore*). He is a published poet and has also served as Chairman of the Israel Association of Writers in English editing a number of issues of its journal, *arc*.

Acknowledgements

Our programs have been supported by local and national departments of education and various embassies, foundations, synagogue and church communities, trust funds, and private individuals in Israel, the U.K., Germany, and the U.S.

I would like to thank generations of children at play (whether school pupils, parents, grandparents, other family members, teachers, or school principals) who have shared traditional games with each other in our programs and agreed to allow us to use their descriptions of Hopscotch as well as the photographs included in this article.

I would also like to thank all past and present members of the CCECH teaching team, especially our Program Coordinator, Mahadiyah Barhum, and our research assistant and archivist, Tsahi Tubol.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the great debt I owe Rivanna Miller, the CCECH Internal Evaluator, with whom I have ongoing discussions about every facet of the work described and who has edited this article.

Notes

1. For a discussion of gender and children's games see "The Interaction of Gender and Play Style in the Development of Gender Segregation," Julie Tietz and Stephanie Shine, pp. 131-147, and "Boys Who Play Hopscotch: The Historical Divide of a Gendered Space," Derek Van Rheenen, pp. 111-131, in *Theory In and Context Out*, Vol. 3 of *Play and Culture Studies*, ed. Stuart Reifel (Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing, 2001).
2. When the State of Israel was established in 1948, the Arab communities chose to maintain separate school systems in which Arabic was the language of instruction.
3. While the individual children "graduate" at the end of 5th or 6th grade (11- to 12-year-olds), the paired Jewish and Arab schools continue in partnership so that each new pair of 4th- or 5th-grade classes automatically enters the program at the beginning of each new school year. For a more detailed description of the program structure and content see "Harnessing Folklore and Traditional Creativity to Promote Better Understanding between Jewish and Arab Children in Israel," Simon Lichman and Keith Sullivan, Vol. VI, *Education, Culture and Values*, eds. M. Leicester, S. and C. Modgil, *Politics, Education and Citizenship* (London: Falmer Press, 2000), pp-66-77. For more information about CCECH see <http://www.ccech.org>.
4. The Jewish population of Israel reflects the wide spread of countries throughout the world where there have been Jewish communities. The Arab population of Israel includes Christians, Muslims, Bedouin, and Druze from rural and urban settings.
5. In particular we use *Children's Games*, by the Flemish artist Pieter Bruegel the Elder (1560) (<http://www.khm.at/en/visit/collections/picture-gallery/selected-masterpieces>); Rothschild Dwelling, Spitalfields (London, 1930s), by the British artist John Allin (<http://spitalfieldslife.com/2012/04/09/john-allin-artist>) in *Say Goodbye: You May Never See Them Again*, John Allin and Arnold Wesker, (London: Jonathan Cape, 1974); and a photograph of a complicated draughts-type game called Siji, taken by an Armenian photographer, Elia Kahvedjian, in the 1930s. For a description of how these lessons work, see "Meeting in the Middle East: Iona and Peter Opie's Contribution to Co-existence Education," Simon Lichman and Rivanna Miller, *International Journal of Play* (Vol. 3, no. 3, December 2014), pp.280-292.
6. The local names for some of these games are as follows: Apricot Stones - *Gogoim/Adgoim* (Hebrew), *Adjum* (Arabic); Duck Duck Goose - *Golem Bma'agal* (Hebrew), *Tak Tak Takia* (Arabic); Elastics - *Gummi* (Hebrew).

Hopscotch is called *Class* in Hebrew. Polish and Russian immigrants to Palestine-Israel brought the name with them. In Russia and Poland *Class* means “class” both in the sense of “a class” and “grade.” It was a game associated with school playgrounds although it was not exclusively played in school, and has the further connotation of “going up a class” (i.e., grade) as a player progresses up the numbers on the Hopscotch court. In Arabic it is called *Hajla* (literally: hop) or *zakhkah* (which might be derived from the word *zakhlak* – to slide).

7. All photographs by Simon Lichman and Rivanna Miller.

8. The Flower court resembles “spiral Hopscotch” as described, for example, by Iona and Peter Opie, *Children’s Games with Things* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 105-7. See Simon Lichman, “From Hopscotch to *Siji*: Generations at Play in a Cross-cultural Setting” in *Play Today in the Primary School Playground: Life, Learning and Creativity*, eds. Julia Bishop and Mavis Curtis (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001), pp. 152-166, where some of this material was first presented.

9. I would like to thank members of the Childlore List for generously sharing knowledge on this point and helping locate diagrams of, and literature about, Hopscotch courts; in particular, Anna Beresin, Julia Bishop, June Factor, Mavis Marsh, Steve Roud, and Gareth Whitaker. For examples and accounts of Hopscotch see Anna R. Beresin, *The Art of Play: Recess and the Practice of Invention* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014); Simon J. Bronner, *American Children’s Folklore* (Little Rock: August House, 1988); J.W. Crombie, “History of the Game of Hop-Scotch,” *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 15, 1886, pp.403-408; June Factor, *Captain Cook Chased a Chook: Children’s Folklore in Australia*, (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin, 1988); Frederic V. Grunfeld, *Games of the World: How to Make Them, How to Play Them, How They Came to Be* (New York: Plenary Publications International Incorporated, 1975) for UNICEF; Mary and Herbert Knapp, *One Potato, Two Potato: The Folklore of American Children* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1976); Steve Roud, *The Lore of the Playground: One Hundred Years of Children’s Games, Rhymes and Traditions* (London: Random House Books, 2010).

10. Alice B. Gomme, *The Traditional Games of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 2 volumes (London: David Nutt, 1894 and 1898), pp. 224-227; and Iona and Peter Opie, *op.cit.* p. 109.

11. In contrast to this there are games where the parameters of play are determined by a tension between the number of participants and the “shape” of the game such as Duck Duck Goose, and games where the boundaries of play or the game-area itself will be determined by the general agreement of the players, such as Football, Catch, Hide and Seek, or What’s the Time Mr. Woolf (Hebrew: *Hayai Sarah* - “Sarah’s life”). For wonderful examples of the way public space is used in play see Amanda Dargan and Steve Zeitlin, *City Play* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990).

12. Iona and Peter Opie also talk about Hopscotch courts as leaving “traces behind them,” *op.cit.* p. 95.

13. Gertrude Sheffield (my colleague Barbara Rosenstein’s mother) describes how, when playing Hopscotch (called “Potsy”) in Brooklyn around 1910, they would flatten the sardine tins they used for throwing onto the squares by placing their tins on tram tracks. Arline Miller (my mother-in-law) talks with a gleam in her eye about how, in the Bronx of the 1930s, she would play a tag-like game in “the Foundies,” which entailed climbing unfinished structures and being chased across the open spaces of glassless window frames (Private Communications).

14. A more detailed description of the Joint Activities appears in Lichman (2001) *op.cit.*

15. Rivanna Miller, Evaluation Archives. Formative evaluation is used throughout CCECH programs to improve the quality of each activity and for program development.

16. Despite being a “girl’s game” in both Israeli and Palestinian communities, the boys are more than happy to play Hopscotch during the Joint Activities and talk about enjoying the opportunity to play rather than feeling embarrassed.

17. Participants refer to “Jewish space” or “Arab space.” See Simon Lichman, “Invisibility–Dissolving the Boundaries of *Local* in Conflict Situations Where *Local* Could Be *Hostile* or *Exclusive*,” Annual Meeting of the American Folklore Society, New Orleans, 2012 (unpublished).

18. Rivanna Miller, Evaluation Archives.

19. Rivanna Miller and Barbara Rosenstein are undertaking an Evaluation and Tracer Study to examine the long-term impact on participants and their communities. See the conclusion of Lichman (2001) *op.cit.* for a brief discussion of program impact.

20. See *To Kill A Mockingbird*, by Harper Lee, in which Atticus Finch uses the image of standing in someone else’s shoes to explain the importance of seeing the world from other people’s perspectives to his daughter, Scout.

Classroom Application: Student Games and Play Worksheet

Name: _____ Date _____

1. Games Write down all the games and kinds of play that you remember now or when you were younger. Don't forget pretend play, travel games, cards, video games, and board games. You may use the back of this sheet.

2. Folk Groups Write down the different groups of people you've played with, such as neighbors or school friends. These are what folklorists call folk groups.

3. Landscapes and Boundaries

List places where you have played games. Write or draw descriptions of a place where you played. Include boundaries. You may use the back of this sheet.

4. Young People at Play in Your Community

On a separate sheet, draw a picture or write a story about a memory of childhood play. Share the written story or the story of your picture with a partner. The partner should listen carefully and ask at least two questions. Write down the questions but don't answer them yet! Switch. After you've both shared, return to the questions. Do the answers deepen the story? Do your stories say anything about being from your community? Pairs should share their stories with the class.

Adapted with permission from www.louisianavoices.org.

Classroom Application: Adult Games and Play Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Now that you and classmates have collected games that you play, interview some adults about what they played when they were young. When interviewing others, remember to be polite and thank them for their time. A suggested interview form to copy for each interview follows. Add other questions you'd like to ask. If you run across an unfamiliar game, ask about it and report back to the class. Choose at least one game to ask about in detail.

Name of Person Interviewed _____

Interviewee agrees this interview may be shared in educational settings. Yes _____

Birth Year _____ Female _____ Male _____

Birthplace _____

Childhood Home (if different) _____

1. Games Played as a Child (list games, use a separate sheet if necessary).

2. Write a detailed description of at least one game you collect. Include rules, number of players, boundaries, who played it, special memories (use the back of this sheet or a separate sheet).

Adapted with permission from www.louisianavoices.org.



Expanding Digital Learning Opportunities for Skateboarders and Other Teen Subcultures

by Tal Bar-Zemer and Jessica Forsyth

Skateboarding, it really is a community. You could see another skateboarder you've never met and you feel that connection, just because they do what you do, and when you see them it's like you can be friends instantly, just because you both do that one thing.

~Kickflip skater, Cerebral*

Skateboarders have always had a certain eye for things. We see things that most people would take for granted. Like handrails or ledges and benches. You look at it is as something to sit on, we look at it as something to conquer. And we are always trying to adapt, we are always seeing it from a completely different perspective.

~Skater and youth mentor, Rodney Torres

Kickflip channels teen skateboarders' passionate interest and talents into digital learning. This interest-driven, connected learning program benefits teen skateboarders for whom school is often not a safe or constructive learning environment. Co-sponsored by [City Lore](#) and the [Harold Hunter Foundation](#), based in New York City, the program is carefully planned to link skateboarders'

* Cerebral is a pseudonym selected by the Kickflip skater/student.



Kickflip skater/student Bilal Ndongo instructs Harold Hunter Day skaters in the rules of the game his group designed with the Arduino board.
Photo by Abby Ronner.

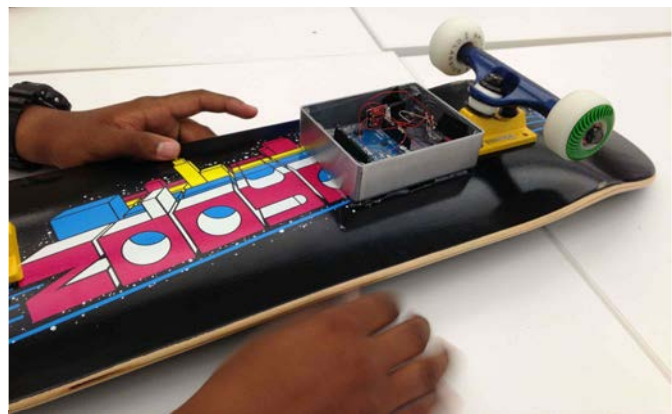
identities and interests to support their development and expand their skill sets. The skills endemic to this population are not often supported in a conventional classroom setting. We seek to empower these teens by helping them to understand and value what they learn as they pursue their passions and how those skills can serve them in the future.

Kickflip has been developed as a model that can be applied to other teen subcultures ranging from hobby-based subcultures such as Comic Book Fans, Gamers, Manga, and Spoken Word; music-based subcultures such as Hip-Hop/B-boys/Graffiti, Emo, and Metalheads; fashion-based subcultures such as Haul Girls and Sneakerheads; and other formal and informal sports-based subcultures such as BMX, Parkour, and Street Ball.

Taking place in an intensive summer workshop, as well as during the school year on weekends and after school, participants work in teams on iterative design processes emanating from their passion for skateboarding to create projects in graphic, web, fashion, and game design; digital filmmaking; coding; and app development. Participants can specialize and go deep in one area of interest or choose to be exposed to a range of media and skill sets. Participants receive mentorship and coaching from instructors and industry professionals to support their artistic and academic growth and expand notions about their skills and career and college prospects.

In past workshops students have created documentary films, designed and play-tested skateboarding games, designed interactive apps, and created and programmed Arduino-enhanced skateboards. Arduino is a peripheral circuit board that can be programmed to measure trick accuracy by counting the number of times the skateboard flips and/or rotates. Youth who took part in the program coded a game-scoring app that used this technology.

In addition to a rigorous, engaging curriculum, we conduct an evaluation process that allows us to assess how the program contributes to changes in students' perception of themselves as learners and their feelings of college and career readiness. We have also been the subject of several studies to measure youth trajectories, interest-driven learning models, and youth engagement with connected learning and technology. Two teen skateboarders from the program subsequently applied and were accepted into the computer programming undergraduate program at Parsons.



An Arduino circuit board fastened to a skateboard. Student teams designed games that used sensors connected to the Arduino and programmed to measure the physics of skateboard tricks. Photo by Jessica Forsyth.

Kickflip project partners are members of Mozilla's [HIVE NYC Learning Network](#), a growing constellation of communities around the globe that champion digital skills and web literacy through connected learning. Funded by Hive Digital Media Learning Fund in The New York Community Trust, Kickflip has conducted a series of workshops on [filmmaking](#) with Reel Works and on [physical computing and game design](#), and [game app design](#)² with Parsons The New School for Design.



About the Youth

Our target demographic for Kickflip is youth between the ages of 14 and 24 in New York City who struggle academically or behaviorally but are already engaged in skateboarding activities during afterschool hours and the summer. Many of our students struggle with a variety of social, emotional, and behavioral issues that have distanced them from activities at school.

Skateboarding provides a space that helps them to develop improved self-control, focus, and commitment and offers a positive diversion from less healthy, potentially destructive behaviors. Through partnerships with local community and faith-based organizations, as well as youth interns and participants, the Harold Hunter Foundation (HHF) has strong connections with students from some of the most underserved areas, which have the highest concentration of high-risk disengaged youth (youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school and are not employed), particularly in Brownsville, East New York, and the South Bronx.

As a group, teen skateboarders in New York City are often an underserved and misunderstood population who do not consider themselves college-bound prospects. However, their commitment to learning in pursuit of their passion is an asset. Their craft often draws them together in spaces around the city to socialize, experiment, and perfect their skills.

About 95 percent of the youth Kickflip serves are Black and Latino skateboarders from low-income and often single-parent households in neighborhoods with the highest rates of poverty, violence, and incarceration. Many of the very qualities, abilities, and characteristics that draw these youth to skateboarding also make them vulnerable to a variety of pitfalls. Skateboarders have unique learning styles and socio-emotional and behavioral needs that are often not adequately addressed by conventional organizations and institutions, particularly in resource-poor neighborhoods. Such circumstances hinder development of their creativity and innovative spirit and often leave them disengaged from school.

KICKFLIP Best Practices for Connected Teaching/Learning and Youth Engagement

Use professional-caliber training and professional equipment.

Ensure 360-degree transparency among students, group leaders, teachers, and guests.

Group work and teamwork, both among students and between/with instructors, administrators/staff, and students is critical.

Working within a subculture and harnessing existing social networks improves learning.

Students need to feel that their needs and desires are being accommodated.

Empowerment is essential for learning to occur.

Students will thrive in an environment of mutual respect where students, instructors, and administrators are on equal footing and students' expertise is valued.

Learning must be engaging so that it is simultaneously challenging and fun.

Learning and knowledge that develop through experiences outside a formal classroom space are relevant and should be drawn upon to enhance students' learning in the classroom.

Repeated "failure" is an essential part of learning and mastery.

Failure and difficulty do not have to be demoralizing if the process is transparent and the learning applies to what is relevant to students' lives.

Through Kickflip we sought to fill the void left by more conventional organizations and institutions by providing an out-of-school program specifically and creatively tailored to harness and develop potential while addressing the specific challenges skateboarders may face in academic settings. Although often perceived as a disaffected group who disrespect authority, skateboarders have inherent strengths: tenacity, passion, flexibility, creativity, and patience. These strengths can serve them well, not only in their sport, but also in both academic and professional settings. Skateboarding offers a healthy outlet that diverts youth from gang participation, prevents a sedentary lifestyle, builds character, provides a coping strategy to channel difficult feelings, and instills a spirit of community involvement, self-efficacy, and entrepreneurship.

Skateboarding is as much an art form as a sport, with the personal style of the skateboarder as valued as the technical execution of tricks. Most skaters are drawn to skating because of the opportunity for creative expression both through skateboarding itself and the various visual art forms that are integral to the culture of skateboarding, from filmmaking to graphic design.

Program Model and Best Practices

How does an interest-driven, connected learning program such as Kickflip influence students for whom school is not a safe or constructive learning environment? How does it use their strong identity to support their development and expand their ideas of their skill sets?

How can similar youth populations connect with opportunities to cultivate their existing skill sets, develop new skills, connect with adult mentors invested in their ongoing development, and access alternative pathways to academic and career success?

In designing and refining Kickflip over the course of three iterations, we developed best practices that will be made accessible in an online toolkit providing resources that other organizations can use to design programs that harness the strengths of hard-to-reach youth populations by targeting a specific subculture of youth and/or to adapt existing programs to work more effectively with the

youth they currently serve. We developed a set of guiding principles that can be used by other practitioners to design programs. These principles are based on basic assumptions about the population, the nature of conventional learning spaces, and the best practices for creating an optimal interest-driven connected learning environment.¹

What Is Connected Learning?

Ito, M., et al. 2013. *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design*. Irvine, CA: Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.

Kumpulainen, K. and J. Sefton-Green. 2012. What Is Connected Learning and How to Research It? *International Journal of Learning and Media* 4(2)7-18.

These basic assumptions and guiding principles were derived through our experience working with student skateboarders and adult mentors and instructors from the skateboard community, discussions and interviews with instructors and adults from the community, observations of students in workshops, analysis of video- and audio-recorded one-on-one interviews with program participants, and a focus group conducted with a student advisory group made up of program participants.

These practices and guiding principles will continue to guide and inform HHF's programs with teen skateboarders and City Lore's Out-of-School Time Programs. Our next steps are to publish online Kickflip documentation and guiding principles and disseminate them to community-based educators interested in using digital technology and connected learning experiences to engage hard-to-reach teens by drawing on their existing skills, strengths, and passions. Our hope is that Kickflip will provide strong evidence of the strengths and skills of these youth to the world outside the skateboard community, a hope articulated by Cerebral, one of the Kickflip skaters: "The program just gives us an opportunity to show the perseverance that we learned in skateboarding in a more positive light and show it to the world."



Tal Bar-Zemer, MEd, an independent consultant, served as City Lore's Education Associate and Manager of Out-of-School Time Programs for three years and was the Project Co-Director of Kickflip. **Jessica Forsyth**, PhD, is Co-Founder and Executive Director of Harold Hunter Foundation and co-directed the Kickflip Project.

HHF Director Jessica Forsyth consults with judges Peter Pabon (skate photographer and journalist) and Reid van Renesse (skater and video producer/filmmaker) as they tally points following a screening of Kickflip 1.0 student videos at Harold Hunter Day. Photo by Amanda Dargan.

URLS

<http://www.citylore.org>

<http://www.haroldhunter.org>

Notes

1. A toolkit will be available online via the City Lore, HHF, and Hive NYC websites in December 2015.
2. <https://hivelearningnetworks.org>
<https://vimeo.com/57074557>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8bElRocBiQ&index=4&list=PL4slyQodoIv3QkeF15ipPWRi-UYbvWZY7>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKD8F-6CHWc&index=2&list=PL4slyQodoIv3QkeF15ipPWRi-UYbvWZY7>



Pen Tapping: Forbidden Folklore

by Anna Beresin

While setting up a filmmaking elective in an afterschool program in the Point Breeze section of South Philadelphia, our University of the Arts students noticed the ten-year-olds pen tapping. They were not just tapping their pens. They had full drum sets at the ends of their writing implements—scraping, touching the tip of their Bics like drum sticks. What emerged was an unveiling of a full-fledged children’s folklore phenomenon, complete with stylistics and folk origins. It became evident that not only was this something that many of the children loved to do, but also that it was illicit, not permitted in school.

*In music class?
You can’t do pen tapping in music class. Music class is boring. We just listen to stuff.*

*In the cafeteria?
In the cafeteria? At lunch? You would be suspended for pen tapping at lunch.*

*Why?
Teachers don’t like it. They say it’s noise.*

The children were experts in pop music and knew words and moves, and clearly the rhythms, to almost every major hip-hop artist. But pen tapping emerged only on the sly, often in competition. I asked if one particularly skilled pen tapper ever considered taking drum lessons.



UARTS student Perry Melat with young friends.



Making the Film *Making Beats*

Making Beats was filmed by children under the direction of undergraduate art students at the University of the Arts. Each week 18 college students walked to the afterschool program in a K-8 public elementary school and created elective curricula in media, design, and art and performance, based on the subjects chosen by the school children. As the college students reflected, gathered materials, and designed the courses, they soon recognized the youths' skill and the absurdity of its invisibility.

In addition to learning about pen tapping as a subject, the filming project led to questioning our usual research procedures. It seems that pen tapping is all over YouTube, no surprise, with tips on how to do it and celebrations of great skill.¹ The only type of material found in an academic search was about how to stop children from tapping their pens, and its connection to ADHD (Sida-Nicholls, 2012). Even the children were surprised that we considered what they were doing to be a music tradition. This all suggests the need for a multimedia approach to folklore study, particularly with newer performance genres.

Although we have permission to film, we cannot name the children's names here.² Thanks go to the participants of the inaugural class of Neighborhood Engagement at the University of the Arts: Emily Anthony-Craig, Nathalia Avila, Tiffany Bunch, Jason Corbett, Mawiyah Dowd, Spencer Faulk, Isaiah Freeman, Jihyun Lee, Anne Marie Levy, Patrick Luong, Zoe McCarthy, Perry Melat, Sarah Moyer, Marianne Murphy, Melanie Rosenthal, Catherine Snyder, Elizabeth Tong, Jayda Turner, and especially Photography Senior Lecturer Lindsay Sparagana.

They did not expect to uncover an undocumented folk tradition in a school setting, but they recognized art when they saw it.

The Clef Club of Jazz was a mere few blocks away, where the drum faculty have played with greats; some of the old timers in jazz had played with Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and John Coltrane. Never heard of them. The Clef Club, a historic landmark of performance created when Black musicians were excluded from the white musicians' union, also was unrecognized. The idea that pen tapping might be connected to a larger field of music was interesting, yet puzzling, to the children.

Pen tapping seems to emerge from the great rhythm game traditions, with its syncopations rooted in Africa. Its genre cousins appear to include tap dancing, body slapping, step dancing, hand clapping, and its recent relative, the cup tapping game. How ironic in this age of the disappearing pen, that it emerges as an instrument. Children have often played with trivialized materials, the discarded fabrics and bits of wood not in use by adults (Dargan and Zeitlin, 1990; Rossie, 2005; Schwartzman, 1978; Sutton-Smith, 1986). Pen tapping is also clearly related to beat boxing, the imitative percussion of the mouth popular in rap and Brazilian music, and to the improvisation of jazz (Euell and Alexander, 2009; Gunn, 1999). In these traditions, the mouth or body imitates the drum, which is often imitating the body or speech. You can see the students' own connection of pen tapping with break dancing in the spontaneous acrobatics of the film.

Ironically, as the children got to know our students and our art materials, the pen tapping subsided. Like many children's folklore traditions, it seemed to serve the purpose of

transition making. Once they began to make films and record songs, our time was spent sharing technical skills. Much like handclapping in between activities, pen tapping only then emerged as a filler. Yet, it was a powerful way for our students to meet these younger ones as equals.

Bo Diddley, Bo Diddley, where you been?



Anna Beresin is Professor of Liberal Arts at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. A folklorist and psychologist, her books include *The Art of Play: Recess and the Practice of Invention*, 2014, Temple University Press, and *Recess Battles: Playing, Fighting, and Storytelling*, 2010, University Press of Mississippi. *Recess Battles* won the Iona and Peter Opie Award from the American Folklore Society. She co-directs NEUARTS, Neighborhood Engagement at the University of the Arts with Lindsay Sparagana, Senior Lecturer in Photography.

Photo: Anna Beresin and Lindsay Sparagana

URL

Making Beats is accessible on the *Journal of Folklore and Education* YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KODQ6La0kPA>.

Notes

1. Two videos depicting pen tapping online can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6HyjBEFulol and www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFDvtacIjVY.
2. We are in a lucky position to photograph and video the children, as their families gave permission when they signed up for this afterschool program. It seems proper to not name names as a way to partially mask their identities and to acknowledge their group's collaborative effort.

Works Cited

- Dargan, Amanda and Steve Zeitlin. 1990. *City Play*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Gunn, Russell. 1999. *Ethnomusicology*. Vol. 1. New York: Atlantic Recording Corporation.
- Euell, Kim and Robert Alexander. 2009. *Plays from the Boom Box Galaxy: Theater from the Hip-Hop Generation*. New York: Theater Communications Group.
- Rossie, Jean-Pierre. 2005. *Toys, Play, Culture and Society: An Anthropological Approach with Reference to North Africa and the Sahara*. Stockholm: Royal Institute of Technology.
- Schwartzman, Helen. 1978. *Transformations: The Anthropology of Children's Play*. New York: Plenum.
- Sida-Nicholls, Kate. 2012. *What If It Happens in My Classroom? Developing Skills for Expert Behaviour Management*. London: Routledge.
- Sutton-Smith, Brian. 1986. *Toys as Culture*. New York: Gardner Press.



UARTS students with Anna Beresin.

Building Community as a Cool Commodity: Empowering Teens as Local Changemakers

by Emily Hope Dobkin

In preparation for when historic surfboards returned from Hawaii to Santa Cruz in July 2015, teens in the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (MAH) youth program, Subjects to Change (S2C), helped create a section of the exhibit *Princes of Surf*.¹ They served as cultural researchers who explored the remarkable story of these surfboards and through the story of surfing learned the concept of leaving an unintended legacy. Diving into this story helped these teens feel more connected to Santa Cruz's history, discover how traditions grow and change while a community identity is formed, and gain skills in documenting and presenting local culture.



In the summer of 1885, three Hawaiian princes, David Kawanakoa, Edward Keli'iahonui, and Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, started Santa Cruz on its journey to becoming a city of surf. While visiting family, they introduced surfing to the world beyond Hawaii by crafting surfboards from Santa Cruz's redwood lumber. They rode the waves here and returned to Hawaii with their boards. The princes were teenagers at the time; never did they intend to leave such a legacy in Santa Cruz. The impact of their stay rippled from coast to coast and shaped the cultural identity of Santa Cruz County.

On this 130th anniversary of their epic ride, two of the three original redwood surfboards returned to Santa Cruz to be displayed at the museum. In preparation for the *Princes of Surf* exhibit, S2Cers explored how these boards set the course for developing Santa Cruz's surfing identity. They curated a section of the exhibit that includes interviews they conducted with three local teens who are "making waves" in Santa Cruz through their own talents and crafts.

When S2Cers were first invited by the museum's exhibit team to participate in this process, they knew their first challenge was to establish that they were not only changemakers, but spacemakers: they believe in making space to empower more teens to get involved with our community. They decided to use the exhibit space to celebrate and honor three local teens they believe will have a legacy in Santa Cruz County.

Their first step was figuring out exactly who those three teens were. At an event they hosted in late April at the museum, they set up a "nomination station," asking visitors to share names of teens who they think are making an impact. From there, they narrowed down a list, did further research on these local teens, and made their final selection. Thereafter, S2Cers designed questions and arranged interviews with the three teens they selected to highlight in the exhibit.



“I liked asking the subjects, ‘What is your advice for other teens wanting to make a difference in their community?’ It was inspiring to hear each of them be so transparent and genuine in their responses. This question seemed to come the most natural to all of them,” explained Mikaela Byers, former S2Cer and Youth Media Intern at the MAH.

For teens interviewing teens, the experience is much more than simply gathering information. It gives them a chance to bridge differences and share with one another. “This project gave me exposure to other teens that I otherwise wouldn’t have connected with. It was great to finally talk with people I had only passed in hallways,” Mikaela further explains.

As a teen who has been sparked by the documentary process and plans on studying film in college, Mikaela took on the role of editing and compiling the majority of the [Teens Making Waves](#) film for the exhibit. Through this, she learned how to share a story that reflects her community: “Making nonfiction film is my favorite form of documentation. I’ve loved learning everything from interviewing to the editing process. I think documentary film is special because you are able to combine both images and sound. Both photo and film are able to utilize the power of visual art, but video is special because of the amount of effort and time that you (as the director producer, etc.) pour into it. Getting the footage is just the beginning.”

The resulting message that Mikaela and S2Cers produced is powerful: “Young people are often underestimated in their ability to create positive change in the community. It’s unlikely that the Hawaiian princes knew just how integral their surf session would be to the U.S., and the world. This video shows three teens who have very different passions, yet all have carved out space for themselves in the community. Teens will make the biggest impact on the community when they pursue things that they love to do, whether it be surfing, singing, science, or skating.”



Subjects to Change is a youth-driven program that empowers teenagers to engage as active community leaders through community discovery, collaborative arts, and creative experiences. Based upon the youth empowerment model, S2C has two primary goals: 1) Empower teenagers as community changemakers using the arts to develop projects that inspire positive change on local issues that matter to them and 2) Create opportunities for teenagers to become community ambassadors at the museum and for other community projects.

Through skill development, community collaborations, and community-based projects, S2Cers learn how they can make an impact both on an individual and a collective level. Participating teens share their passion for activism through a series of informal art workshops. Whether using improv theatre techniques to complete a team-building exercise, exploring the root causes of a local issue through a printmaking project, or expressing distant relations to our underutilized river with poetry, S2Cers are exposed to a variety of local culture and artistic media to inspire change while finding their own creative voices. This group loved taking on the challenge of conducting research into the living legacy of surf culture in Santa Cruz.

How S2C Works

S2C runs on the trimester system, serving a cohort of 15 to 20 students ages 12 to 18 from across the county per term. We have found that teens rarely have the opportunity to interact with other teens beyond their schools. S2C aims to connect youth throughout the county using art, culture, and social activism to empower teens across differences and locations.

During their first term, S2Cers research and identify community issues that they feel most passionate about. From there, teens brainstorm how to raise awareness on those issues creatively. A key issue that youth have identified is the lack of creative safe spaces for teens to go to on Friday. To fill this gap, S2Cers created a space by initiating bimonthly Teen Nights at the museum.

During their second term, S2Cers hone in on a specific theme related to the social issues they have been exploring and focus on implementing their ideas at Teen Nights to serve the greater youth community. They collaborate with local community members, organizations, artists, and musicians. Additionally, they create their own interactive social justice themed projects for Teen Nights. Teen Nights are free and attract about 300 diverse teenagers to the museum, allowing more youth to get involved with their community.

In their third term, S2Cers become further integrated into the museum's regular programming by volunteering at our public events and festivals as activity facilitators. S2Cers begin to take on leadership skills by engaging with diverse visitors, stepping out of their comfort zones, and leading strangers in creative and cultural activities. S2Cers also intern in various departments at the museum or organizations within the community.



The heart of what S2ers do is initiate change through building community. It's been exciting to see how Santa Cruz teens flourish not only individually but also collectively as a group and beyond by encouraging additional teens to connect with their community. I've been thinking about how the tools that I've acquired in developing S2C can be used in other educational settings. How can we get more arts for social change happening in classrooms? The following are ways that I think any educator can apply what we've done with S2C in their learning environments.

Explore the foundation: Self-identity vs. community identity. Taking time to establish that teens (or any students) are meaningful contributors to their community is crucial. Within S2C, we emphasize how communities are not built just by architects or city planners; communities are built upon connections with one another, positive relationships, and a sense of belonging. We begin our time together by completing a series of identity workshops and projects to create a safe space to explore larger issues in our local community. This not only bonds the group, teens are also inspired by one another and develop camaraderie. Through further discussions and ventures into the community, teens later move on to explore community needs and assets, as well as issues that surface for them on a daily basis.

Get out there: Identify, connect, and collaborate. We always start with a community mapping activity. I ask teens to doodle a map of their personal communities. Every time I lead this activity and ask S2Cers for their thoughts, a common response is, "Wow, my community is really small; I just go to school, then to x (soccer practice, band rehearsal, etc.), and then home." Sharing various resources, inspiring community members, getting out in the community, and doing activities like a photography scavenger hunt of downtown Santa Cruz allows our teens a shift in perspective and new ways to get involved with their community. We also focus a considerable amount of time on our collaborative partnerships. All spring we participate in various community events across the county to share what we're about and learn from other organizations.

After one outreach project, S2Cer Mariah reflected, "This experience really opened my eyes to how little exposure I have had to Watsonville and all of the wonderful people that live there. It is so important that we continue to bridge the divide between north county and south county. It feels really good knowing that we as changemakers have the power to do that in a creative way through collaborative art projects...and we must."²

Let them build and more will come. When creating this program about two years ago, we learned that in teen centers and other youth programs across Santa Cruz, teenagers are recipients of programming, not co-creators or leaders. S2C gives teenagers real responsibility and leadership opportunities in a supportive environment.



Within a structured system, teens are given the reins to plan their own events and projects. Initially, S2Cers brainstorm issues that affect them and their peers directly: public safety, litter and pollution, homelessness, gender stereotyping, the Santa Cruz County divide, mental illness stigmatization, and the juvenile justice system. They then create a theme incorporating these local issues, followed by making marketing materials, meeting with potential collaborators, and designing interactive activities. Amazing projects have resulted from this such as a [photo booth that explores stereotypes](#),³ the establishment of gender neutral bathrooms at the museum, and a [self-care zine](#)⁴ highlighting local resources for teens. Beyond the core group that meets weekly,

hundreds more teens have increased exposure to community building through Teen Nights. These events ultimately offer new ways of exploring Santa Cruz by providing teens a space to share perspectives creatively while promoting social activism.

Changemaking leads to spacemaking. As teens design projects and experiences, they are making space for others to connect to our community in fully engaged ways. Recently, S2Cers incorporated an open mic into an event. I had concerns. What if no one signed up? Did we have a backup playlist? The first person who got up on [stage sang Frank Sinatra](#)⁵; by the end of the song, the floor was packed with couples dancing. The last duo sang a song from *The Little Mermaid*. In between, singers, songwriters, and poets shared their work. It was not nearly what I anticipated (in the best of ways), and I applauded S2Cers for creating a format for that all to take place. It was an awesome example of how they provided a space for creative voices to be heard, shared, and empowered.

It is imperative that we keep unlocking this kind of leadership potential among young people. When youth support one another in community building, there is exponentially a positive ripple effect within a place, whether it be a community center, school, or museum.

At the core, S2C is helping teens learn who they are and how to make meaning within the community where they live. They are exploring what shapes our community and celebrating the subcultures that exist here in Santa Cruz: the surfers, the poets, the Pacific Avenue street performers, the artists, the musicians, the farmers' market regulars, the young people. They discover that it is cool to play a vital role in their community, and in participating in the rich expressions of Santa Cruz culture.



Emily Hope Dobkin holds an MA in Arts Management from the University of Oregon with a focus in Community Arts, as well as a BA in Creative Writing from Goucher College. Her background spans a hodgepodge of various creative arts experiences, all of which have inspired her to facilitate a range of engaging arts educational opportunities in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Eugene, San Francisco, and now as the Youth Programs Manager at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History.

Notes

1. <http://www.santacruzmah.org/2015/the-birth-of-surf-city-july-3-october-25-2015>
2. See <http://subjectstochangesantacruz.tumblr.com/post/119937787225/s2c-on-the-road>
3. <https://www.flickr.com/photos/santacruzmah/sets/72157644437307071>
4. <http://subjectstochangesantacruz.tumblr.com/post/117273695579/giving-out-free-zines-on-self-care-packed-full-of>
5. <https://www.facebook.com/santacruzmah/videos/vb.107670235978659/820968551315487/?type=2&theater>

URL

Teens Making Waves film <https://youtu.be/3d9cj-UDVxU>.



Discovering Community, Transforming Education

Students from Open Fields School in Thetford learn camera techniques and work on their documentary film at the Elizabeth Copper Mine in Strafford, Vermont.

A Conversation with Gregory Sharrow

For a decade the Vermont Folklife Center (VFC) has supported educators and students in a K-16 program based on ethnographic inquiry called Discovering Community. The Discovering Community Education Program hosts an annual week-long summer institute and ongoing professional development opportunities; lends equipment; and offers expertise in interviewing, documentation, and curriculum development. The long-term goal is to foster a transformative experience for young people that will facilitate personal growth by deepening their understanding of others and, in turn, themselves. At the same time, community-based research promotes young peoples' sense of identification with, and caring for, their home communities and their future involvement in civic life. Since drawing on community resources and using digital technology represent rich opportunities for hands-on learning, this approach engages all students, facilitating the development of basic research and communication skills.

VFC's co-director Gregory Sharrow has shaped Discovering Community to bring together place as the context, sustainability as the goal, and service learning as the strategy. A former social studies teacher, he brings understanding of public school realities to his leadership in the field of folklore and education. Paddy Bowman of Local Learning interviewed Greg to capture his thoughts on how ethnography—a key concept and method in folklore, oral history, anthropology, and ethnomusicology—uniquely prepares young people to engage with local people, cultural expressions, institutions, and civic life.



Students in Cambodia work on photo stories to exchange with students from Hartford Area Career and Tech Center in Vermont as part of the [World Story Exchange](#) program, an affiliate of VFC.



LL: Why is folklore so important in the education of young people?

GS: Ethnography is our key concept. It stitches through everything that we do and is the key. Through ethnography, people become visible to one another. This kind of research sets metes and bounds and establishes the lenses through which people can understand themselves and others. It also provides for more collaborative exchanges, and by positioning interviewees as experts, it begins to dissolve lines of class, power, wealth, or prestige. Everyone is the expert of their own lives.

Folklorists historically have worked with marginalized cultural groups documenting wide varieties of cultural expressions, so we are axiomatically involved with a radical leveling of society. Ethnography presupposes that hierarchies don't apply. We would document an abstract artist in the same way we would document a traditional quilter.

Our education programs encourage students to learn to be storytellers; to explore and capture stories in their communities by doing primary source research; to listen to others' stories, thereby building empathy and compassion; and to come to see themselves as part of a wider, interwoven community.

LL: What is an example of how this works?

GS: Preparing young people for our annual VFC three-week travel study to Rwanda for the past several years offers numerous examples. Students arrive in Rwanda prepared to use their documentary and media production skills on projects defined by our local partners. Rather than building a house, we go to collaborate on video projects that become fundraising tools for clean water projects, for example. In the process our students work side by side with local people seeing these issues through the eyes of their Rwandan partners and collaboratively producing media that tell a story defined by the community with which they are working.

Disabusing young people of being tourists is our main training goal. They need to scrutinize the mindset, “as North Americans we have the answers.” To do this, we lead activities to help them understand how they attribute normative values and position themselves. Ethnography allows these students to approach people with respect and the presumption that they will find unfamiliar as well as familiar circumstances and traditions.

The Putney Central School’s “Portraits of Sustainability in Putney” is another example. The 8th-grade Social Studies class considered definitions of sustainability and learned the fundamentals of ethnographic research, interviewing techniques, and media production. Each student selected a member of the community to interview and photograph and produced a short film, a portrait of this individual and the work they do. Film subjects included individuals working in the fields of mental health, food, farming, education, conservation, solar power, town government, and road and land management. Students also produced audio pieces that feature residents’ responses to the question, “If you could change one thing about Putney, what would it be?” (See the Putney Central Case Study, which outlines how this project was organized and links to students’ media productions.)

LL: What does this mean for public education?

GS: All cultural groups have a deep sense of the role of education in their society and ideas about educational practice. Learning from local educators, parents, and young people about education in their lives can only improve school systems.

LL: How does VFC serve Discovering Community teachers and students?

GS: We have a cadre of teachers who speak at national and regional conferences about their work. We provide methodology and technology training through the summer institute, workshops, and working one-on-one with educators. Teachers’ visions drive our involvement. We might be asked to help with planning, loan equipment, direct interviewing instruction, assist with media production, or conduct a two-week residency.



VFC’s Upper Valley Oral History project invited youth from the Upper Valley Haven, a homeless shelter, to work with seniors at Bugbee Senior Center. The youth asked seniors to reflect on local places that have changed. They took photos of those places and then we found archival images at Hartford Historical Society. See the resulting film at <https://vimeo.com/72751982>.

I believe strongly in Backward Design so I begin by asking, “Where do you want students to be when this ends?” That way we can work smarter. I also believe in community events that showcase culminating projects that all parties may attend. Media also takes students’ discoveries beyond the classroom so student work is increasingly accessible.

LL: Given the “education wars” and the climate in many states’ school systems, how does Discovering Community fit in the curriculum and help students meet standards?

GS: The Vermont legislature mandated alternative, competency-based evaluation for high school graduation. Every student has a personal learning plan and must complete a self-directed project.

We fit neatly into the education paradigm in our state. We support teachers in meeting the objectives of the curriculum, as well as identify alternative strategies for meeting the standards. This model could be successfully adapted in other states as well.

LL: How do your education projects fit within VFC's mission?

GS: Founded in 1984, VFC's archive houses the stories of more than 6,000 Vermonters organized in over a hundred collections. Inspiring young people to document the lives of local people, family members, and friends fits completely within our purview. Students are adding to scholarship, learning about the local, and serving their communities.

LL: What's on the horizon as you look into the future?

GS: We've just hired Kathleen Haughey from the PhD program in ethnomusicology at Brown University to take on the leadership of our ed program. Her first project is to develop an online showcase for student media projects that will also serve as a resource for educators who are interested in media and community-based learning. It's thrilling to have a new member of our team who is so capable, creative, and committed to furthering this work!



Classroom Application: Putney Central School Case Study (A Discovering Community Project)

Project Name Portraits of Sustainability in Putney, Vermont
Location Putney Central School
Date Fall 2014
Time 4 times a week for 10 weeks (3, 45-minute; 1, 90-minute class)
Teacher Leah Toffolon
VFC Team Greg Sharrow, Evie Lovett
Student Age 8th grade
Class Social Studies, 14 students



Havah (L) and Angelika (R) interview Andrea Darrow of Green Mountain Orchards in Putney, Vermont. Photo by Marianne Toffolon.

Project Description and Goals: Introduce students to ethnographic inquiry, interviewing techniques, audio recording, photography, and video and media production. Discussing ethics and approaches to interviewing and photographing were also important.

The larger objective was for students to learn to be storytellers; to explore and capture stories in their community by doing primary source research; to listen to others' stories, thereby building empathy and compassion; and to see themselves as part of a wider, interwoven community.

Students participated in an introductory "Vox Pop" audio exercise. In groups of two to three, they went to downtown Putney and asked residents, "What is one thing you would change about Putney?" Students worked together to edit responses into short audio pieces. They gained familiarity with the Tascam and Garageband software and editing process. The pieces can be heard at <https://soundcloud.com/pcsmmedia/sets/putney-sustainability-project-fall-2014>.

The initial exercise was preparation for an assignment of a three-minute audio slideshow of audio excerpts and still images. Students chose community members connected with the broader theme of Sustainability, interviewed them, photographed them and their work places, edited the audio, and produced a short video using iMovie software. Students were responsible for making contact with their subject, interviewing, recording, photographing, storyboarding, and editing their film.

The project culminated with a community presentation of the films on the big screen at Next Stage Arts Project, attended by over a hundred community members. After the screening, student filmmakers answered questions onstage. When asked what the best part of the process was, one student said, "Tonight: showing our films to the community and realizing that we kids really had something to contribute and that people, adults, are interested in seeing it."



Idea for the next project: Putney Central School and The Grammar School could create a collaborative project interviewing Putney elders.

Equipment

6 Tascam DR-40 recorders, mics, and headphones (supplied by VFC)
14 MacBook laptops (for use onsite only at PCS)
3 digital cameras
Student cameras and iPhones
Extra batteries

Software

Garageband
iTunes
iMovie

Syllabus

Pre-project: Explore concept of sustainability

Intangibles

Caleb Clark, IT support at Putney Central School, was available for help as needed.

Audio slideshow project could have been shortened by 3-7 days if students were permitted to take laptops home or work at scheduled times outside class. This would be possible as no other homework was assigned at this time.

Next Stage provided the screening venue free of charge.

VOX POP PRODUCTION

Class 1 Greg Sharrow: What is ethnographic research?

Introduction to interviewing techniques
Demo interview with Herve Pelletier, PCS Principal

Class 2 Introduction to Vox Pop project

Examples <http://www.prx.org/pieces/19078>
Vox Pop exercise in the community in groups of 3 (1-equipment, 2-interview, 3-scout and troubleshoot)
Interview 3 people minimum

Class 3 Media-making ethics

Introduction to Garageband workflow
Download and edit audio

Class 4 Garageband workflow, cont'd.

Class 5-6 Editing

Class 7 Presentation of audio pieces

AUDIO SLIDESHOW PRODUCTION

Class 1 Introduce audio slideshow project

Show examples
http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/1-in-8-million/#/joshua_caouette

Class 2-3 Audio slideshow examples

http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/travel/20080222_MARTIN_FEATURE/index.html
http://www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/1-in-8-million/#/lynn_true

Contact subjects
Brainstorm questions

Class 4 Audio slideshow examples

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-outthere-salvationv2-ss-htmlstory.html>

<http://www.latimes.com/nation/la-na-bennett-freeze-ss-htmlstory.html>

Introduction to photography/the camera

Photo scavenger hunt

Class 5 Role-play interviews (essential)

Replay Greg Sharrow interview with Herve Pelletier

Teen Reporter Handbook review

Class 6 Students conduct interviews at school

Class 7 Listen to and log interviews

Download

Create shot list

Class 8 Students interview and photograph on site

Class 9 Thank-you notes

Listen, log audio

Download photos

Class 10 Download audio and photographs

Class 11 How to edit 30 min. of audio to 3 min. FIND THE STORY

Class 12-15 Audio editing

Class 16 Introduction to iMovie

Class 17-23 Video editing

Class 24-25 Presentation of videos

What We Learned/What We Would Change

Audio Slideshow class 1-5 could be compressed (it was stretched out because of scheduling).

Audio and video editing days could be shortened by requiring students to sign up for out-of-class or afterschool sessions once a week.

Consider running it as an afterschool program.

Assign some tasks as homework (creating storyboard from logged audio, creating shot list from audio, etc.).

Build in a weekly conference during editing periods so adults have built-in one-on-one time with students.

Bring in other professionals and PCS students for editing support.

Add more peer editing (make this an expectation on which students will be assessed).

Emphasize it's essential to log audio.

Storyboarding is essential. Maybe use storyboarding program online.

Structure in reflection time (Need more time between interviews 1 and 2. Log, storyboard, ask what photos do I need, what do I want to know?).

Video Q&A.

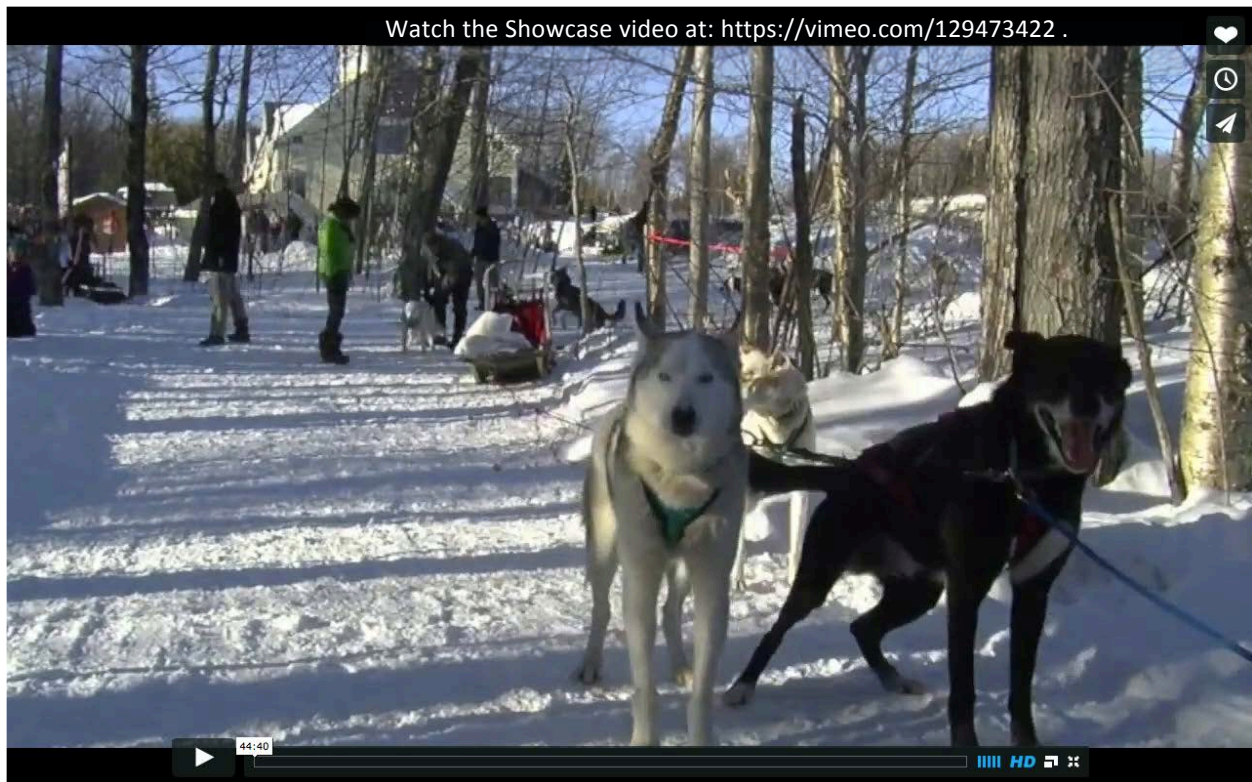
Classroom Application: Discovering Community Showcase

This showreel of the Vermont Folklife Center’s Education Program has a sampling of nine youth-made documentary films, photo projects, and mixed-media pieces that allow an opportunity to view students’ work and learn from the young minds behind the projects.

Completed during classes, workshops, and afterschool programs at schools and nonprofit organizations around the state (and beyond), these projects include documentary films and photography produced by high school students, and maps and place-based artwork produced by elementary school students. Additionally, stories gathered by youth nationally and internationally enter the conversation through our collaborative working partnerships with the World Story Exchange, Conversations from the Open Road, Stories of Hope, and the Freedom and Unity Project.

As media instructor and exhibit curator Scott Miller observes, “This is an exciting time in history to be teaching the production of documentary media—recording technology has become accessible, ushering in an age of democracy in terms of whose stories are told and who creates the content. We are all richer as an audience learning from the expanding archive of human experiences recorded with creativity and honesty.”

The Vision and Voice Gallery and Workspace is supported through the generosity of VFC Exhibit Program sponsors: Main Street Landing, Northfield Savings Bank, Blittersdorf Foundation, Cabot of Vermont, and the Vermont Community Foundation.



What Clicks and Sticks: A Career of Community and Media Arts Programs

by Judy Goldberg



Judy Goldberg in classroom at Instituto Quilloac in Cañar, Ecuador.
Photo by Judy Blankenship.

Once I heard a writer say that each day is like picking up a sword and hacking through the thickets. “I never know where I’m going, or where I’ll end up. But, if I just stop and turn my head to look behind me, there, in clear view, is a finely cut swath as far as the eye can see.”

My hope is that by introducing my trajectory and reflections, others will come to trust their instincts and follow them, like a farmer who stores the best ears of corn for next year’s plantings.

As I sit within a cobblestoned courtyard in Cuenca, Ecuador, this sense of the “cut swath” is reflected in all the places my eye can travel: the ascending stairway, the surrounding balconies with hanging ferns, and the groomed tangle of diverse greenery and blooms. Many possible paths, yet at each turn, one chosen. After decades of creating and implementing youth in community programs, I’m considering what of my own thicket thrashing can be instructive for youth practitioners, program organizers, educators, nonprofit directors, and youth participants. How has my unfurling path become less of a maze and more of a blueprint where others may find their own footing and make their own way?

What took years to realize is what kind of a learner I am. Schools immediately answer this question for us by structuring a kind of education whereby we develop basic skills to learn content from which we will be tested to prove we have acquired knowledge. For those who are successful at conforming to the academic rigors of reading, writing, discussing, and testing, this model may be effective. And for those who *get* it, accolades and confidence follow. Yet for someone like me, who I believe represents a wide range of students, conventional schooling is a mismatch. Learning comes

alive and relevant when I can learn by doing, initiating projects, applying creativity, and interacting with other students and community members. Learning through projects motivated me; believing my learning was part of a greater whole that could complement and fulfill the needs of others heightened my investment. Hence, my work in the youth in community field comes from a personal imperative to influence conventional systems of learning. I wish to weigh in on how education can better serve, if not celebrate, the learners among us who want their schooling to be participatory and socially relevant.

My Introduction to Project-based Learning: Foundational Organizations and Resources

Formative for me as a teenager was attending a presentation about [Project Piactla](#) at my high school. Slides of the Sierra Madres, faces of Mexican villagers, and the project's goal to teach self-sufficiency in health care released a magnetic force in me. I later found myself among a group of five students, trekking by foot and burro into remote villages to teach people how to brush their teeth. "Abre la boca, ¡mira, como así!" I would say as I brushed teeth inside a stranger's mouth. This could have ignited a dental career, but more compelling was a desire to work in Spanish-speaking communities, be useful, and uncover stories.



Students in the Youth Media Program. Photo by Katy Gross, YMP Program Director.

[Foxfire Books](#) and the field of experiential education were the next gravitational pull. The attraction to learn through human exchanges and active participation led to a few years as a wilderness instructor for teens who also responded well to this experiential learning experience.

Considering what presents itself and measuring it with intention has consistently steered my professional decisions. Upon completing film school at the Anthropology Film Center in Santa Fe, New Mexico, I was introduced to a wild-eyed, mission-driven, entrepreneurial hippy looking for a production assistant for a one-day shoot to produce a PSA on needs of the elderly. This gig led to six years with the [Self Reliance Foundation](#) where filmmaking, community stories, and education came together. We produced documentaries about village life and sustainability in northern New Mexico. We wrote ancillary guides and led workshops in solar energy and technology at a local school. My first film was *La Querencia: A Homeland Facing Change*, using a folk tale about a cricket and a toad to convey cultural tensions between traditional values and modern-day pressures.

Youth, Community, and Learning: Always at the center is story

The merger of videography and teaching led to several years as an artist-in-residence. I taught video production throughout New Mexico, primarily with underserved Native, Hispanic, and disaffected youth. At each site the students determined what they wished to explore and communicate. My job was to awaken their imaginations and facilitate their story-making into images, voices, and sound.

Always at the center is story. Many of us claim this word "story" and I fear its cooption. Story provides a context for understanding human experience. It gives us vantage points to see others

and ourselves as characters within a series of events. Guiding participants to uncover personal narratives or conduct interviews creates a space of trust, enabling the person of focus to be heard. We all have stories of trauma and triumph and these are the stories we need to tell, the ones hankering to spill out. From an educator's point of view, story-making drawn from fieldwork (ethnography) seamlessly integrates academic learning, community building, and inquiry into the human condition. Story-making can activate learners' motivation to know more about places, history, and literature and how to assess contemporary life. As one 7th-grader articulated during an oral history project, "It's fun, so you don't even know you're learning."

The thicket is dense when you are the first to clear the trail. And my machete was additionally heavy, as I carried a lion's share of self-doubt. Yet, there was something greater than myself at play. Maybe what kept me going was that initial pull to adventure that claimed me early on and only now can I affectionately say, won out.

Encouraging the creative light to shine in others is contagious, but how does one make youth in community programs viable? Essential are relentless tenacity (or call it crazy persistence), the ability to articulate how participants benefit, ceaseless grant writing, schmoozing, and an ability to ignite the vision in others. Seizing the slightest crack in a door is imperative. Balancing what to pursue, sustaining the work at hand, and forming new relationships require a juggler's rhythm. Expanding a plan to welcome others' ideas and remaining open to what appears is also a must, as it often is better than what you initially imagined.

During my 40s I established a media business, Viewpoint Productions, unwittingly affirming a freelancer's life of uncertainty. I was teaching video as an adjunct faculty member at Santa Fe Community

College and producing videos for public and private entities when I was asked to work on a documentary about the New Mexico [Farm Security Administration \(FSA\)](#) photographers for an exhibition at the New Mexico Museum of Fine Arts. This project was the game changer that marked the shift from managing multiple projects to dedicating my career to educational community programs. [Drawing from the Well: Connecting School to Community](#) and, later, the founding of the nonprofit [Youth Media Project](#) (YMP) formed and engaged the pedagogy to teach and practice the craft of digital storytelling and the art of listening for a socially responsible world.

Drawing from the Well uses a "well" metaphor as a framework for an interdisciplinary, community-based, oral history curriculum. From my years in northern New Mexico, where I lived in a one-room adobe and drew my water from *la noria* (a water well), the idea of pulling up the stories to nourish the community was a natural extension of my work with the Self Reliance Foundation and the FSA video project. We had taken the FSA photographs to their places of origin to ask residents (many had been my neighbors) to tell us about the people, traditions, and events during the time of the Great Depression. These same photos became invaluable when starting Drawing from the Well in the same community, where we asked students, "How is life different today, compared to life half a century ago?" The photos triggered students to imagine, compare, question, and write stories about their community. Middle-school students worked in teams to investigate their personal heritage, folklore, traditions, celebration, and lifestyles. This led them to interview, record oral histories, edit, and present back to their community stories and insights. New intergenerational relationships and new ways of learning and demonstrating knowledge about history, Spanish, language arts, and communication skills surfaced. The State Historian's Office adopted Drawing from the Well as a means to gather community stories.

Nuts and Bolts for Designing Community Media Learning Programs

Planning

The [Drawing from the Well Curriculum](#) offers an adaptable framework for youth in community programs. Media production and making a digital story can galvanize students' focus and energy, creating a positive learning experience. Metaphors, such as *La Noria* (a water well), which was foundational for this curriculum, can serve as a template for planning a project's progression. The 4 P's outline the straightforward approach:

Pre-production,
Production,
Post-production, and
Presentation.

The more youth are in charge, the greater the learning and the gain.

Assessment

What does "success" look like when using media to engage youth in community? When creating community media projects, align with colleagues, existing programs, and educational institutions for ongoing beneficial impact. In today's competitive grant-funding world, forming meaningful partnerships with schools, colleges, nonprofits, populations with specific needs, and community issues is essential. Being inventive, creative, replicable, and scalable helps, too.

The following objectives and goals were critical to defining successful projects. At Youth Media Project they were remembered as the 4 Cs:

Collaborate with active and committed partners for participants to
Create digital media to
Communicate about social issues for positive social **Change**.

We learned to design and evaluate all our projects using these guideposts when writing proposals and contracts, creating curriculum, building schedules, critiquing youth productions, and reporting assessments.

YMP built upon the successes of Drawing from the Well. Applying the model of collaboration with existing educational programs—schools, colleges, and service organizations—YMP activities revolved around producing a regular radio show, now called *Audio Revolution!*, to focus on youth-related issues selected, represented, and crafted by youth. As time progressed and ongoing contracts with educational institutions grew, YMP established an internship program, whereby college students and graduates (many through AmeriCorps) used YMP as a laboratory to practice their craft of media production and to mentor students. My work shifted from serving as a practitioner to founding and directing an organization. This required new skills in development, management, and administration.

After 35 years of designing, coordinating, fundraising, instructing, and finally hiring talented staff, I needed to refuel and reconnect with the reasons I had "picked up the sword and begun my thrashing." Last year I was granted a sabbatical from YMP and set out for four and half months with my husband [Thayer Carter](#). I called it the *Plan Sin Plan*. We chose Ecuador with a little more than a spin of the globe—a family connection, attraction to diverse landscapes and cultures, plus a return to learning Spanish drew us there. During my sabbatical I began imagining an extension of YMP's internship program to include an international component; the zeal to run an organization had waned. Thankfully, in my absence, new leadership was emerging. I returned to YMP with the satisfaction that my work of launching and sustaining the organization was complete. I was ready to spread my wings.

While in Ecuador, thanks to colleagues with whom I had made the FSA video, we were introduced to [Judy Blankenship](#), a documentary photographer and author who lives half the year in Cañar, Ecuador, with her husband Michael Jenkins. Judy had established an extensive archive of photos and oral histories of the indigenous Cañari people. When visiting Judy and Michael, Judy presented a proposal:



Voces Project. Photo by Judy Blankenship.

Media Learning Models

Many wonderful radio and video products are available online. Here are some of my favorite radio stories from YMP participants. They also represent successful educational partnerships:

[A Remarkable Listener](#)
[Palestinian Hoop Dreams](#)
[We Youth](#)

For a video demonstrating process more than product, go to this [YMP Sampler](#).

[Voces de Cañar/Cañarikunpa Rimay](#) is an emerging intergenerational, transnational digital storytelling exchange steeped in community identity and learning. Conceived this year, the website is beginning to be populated with radio segments, photographs, posts, and videos. Check out [Dia de la madre](#) for a youth in community sample. [La marcha](#) captures an event.

The impacts of authentically and ethically connecting learning, service, and youth continue to grow. [Kichwa Hitari](#) is an online weekly live broadcast for the Kichwa-speaking Ecuadorian community. Since April they have been broadcasting our bilingual (Kichwa and Spanish) Voces de Cañar radio segments through [Radio el Tambo Stereo](#) in the Bronx. Our first video segment about Carnival was screened in April at [Bronx Rising! Hawari](#) at a POEMobile event with [City Lore](#) and the [Bronx Music Heritage Center](#). We've conducted classes with journalism students at Cañar's bilingual Instituto Quilloac, with exercises from Drawing from the Well, using Judy B's photos to trigger students' creative writing and audio recordings. We're coordinating with [Radio Ingapirca](#), a Cañar station, to broadcast edited versions of our Cañar pieces and Kichwa Hitari commentary. To date we've produced stories about local festivals, a march for International Workers' Day, and a Mother's Day segment including messages and music from a youth ensemble. We're finishing a segment featuring the Quilloac students' Kichwa poems. They'll be ready for another upcoming POEMobile event in

How would I like to assist in the indigenous Cañari archive work? She had just learned that the archive would eventually be part of the LLIILIAS Benson Latin American Archives and Collections at the University of Texas.

And so, the story continues....

We learned that the third largest concentration of Ecuadorians in the world live in New York City, and 85 percent of the families in Cañar have family there. Thanks to folklorist colleagues Suzy Seriff and Laura Marcus Green with whom YMP co-created outreach programs with the Gallery of Conscience at the Museum of International Folk Art, the idea of an exchange and potential partnerships were suggested. I took an exploratory trip to NYC to see if the pieces would snap together. Forming this transnational digital storytelling exchange has been like following the yellow brick road and landing in Oz.

Since March 2015, a team of us in Cañar have been producing audio and video segments for [Voces de Cañar/Cañarikunpa Rimay](#), a digital storytelling exchange between Cañaris in Ecuador and NYC. Our transnational professional team is exploring within our respective communities how traditions, cultural heritage, and contemporary life find new forms of expression and adaptations when one culture resides in two locations. The impact of migration, including how family and cultural ties are sustained, balanced, and transformed, underpins this project.

NYC. And we're seeking funding to expand the impact and reach of our work to build community through creating media.

The challenge of sustaining collaborative community programs is exceedingly more difficult. The world of Common Core standards and mandatory testing is leaving less room for innovation and community engagement. Finding funding support through grants and fundraisers to maintain programming and job security is, well, like relying on a spinning roulette wheel to land consistently on your number. Yet youth, youth providers, and youth organizations are hungry for engaging community media programs, and this work fulfills a niche in afterschool, summer, and weekend workshops. Story-making has the capacity to set those in danger of falling through the scholastic cracks back on track. And nonprofits and businesses are all interested in having their stories told and posted online. The rewards from community story collection, the positive impact for nonconventional learners, and the potential for creative story-making are boundless. If you're an irrepressible sword-swinging adventurer, then I say sharpen your tools, get to know your particular jungle, and blaze (or widen) an inter-connective youth, community, and education trail.



*A Theater Arts graduate of UC Santa Cruz, with post-graduate work through Temple University at the Anthropology Film School in Santa Fe, **Judy Goldberg** has devoted her professional career to the production, dissemination, and training of place-based digital storytelling programs for public radio and TV broadcasts. After decades of independent media production and education, she became founding director of Youth Media Project and is currently coordinating Voces de Cañar, an independent extension of this work.*

Judy Goldberg in Alausí, Ecuador. Photo by Thayer Carter.

Sidebar URL citations

<http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/drawing-from-the-well/index.html>
<http://www.youthmediaproject.org/2013/03/a-remarkable-listener>
<http://www.youthmediaproject.org/?s=Palestinian+Hoop+Dreams>
<http://www.youthmediaproject.org/2011/08/we-youth>
<http://www.youthmediaproject.org/2014/10/sampler-of-ymp-programs>
<http://www.vocesdecanar.org>
<http://www.vocesdecanar.org/el-dia-de-la-madre>
<http://www.vocesdecanar.org/1-de-mayo-la-marcha-desde-el-tambo-a-canar>

Article URL citations

http://www.healthwrights.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=204:piaxtla-main&catid=91
<http://www.foxfire.org>
<http://www.selfreliancefoundation.org>
<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/fsa>
<http://www.cesdp.nmhu.edu/drawing-from-the-well/index.html>
<http://www.youthmediaproject.org>
<http://judyblankenship.com>
<http://www.vocesdecanar.org>
<http://kichwahatari.org>
<http://www.radioeltambostereo.com/fm>
<http://citylore.org/event/bronx-rising-april-national-poetry-month>
<http://citylore.org>
<http://www.whedco.org/Arts/Bronx-Music-Heritage-Center>
www.radioingapirca.com.ec



Classroom Application: Four Tips for Youth and Community Programming

From a lifetime of working within the youth in community field Judy Goldberg shares some proven tips for designing and evaluating successful projects.

Central tenets to youth in community projects are to encourage participant-driven inquiry; represent local, intergenerational, and diverse voices; and orchestrate engagement and feedback about themes of import.

1. At the beginning, affirm committed and active partners. Too often I took “Yes, let’s do this” to equate to engagement by fellow educators. Identify roles, responsibilities, and schedules. For projects with high schoolers, once a week isn’t effective. There are too many chances for students to miss a session and get behind. If you’re working as an independent educator/producer, the institutional contact person needs to provide continuity and engage with students throughout the project.
2. Agree on outcomes and creative products, although they may change as the project progresses, so that expectations are grounded in activities and production. This work requires attention to the learning process and product delivery simultaneously. It’s easy to get excited about possibilities and promise more than is feasible in a given timeframe. Just accept, *there is never enough time*. Scale deliverables appropriate to time constraints. Media production is labor intensive if editing is involved. Live performances take rehearsals and scripts. Be flexible and size up the situation as changes occur. Establish your communications styles and discuss how to have conversations and evaluate along the way with partners.
3. Challenge participants to develop specific, yet complex topics to make for compelling media. Choose media literacy segments relevant to students’ projects and identify triggers to ignite content development and increase production quality. Tools for shaping inquiry and honing dynamic forms of expression include free writes, web-brainstorming, photographs, objects, folk art, folklore, and writings. Bringing in community knowledge bearers, professionals, movies, and other youth-produced media are other tools. Final projects can take the form of personal narratives, interviews, spoken word, commentaries, documentaries, music compositions, radio dramas, and broadcasts—pre-produced and live—photography exhibitions, books, articles, artwork, live performances, videos, social media, blogging, internet distribution, portfolios, and community events.
4. Integrate venues for presenting participants’ final projects into project designs. Invite audiences and provide snacks. Provide a space for reflection and dialogue to engender compassion and appreciation for the power of story and the art of listening.

Bridging Collaborative Ethnography and Democratic Education

by Alison Kinney

Just outside Chapel Hill, North Carolina, is a five-acre parcel of land being cultivated by about 35 refugee families. This is Transplanting Traditions Community Farm (TTCF), a project dedicated to providing refugee adults and youth access to land, healthy food, and education. Most participating families identify as Karen, and tell of growing up in farming families in the Karen State, a mountainous region on the eastern border of Burma. In the unrest of the Burmese civil war they fled to refugee camps in Thailand where some were able to maintain small gardens and farms. Now, despite working fulltime jobs and raising families, TTCF farmers make time to maintain farming traditions here in North Carolina. In this way, Transplanting Traditions has become a unique community space where these Karen farmers experience continuity between the vastly different landscapes of their former and present lives. One farmer explained,

What this farm does for the refugee community, especially the older people and myself, is important. We feel healthier, and a lot of people talk about the fresh air and how they miss their country. Before, when older people didn't have a farm here, they just wanted to go back to their country; they had nothing to do, and they wanted to go home to their homeland. And now, because of the farm, they don't want to go home; they work here and feel really good (TTCF Farmer Survey 2013).



TTCF Youth Program documentary photography workshop.

About the Karen Community

While all the TTCF farmers are from Burma, most do not identify as Burmese, but rather as Karen. Karen is an umbrella term for a number of indigenous groups who have historically lived in southeastern Burma (Myanmar). These groups speak several dialects and practice religions ranging from Buddhism and Christianity to local animist faiths (Cheesman 2002).

Despite this diversity within the Karen population, a shared experience of violent persecution at the hands of the Burmese government has led to a unified Karen cultural identity. Most Karen people in the United States today are refugees from an insurgency that has been active in Burma since the late 1940s. As a result of decades of war, thousands of Karen families have fled on foot across the Thai-Burmese border to live in refugee camps. TTCF farmers often refer to the U.S. as their "third country": they grew up in Burma, lived for up to 25 years in Thai refugee camps, and finally gained refugee status in the U.S.

While completing my Masters in Folklore at the University of North Carolina, I worked with a youth program affiliated with TTCF. The youth were between 12 and 19; all identified as Karen, and all but one had grown up in Thai refugee camps. They moved to Carrboro in the last ten years as part of a large influx of Karen refugees to the U.S., and to the North Carolina Piedmont in particular. TTCF Youth Program (TTYYP) members met regularly for workshops and fieldtrips related to their interest in environmental activism, commitment to creating a healthy food system, and experiences as Karen immigrants in North Carolina. They decided to make a documentary to help tell their families' stories.

As seen in this documentary, *The Story of Three Farmers* (see below), TTCF fields host abundant crops of traditional Karen vegetables and herbs. Families and friends work together, taking breaks to rest and eat in the shade of large bamboo trellises that support winter squash and water gourd vines. Speaking to the importance of the farm as a community space, another farmer explained, "I see many of my friends here from when we lived together in the refugee camp. We come here together; we talk together. This is the most beautiful thing" (TTCF Farmer Survey 2013).

Collaborative Documentary Curriculum

Facilitating a collaborative documentary process with Karen youth seemed an ideal circumstance to engage community members in dialogue that revealed important aspects of local culture and community identity. The documentary curriculum that emerged is ultimately a product of all who joined in the work. Although many people played significant roles, two were essential: program coordinator Nicole Accordino and my primary consultant, Tay Nay Sar, an 18-year-old Karen high school student. I included only their names, allowing the rest of the youth—many of whom are underage—to remain anonymous. This choice should not discount the significant contributions others made to the project.

I present a case study that demonstrates a set of guiding principles for an education model that draws on the assets of a specific community and invites students to learn from within their family language and culture. In bridging the methodologies of collaborative ethnography and democratic education, I propose that empowering education takes place when:

- Curriculum emerges collaboratively from within the community it serves,
- Students learn alongside educators through inquiry and dialogue, and
- Teachers understand students' family culture and language as assets to the learning process.



TTCF Youth Program documentary editing workshop and youth interview with TTCF farmer.

This multidisciplinary work draws on the critical theories of folklore, anthropology, education, and refugee studies and offers an ethnographically grounded, collaborative approach to education. Despite the particularity of this program's curriculum, its guiding principles can be applied in many settings, including afterschool programs, arts-based education, ESL education, and, with some finesse, the standard public school classroom.

The curriculum arose out of exploratory, cross-cultural dialogue. We drew upon the work of public folklorists like Deborah Kodish of the Philadelphia Folklore Project and Steve Zeitlin of New York's City Lore, who pursue folklore research in the public interest and seek to make folklore interactive and community-based (Kodish 2013, Zeitlin 2000). We taught students to be observers of their culture and work with older members in the community to document Karen foodways and stories of shared experience. In this way, we gave students the tools to learn in an inquiry-based framework in which teachers pose questions to students, rather than present facts. I found, like the folklorist Anne Pryor, that ethnography is an ideal tool for establishing this framework. In referencing Dewey's foundational work, *Democracy and Education* (1916), Pryor notes the overlap between ethnography and alternative models of education and asserts that an ethnographically grounded curriculum insists on inquiry-based pedagogy.

With ethnography, a deep understanding of personal and community story, aspiration, belief, and aesthetics becomes an avenue for activism, advocacy, and community development.

Bringing ethnographic processes into a curriculum breaks the mold of conventional teaching. Ethnographic fieldwork is a methodology in which the ethnographer has cultural questions about which to seek enlightening information. Ethnography does not fit with the model of students receiving knowledge; it requires that one discover and so is more aligned with inquiry-based pedagogy (Pryor 2004:397).

Ethnography as an educational model helps establish the teacher-student relationship in which teachers learn side by side with students. Within this framework students produce rather than receive knowledge. Paulo Freire explains that it is in these circumstances (in which teachers "create the possibilities for the production or construction of knowledge") that transformational education takes place (1998:30).

Developing Leadership

TTYP was designed to engage refugee youth in leadership training. "The end goal of programming," according to the project's website, "is to provide teens with the tools and experiences to be able to make positive and lasting changes in their communities" (TTCF 2014). When I began, I immediately noted Accordino's perceptive method of facilitating an ongoing dialogue with students; she involved them in every aspect of program planning, from scheduling difficulties to learning goals. Although Accordino facilitated these conversations, her voice did not overpower those of the students. I saw her relinquishing the status of knowledge broker and assuming that of facilitator. As a result, TTYP became a learning space that authorized students to design their own education, leading to a meaningful curriculum based in their culture and language and molded by their desires, interests, and cultural understandings.

As an ethnographer I faced a parallel shift in power dynamics, so I worked toward an ideal of collaboration. I sought to relinquish my status as researcher and assume that of research facilitator.

Folklore and Culturally Responsive Education

A number of educators and cultural workers have theorized alternative teaching models to give students opportunities to bring their life experiences into their learning and celebrate their language and culture as educational resources. Culturally responsive teaching is one such model, proposed by the education theorist Geneva Gay. Gay encourages teachers to connect students' cultural knowledge and prior experiences to academic knowledge and intellectual tools, thus legitimizing students' unique experiences and informal learning (2002, 2010).

The folklore and education proponents Paddy Bowman (2004) and Elizabeth Simons (1990) also stress this notion, writing of the value of curricula that draw upon local folklore and honor students as experts of their own cultures. They suggest that teachers bring students' home and community lives into the classroom through folklore fieldwork opportunities; in doing so, students discover more about themselves and learn that their lives are worthy of study, just as any others might be.

The education researcher Luis Moll, teacher Cathy Amanti, and anthropologists Norma Gonzalez and Deborah Neff present a complementary framework in which teachers recognize students' "households as containing ample cultural and cognitive resources with great *potential* utility for classroom instruction" (Amanti, et al. 1992:134). They refer to these cultural and

cognitive resources as funds of knowledge and assert that to allow funds of knowledge to guide classroom learning, teachers must "assume the role of the learner," establishing "a fundamentally new, more symmetrical relationship with the parents and students" (Amanti, et al. 1992:139).

TTYF program coordinator Nicole Accordino's teaching choices reflect this teacher-student dynamic in Gay's theory. As the educator Elizabeth Kozleski writes:

Culturally responsive teachers negotiate classroom cultures with their students that reflect the communities where students develop and grow. This is no small matter because it requires that teachers transcend their own cultural biases and preferences to establish and develop patterns for learning and communicating that engage and sustain student participation and achievement... When the cultural heritages and assumptions about what is valued, expected, and taught compete with other compelling realities, teachers take on a facilitator role while they relinquish their status as knowledge brokers (2010:1).

Each of these pedagogical notions adds to a model in which curriculum and teaching strategies aim not only to accommodate students with diverse backgrounds, but also to sanction them to learn through their cultural identity. These approaches dovetail with folklore's ethnographic nature.

This shift necessitated readjusting the convention in which the researcher acts as an "authoritative scholar" and the consultant acts as a "passive yielder of data," forming a relationship of "subject to object" (Yow 2005:1). Instead I worked toward a more egalitarian research relationship formed through dialogue, collaboration, and a readiness to learn from those "credentialed by their community, not the academy" (Kodish 2013:435).

I hoped our curriculum would provide students tools to research and report on their community successfully. Although my voice as facilitator was evident throughout the documentary process, I worked to assure that it did not overpower those of the youth. Finding this balance was challenging.

The youth anticipated that I would lead, telling them who the audience was, what the message should be, and how to accomplish the tasks. As a teacher and research facilitator, I opted to challenge them to do this work on their own, to discover what *they* thought was important to share and who *they* wanted their audience to be. Rather than providing answers to their questions about documentary representation, I facilitated conversations responding to the issues they brought up. Through this process the students created a documentary that was truly theirs.



TTYT Documentary interview workshop.

“Where I’m from is really different”

In my first interview with Tay Nay, she told me about her experience as a new student in an American elementary school. She explained that when she first arrived in the U.S., nobody—not even her teachers—knew who the Karen people were, or what it meant to be Karen. At the time, she did not speak enough English to give an explanation. When I asked what she hoped to gain by making a documentary, she told me:

I feel like when we do this project, it will be really helpful to Karen people, because here not many people know about them and their story. So I think, if we do this project, some people will understand Karen people. They are not refugees who have come to America, without education, for nothing. (Sar 2014a)

Later in the interview, she extended her thoughts, “And, it can also help with our siblings in the future, because they might not know where they are from. They might feel stuck in the middle—I was born there, but grew up here. They might be confused about their nationality” (Sar 2014a). Finally, she noted both the challenge and pleasure she finds in telling her story: “I am from a country most people don’t know about, and it’s a poor place. It’s really hard to explain to people. The place where I’m from is really different. I really love to tell people about these things” (Sar 2014a). In Tay Nay’s statement, I heard three important notions: a longing to share a story, to be recognized, and to be understood; a desire to maintain a sense of what it means to be Karen within the Karen community; and how the process of telling, in and of itself, is meaningful.

In winter 2014 we began meeting in an afterschool program format. Through interviewing, surveying, and hosting planning discussions with participants, the goals became clear. We would use digital storytelling to share Karen farmers’ life experiences and knowledge of food and farming with audiences within and outside the Karen community.

We began with interview workshops (ask open-ended questions, prompt interviewees to tell stories, allow interviewees to guide the discussion as much as possible, and ask relevant follow-up questions). Students interviewed each other about cooking experiences in Thailand and North Carolina. Next we worked on cultural and linguistic interpretation in an exercise where students translated a Karen recipe passed down through oral tradition for American use. Students began learning the basics of documentation, while bringing their home lives into the educational space: sharing recipes, telling stories of their experiences and those of their families, and discovering and discussing difference while “translating” Karen ways of cooking for an American audience. By

engaging students in content relevant to their lives, these exercises allowed students to explore and express identity and gain confidence in telling their stories.

In the initial months I was building my own ethnographic understanding of the community in which I was working. The youth were my teachers. I found that inviting students to become teachers is both an empowering experience for them, as well as a necessary step for an outsider, teacher, facilitator, and ethnographer to reach students successfully with relevant, meaningful curriculum. It is also a necessary step in fostering a democratic, collaborative learning space where students realized their voices as valid and worthy of attention.

Digital Storytelling

In the summer, as the program took the form of an internship, I worked with interns alongside Accordino and a photographer, Peter Eversoll, hosting workshops in photography, interviewing, storyboarding, audio editing, translating, subtitling, and, finally, producing the documentary. Students worked in small groups, taking on roles as photographers, audio producers, interviewers, and translators to conduct interviews with three Karen women who farm at TTCF and to document the farm through photography and audio recording. The project extended into the fall and culminated with a short audio documentary accompanied by a photo essay.

Our focus was Karen foodways. With the farm as the setting, this subject was intuitive. The longer I work in the Karen community the more I am aware of the deep relevance of the subject matter, its centrality to Karen lifeways and potential to initiate expressions of storied identity. The foodways scholar Charles Camp writes, “Food is one of the most, if not the single most visible badges of identity” (1989:29). Students also recognized this, explaining at the start of the project, “Many people know about Chinese food; they know about Mexican food; and they should also know about Karen food too, because it is also good and healthy.” They said that if people knew about Karen food, “they would know something about Karen people.”



During storyboarding and editing, students thought creatively about how they wanted to tell these women's stories. It was important to me that we provide a complex representation of our interviewees that moved beyond the victim-survivor paradigm that permeates common perceptions of refugees. I turned to the social work scholar Jay Marlowe's discussion of refugee representation: "When society views refugees more as ordinary people beyond the category of passive victim, there is greater potential to see 'them' as more like 'us' and consequently as members of the community" (2010:188). Students' decision to focus primarily on farming experiences, rather than strictly experiences of displacement, aided in crafting a complex story that emphasized ordinary moments over extraordinary moments, inviting viewers to understand the interviewees as women and farmers, not simply refugees.

Each phase of the documentary process allowed for a diversity of learning opportunities in literacy, critical thinking, story analysis, and language learning, each within the context of students' family language and culture. The oral historian Rina Benmayor articulates the power of digital storytelling to draw on the assets of the students, stimulate them creatively, and offer a number of media through which to learn:

Digital storytelling is an assets-based pedagogy where students can bring their own cultural knowledge and experiences to the fore, including their skills and comfort with technology, to transform their thinking and empower themselves. The multiple creative languages of digital storytelling—writing, voice, images, and sound—encourage historically marginalized subjects, especially younger generations, to inscribe emerging social and cultural identities and change lived cultural discourses in a new and exciting way (2008:200).

It was precisely this "inscribing of social and cultural identities," along with bringing fuller understandings of Karen culture to a broader public that was the purpose of our project.

Learning Through Family Culture and Language

While many students born in the U.S. learn literacy and critical thinking through literature and history that reflect their lives, culture, and family history, immigrant students (and those of many marginalized populations) are expected to do the same learning through material detached from their cultural identity, family history, and language. When I asked Tay Nay what most excited her about TTYP, she said, "To remind me of who I am and where I am from, because here they learn about our culture and our story. That is what is most fun and important to me" (Sar 2014a).

There are too few opportunities to do this in a public school setting. Teachers face the challenge of reaching diverse student populations and often work with standardized curricula. Meanwhile, many students feel that cultural and linguistic assimilation is the only route to social and academic success. This educational landscape forgoes the possibility of inviting students to treat their bicultural, bilingual experience as an asset in their learning, and essentially declares their first culture and language a hindrance to their ability to integrate. In working with the TTYP's demographic in which all students shared a sense of ethnic identity and a language, we were able to bring Karen culture to the center of the learning process. Students' family-specific knowledge, cultural aesthetics, and language became the foundation for project-based learning.

Concluding Thoughts

In October 2014, after weeks working with students one on one in their homes to make final editing choices, the youth presented their work at a farm-to-table TTCF benefit dinner. This was a powerful culminating moment in our work together. Students stood in front of a room of funders and presented their work. One student eloquently told the crowd why she wanted to make this documentary. She explained that when stories are not told, they are forgotten, asserting that these women's stories should not be forgotten. In this statement, she acknowledged that Karen stories were not being told—or at least not being broadly heard—and that she was taking action to change that.

Such testimony and survey responses speak to the diverse educational outcomes of the project. While some responses focused on technical skills that youth learned (acquiring computer skills and making a documentary), others were more broadly interpersonal (building communication skills). Responses ranged from knowledge that they see as affecting their day-to-day lives to skills they understand as important to future careers and engagement both within and outside their community. Resting completely beyond these categories, though, is the response, "How to be comfortable with who I am," which speaks pointedly to identity-formation and negotiation, a process highlighted when students' personal and family identity informs curriculum.

What the Youth Learned

A few weeks after presenting their documentary at the fundraiser, the youth reported on their experiences in a survey and focus group conversation. In response to the prompt, "Through this project I learned..." they wrote:

How to be serious but also comfortable with what I do and who I am.

How to translate Karen to English verbally and in writing.

To speak louder and more clearly to people, so they don't have a hard time understanding.

How to make/edit a documentary.

How to start a conversation and how to ask engaging questions.

Computer skills that can apply to future jobs.

How to have more confidence talking to strangers.

Time management.

Speaking in front of a group of people without being scared, feeling like a leader and a representative.

(End of Project Survey 2014, Sar 2014b)



Alison Kinney is an educator and a recent graduate of the Folklore MA Program at UNC Chapel Hill. Through community engagement, education, research, documentation, and community programming, she aspires to foster cross-cultural conversation, community cohesion, and cultural and economic development.

All photos by Alison Kinney.

URL

The Story of Three Farmers can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7wQQoMVcDk>.

Works Cited

- Amanti, Cathy, et al.. 1992. Funds of Knowledge for Teaching: Using a Qualitative Approach to Connect Homes and Classrooms. *Theory into Practice* 84.2: 132-141.
- Benmayor, Rina. 2008. Digital Storytelling as a Signature Pedagogy for the New Humanities. *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education* 7.2:188-204.
- Bowman, Paddy. 2004. "Oh, that's just folklore": Valuing the Ordinary as an Extraordinary Teaching Tool. *Language Arts* 81.5: 385-95.
- Camp, Charles. 1989. *American Foodways: What, When, Why and How We Eat in America*. Little Rock: August House.
- Cheesman, Nick. 2002. Seeing "Karen" in the Union of Myanmar. *Asian Ethnicity* 3.2: 119-220.
- Dewey, John. 1916. *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*. New York: Macmillan.
- End of Project Survey. 2014. Karen Community Center. Carrboro, NC, October 20.
- Freire, Paulo. 1998. *Pedagogy of Freedom: Ethics, Democracy, and Civil Courage*. Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield.
- Gay, Geneva. 2010. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kodish, Deborah. 2013. Cultivating Folk Arts and Social Change. *Journal of American Folklore* 126.502: 434-54.
- Kozleskie, Elizabeth. 2010. Culturally Responsive Teaching Matters! The Equity Alliance http://www.equityallianceatasu.org/sites/default/files/Website_files/CulturallyResponsiveTeaching-Matters.pdf.
- Marlowe, J. M. 2010. Beyond the Discourse of Trauma: Shifting the Focus on Sudanese Refugees. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23.2: 183-98.
- Pryor, Anne. 2004. Deep Ethnography: Culture at the Core of Curriculum. *Language Arts* 81.5: 396-405.
- Sar, Tay Nay. 2014a. Personal conversation with the author. Carrboro, NC, February 20.
- _____. 2014b. Focus group discussion with TTYP participants. Carrboro, NC, February 20.
- Simons, Elizabeth Radin. 1990. *Student Worlds, Student Words: Teaching Writing Through Folklore*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- TTCF. 2014. Transplanting Traditions Community Farm Webpage. <http://transplantingtraditions.com/youth>.
- TTCF Farmer Survey. 2013. End of the year survey/interviews between farmers and TTCF staff. November.
- Yow, Valerie Raleigh. 2005. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira.
- Zeitlin, Steven J. 2000. I'm a Folklorist and You're Not: Expansive Versus Delimited Strategies in the Practice of Folklore. *Journal of American Folklore* 113.447: 2-19.



Students performing “Traverse Town,” an updated version of Lester Wells’ 1938 rendition, during the Quest Finale, Traverse City Opera House, May 9, 2014.
Photo by Laurie Kay Sommers, courtesy of Michigan State University Museum.

Questing with Alan Lomax: Michigan’s Historic Field Recordings Inspire a New Generation

by Laurie Kay Sommers and Samuel Seth Bernard

“What a place Traverse City is a-coming to be!” Retired lumberjack Lester Wells once sang these words while sitting with his aging buddies in Launtner’s Tavern (now Union Street Station—still a bar with live music) in downtown Traverse City, Michigan. The folklorist Alan Lomax recorded the song by cutting a 12-inch disc on the spot with his Presto instantaneous disc recorder. The year was 1938, and Lomax—then a 23-year-old Assistant in Charge at the Archive of Folk-Song—was in the midst of a 10-week folk music collecting trip of the “Lakes States,” gathering examples of Michigan’s rich trove of traditional song to enrich the Archive’s holdings at the Library of Congress.

Seventy-five years later, a new generation discovered Lomax's recordings and made them their own. [The Quest—A Celebration of Community](#) was an innovative, place-based afterschool arts program in seven underserved schools in northwest Lower Michigan. Seth Bernard, Artistic Director of the Quest, envisioned a project in which participants would “embark on a creative adventure, discovering the awesomeness of both our place and our path, and in doing so, to co-create a professional performance to share with our communities.”¹ The Finale concert featured students' artwork and collaboratively written songs, inspired by Lomax's 1938 Michigan recordings. The culminating performance took place May 9, 2014, in front of several hundred friends, family, and community members in the historic Traverse City Opera House, just around the corner from where Lomax made his 1938 Traverse City recordings.

The Quest concluded a five-year federal 21st Century Community Learning Center grant to [SEEDS](#), a Traverse City nonprofit. Community Learning Center grants provide “academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours for children, particularly students who attend high-poverty and low-performing schools. The program helps students meet state and local student standards in core academic subjects, such as reading and math; offers students a broad array of enrichment activities that can complement their regular academic programs; and offers literacy and other educational services to the families of participating children.”²

The main goal of the Quest “is to empower youth to create change.” SEEDS literature continues: “Empowering youth means helping them tap into their own sources of power and supporting them as they find their own voices. As they gain confidence in one arena, they are able to bring a confident attitude to others.”⁴

The 2014 Quest project highlighted here was the second of the series of “Quests,” immersive arts and education experiences organized around differing themes. In the pilot year, the theme was “Personal Resilience.” Year 2 leveraged the 75th anniversary of Alan Lomax's Michigan folksong recordings. Year 3 (2015), “The Quest for Something Fresh,” explored the agricultural bounty of the region through music and art.⁵

SEEDS has been working in northwest Lower Michigan since 1999, providing innovative hands-on learning experiences that help bridge the achievement gap between poor and rich schools. SEEDS focuses on local solutions to global problems—with an emphasis on energy sustainability, community-building, and ecological issues—and has a 15-year track record of weaving arts into their programs by partnering with two local arts organizations, [Blackbird Arts](#) in Traverse City and [Earthwork Music Collective](#). For most SEEDS students, arts education has been partially or completely cut from the school experience or is available only to those who can pay extra. Through experienced and professional art educators, SEEDS provides youth “with opportunities to engage in the creative arts using the entire artistic cycle from inspiration to formation to production to performance or display.”³

The Quest 2014—with its focus on local place and heritage inspired by the Lomax 1938 recordings—was the first SEEDS project to coalesce around an archival folksong collection. Throughout the spring semester, 80 to 100 middle- and high-school students from Benzie Central, Brethren, Forest Area, Frankfort, Kalkaska, Manistee, and Suttons Bay schools prepared for the project Finale by investigating local history, exploring personal journeys, learning songs from the Lomax archives, and writing new material for the concert production.

The Quest unfolded over four months, fostering a rich learning experience for participants. In addition to the Lomax materials, individual sites explored local cultural heritage in different ways. Suttons Bay students, for example, identified significant historic places in their county and then

researched historic photos of the same locations. Their PowerPoint presentation—enhanced by audio from the Lomax Michigan Collection—ran as a "prelude" to the Quest Finale as audience members entered the auditorium. At Brethren, where students chose a lumberjack ballad as their muse, they visited a local historical museum and a still functioning Civilian Conservation Corps Camp. They also went to one of their local places—Tippy Dam, on the nearby Manistee River—and performed the song they had written for a fisherman they met there. Seth Bernard recalled that these local explorations "really added depth to the experience for the students."⁶

Teaching Materials based on Alan Lomax's 1938 collecting trip in Michigan

American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, Alan Lomax Collection Michigan Project Homepage <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/lomax/michiganproject.html>
(Includes a series of podcasts).

The complete Alan Lomax Collection of Michigan and Wisconsin Recordings
<http://www.loc.gov/collection/alan-lomax-in-michigan/about-this-collection>.

Michigan-I-O: Alan Lomax and the 1938 Library of Congress Folk-Song Expedition, Todd Harvey's pioneering multimedia ebook <http://www.dust-digital.com/michigan>.

The companion CD to the above, released by Global Jukebox/ACE
<http://culturalequity.org/features/globaljukebox/michigan/index.php>.

Guha Shankar's blog on Alan Lomax Goes North, about the documentary film he and Jim Leary made based on Alan's 1938 silent color film footage
<http://blogs.loc.gov/loc/2013/08/inquiring-minds-alan-lomax-goes-north>.

Jim Leary's book *Folksongs of Another America: Field Recordings from the Upper Midwest, 1937–1946* (2015), which includes Lomax Michigan material and the DVD documentary of the 1938 Lomax film footage, mentioned above <http://uwpress.wisc.edu/books/5231.htm>.

The Michigan State University Museum traveling exhibition, "Michigan Folksong Legacy: Grand Discoveries from the Great Depression," available for loan through the museum's traveling exhibition service <http://museum.msu.edu/museum/tes/MIFolksong.htm>.

Lesson plans using the Alan Lomax Collection of Michigan and Wisconsin Recordings, by Laurie Kay Sommers with Patricia Shehan Campbell. See "For Teachers" under "Resources" on the Association for Cultural Equity website http://www.culturalequity.org/rc/ce_rc_teaching.php.

Place and Heritage Educational Resources

Educators interested in additional ideas and lesson plans for incorporating place and heritage are encouraged to consult some of the excellent resources available online, among them the Montana Heritage Project <http://montanaheritageproject.org> and *Folkwriting, Lessons on Place, Heritage and Tradition for the Georgia Classroom* <http://archives.valdosta.edu/folklife/proj-fw.html>.

In addition to collaborative songwriting and place-based learning, students created original backdrops and a life-sized Lomax puppet for the Finale, incorporated sound recording technology, and shared their works in progress through a Dropbox. As Sarna Salzman, SEEDS Executive Director, explained to the Finale audience, “This is the face of 21st century education. This is reading and writing and core academics. This is STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math]. We’re dealing with sound equipment, amplification, and chord structures.... This is also community place making. This is the grand vision in action. This is history. This is intergenerational engagement. This is pride of place. And, most importantly, and what inspires me the most, this is the voice of youth. Our youth. These are their thoughts, their dreams, their reflections.”⁷

The Quest emerged from a remarkable synergy of timing and organizations. SEEDS was in the final stages of its grant-funded collaboration with Earthwork Music and Blackbird Arts. Seth Bernard, co-founder of Earthwork Music, and Sarna Salzman of SEEDS were brainstorming about creating something wonderful for their last semester of funding. Enter Todd Harvey, curator of the Alan Lomax Collection at the American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, and AFC’s project to digitize the 1938 [Alan Lomax Collection of Michigan and Wisconsin Recordings](#).

The Library hoped these Michigan materials would inspire new models for making archival holdings accessible and interesting to new audiences, including young people. Todd knew of Earthwork Music, a group of Michigan singer-songwriters who believe in the intrinsic and historical power of music to raise community and self-awareness and facilitate and encourage original music, so he reached out to Seth at just the right time, offering to make the digitized recordings available prior to their planned public launch on the Library of Congress website.



Alan Lomax returned to Traverse City in more ways than one. Throughout the Quest Finale, the audience heard samples from the 1938 Lomax recordings that inspired the student work, listened to the voice of Lomax explaining his impressions of Michigan, and watched as three students manipulated a life-sized papier-mâché Lomax puppet, created with the guidance of artists from Blackbird Arts in Traverse City. Photo by Laurie Kay Sommers, courtesy of Michigan State University Museum.

The timing was serendipitous. Seth realized that the Lomax Michigan Collection could form the basis for an amazing student quest that would explore music, place, personal journeys, creativity, and collaboration. Seth had previously written a song titled “Keep Up the Quest” with lyrics that shaped his idea of “questing” as a trope for creative empowerment: “Whatever you do, it’s up to you, Don’t let them bring it down. Whatever you do, will come true. Once done, you can’t undo. Keep it collective, we love you. Keep up the Quest....” For Seth and the other project educators, collaborative songwriting was a “positive, fun, participatory” technique “to empower kids to find their creative voice and to develop a relationship with the creative process that works for them.”⁸

Composing songs that explore the possible and the potential in students’ lives—although extremely valuable—is not inherently a folklore-in-education project. What folklore—and in this case, the

Lomax Collection—adds is the crucial connection to past and place. With Lomax providing the source material, the result, as Seth puts it, is “music that is true to the times that we live in and also dips into the rich, local cultural heritage.”⁹

The seeds for using an historic folk music collection already had been planted during previous years of the grant, which had funded PA systems and placement at every site of a copy of the Smithsonian Folkways’ influential reissue of *The Anthology of American Folk Music* (edited by Harry Smith). Seth originally planned to use the Smith Anthology, not Lomax, as a point of reference for students, pointing out its profound impact on the music of the 1960s, when a new generation of musicians was inspired by Smith’s carefully indexed and annotated collection of American folk music (much of it previously unknown to the general public). Seth wanted students participating in the Quest to have the same kind of discovery experience. But when Todd Harvey offered a sneak preview of the Lomax Michigan Collection, it “turned out to be so big and so much more directly related to [students’] experience of place.” Seth and his collaborators shifted their focus to the Lomax materials for historic source material and creative impetus. “We allowed them to explore the Harry Smith Collection on their own time,” Seth recalled, “but we focused our time in the school with them listening to the Lomax Collection and working on the creative process. Ultimately, that’s what kept them engaged.”¹⁰ Lomax’s Michigan Collection had names of towns the students knew, making it a powerful teaching tool. This uniquely local historic folk music collection challenged students to explore and embrace their identity of place and inspired both new compositions and new interpretations of the old songs, under the supportive guidance of Earthwork musicians.



Earthwork Music Collective member John Hanson, also a project musician, produced this video promo for the Quest. The soundtrack includes two songs by participating students: “Little Sleeping Bear,” inspired by a local legend about the origin of Sleeping Bear Dunes and the Manitou Islands and “Traverse Town,” inspired by Lester Wells’ 1938 recording of a song of the same title. (Used with permission.)

The Quest—A Celebration of Community represents a replicable case study for engaging students in community, history, and traditional music through collaborative songwriting. Cultivating youth empowerment is key. The project’s success derived from creative, experiential group learning in which students helped shape the project from start to finish. After a final public performance,

students realize they can do anything—and then they do it again.¹¹ The semester-long format allowed for deeper personal relationships to develop between educators and students. Some of the same students and musicians had been involved for several years in SEEDS afterschool programs, further enhancing trust and safe learning environments. Earthwork musicians came to see themselves as mentors: professional working musicians “showing up” and showing interest in students’ lives and creative potential.

Helping students find their creative voice and empowering them through all phases of an immersive, cooperative project has inherent value and can be organized around all kinds of themes. The critical piece of this project for folklore and education is the use of an historic folksong collection that has *local relevance* to the participating students. These students connected with Alan Lomax’s 1938 Michigan Collection. Other online historic folksong collections will resonate with students from other regions of the country (see [American Folklife Center, Online Collections and Presentations](#)). A growing body of research links increased self-esteem, pride, and ownership in accomplishments, increased student interest in learning and comprehension, and positive relationships between students, teachers, and the community, to the kind of learning evidenced in the Quest.¹²

At the close of the Quest Finale, Seth offered his take on the benefits of the project. Through exploring their creative potential, students learned to support each other and take calculated creative risks. Through exploration of the historic songs in the Lomax Michigan Collection, they expanded their musical boundaries. As Seth told the audience, “It’s so wonderful when our circle of understanding and compassion widens. That’s what the arts do for us.”¹³ And when the students were told that their songs and performance were being documented and archived by the Michigan State University Museum (just as the earlier field recordings by Alan Lomax had been archived by the Library of Congress), everyone cheered. In the words of “The Presto Machine,” a collaborative song created during the project,

*Everyone has a story,
Made into song.
And they’ll live on.*

Laurie Kay Sommers served as program director for the Lomax Michigan Legacy Project 2013-14. She has been involved with various folklore in education projects, among them lessons plans using the Lomax Michigan materials (for the Association for Cultural Equity website); The Florida Music Train, which won the 2003 Dorothy Howard Prize for Folklore and Education from the American Folklore Society; and Folkwriting: Lessons on Place, Heritage, and Tradition for the Georgia Classroom.



Seth Bernard co-founded Michigan’s Earthwork Music Collective. With a background in music, theater, and outdoor education, Seth is a fixture of the independent music scene in Michigan and beyond. In addition to an active performance schedule, Seth serves as Artistic Director of the Quest, which implements afterschool arts enrichment programs in northern Michigan through the Traverse City nonprofit, SEEDS.



Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the Alan Lomax Collection of Michigan and Wisconsin Recordings (AFC 1939/007), American Folklife Center, Library of Congress, for recordings of “The Gallagher Boys” and “Once More A-Lumbering Go.”

URLS

www.keepupthequest.com

www.ecoseeds.org

www.blackbirdartstc.com

www.earthworkmusic.com

<http://www.loc.gov/collection/alan-lomax-in-michigan/about-this-collection>

<http://www.folkways.si.edu/anthology-american-folk-historical-award-winning-collection/african/music/article/smithsonian>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otNBzz-FAk8>

<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/onlinecollections.html>

Notes

1. Sarna Salzman, electronic correspondence to Laurie Sommers, July 20, 2015.
2. U.S. Department of Education, 21st Century Learning Centers, accessed April 25, 2015.
<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html>
3. Sarna Salzman, electronic correspondence to Laurie Sommers, July 20, 2015.
4. Ibid.
5. See www.keepupthequest.com.
6. Seth Bernard, interviewed by Laurie Sommers, June 28, 2014. Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, East Lansing.
7. Sarna Salzman, Quest Finale, May 9, 2014, Laurie Sommers, fieldworker. Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, East Lansing.
8. Seth Bernard, interviewed by Laurie Sommers, June 28, 2014. Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, East Lansing.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Sarna Salzman, electronic correspondence to Laurie Sommers, July 20, 2015.
12. Promise of Place, Enriching Lives Through Place-Based Education. Center for Place-based Learning and Community Engagement, accessed July 20, 2015.
http://promiseofplace.org/Research_Evaluation/why_it_matters.
13. Seth Bernard, Quest Finale, May 9, 2014, Laurie Sommers, fieldworker. Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, East Lansing.

Classroom Application: Questing Design Template

The semester-long Quest involved students in multifaceted activities, among them design (sets, album art, and publicity), songwriting (instrumentation, lyrics, poetry, listening, collaborating), production (staging, sound, lighting), and performance—all inspired by historic Michigan field recordings made by Alan Lomax in 1938. The following organizational template, as conceptualized by Seth Bernard, structured the project.

Phase 1 (two months)

Exploration

Creative listening and learning of songs from the collections, with a focus on extracting meaning and reinterpreting, even rewriting the songs. Fieldtrips to local natural and historic sites. How does this exploration of place relate to each young person's personal story and their path ahead? They are on their Quest, individually and collectively.

Phase 2 (two months)

Creation

Group composition of original songs for the final performance begins. Old songs are selected and arrangement and interpretation begins. The Quest continues and the creative process is working tangibly. Ideas become realities, imagination becomes sound.

Phase 3 (final month)

Refinement

Songs are arranged and rehearsed, performers become as comfortable with the material as possible. We understand our opportunity to nourish our community with this work.

Phase 4

Performance

The Quest is actualized! Students participate in a pre-concert tech day when they record their work prior to sharing it in the final community performance. True connections to our place, deep commitment to our work, strong support of our friends. We honor our self-respect. We were born to shine and our lives mean the world to us. We can do it. We just did.¹

Seth and his Quest co-director Josh Davis selected 15 Lomax Michigan recordings as springboards for collaborative songwriting. They chose songs that represented the geographic scope of Lomax's Michigan journey—from Detroit to the western Upper Peninsula—and connected with students' home areas. Lumberjack ballads struck a chord with the region's past and present logging economy. The rhythms and poetic forms of Detroit blues resonated as a shaping force of much of today's



Quest co-director Seth Bernard (right) and Kalkaska Middle School students performing the place-based anthem, "Kalkaska Is Awesome," which began with a chorus modeled on the "come all ye" formulaic opening of many traditional ballads recorded by Lomax in 1938. "Hey, everybody, come on along, Kalkaska is awesome, we can tell you in song!" Students brainstormed about places they loved in their town and incorporated them into the song. Seth recalled, "By putting things that are important to them into song, they then have this capsule, this song, that lifts up their town." Photo by Laurie Kay Sommers courtesy of Michigan State University Museum.

popular music. Songs of Great Lakes sailors connected with students who grew up along the shore of Lake Michigan. Perhaps the most powerful songs were those Lomax collected in Traverse City, site of the Quest Finale, and nearby Beaver Island. "Traverse Town" ² evoked people and places of 19th-century Traverse City. The students' collaborative rewrite (with each school providing a verse) describes places and notable characters of the town today as the students experience it. "The Gallagher Boys," [Audio #1] sung by Beaver Islander Dominick Gallagher, chronicles a 19th-century Lake Michigan shipwreck between Beaver Island and Traverse City. Gallagher sings the song and then tells Alan Lomax a personal story about the events that inspired it. "That was really cool for the kids," Seth recalled, "to hear a 75-year-old guy telling a 65-year-old story from his life. There are many different layers and nuances of inspiration for the kids. Also, it's historic. So we tried to bring with this project a sense of reverence and excitement, opportunity for these kids. They need to be proud of where they're from. We show up as working musicians from Michigan, excited about the Library of Congress. We tell them how cool that is, and that Alan Lomax is this major guy. Without his work we wouldn't have discovered the roots musicians who influenced our music today." ³

The use of historic source material provided some challenges. Seth had to inspire "kids who identify with artists like Miley Cyrus, Skrillex, metal, dubstep, and hip hop," not the ballads and blues of the Lomax Collection. Students and facilitators spent time listening to and talking about the original songs, sometimes learning a chorus or the whole piece. The "hook" was to engage students in the historic source material, not as scratchy old recordings but as a rich source for student creative work. "The process was adventurous," Seth wrote, "and the results were dynamic and refreshing. Instead of mimicking the source songs, students felt excited about using song elements as a tool to explore their personal, cultural, and physical landscapes. It was neat to watch the musical palates of both teachers and students grow throughout this program. I know that my own writing was influenced by both the source recordings and the modern stylings of these young interpreters." ⁴



Earthwork musician-educator Sam Cooper (black hat) works on collaborative songwriting with students from Brethren. Photo courtesy of SEEDS and Earthwork Music.

Key to the project's success was the five-step collaborative songwriting process. Young people naturally become more invested in songs they are writing together. Normally the teaching musicians would start from scratch when brainstorming with the group, but with the Quest they used Lomax source material as inspiration, prompting more listening. Here is a brief overview of the process.

Step 1 Brainstorming and free association, ideally with a circle of 5 to 20 people. Participants each contribute a word or sentence that the facilitator writes down. After one round, everyone closes their eyes, and the facilitator recites the group's ideas. Everyone listens to the sounds of the words or phrases and creates mental pictures. The first round of words shapes another round of brainstorming. Some words and phrases connect. Some may be another phrase that rhymes. A large group of participants may only have to go around the circle twice.

Step 2 The facilitator asks about connections of words and phrases. Is a story or form emerging? Is a chorus emerging? Sometimes students will already have melodic ideas. Find rhythms of words and musical motifs that go with that. Employ democracy and give everyone’s idea a chance—it works!

Step 3 Work out verses, choruses, bridge, or riff. With the Lomax Collection, there were already tunes, rhythms, and melodic ideas that served as a springboard for content.

Step 4 Perform and record the song using a smartphone or a recording engineer. Do at least two takes of a song, creating a professional environment. Re-work the song as needed. Emphasize that everyone has a role.

Step 5 Give a public community performance.

In his project blog, Seth described the new collaboratively written songs as “a combination of original songs, inspired by our home places, and rewrites of old folk songs from the Lomax Michigan treasure trove, a truly magnificent collection.” All the songs were terrific, but we’ll highlight just three, which illustrate creative integration of technology as well as differing fusions of the field recordings with contemporary musical styles.

“Hoedown Showdown (Sissy Walking in Brethren)”—a title that combines current pop culture with an old-time dance form—was inspired by the 1938 Lomax recording of Archie Stice singing the lumberjack ballad, “Wild Mustard River.” Earthwork musician-educator Sam Cooper worked with students from Brethren Schools in heavily forested Manistee County on creating this song. In her blog, Cooper wrote, “It’s a rather gruesome lumbering song that memorializes the young Johnny Styles, who catches his foot in a logjam and meets his end under the rushing river. So, we changed up the meter of the song and sang about life near the local Manistee landmark Tippy Dam as the kids have (or would like to) experience it.”⁵



Watch students from Brethren Schools, Manistee County, perform “Hoedown Showdown (Sissy Walking in Brethren).” The excerpt includes a clip from “Wild Mustard River,” which provided source material for students’ songwriting, and Seth Bernard explaining some of the process. Video by Laurie Kay Sommers, courtesy of Michigan State University Museum.

In “Comb the Whole World Over (Michigan I Call My Home)” Earthwork musicians Ben Cohen and Akile Jackson used their mobile beat lab with Forest Area Schools to facilitate hip-hop empowerments with students. Undergirding “Comb the Whole World Over” is a sampled track [Audio #2] with excerpts from the Lomax 1938 Michigan recordings, including Lomax’s voice identifying one of his recordings as “2266 B1 and 2” and a clip of Carl Lathrup’s rendition of “Once More A-Lumbering Go” [Audio #3] which also inspired the chorus of “Comb the Whole World Over,” which morphed from the original—“I’ve roamed the wildwoods over, and once more a-lumbering go”—into “I’ve combed the whole world over, Michigan I love the most.” Students also wrote original rap lyrics about Michigan as “home.”

Michigan I Call My Home

Chorus:

I've been through Appalachia
And I've walked through Tennessee
The shores of the United Kingdom
And France and Italy
The Big Apple in the East to
The gold Pacific Coast
I've combed the whole world over
Michigan I love my most

From the warmth of Alabama to
The palms of Florida's Keys
Volcanoes of Hawaii to the giant
redwood trees
Across the big blue oceans – all the
wonders
I've been shown
I've combed the whole world over
Michigan I call my home

Luis Rap:

Michigan is my home
Michigan is my place, a
fantastic state
with all the great views, And
all the great lakes
I've been born and raised in a
place called Fife Lake
I go to Forest Area I'm a true
warrior
Don't hate, I don't discriminate
Cause we all can participate
Yeah I can play
when it comes to sports- I'm a
total B.A.
hold up I'm getting off topic
Let me go mudding vroom vroom
I'm on it
That's one of them things
I love about Michigan
A lot of good mud and a lot of
good friends
and meeting good people,
Meeting good friends,

And seeing good birds,
And love pigeons,
Truth is, my whole point to this
Michigan is alive and well
If rapping dies off,
I'm a go with it as well

Repeat Chorus

(Jamie Verse)

Michigan, Michigan
Say it again,
From the U.P.ers in the north to
Detroit
Are all our friends
oh Michigan, Michigan
Say it again
From the nation, all over,
Throughout the world
Are our friends

Repeat Chorus

(Austin's Rap)

I've been through Appalachia and
I've walked through Tennessee,
the shores of the U.K. France
and Italy
Chicago's Big Bear
Might be mean
But there isn't a place that
packs a punch like Northern
Michigan's woody crunch
with calm forest and our Great
Lakes
Michigan is full of great traits
Best of all states
Urban or rural, we have it
And I love every bit
Trees to the bees
Summer and winter
A wooden splinter
Easy and not a hurry
No city life don't worry

“Comb the Whole World Over” lyrics [[Listen: Audio #4 “Comb the Whole World Over \(Michigan I Call My Home\)”](#)]

“The Presto Machine,” also performed by Forest Area Schools, is a rock anthem of Lomax’s Michigan journey. The title refers to Lomax’s recording technology, the Presto instantaneous disc recorder, which made 12-inch records on the spot. Each verse evokes a song Lomax recorded in 1938: the lumberjack ballad “Once More a-Lumbering Go,” sung by Carl Lathrup of St. Louis, Michigan; “We’d Rather Be a Couple of Bums,” sung by Mason Parmer of Newberry; and “The Gallagher Boys,” about a shipwreck between Traverse City and Beaver Island in 1873, sung by Dominick Gallagher of Beaver Island.

The Presto Machine

A pioneer man
Travelin the world
Collecting people's words
Every boy
And every girl
Their voices should be heard
In my car
I'm ready to rock
With my recorder in the back
A presto machine
That just won't stop
Gonna record 3,000 tracks

Pre Chorus

Everyone has a story
Made into a song
And they'll live on!

Chorus

Recording
All across the land
Doing all I can
As a traveling man
Music
Is the key to the soul
And my presto machine
Is filled with Rock-N-Roll

A lumbering man
Headin down Sharon Rd.
A double saw in his hand
He tells me his story
As he carries his load
Of the lumber in demand
"No time for hunting
Buck or doe
My family must be fed
We go out singing
A lumbering go"
I recorded all he said

Pre Chorus
Chorus

A couple of bums
Living on the streets dreamin what life
could be
Stolen shoes
Cover their feet
As they tell their story to me
"We haven't got a nickel
We haven't any cares
We'd have it no other way
We see the worries of the
millionaires"
I listen to what they say

Pre Chorus

Chorus

Boarding a ferry
A man ready to go
But the weather is looking grim
His uncle stops him
And tells him no
Your chances of survival are slim
I listen to his story
Of how he stayed behind
As the ship went down in the lake
Nobody knew
That he was alive
Until he walked into the wake

Pre Chorus

Chorus

Lyrics to "The Presto Machine"
[Listen: Audio #5, "Presto Machine"]

URLS

- Audio 1 https://youtu.be/Q_YKn8YkqOQ
Audio 2 <https://youtu.be/LrHbegAvjeU>
Audio 3 <http://youtu.be/bCvCp4T2Itw>
Audio 4 <http://youtu.be/XDiEh5nkzno>
Audio 5 <http://youtu.be/hRC14C0SjyQ>

Notes

1. Seth Bernard, electronic mail correspondence with Todd Harvey and Laurie Sommers, December 6, 2013.
2. The student version of "Traverse Town" is featured in the soundtrack to the Quest promotional video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otNBzz-FAk8>.
3. Seth Bernard, interviewed by Laurie Sommers, June 28, 2014. Michigan State University Museum Cultural Collections, East Lansing.
4. <https://www.earthworkmusic.com/blog?page=ind&i=161>.
5. <http://www.samanthacooper.org/news/teaching-for-the-quest-program>.



Community Building from Below-the-Ground-Up: The Co-Op Youth Council in One Tiny Ozark Town

by Rachel Reynolds Luster

Too often young people in rural communities grow up hearing that “success” means to leave because it is impossible to make a way “here.” This phenomenon is not reserved just for rural places; the same could be said of many neighborhoods, barrios, and reservations across the country. I believe that as folklorists working in community, one of the most important ways that we can put our skill set to use is to challenge this assertion by actively engaging youth in an appreciation of the cultural context and heritage of where they live. Offering an inclusive understanding of “value” and facilitating mentor relationships help them to realize that it is indeed possible, even rewarding, to live in and contribute to their home communities. The Co-Op Youth Council (CYC) encourages young people in large, sparsely populated Oregon County, Missouri, to think about how to define “success,” assert their value to different aspects of community life, and challenge them to “be the change that they wish to see in the world,” as Gandhi said, starting at home.

The CYC is an outgrowth project of the Oregon County Food Producers and Artisans Co-Op (OCFPAC), a collective of farmers, ranchers, artisans, and concerned citizens working toward a holistic approach to community renewal and sufficiency. The larger organization offers a market and community center on the square of our county seat in Alton, Missouri. In this small town in the southern Missouri Ozarks butted up against the Arkansas line, goods can be sold or traded and local knowledge is cherished and shared. At its heart, the Co-op is a below-the-ground-up approach to community development, incorporating resources from various fields, folklore to restoration biology, to address the cultural, economic, ecological, spiritual, and physical wellbeing of place. The belief that a vibrant, dynamic cultural practice is both the flower and the seed of a well-tended community guides this approach.

The Co-Op’s main goal is to nurture an environment in which cultural traditions flourish. We believe that it is our responsibility, as members of our small communities, to lend our gifts to this end. My toolbox includes folklore and community-organizing skills. I began organizing producers and artisans in the county five years ago. We opened our storefront and community center two years ago. I see my role as a steward, facilitator, and conduit of and between community, traditions, ideas, and actions. I have adopted the term “Project Steward” to describe my role, which to me infers a connection between people and place and has a generational implication.



Co-Op Youth Council logo painting.

Youth have always played a part in our organization. We formed as a multi-member LLC operating as a nonprofit. While we give 100 percent of our Co-Op Shop profits to the community, I wanted to form a for-profit entity, which allowed us not to have a board. I felt that this would give each member an equal say in how the project developed, encouraging ownership and responsibility. OCFPAC members range in age from 12 to 90. Many younger children participate in events with their parents by volunteering in the shop and aiding with events. Everyone has an equal say in how projects develop and profits are reinvested, regardless of age.

While engaging young people has always been important, up until a few months ago, they had no separate committees. I realized that a Co-Op Youth Council could be very powerful both for young people and our communities at large. We intend to have positive impact in a wide variety of

community issues that bear on young people's lives. I wanted to carve out a space where they could identify community needs and resources as well as ideas and solutions with the thought that the larger Co-Op could then help them. This epiphany literally came to me in the middle of the night. I sat up and immediately thought of community-minded young people who would share the vision. I shot off a quick set of texts and messages to them and their parents, and they all enthusiastically agreed to participate and offered suggestions for additional council members.

A CYC goal is to nurture aspects of the cultural landscape integral to community identity and understand and identify those qualities within the group. "Building relationships is a big part of service and that is what we are doing here. It goes a long way," said CYC member Mary Alice Oesch. Another goal is to challenge the CYC to identify projects or activities that could make that cultural landscape stronger and more inclusive. This was our first exercise as a group. We split a giant Post-it note down the middle and wrote on one side challenges and on the other opportunities for improving livability for young people in the community. The list of activities that CYC members wanted to initiate grew very quickly, while the community qualities that they felt were special and to be supported remained empty. Through discussion, it became apparent that most CYC members had not spent any time outside their home communities and did not know what made it "special." So, that becomes part of the mission too. Folklore is a field that researches and documents such qualities. Moving forward, documentation will be integrated into the CYC's community activities, discussions, and initiatives with the hope that, along with altering their sense of possibility within their community, youth will gain a better understanding of the cultural context of the region and integrate that context into their projects.

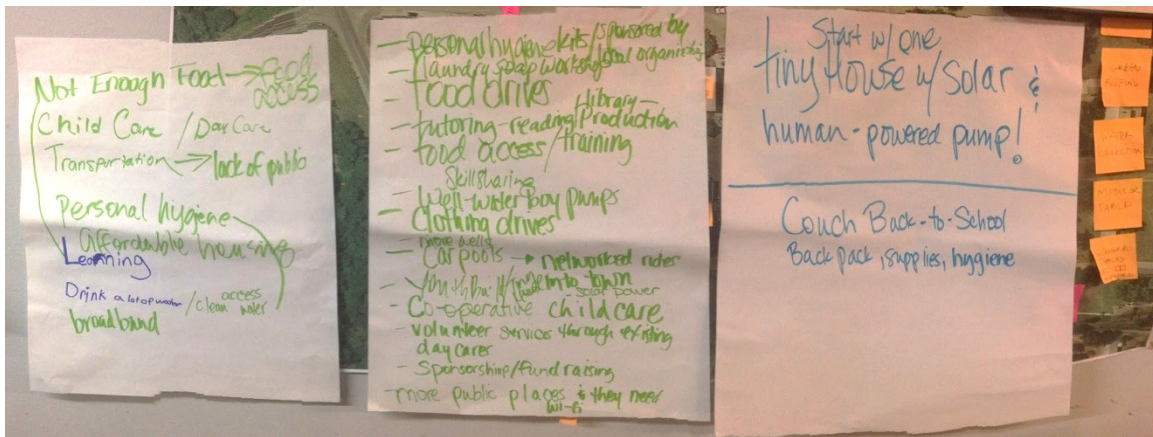
The CYC hit the ground running. They chose two projects from their list of community wants to tackle this summer, an Outdoor Movie Series and Art Walks. We are 45 miles from the nearest movie theater, and I don't even know where the nearest Art Walk is, but the CYC members believe that these activities will bring a wide variety of people together in fellowship. Indeed, their efforts have been the talk of the towns. They raised the funds to host these events, including donations of a giant movie screen and commercial popcorn maker from local supporters. In line with our OCFPAC methodology, CYC members participate in all aspects of planning and execution. We worked

together to draw up proposals for potential sponsors, they attended city council meetings to ask for use of public spaces and support, and they gave radio and newspaper interviews. They are managing budgets, testing equipment, ordering supplies, programming artists, and learning to pool resources. Their enthusiasm has also translated into greater interest for the larger Co-Op. The CYC is being encouraged to have great ideas and learn what it takes to bring them to fruition. In return, we all reap the benefits of success and appreciation from our organization and the community at large. Success is already improving the group's identity. The first Outdoor Movie Series event opened with the Ozark Highballers, a dynamic old-time stringband, and nearly 400 people attended.

The CYC plans to use these events as fundraisers that will allow them to tackle two more community projects on their list, and so on. In coming months, the CYC will begin working with OCFPAC members on a Foxfire-style publication to document purveyors of homesteading skills here (new and old) and serve as a resource guide for new residents. It will document and bridge the cultural traditions of the generational families of Oregon County with the slew of back-to-the-landers moving into the county in recent years.

There are deep educational outcomes from this work. These young people are learning many skills in a variety of academic subjects, including math, language arts, and social studies, and they are calling upon local cultural assets. What is important to me is that it is done in a way that encourages them to be proactive in crafting the present and the future of their home communities.

As the facilitator, I am also learning a great deal. When I invited current CYC members to join at its formation, I knew that they would have wonderful ideas. I did not know how good they would be at following through on those ideas. I assumed that I would carry the burden of logistics or a separate OCFPAC committee would help them. The opposite has been the case. The CYC has enthusiastically taken the bull by the horns, from delegating tasks to attending meetings religiously. The CYC is a fledgling, but a healthy one. I look forward to seeing it grow in anticipation of what these young people dream and do to strengthen our communities in the future.



Rachel Reynolds Luster is a folklorist, fiddler, librarian, and community organizer in the Missouri Ozarks. She is the founder of the Oregon County Food Producers and Artisans Co-Op, a market and community center integrating arts and agriculture, and HomeCorps, a program to support rural youth in community building. She is also a founding member of Art of the Rural and director of their Mary Celestia Parler Project. She is pursuing a PhD in Heritage Studies from Arkansas State University.

The Art of Seeing: Visual Anthropology as a Road into Experience



by Luci Fernandes

Visual anthropology is premised on the belief that cultures can be understood and represented through the visual symbols that they use, based on an analysis derived from long-term participant/observation of the community.

Ethnographic photography or ethno-photography uses photography to study the traditions, customs, daily life, ceremonies, and people of particular cultures. It has been in practice since the 1890s. Franz Boas, and later Margaret Mead and Gregory Bateson all pushed for greater use of photography, which was often brushed aside by critics as “fluff” of the researcher’s toolkit. Most anthropological fieldworkers have produced images of the people they studied but are often not incorporated in their research. Photographs taken in the field, like written fieldnotes, help reconstitute events in the mind of the ethnographer.

This article was originally published by *Community Works Journal* and is shared with a reciprocal agreement. www.communityworksjournal.org
(Some revisions have been made for republication, eds.)

In the 1990s, experiments with multimedia-hypertext technology opened up the promise of a future with computer-generated pictorial ethnographies—a new kind of text producing a different type of learning experience. Photography has been increasingly used to improve conventional ethnographic narratives. As a result, photographs are no longer mere illustrations of written text. Images can help create a context for written narratives. They can, however, also be collected into photo-essays that depict events, behaviors, people, cultures, or social forms. The ethnographic use of photos involves description, analysis, and interpretation. Each stage can increase our understanding of human social phenomena.

Cultural photographs and films seem to be objective; however, we need to remember that taking or making them is highly subjective. Images captured and narrated by members of the community being observed are actually ideological constructions that shape (and are shaped by) cultural and social environments. And we shouldn’t forget that the photographers or filmmakers, even if they are anthropologists, are taking the photos or making the film through their own cultural lenses that shape perceptions of reality. Images can embody personal and societal narratives. Incorporated within cultural processes, they can have a significant influence on socio-cultural systems.

Illustrations from My Research in Ecuador and Cuba

When as an anthropologist/ethnographer I use photos as documentation, I feel that I am opening a window onto daily life or a cultural event I am observing. I began using visual anthropology techniques when I was doing dissertation research among the Kichwa Indians of Ecuador. There I documented the community development project [Kallari](#), which offers alternative economic options

to people living in the Amazon Basin. The Kichwa create distinctive handcrafts such as necklaces and baskets, grow coffee, and make chocolate. Each of these activities is time consuming and involves hard work. I wanted to show these processes in all their complexity and difficulty. The Kichwa use materials from their natural environment, not only the coffee beans and cacao, but also string, beads, and canes. To make the string they must harvest the plants, scrape them to expose the fibers underneath, wash them in the river, lay them in the sun to dry, beat them on rocks, weave the fibers into strands, then start to string the beads. The beads themselves are seeds that must be processed. I photographed every step. Not knowing it at the time, those pictures became invaluable to the Kichwa as part of their recorded history and for internationally marketing their wares.



My work in Cuba has led me to use visual anthropology techniques extensively. Over the past 12 years, I have lived in Cuba for periods of time and conducted ethnographic field research, documenting various aspects of Cuban culture. Cuba is a visually stimulating place that many people from the U.S. know only from negative or romantic coverage by the U.S. media. I would like people to experience it as I have

experienced it. I decided that it would be easier to convey daily life in photos and videos than to describe these aspects in words. You can see things in Cuba that you can't be seen anywhere else, not only the 1950s cars that everybody knows about, but, for example, strange inventions for making do with little, street professions that are both ways of earning a living and sources of amusement, extreme poverty, and exuberant joyousness.



My current research focuses on resource distribution and social networks. I analyze how people make ends meet despite scarcity of goods and restrictions on trade and business. I also investigate the social relations that guarantee the allocation of goods and services. I collaborate with a colleague from Denison University, Anita Waters, and we analyze the government representation of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, the commemoration of the attack on Moncada Barracks in 1953, and the recording and display of history through museum exhibits and monuments. For this research, we took over 1,000 photos along with film and audio recorded interviews of docents and other museum employees. When I moved to North Carolina, I started exhibiting some of the photos that I had taken in Cuba. I didn't want only to exhibit my own photos, I wanted my students to learn to use photography and video as means of understanding cultural groups better.

Classroom Application: Visual Anthropology Strategies for Students



Introduce students to unfamiliar communities through photos and videos.

I think that visual anthropology offers significant ways for getting to understand communities better. People viewing the products of visual anthropology, whether photos or videos, can be exposed to communities with which they are unfamiliar and maybe will never come into contact with in their lives. Consider how unsatisfying dance ethnography texts are without photos or videos; they can be just dance steps on the page. Many dimensions of community are highly visual. Photos give a better sense of color and shapes. Videos add motion and sound, bringing viewers closer to being actually with people in the community. Sounds, facial expressions, tones of voice, body language: the only thing missing is smell. Perhaps viewing images creates greater empathy; better understanding is gained on a visceral level. The interpretation of photos may be more guided by the choices of the photographer in terms of framing or selection of images. When photographers are part of the culture being photographed, the photo may even be a projection of themselves, of a portion of their cultural identity.



Encourage students to use photos in interviews to elicit reactions and information from community members.

Both in Ecuador and in Cuba, I have used photos I have taken to elicit reactions or information from participants; the photos help open a dialogue between myself and those I am interviewing. I even incorporated myself into the photos and thus became a part of my own observations and entered into the reflexive process. The images can guide the discussion. The person pictured (or the person/people from the pictured world) interprets the images, giving me an opportunity to listen. People respond differently in interviews using images and text than they do in interviews using words alone. Images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words, so photo-elicitation interviews draw out a different kind of information, perhaps deeper, certainly more interesting, than do ordinary interviews. It unlocks a flow of vivid memories in the mind and I have found elicit more detailed explanations of a ritual activity or event.



Allow students to turn the camera over to community members so that they can “speak in their own voices” through photos.

Another visual ethnographic process that I like is to allow participants to speak in their own voices through photos that they take themselves. I give them the camera and ask them to take pictures. They describe what to photograph and why they should take particular photos. This photo-voice technique gives participants the means of identifying what is significant to them. It is particularly important when participants belong to groups that have been marginalized, silenced, overlooked, or rejected. This technique can also be used to identify a societal problem or a topic that needs to be discussed within the community but is considered taboo. It can lead to community discussion, mobilization, and even action.

In his work with marginalized and oppressed groups, for example, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire argued for the importance of creating opportunities for people to visualize their social problems

and to use this visualization as a basis to stimulate collective introspection, discussion, and action. In 1973, while conducting a literacy project in a barrio of Lima, Peru, Freire and his team asked people questions in Spanish, but requested the answers in photographs. When the question "What is exploitation?" was asked, some people took photos of a landlord, a grocer, or a policeman (Boal 1979, 123). One child, however, took a photo of a nail on a wall. It made no sense to adults, but other children were strongly agreed. The ensuing discussions showed that many young boys of that neighborhood worked in the shoeshine business. Their clients were mainly in the city, not in the barrio where they lived. As their shoeshine boxes were too heavy for them to carry, these boys rented a nail on a wall (usually in a shop) where they could hang their boxes for the night. To them, that nail on the wall represented "exploitation." The "nail on the wall" photograph spurred widespread discussions in the barrio about other forms of institutionalized exploitation, including ways to overcome those (Singhal and Rattine-Flaherty 2006). I have used the photo-voice method in Cuba to give people the chance to express themselves through the images that they photograph by telling their story directly. This empowers the interviewee to highlight things that they find significant that the researcher may have found insignificant.



Teach students to incorporate multimedia possibilities in their investigations of communities.

As an anthropologist, I want to make my discipline more accessible to students from a range of disciplines in the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the fine arts. As a teacher, I think that students need direct ethnographic experiences, not just reading about what anthropologists have done. Today's students are typically more visually oriented because of the Internet; I have found that they are no big readers, except of text messages. As a socially conscious person, I want to get students out into the community, to have them break out of the isolation of their university bubble. Now that digital cameras and video recording equipment are relatively inexpensive, more visual anthropology technology is financially accessible to instructors and students. In my visual anthropology course, I have students choose a community, gain community access and confidence, built rapport and trust with the members they will interview, and then conduct the research, which involves photography, video, podcasts, blogs, and PowerPoint presentations within one semester. As for me, I hope that my discipline comes to value imagery more in the research process and more anthropologists include them in their research.

Luci Fernandes, PhD, is a cultural anthropologist who focuses on documenting daily life through audio and visual media. She is Associate Professor of Cultural Anthropology at Georgia Gwinnett College and is a regular contributor to Community Works Journal.



URLS

www.kallari.com

http://www.communityworksinstitute.org/cwonline/articles/luci_visualanthro/luci_text/luci_introto_visanthro.html

Works Cited

Boal, Augusto. 1979. *Theater of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.

Singhal, Arvind and Elizabeth Rattine-Flaherty. 2006. Pencils and Photos as Tools of Communicative Research and Praxis: Analyzing Minga Perú's Quest for Social Justice in the Amazon. *Gazette* 68(4), 3130-330.

Access at [http://utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/Articles and Chapters/singhal_rattineflaherty.pdf](http://utminers.utep.edu/asinghal/Articles%20and%20Chapters/singhal_rattineflaherty.pdf).



During the 2014-15 school year students at Grisham Middle School in Austin, Texas, created audio stories to document a wide range of community traditions, such as Norwegian and German family recipes in the U.S., the lives of community musicians and poets, and artisan soap making. Their English Language Arts teacher Jennie Tidwell attended Texas Folklife’s 2014 Stories from Deep in the Heart Summer Institute, [texasfolklife.org/event/ssi2015] a five-day workshop for Austin-area teachers to learn how to make audio documentaries with professional producers, journalists, and cultural workers. Texas Folklife encourages teachers who complete the summer institute to implement the indepth version of our program in their classroom the following school year.

Tidwell’s students worked with Stories from Deep in the Heart Project Director Marcelo Teson and audio producers throughout the multi-week program to craft audio stories related to themes of folklife and local traditions. To prepare, students considered personal experiences, cultural traditions, and their connections to Grisham Middle School and Texas. They developed proposed story topics and pitched them to the Stories from Deep in the Heart team, who accepted the proposals or offered feedback to improve concepts.

Groups of three to five students organized around each topic and set out to interview community members, record and transcribe audio footage, script and edit the documentary using Audacity audio editing software, and produce a cohesive, polished audio documentary. Students learned the importance of teamwork and to appreciate the unique traditions found in their own families and community. They presented their audio documentaries to their peers and families at a Grisham Middle School public Listening Party event in February. Texas Folklife makes finished stories produced by youth and teachers available for public radio stations to license via Public Radio Exchange. One story from Grisham Middle School, “Reptiles in the House,” was recently picked up by the nationally syndicated program PRX Remix.

Hear the stories at <http://texasfolklife.org/article/grisham-middle-school-2014-2015-finished-audio-pieces>
 Stories from Deep in the Heart on PRX http://www.prx.org/group_accounts/118054-storiesfromdeep
 Texas Folklife on SoundCloud <https://soundcloud.com/texasfolklife>



*Texas Folklife Programs and Development Director **Charlie Lockwood** holds an MA in Ethnomusicology from the University of California-Santa Barbara. He works closely with [Stories from Deep in the Heart](#), folk and traditional arts apprenticeships, and *Foodways: A Place at the Table*, a statewide survey of Texas food traditions.*



by Julianne Morse

In 2013-2014 the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts (NHSCA) embarked on an initiative to develop relationships with immigrant, refugee, and new American community members as part of our commitment to bring and support arts in underserved communities. Over the past two years we have funded fieldwork to identify 11 artists, developed relationships with social service providers, and given noncompetitive pilot support for a traditional Rwandan dance program for middle and high school youth. These efforts were in support of several strategic plan goals to “respond to changing economic, cultural, and demographic conditions of the state to create a culture of inclusion in the arts.”¹

As the Traditional Arts Coordinator, I arranged meetings with many of the social service organizations that provide resources for the Bhutanese, Rwandan, and other new American groups to share information about NHSCA, our grants, programs, and services. This outreach took longer and presented more challenges than I’d anticipated. After only my first year in the position as a public sector folklorist, I was quickly learning that each organization had very different cultural approaches to operating, providing services, and connecting with community members. I am always learning that the most important thing is to keep showing up in person and demonstrate you are committed to helping.

One group NHSCA connected with was New American Africans (NAA).² NHSCA first approached NAA because of their successful academic afterschool program attended by 10 to 25 youth three days a week. We wanted to encourage NAA to apply for one of our general project grants to expand their afterschool program to include the arts. NAA had held many cultural celebrations and

The two largest populations of refugees to New Hampshire in the past decade are Bhutanese and Africans from the eastern region of Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Burundi. Most Rwandan youth here grew up in Congolese or Ugandan refugee camps. Although their parents identify as Rwandan, many youth born after the 1994 conflicts and resulting genocide have never lived within the national borders of Rwanda or live among ongoing, residual ethnic tension. Rwanda's current borders were drawn in 1884 by Germany at the start of the European colonization of Africa and, as happened in much of the region, the existing ownership of land by different ethnic groups was not acknowledged.³



community potlucks that featured lengthy programs of music and dance. Their executive director, Honore Murenzi, has described the important role music and dance can have as a tool for community members to stay connected with their Rwandan cultural heritage.

NAA's expansion of adding an arts component to their successful programming we felt complemented both NHSCA's and NAA's missions. It has been demonstrated through many anecdotal stories and in research how engagement in the arts can have numerous positive outcomes for youth. James Caterall's 2012 research funded by the National Endowment for the Arts looked at four long-term studies of the impact of arts engagement on at-risk youth:

Socially and economically disadvantaged children and teenagers who have high levels of arts engagement or arts learning show more positive outcomes in a variety of areas than their low-arts-engaged peers. In middle school, high school and beyond they do better on a host of academic and civic behavioral measures than do at-risk youth who lack deep arts backgrounds. To varying degrees those outcomes extend to school grades, test scores, honors society membership, high school graduation, college enrollment and achievement, volunteering, and engagement in school or local politics.⁴

The reality of the trauma that these youth and their families have experienced from generations of conflict, living conditions in refugee camps, the long-term lack of access to nutritional foods and education, and now being part of a diaspora that is assimilating to a new culture, climate, and language is one that many of us will never be able to comprehend. At the local high school there are over 200 English Language Learners (ELL) with only five fulltime ELL staff. The goal in encouraging the expansion of NAA's programming to include the arts was for Rwandan and Congolese immigrant and refugee youth in Concord to engage with a traditional artist and art forms that celebrate and honor their cultural heritage. This engagement aimed to engender personal pride in culture, a greater sense of self-worth, and acknowledgement of their diverse cultural traditions as enriching the fabric of the Concord community. The program also hoped to instill confidence in the youths' ability to overcome academic challenges that arise from cultural and linguistic barriers and involve parents in the shared responsibility of celebrating traditional culture.



Hear Master Teacher Thierryne Dusabe and the youth sing traditional songs and share their dances on the *Journal of Folklore and Education* YouTube channel https://youtu.be/1DuE_a6oL4k.

Youth and Traditional Arts: A Study in Dance

Over the course of a year I met with Murenzi and different board members several times to discuss possible options to include the arts in their afterschool program. Approaches that both the board members and I thought would be a good route were sometimes not culturally appropriate or aligned with the overall goals of the afterschool program. Even within the organization's board of largely American community members, it could not be assumed that their good intentions for community bridging and engagement would be culturally appropriate or fit the commitment of the NHSCA Traditional Arts Program to support culturally specific art forms. One suggestion was made for a Nigerian artist to do batik with the Rwandan youth, another was for an American teaching artist to lead drawing programs. There were brainstorming sessions on a culminating cultural celebration that could build on an existing series of community ice cream parties, yet in Rwandan culture sweets are not valued or celebrated. These discussions and negotiations of possible opportunities allowed a relationship to develop between myself, Murenzi, and board members, and we gained a better understanding and articulated goals for everyone involved in the program.

Ultimately, Thierryne Dusabe became the lead artist to teach and engage youth at NAA's afterschool program in traditional dances of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She grew up in Rwanda and attended the College of Medical Technicians in Gitega, Burundi, where she participated in the dance group Inyange. She was later resettled at the Zaleka refugee camp in Malawi where she joined a Rwandan traditional dance group, Imanzi, which performed in weddings and cultural shows. Dusabe is currently a student at Nashua Community College studying nursing and working at a healthcare facility. At age 25, she is an excellent role model for the high school youth in the NAA afterschool program. She also understood the importance of passing on these traditions and was able to provide a significant link between the youth in the program and her teachers in Africa. It is this link that powerfully connects youth with their community and provides youth a better understanding of their own personal identities through a cultural lens.

The dance program met for 15 weeks on Friday evenings from 5 to 7pm at a local church during the 2014-15 school year, with 12 to 25 youth attending each Friday. Dusabe, Murenzi, and I collaborated to develop a work plan that focused on traditional dances and the cultural significance of dancing within Rwandan and Congolese culture. Dances include *Ikinimba* and *Igishakamba*, *Umushayayo/Umushayagiro*, and *Intore*. *Ikinimba* and *Igishakamba* are similar dances, only different in their origins. They are accompanied by instruments like *ingoma* (drums) and *ifirimbi* (whistle). They require both strength and self-confidence and can be done by boys and girls. *Umushayayo* and *Umushayagiro* are the dances of women and girls. They symbolize and celebrate the elegant movement of various animals from elephants and gazelles to the traditionally most revered bovine, the cow. *Intore* was performed by warriors to scare their opponents and is traditionally performed by boys. *Intore* was perhaps the favorite dance of the youth as it included improvisational chanting and dancing that usually sent the youth into fits of giggling as they tried to outperform each other creatively.

While there are many arguably subjective and anecdotal positive outcomes of the program, there were at the same time missed opportunities in evaluation. This was not due to a lack of foresight on building evaluation measures into the program, but to a lack of understanding of the cultural and linguistic barriers that would prevent conventional evaluation measures from being implemented. Just as the length of time it took to develop a relationship with NAA was underestimated, so was the capacity to implement high-quality evaluation into this pilot program. The students primarily speak in Kinyarwanda when together, and it took time for both them and me to gain trust to exchange phrases in English and French. Boys in general had higher proficiencies in English, and the girls were very timid to speak with me. I found that girls typically have more responsibilities at home beyond the school

Tips for Developing Relationships with Immigrant and Refugee New Community Members

Try multiple methods of communication. Email, call, show up. All or none of these may work. Keep trying to make a connection and don't be discouraged. Until you develop a relationship, you will not know the preferred communication style of different groups.

Share and listen. Make repeated meetings to share information about your services but also show up to their programming even if it isn't directly related to yours. By showing up to community conversations and other programming you gain insight into what is important in their lives and develop connections to ways your agency may support their needs.

Find creative ways to provide services. Some individuals and organizations may be weary of state or public programs. If you are unable to provide support for services or identify an artist who would be ideal for an apprenticeship, for example, you may want to find a fiscal agent or social service organization that has the capacity to be a good partner.

Be open and respect cultural norms. If you enter a partnership or provide a service, it may be implemented in a different way than you imagined. Trust that different communication styles and approaches will still achieve the desired goal.

Good intentions may not be the best path. Listen carefully and prompt dialogue about what kinds of programming or services are most appropriate. Ideas that you, the organization's board, or social service organizations think would benefit new community members may not be culturally appropriate. Be patient. Involve community members to help develop a plan so you do not assume what will be the best program. Constituents may be grateful for any support and feel uncomfortable sharing how they might approach programming differently.

day with cooking and therefore were potentially spending more time with non-English-speaking parents and guardians. Most weeks I would bring snacks and built trust by always showing up, trying to participate in the dances, and engaging the students in conversation. It was not the level of evaluation I hoped for, but the relationship building and experience will allow me to understand evaluation possibilities for future programming.

Despite these evaluative shortcomings, I feel confident in claiming that all partners, participants, teachers, and community members involved have strengthened practices for working together, listening to each other, and understanding our diverse cultural perspectives. If I could quantify the joy each week on the faces of the dozens of youth who participated and repeatedly attended the program, the success would be undeniable. While most aspects of life for these youth center on assimilating to a new culture and learning a new identity, it is our hope that by engaging in a celebration of traditional Rwandan dance they will be able to retain cultural pride in their heritage.



Julianne Morse is the Traditional Arts Coordinator for the New Hampshire State Council on the Arts where her responsibilities include overseeing grants, fieldwork, research, special initiatives, and professional development. She has focused recent efforts on expanding understanding and support for New American traditional artists and for the vibrant social dance community. She enjoys listening and helping to make possible the creative expressions of all community members.

All photos are courtesy Becky Field, Fieldwork Photos (www.fieldworkphotos.com).

Audio recording of singing by New American African youth, recorded by Julianne Morse.

NOTES

1. *Arts Ingenuity: NH State Council on the Arts Strategic Plan 2014-2018*, 2013. Retrieved from http://www.nh.gov/nharts/aboutus/pdf/2014-2018_nhscstrategicplan.pdf.
2. New American Africans formed in 2004 to help newly arrived Africans integrate into their new community by building bridges with local institutions to help families meet their basic needs. Through African leadership, NAA develops strong immigrant communities by promoting collaboration, equity, resilience, and opportunities to thrive with dignity and respect. NAA has a one paid staff member, Executive Director Honore Murenzi, and is overseen by a board of directors. Murenzi is the only service provider for the organization. Services include vocational training; translation at healthcare, educational, and legal meetings; English as a Second Language courses; and afterschool programs for increasing academic achievement.
3. In 2014 New Hampshire had a population of 1,326,813 with shifting statewide demographics from 97% Caucasian in 2000 to 91.6% in 2013. (U.S. Census Bureau, New Hampshire, 2010. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/33000.html>.) While French Canadian, Irish, Scottish, and English ancestry still dominate the region, we have seen an increased diversity with the availability of web and technology jobs in the southern part of the state. In 8% of households English is not the first language. NH has four refugee resettlement cities that have welcomed 3,317 new community members in the past five years (NH Department of Health and Human Services, 2013. *Who Are Refugees*. Retrieved from <http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/omh/refugee/facts.htm>). In these cities the non-Caucasian population ranges from 10 to 21%, marking significantly more diverse areas than the state average.
4. Catterall, James, Susan S. Dumais, and Gillian Hampden-Tompson. 2012. *The Arts and Achievement in At Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies*. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities

by Linda Deafenbaugh

Standing on the threshold of the schoolhouse door surrounded by the flow of traffic moving between the community and the classroom, I notice a pile of what appear to be discards cast to the side outside the doorway. Much of the pile is community knowledge and community ways of knowing that will be retrieved later when the dismissal bell rings. Peering around the doorway, I see a similar pile of school knowledge and school ways of knowing that are left inside awaiting the next morning's welcoming bells. This taking off and putting on of culturally situated knowledge is a regular feature of all our lives as we move between the many cultural groups and contexts that make up our daily existence. We know, for example, that we cannot bring those jokes and ways of joking that we do with our friends into our family dining room, religious school, or workplace, so we leave them outside. Certainly, school-inappropriate jokes are in that pile outside the schoolhouse, but so too are most of the community traditions and experiences that make up the bulk of students' lives in non-school hours. For immigrant, refugee, and minority students in particular, I wonder whether these youngsters feel that they could keep anything with them as they entered the school building.

I invite readers to look more closely at what students passing through a school portal may get to take with them and consider why being able to bring in more benefits youngsters. To help educational practitioners think about ways to do this, I examine several instructional practices frequently employed in folklife and folk arts education that productively strive to increase community knowledge and ways of knowing as resources for student learning.

Knowledge and Ways of Knowing

As I discuss *knowledge*, I am referring to the subject matter, the what, that is known and gets to count as knowledge. Knowledge has content, the "stuff" known or being taught, as the focus. School knowledge can be classically understood as the canon of formal knowledge often encoded in standards or other means that declare what all students should know and be able to do at different points in their school careers. Community knowledge can be understood as content that is situated within a community cultural group or setting. Community knowledge can include the songs sung at celebrations or when jumping rope, the symbolic meanings behind ritual practices like decorating a Christmas tree, the organizational structure for storing food and dishware in the kitchen, the home remedies used to provide relief from common ailments, the expected exchanges when greeting someone, and the many other things that we each know for functioning well in our many groups every day. Bowman and Hamer (2011) have found that formal educators may refer to community knowledge as intrinsic knowledge whereas folklorists will call it traditional knowledge.

I define *ways of knowing* as: how one knows/learns/teaches/approaches the knowing/using of knowledge within its situated context. A classic school way of knowing for example would be didactic instruction in which the teacher presents an extended explanation of the material that the students are to learn and uses questions to direct student attention to information the teacher has already explained (Rose, et. al, 2001). Community ways of knowing are as varied as the cultural groups that use and pass on their knowledge. Transmission of community knowledge is often

integrally linked to the continuation of traditions and makes allowances for variations and creativity to adapt to the specifics of a situation. A heavy reliance on observation with trial and error is a way that many games are transmitted in neighborhood streets, for example. Another way is when Grandpa guides young hands in how to handle tools while telling about a time when all did not go as planned. This way combines hands-on experiences with a historical dimension to pass on particular skills coupled with a sense of the contexts when they should or could be applied. Most often we are not fully aware of the many ways of how we came to know community knowledge, but these ways equip us all with a repertoire of learning methods that can be as situated as the content of the knowledge they teach.

Community groups and contexts use community ways of knowing to transmit community knowledge and, classically, schools use school ways of knowing to advance school knowledge. Multiple researchers have pointed out how school knowledge and school ways of knowing are not easily accessible to all students. See for example the research by Heath (1983), Ladson-Billings (2007), or, better yet, review a discussion of the research on “the home-school disconnect” in Bowman and Hamer (2011, pp. 11-12). Lack of success is predictable when students struggle to gain access to school knowledge because of their not being proficient in school ways of knowing.

Schools tend not to give lots of validity to personal experience, as standardized tests so clearly show through emphasis on students demonstrating proficiency in a bounded amount of selected knowledge queried through multiple-choice questions. What is deemed a “good student” is further characterized by the youngster’s involvement in providing answers to, and asking questions of, the school canonical lessons. In school ways of knowing there are acceptable questioning topics that dis-en-voices other ways of questioning and discourse (Heath, 1983). All too often, the expected ways of participating in school do not leave room for a different profile of participation. Those students who are not expert at school ways of knowing and school knowledge have little room to voice at what they are expert.

Schools have desires to increase connections with many different cultural communities and the participation of their culturally diverse student population. Ladson-Billings (1994) found that successful teachers of one struggling group of students bridged the gap between school and home cultures by attending to the students’ cultures as a regular feature of their instructional practice. In culturally relevant pedagogy, teachers access community knowledge within students to advance school knowledge. Increasing the relevance of school knowledge, and making learning personally meaningful, are strategies to achieve greater student engagement. When students participate, they demonstrate competency and can give the teacher a different perspective on who they are and what they are capable of doing. Students who engage more can become more competent in school ways of knowing and develop a different perspective on school knowledge and themselves in relationship to it. Increasing student participation in school by tapping into their community knowledge in respectful ways that simultaneously support the youngsters’ cultural competency can positively affect academic achievement (Ladson-Billings, 2007).

Teachers wish to be expert in what they are teaching, but no one can possibly know all the community knowledge and ways of knowing in any given community. Allowing community knowledge and ways of knowing into the classroom requires teachers to be learners and reflective about their own practice. It is not surprising that teachers might devalue community ways of knowing without knowing they are. Certainly this could happen when educators pay insufficient attention to the dynamics of the politics of cultural differences that solidify these differences into borders with unequal power exercised across it (Erickson, 2007).

Methods for Accessing Community Knowledge

By presenting several examples of folklife education activities that use school ways of knowing to access community knowledge and advance school and community knowledge, I seek to increase teachers' comfort with expanding their instructional repertoire to include more folklife education practices. The following activities are easily accessible to all teachers, generally do not require funding, and can be managed within a single classroom. With each example I explore the intersections between the school and community ways of knowing and bodies of knowledge. These intersections show the complex relationships that can and do occur within each method of including more of the community in instruction. The diagrams consistently show that these activities all start with teachers' expertise in using school ways of knowing. Educators who seek to advance the success of all students, particularly immigrant, refugee, and minority students, will find suggestions of activities that others are finding useful. I draw my examples from the [Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School \(FACTS\)](http://www.factschool.org) in Philadelphia, a school dedicated to including folk arts as an integral part of student learning. This is not an exhaustive list of folklife education practices. There are many other methods within folklife and folk arts education models across the country that could provide further inspiration.



See Debbie Wei talk to FACTS 3rd graders about Mid-Autumn Festival at www.culturetools.org/community/maf.html.

Lion dancers at Philadelphia's Chinatown community Mid-Autumn Festival.
Photo by Eric Joselyn.

Cultural Texts

One way to access community knowledge is through the inclusion of texts from students' cultures. This instructional activity is one common in multicultural education programs. It promotes the use of instructional materials that go beyond the classic canon of texts to include literature, music, and art from multiple cultural groups. As students read, sing, and make art projects from a cultural group, they learn about the knowledge of that cultural community. If the cultural group whose texts have been selected for inclusion is a group a student identifies with, then s/he can "see" her/himself included in the classroom (Banks and Banks, 2004; Grant and Sleeter, 1998). Although these texts may contain some glimpses into community ways of knowing, most teachers primarily use school ways of knowing to access the texts and advance school knowledge within mandated curricular objectives. Character and plot can be taught by using an Asian folktale, rhythm and harmony by using a South American folk song, and shape and design elements by using an African mask. However, care must be taken to avoid common pitfalls like assuming that all the Asian students, regardless of where in Asia their families' roots might be, will know and relate to that folktale, or teaching a token folk song without its community cultural context.

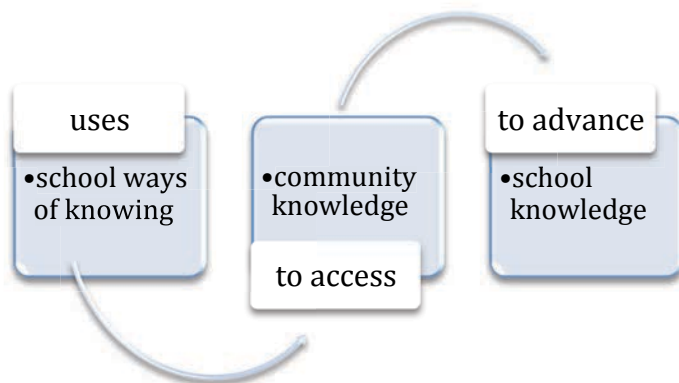


Figure 1: Cultural Texts

Texts are broadly defined by Botel and Lytle (1988) to include written and oral texts, multimedia artifacts, and children’s experiences and can be authored by anyone, including the children themselves.

When folklife educators use cultural texts for instruction, they take care to minimize the use of overgeneralizing materials that reduce a cultural group to a few essential traits and seek out materials that emphasize variability and change as normal cultural features of a group. They will select texts carefully to maximize the connections with students. For example, FACTS has some Liberian students and uses a [printed collection of Liberian folktales](#) gathered in a Philadelphia senior citizen center as a language arts textbook for learning about developing characters in stories. Local communities contain readily accessible texts that can be more applicable to students lived experiences by virtue of these being things they have seen or heard before. If it is a story the

student has heard, s/he could add to the lesson and demonstrate expertise by sharing contextual information about its local use. Community centers, archives, galleries, museums, ethnic clubs, and religious centers are places that may have printed versions of locally told stories, recordings of local musicians, and pieces of art that could be photographed or loaned to teachers. The Internet is another rich resource for instructional materials as organizations and individuals in every community capture and post their traditions in multiple media formats.

Students’ Experiences

One of the most easily accessible resources of community knowledge is the everyday experience and cultural practices of students themselves. When students are asked to recall, reflect upon, and share their life experiences as a part of instruction, these memories and stories become available to be used as texts. Teachers use school ways of knowing when asking for personal experience recounting situated inside the classroom. It is hard to know the many varied ways that different community cultural groups do this, but even if a teacher did, these situated community ways, like telling family stories around a holiday table, would be difficult to replicate. As texts for instruction, students’ experience narratives can help advance students’ acquisition of school knowledge by enabling them to make connections to it that are personally relevant and meaningful. Interacting in reflective ways with their community knowledge also can provide students with opportunities to advance a deeper understanding about their cultural practices. Even though several students in a classroom might appear demographically similar, their families have had different life experiences that result in the unique variations that each student comes to know as their culture. Discussions using school ways of knowing about the many varied experiences of their classmates can further advance student understandings of community knowledge that may be similar or drastically different from their own.

[I]n every classroom there is a resource for the study of within-group cultural diversity as well as between-group diversity. That resource is the everyday experience and cultural practices of the students and teachers themselves (Erickson, 2007, p. 48).

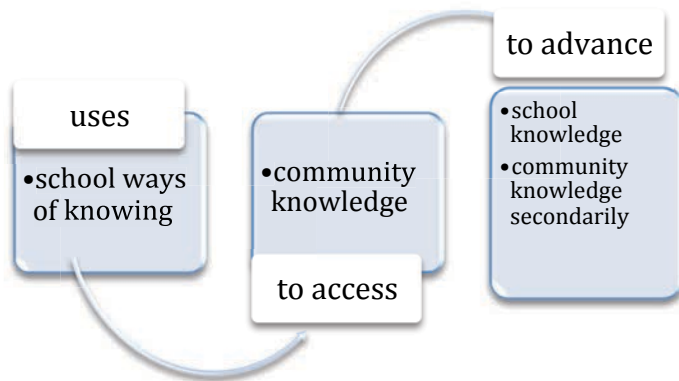


Figure 2: Students' Experiences

Annie Huynh, 4th-grade teacher at FACTS, describes how she used the school ways of knowing in her writing workshop unit to access students' community knowledge about the bean cakes eaten as part of the Mid-Autumn Festival. She found that this helped more of her students advance in both their school knowledge about writing and their community knowledge of this tradition within so many Asian families.

Deeper understandings of other classmates' cultures could be a secondary benefit in learning activities that use community knowledge as texts, as this FACTS teacher also found. But teachers could choose to advance students' understanding of community knowledge as a primary goal by enacting additional or different curricular goals and instructional activities. When teachers use folklife education activities to direct students' attention to noticing similarities and differences and patterning within these, teachers can be more deliberative in advancing student understandings of the complexities of culture and its processes at work in their lives. Erickson (2007) further points out that teachers, directly including students' outside-the-classroom experiences in instruction, benefit more than students. Teachers who do this advance their own development of non-stereotypical understandings of their specific students each year and thereby become more culturally sensitive practitioners.

Community Presenters in the Classroom

Students' family members are another ready resource for including more community knowledge in the classroom. Increasing family involvement in supporting their child is desired by schools and families alike. Frequently family involvement in school is limited to the school communicating with the parent about their child's progress with school knowledge and participation in school ways of knowing. Teachers open up the possibility for a different relationship with community members when they invite family or other community members into the classroom to share their community knowledge through activities like telling stories of their experiences, being interviewed by the students, or showing and telling about their traditions and cultural practices. These ways of sharing all use school ways of knowing to access the community knowledge that their visitors may share.

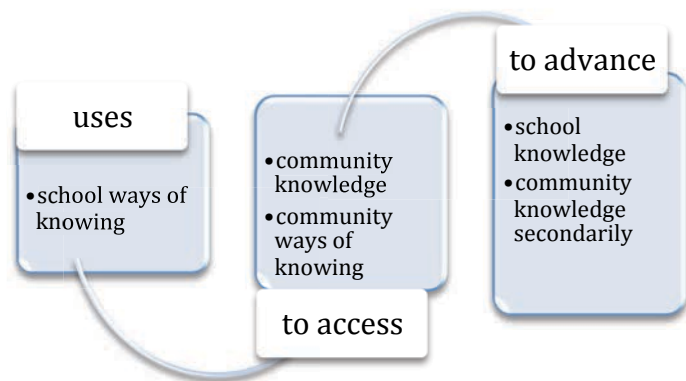


Figure 3: Community Presenters in the Classroom

By bringing community members into the classroom, the community knowledge they share is out of its situated community context. Even if the visitor is demonstrating how she quilts or pinches dumplings, the demonstration is one that is *about* the tradition rather than actually *being* the tradition. By this I mean, the context is so different for the visitor that she or he is making many decisions about what is appropriate to share in a school and what is better reserved for the doing of

the tradition in the community context. Although it is not a fully enacted community practice, it is still possible for this instructional activity to access both community knowledge and community ways of knowing.

What the visitor shares becomes a text for primarily advancing school knowledge as the teacher makes use of it to advance instructional goals. Advancing students' community knowledge is a secondary benefit when students are exposed to the diversity of cultural knowledge and practices in the community. Teachers can make advancing community knowledge a primary benefit by making this an intentional instructional goal and including learning activities in the lesson that deepen the students' engagement with the visitor's and their own cultural knowledge.

Teacher Annie Huynh at FACTS invited some parent visitors into her 4th-grade writing class to share their stories and celebration traditions. She noted how much more engaged all the students became in the lesson, but most especially the child whose parent was presenting. Although she used the community knowledge to advance the writing workshop curriculum, she describes an unexpected secondary benefit of expanding her own thinking about how oral narrative is an important way of knowing in her students' lives. There are many resources on how folklife and folk arts education programs across the nation structure activities using visitors to the classroom to advance student understanding of community knowledge. Many of the instructional materials accessible on the [Local Learning website](#), and through links found there, have been developed by folklorists who work in education and educators with experience in folklife. These instructional guides and tools pay attention to structuring learning activities that explore culture respectfully and help youngsters understand culture in more complex ways.

Community Field Investigations

The community outside the schoolhouse door is a very rich educational resource. Taking students out into the community to investigate community events, observe traditions, and interview community members as part of curricular units of study uses school ways of knowing to gather information and make sense of it. This folklife education instructional activity accesses community knowledge in its own context. Although community members will certainly shape their answers to student questions in response to their audience, what students hear, see,

and experience will remain situated in particular community ways of knowing and making sense of the world. Community investigations advance school knowledge through fulfilling the planned role for this activity within the curricular unit and advance school ways of knowing through developing the skills of data collection and analysis. As with the using of students' and visitors' experiences in the classroom, advancing community knowledge is a secondary benefit resulting from exposure to different cultural perspectives and practices. Advancing community knowledge could be shifted into a primary goal through the inclusion of meaningful hands-on experiencing of the community practices and using reflection to deepen students understanding of their own and others traditions.

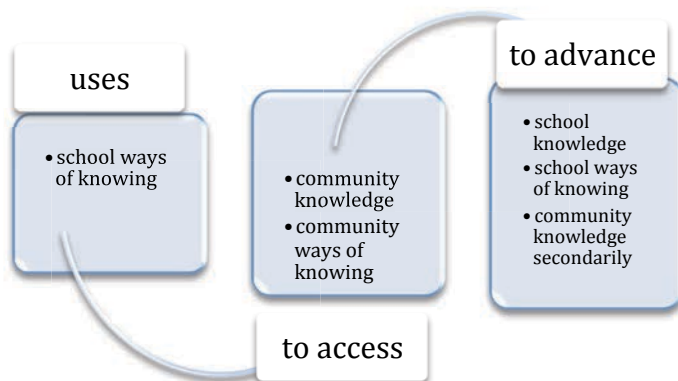


Figure 4: Community Field Investigations

At FACTS, community investigations are built into the social studies curriculum and involve walking tours of a couple of Philadelphia neighborhoods. In 4th grade, the students go into the Chinatown neighborhood where the school is located, visit local businesses, watch a kung fu lion dance demonstration in an academy, and interview a master artist. There are many well-designed community investigation model programs in folklife education occurring across the country. Some programs with resource materials that could be adapted to other schools can be found through the [Local Learning website](#) such as the [Hmong Cultural Tour](#) project and a [mapping project](#) in Madison, Wisconsin.

By making particular student culture and family history a deliberate object of study by all the students in the classroom, the teacher can learn much about what he or she needs to know in order to teach the particular students in ways that are sensitive and powerfully engaging, intellectually and emotionally (Erickson, 2007, p. 50).

Other community investigation models incorporate components like identifying issues of importance to the community, developing student-directed projects, and service-learning experiences. In all community field investigations, it is worth pausing to consider the interrelationships between school and community knowledge and ways of knowing, particularly in how the learning activity values each. It is counterproductive for communities to experience school ways of knowing as disrespectful or as reinforcing political power imbalances in society. Community field investigations can be valuable for building stronger connections between schools and communities with many positive benefits for all involved, particularly for the students who experience and learn from their community in new ways.

Conclusions

As an institution, schools too often find themselves reinforcing societal imbalances, to the detriment of the young learners they are trying to support and advance toward success. Students quickly learn what aspects of themselves they can and cannot bring with them into the classroom, thus they leave far too many of their resources for learning outside the schoolhouse door. When students are invited to bring their personal experiences from the community into the school, this can counterbalance societal power-related cultural dynamics and validate the worth of that community knowledge. Helping students see their outside-of-school knowledge as valuable and the differences between their and their classmates' community knowledge as variations that are merely different rather than less than or inferior in some way, opens up new spaces for learning.

Students have much to gain when they can bring more of themselves to school. Learning comfortably through school ways of knowing is not a challenge for some students, but for others it can be extremely challenging. Teachers cannot be expected to be cognizant of and proficient in the many community ways of knowing familiar to the students in their classrooms. Thus hoping a teacher could use multiple community ways of knowing to differentiate instruction, and facilitate each student learner with their particular familiar ways, is an expectation beyond what is possible in most classrooms. However, accessing community knowledge and incorporating it in instruction is realistic and possible in most classrooms. Community knowledge can serve as the bridge that enables a student to engage with school ways of knowing, advance in school knowledge, and become more successful in school.

Folklife education activities that use school ways of knowing to access community knowledge can increase student engagement and allow students to connect with school in deeper ways. These activities greatly multiply the resources that teachers can have available for instruction and open new possibilities for expanded discourse. Students generating their own texts of community

experiences are creating new knowledge. Though folklife education activities in schools, students have a means and a context for sharing these aspects of themselves with others and for learning about how their experiences are shared or differentiated from their classmates' experiences. By opening up additional spaces for students to insert themselves into their learning, folklife education shifts the dynamics of teaching and learning, allowing students and community members to be featured as knowledgeable experts for all in the classroom to learn from, including the teacher.

Gaining and deepening understandings of their students' cultures is not an insignificant secondary benefit that teachers often experience when they lead folklife education activities. As teachers observe their students sharing, they gain new insights into their students' lives and into how they can develop their own practice as culturally responsive and inclusive educators. The interrelationships between the school and community way of knowing and bodies of knowledge within folklife education instructional activities can enrich learning for all students. Tapping into this complexity opens up new dimensions inside the classroom, dynamic spaces that can accommodate students bringing in more of their cultural selves.



Linda Deafenbaugh coordinates folk arts education programs and research at the Philadelphia Folklore Project. She helped develop the Standards for Folklife Education by Diane Sidener and pilot them in K-12 schools and classrooms. Her research includes developing analytic methods for research teams looking at classroom discourse and social-cultural classroom dynamics (MUSE curriculum classrooms), teacher training in science education (funded by NSF), and urban youth definitions of community and cultural stressors that influence their mental health (Center on Race and Social Problems/funded by NIH).

URLS

www.factschool.org

http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/wphila/stories/agape_wafrica_stories.pdf

<http://locallearningnetwork.org>

<http://csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/HmongTour/index.htm>

<http://csumc.wisc.edu/cmct/ParkStreetCT/index.htm>

Works Cited

- Banks, James A. and Cherry A. McGeeBanks (2004). *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Botel, Morton and Susan Lytle (1988). *PCRP II: Reading, Writing, and Oral Communication Across the Curriculum*. Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Department of Education.
- Bowman, Paddy and Lynne Hamer (2011). *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
- Erickson, Frederick. (2007). Culture in Society and in Educational Practices. In James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (Sixth ed., pp. 33 - 61). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Grant, Carl A. and Christine E. Sleeter (1998). *Turning on Learning: Five Approaches for Multicultural Teaching Plans for Race, Class, Gender, and Disability* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Heath, Shirley Bryce (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, Life, and Work in Communities and Classrooms*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria (1994). *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Ladson-Billings, Gloria (2007). Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory and Practice. In James A. Banks and Cherry A. McGee Banks (Eds.), *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* (Sixth ed., pp. 33 - 61). New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rose, C. P., et al. (2001). A Comparative Evaluation of Socratic Versus Didactic Tutoring. In Johanna. D. Moore Keith Stenning (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Twenty-Third Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society* (pp. 897-902). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* is a publication of
Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education prepares students of all ages, their teachers, and their families to draw on traditional culture and local knowledge to enrich education and communities.

SUBSCRIBE Sign up for the quarterly Local Learning E-Bulletin for news, resources, model projects, job announcements, and updates.

FACEBOOK "Like us" on Facebook to stay connected.

Intersections: Folklore and Museum Education ***Journal of Folklore and Education* Volume 3**

The theme for the 2016 *Journal of Folklore and Education* issue is dedicated to exploring the intersection of folklore and museum education. We invite submissions of critical articles, case studies, lesson plans, and teaching applications for this special issue.

2016 Local Learning Advisory Board for Folklore and Museum Education

Betty Belanus, Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural

Amanda Dargan, City Lore

Sarah M. Hatcher, Mathers Museum of World Cultures, Indiana University

Lisa Falk, Arizona State Museum

Robert Forloney, Goucher College Masters in Cultural Sustainability Program

Carrie Hertz, Museum of International Folk Art

Michael Knoll, HistoryMiami

Thomas Grant Richardson, Museum of International Folk Art

About the Editors



*Paddy Bowman is Director of Local Learning and creator of numerous folklore and education resources. She is co-editor of *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum* and received the 2013 Benjamin A. Botkin Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Public Folklore from the American Folklore Society. Reach her at pbbowman@gmail.com.*



***Lisa Rathje** is Assistant Director of Local Learning and Director of Folklife Programs with Company of Folk in Chicago, Illinois. She has directed in- and out-of-school programs, written curricula for diverse learning environments, and served on the National Service Learning Leader Schools peer review board. She also teaches in the Goucher College Masters in Cultural Sustainability program. Reach her at rathje.lisa@gmail.com.*