

Learning Application: Tips for Adapting a Collaborative Curriculum in Classrooms or Museums

Project Resources

Forge partnerships among organizations that collectively provide access to the following key project resources:

Project staff with

- ~ Expertise in folklore and heritage documentation, interpretation, and production
- ~ Connections to local traditional artists, especially those who are immigrants or refugees
- ~ Expertise in digital storytelling, media literacy, and audio production

Community partner organization that can

- ~ Provide consistent access to 6 to 15 youth
- ~ Be a liaison and means of communication with participants outside the workshop

Also:

- ~ Meeting or classroom space
- ~ Transportation
- ~ Computers and audio editing software
- ~ Recording equipment and studio
- ~ Public venue for listening event, if applicable
- ~ Relationship with local public or community radio stations, if applicable

Most states have a state folklorist and/or arts council staff who can help connect you with appropriate traditional artists in your area. If you are not familiar with the folklorist in your state, here is a place to start: www.afsnet.org/?page=USPubFolklore .

And snacks or meals are highly recommended to fuel youth participants!

Logistics

- ~ Ideally, project participants meet twice weekly to maintain students' engagement and fluency with the project, especially at the beginning phases.
- ~ Customize the curriculum to the participants, available resources, capacity of project participants, as well as the community context.
- ~ Consider piloting the project model as a way of customizing the curriculum to the resources at hand in your community, as a baseline for developing future workshops.
- ~ Be sure from the outset that all participants (including staff, students, artists, and any other project personnel) are clear about their roles, the project timeline, and outcomes.
- ~ Build trust with and among participants by establishing mutually agreed-upon ground rules at one of the first sessions (see Sample Agreements document in online curriculum). Incorporate trust-building exercises into session icebreakers and closing activities.
- ~ Model and take part in exercises with students, for example, during icebreakers, check-ins, or reflections. This builds trust and elicits more thoughtful work from students.

And don't forget... Maintain flexibility, patience, and a sense of humor, as the unexpected inevitably arises! In collaborations among multiple partners, there needs to be give and take to accommodate each organization's mission, goals, operations, and timeline. As in any collaboration, be prepared to work outside your "normal" way of doing things, or even your comfort zone. Creativity and openness to new ways of working can forge strong relationships and exciting new directions.