



Journal
of

Folklore
and

Education

Newcomers
and Belonging
2017: Volume 4

About the Cover Photo: “In our culture, gold is most valued. By offering a golden garland, we honor listeners who have gained knowledge of the culture and the history of our people.” Ambika Sharma, quoted in “Receiving a Golden Garland,” by Jo Radner, this issue. Photo courtesy of New Hampshire Humanities.

Journal of Folklore and Education (ISSN 2573-2072)

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

Editors: Paddy Bowman
Lisa Rathje

Review Editor: Thomas Grant Richardson

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 connects folklorists, artists, and educators across the nation and advocates for the full inclusion of folklife and folk arts in education to transform learning, build intercultural understanding, and create stronger communities. JFE publishes work that uses ethnographic approaches to tap the knowledge and life experience of students, their families, community members, and educators in K-12, college, museum, and community education. JFE provides a forum for interdisciplinary, multimedia approaches to community-based teaching, learning, and cultural stewardship.

Journal of Folklore and Education Publication Committee:

Norma Cantú Juan Díes

Lisa Falk

Robert Forloney

Nicholas Hartmann

Sarah Hatcher Rosemary Hathaway

Sandy LaBry

Jackie McGrath

Local Learning does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in any of its activities or operations. As a publication of Local Learning, JFE is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for diverse authors and readers.



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. JFE 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

Lisa Rathje, Executive Director, lisa@locallearningnetwork.org

Paddy Bowman, Founding Director, pbbowman@gmail.com

The Local Learning Board:

Betty Belanus, Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Linda Deafenbaugh, Philadelphia Folklore Project

Mike Knoll, HistoryMiami Museum

Maida Owens, Louisiana Division of the Arts

Anne Pryor, Wisconsin Arts Board (Emeritus)

Steve Zeitlin, City Lore

www.locallearningnetwork.org



Table of Contents

Newcomers and Belonging

2017: Volume 4

Introduction	5
by Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje, editors	
Receiving a Golden Garland: Folk Tales as Gifts across Cultures	8
By forging a path to reciprocity, the giving of a golden garland, a distinguished folklorist and storyteller worked with New Hampshire Humanities to tap Bhutanese refugees' deep culture through a collaborative process that honors cultural contributions that newcomers can make in their new communities.	
by Jo Radner	
<i>Seven Marigolds: Seven Steps to Create a Bilingual Book with English Language Learners</i>	19
Newcomer English Learners Building Language and Belonging through Folk Arts Education	20
Teachers of English for second language learners are often the first to meet public education's influx of refugee and immigrant students, and they employ creativity and innovation to help young people succeed.	
by Lucinda Megill Legendre, Janice Prevail, Kristin M. Larsen, Amy Brueck, and Linda Deafenbaugh	
Folk Arts in the Physical Education Classroom: How Folk Tales Enhance the Cultural Meaning of Yoga	
A first-generation immigrant found a home for her exploration of identity in the P.E. class of a teacher at Philadelphia's Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures (FACTS) charter school.	
<i>How Yoga Tales Began: The Artist's Story</i>	
by Nisha Arya	28
<i>The Teacher's Story</i>	
by Daisy Ling	31
Diversity among Themselves, Diversity in Others	39
A Skype Club between students in Philadelphia and Indonesia reinforces American students' home language and culture and teaches them important ethnographic skills.	
by Amy Brueck	
What We Bring: New Immigrant Gifts	46
A New York City series of programs focusing on immigrants' gifts of arts and cultural expressions is an ongoing education project employing interviewing, classroom residencies, exhibits, and drama.	
by Amanda Dargan	
<i>Classroom Application: Student Interview Worksheet</i>	50
Selections from the Play <i>What We Bring</i>	51
Children of Shangri-Lost	55
New immigrants' strategic use of new media as explicit means of outreach and renewal directly counters a deficit discourse about diasporic communities and provides a rich resource for educators who wish to incorporate first-person accounts of resilience and intercultural dialogue into their teaching.	
by Maureen K. Porter and Susan A. Dawkins	
Sheeko Xariir / A Story to Connect Us: Somali-American Storytelling in the Classroom	71
A photonarrative project in Columbus, Ohio, has brought refugees, scholars, and artists into a long-term collaboration that shows how mentorship through storytelling can bring new ways of learning and knowing into educational environments.	
by Ruth Smith with Qorsho Hassan	

Old Songs New Opportunities: A Museum Program for Young Children and Resettled Refugees	84
Bringing new Americans' culturally diverse games and songs to early childhood classrooms has proven to be a treasure and a vital resource for the wider community.	
by Kelly Armor	
<i>An Interview with Victoria Angelo, Early Childhood Educator and Refugee</i>	92
The Sewing Circle Project in Connecticut: Reflections on Ten Years	94
Marrying refugee artists' expertise in many forms of needlework with marketing, public programming, and ongoing collaboration has proven rewarding and successful.	
by Lynne Williamson	
Music Teachers Reimagining Musical Focus, Function, and Performance for Newcomer Students	105
By advocating for careful listening to students' knowledge of and passion for music from their lives, a music teacher demonstrates that K-12 school music programs are uniquely positioned to create productive learning spaces for refugee and immigrant students.	
by Christopher Mena with Elia Bojorquez	
The Quilted Conscience	112
Inspired by the Nebraska social justice pioneer Grace Abbott, a leader in the struggle to improve life for children, immigrants, and women and Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau in the 1930s, the Quilted Conscience project has brought together refugees and quilters for ten years.	
by John Sorensen	
"The art is, in fact, the community": Fieldnotes on the Art of Community Workshop in Eastern Iowa	126
An ethnic museum in Iowa is engaged in a long-term initiative on intercultural collaboration, freedom, and human dignity through programs that highlight global experience while promoting local community engagement.	
by Nicholas Hartmann	
<i>Journal of Folklore and Education Reviews</i>	
<i>Exhibit Review</i>	
Lloyd's Treasure Chest: Folk Art in Focus	131
Lilli Tichinin	
<i>Website Review</i>	
Teaching Tolerance: http://www.tolerance.org	134
Kathryn R. Taylor	
<i>Book Reviews</i>	
Cinderella Across Cultures: New Directions and Interdisciplinary Perspectives	136
Jeana Jorgensen	
Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies	138
Trista Reis Porter	
New Approaches to Teaching Folk and Fairy Tales	139
Lewis C. Seifert	
2018 <i>Journal of Folklore and Education</i>: Call for Submissions	141
Working at the confluence of education with culture, folk arts, environment, and place, this special issue of <i>JFE</i> will create an important space for folklore to engage critically with emerging and established partnerships between the humanities and science.	

Introduction

by Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje, editors

Educators stand at the forefront of social change. Whether the issue is immigration, migration, economic downturns, trending naming traditions, health, bigotry, civic engagement, or civil society, teachers are often the first to recognize cultural shifts that directly affect their classrooms. Thus, they are often the first who must develop responses to change.

In Volume 4 of the *Journal of Folklore and Education*, *Newcomers and Belonging*, we highlight how educators in K-12, college, museum, and community settings are working positively and successfully with refugees and immigrants across the United States. At a time of heated rhetoric and both heinous and heroic acts surrounding the topics of immigration, inclusion, and diversity, this theme has taken on even deeper meaning than when we chose it months ago. Our aim has been to shine a light on what “belonging” means, not only on refugees and immigrants. Everyone has been and will be a newcomer throughout our lives, whether through a job change or moving in the middle of a school year, emigration or being expelled from a homeland. Everyone wants a sense of belonging, and at the same time “belonging” connotes a privilege that may often operate invisibly in our classrooms and communities.

The U.S. defines refugees as people forced to flee a home country to escape war, persecution, or violence. More than 850,000 have resettled in the U.S. since 2001. The 18-month process involves referral by the United Nations and vetting by our State Department. In comparison, about a million immigrants arrive annually. The top five nationalities of refugees who have resettled here are Burmese, Iraqi, Somalian, Bhutanese, and Iranian (Alpert and Hussein 2017). New Americans is a term that several authors in this volume use to connote both immigrants and refugees. JFE Volume 4 includes articles by New American authors and about curricula and programs developed with and for New American teachers and students. These many perspectives provide a multilayered look at the ways education intersects with *Newcomers and Belonging*, yet we find that consistently a larger thesis can be found throughout: The knowledge, including community and cultural “texts”¹ that diverse individuals bring to an educational setting, offers pathways for inquiry and engagement. Tapping this expertise also meets many types of learning objectives, including in English language acquisition and other literacy arts, workforce development, health and physical education, and community outreach initiatives that encompass both bridging and bonding goals.

The mission of Local Learning has as its central premise that the field of folklore offers tools, strategies, and resources to help educators understand how culture influences ways of learning; creates and strengthens communities; and expresses itself in our schools, universities, museums, and community organizations. By extension, folklore-in-education tools make more visible the cultural texts that students know and illuminate how dominant sociocultural narratives work and are perpetuated. We argue that “there is a pedagogical advantage in teaching students who know

¹ By “texts” we mean not only written or narrative texts, but also texts of material culture such as weaving or basketry and performative texts such as music, dance, or theater.

that their epistemological capital is a valid currency in the classroom” (Rathje 2017). It is not always easy to establish this as a part of classroom culture, but authors in this issue provide examples and proven paths to this goal. Paddy Bowman coins the term “reciprocal pedagogy” to name the “deep collaborative relationship that good teaching involves” in which teachers and students learn “from and with each other” (2011, 20). The authors also demonstrate that educators can get outside the “helping” mindset and move more critically into an “empowerment” mindset that includes academic and personal growth for students of all ages and backgrounds.

Below we have curated a short, but incomplete, list of resources to complement the articles you find in these pages. These resources are not necessarily folklore specific and include sites beyond JFE. Those of us working in folklore and education continue to critique and build our understandings of authenticity, context, and narrative, with the goals of reaching new audiences, addressing the needs of diverse age cohorts and cultural groups, and building accessibility into curricula and program design. We benefit from interdisciplinary partnerships and dialogue. The sharing of tools and strategies through partnerships across disciplines and organizations can help address the challenge of staying relevant and vital in our complicated, interconnected world.

Works Cited

- Alpert, Megan and Haisam Hussein, illus. “United States of Refugees.” *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 2017, 76-77.
Bowman, Paddy and Lynne Hamer, eds. 2011. *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, and Curriculum*. Logan: Utah State University Press.
Rathje, Lisa. 2017. “The Serious Art of Fun: Reading Leisure “Texts” with a Folklore Framework in the Classroom.” Paper presented at the Asian Heritage Forum, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. August 6-7.

Critically Engaged and Cultural Education Resources

Journal of Folklore and Education

While this issue of JFE is a great place to start to gain some good ideas, frameworks, and learning applications, articles in previous JFE volumes are relevant to conversations about inclusion and diversity in educational places.

Volume 3 Intersections: Folklore and Museum Education (2016) several authors looked at topics of racism, social justice, and education. We particularly highlight:

[Dismantling Racism in Museum Education](#) by Marit Dewhurst and Keonna Hendrick

[The Urgency of Empathy and Social Impact in Museum](#) by Mike Murawski

[Heritage Repatriation and Educational Sovereignty at an Ojibwe Public School](#) by

B. Marcus Cederström, Thomas A. DuBois, Tim Frandy, and Colin Gioia Connors

Volume 2 Youth and Community (2015) a number of articles examined student agency in learning. Linda Deafenbaugh’s piece has become a core text cited in a number of other articles and publications, [Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities](#). Two other articles specifically included work in Newcomer communities: [Bridging Collaborative Ethnography and Democratic Education](#) by Alison Kinney and [Developing Relationships with New American Communities](#) by Julianne Morse.

Outside Resources

Some of these come from partners or colleagues in the field, others were shared with us with good intentions. We did not develop a rigorous peer review but hope this list proves helpful for our readers. We also note that almost every state has folk arts programs and folklorists who have developed useful resources and could advise educators wanting to think deeply and carefully about culture in their classes. Please visit the curated [Local Learning Regional Resources](#) list to learn more about what may be happening near you.

A recent **National Council of Teachers of English** (NCTE) recent blog headline reads, “There is no apolitical classroom” (August 15, 2017). NCTE’s Standing Committee against Racism and Bias has curated a list of resources and helpfully outlined by topic the resource sets, including *Resources for Working with White Students* and *Resources for Understanding Bias*. <http://blogs.ncte.org/index.php/2017/08/there-is-no-apolitical-classroom-resources-for-teaching-in-these-times>.

Teaching for Change developed [SocialJusticeBooks.org](#) to identify and promote the best multicultural and social justice children’s books, as well as articles and books for educators.

The Atlantic contributor Melinda Anderson created the Twitter hashtag [#CharlottesvilleCurriculum](#) to serve as an ongoing list of resources to teach responsively to current events. Sources highlighted include the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) and the [Citizenship and Social Justice Curriculum](#).

[The Southern Poverty Law Center](#), which publishes [Teaching Tolerance](#) (reviewed in this issue), offers a full complement of resources crafted with real teachers in mind. We highlight [Ten Ways to Fight Hate](#), [Alt Right on Campus](#), and [Responding to Everyday Bigotry](#).

[Our Stories in Our Voices](#) addresses perennial questions: “Who am I?” “Where do I come from?” “Where am I?” and “Where am I going?” through stories of ethnic identity development, historical events important to people of color in the U.S., use and misuse of land, and coalition building across ethnic communities for social justice and self-realization. In addition to essays, this anthology and accompanying workbook include photo essays, reality-based comic strips, interviews, and narratives from high school students.

[United Nations High Commission for Refugees](#) offers a variety of resources, including teaching tools: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html>. We also find their feature article on the state of education for the world’s refugees and related materials regarding education Relevant: <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/missing-out-state-of-education-for-the-worlds-refugees.html>.

The **American Federation of Teachers** (AFT) has pulled together “Addressing Racism & Stereotyping” via their sharemylesson website: <https://sharemylesson.com/collections/addressing-racial-profiling-stereotyping?theme=284956>.



Receiving a Golden Garland: Folk Tales as Gifts across Cultures

by Jo Radner

In the southern mountain regions of Bhutan, Nepali-speaking people lived for more than a century as farmers and herdsman. Hindu rather than Buddhist, they were a linguistic and religious minority. Some 2,300 have been resettled in New Hampshire—by far the largest refugee group in the state. The Bhutanese Nepalis form only 0.15 percent of the population, but in a population overwhelmingly white, they are very visible. Inevitably, some New Hampshire residents have resented—loudly—the incursion of large numbers of strangers requiring social services. And the refugees face tall hurdles in finding their place in the United States. The elders—many of whom are preliterate, speak only Nepali, and come from a strongly oral culture—are moving into a massively literate, English-speaking country where they see little chance for employment or meaningful participation. Rifts threaten within their community as younger generations become fluent in English and established in American jobs and schools.

New Hampshire agencies have responded very positively to the new refugees. So has New Hampshire Humanities, whose “Connections” adult literacy program supports English language learners from many different countries. Terry Farish, then Director of the Connections program, conceived in 2010 the idea of honoring the oral culture of the refugees by publishing one of their traditional folk tales as a bilingual picture book.

I am deeply grateful to Terry Farish, whose idea began this project and whose persistent community work was crucial to its success, and to the staff of New Hampshire Humanities, who supported the project throughout its course. Deborah Watrous, Executive Director, kindly provided documentation for this article and gave permission for publication of photos and images.



Image of Bhutanese refugee camp courtesy UNHCR and map of Bhutan courtesy Human Rights Watch.

In 1988 Bhutan adopted a policy called “One Nation, One People” and ruled that the Nepali-speaking minority were illegal immigrants. Between 1989 and 1995 more than 130,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese were exiled, often violently, from their homes and farms. Many were trucked across the border into refugee camps in Nepal, where they lived for 18 years—a full generation—before the United Nations began to resettle them. As of March 2016, approximately 85,000 Bhutanese refugees have resettled in the U.S. (“Bhutanese Refugees...” 2016). The Bhutanese Nepalis have all the typical problems of resettled refugees, and have, as well, the highest suicide rate of any resettled refugee population (“Suicide” 2011).

The Council’s goals for the project were not modest:

- honor the dignity of the storytellers and the richness of their culture
 - create a rollicking tale for children to enjoy
 - introduce children and grandchildren of Bhutanese refugees raised in Nepali camps to the culture of Bhutan, a home they had never known but that their elders cherish
 - build a linguistic bridge between cultures
 - promote family literacy
 - generate a powerful, homegrown story for use in their adult literacy program
 - offer both a process and a product to inspire like projects in other languages and cultures, and
 - link through story, longtime New Hampshire residents to newcomers from Bhutan.
- (“Schwartz...” 2013)

Astonishingly, the project has achieved all these goals.

Terry Farish asked me to serve as the project folklorist to help collect folk tales. Lutheran Social Services in Laconia invited us into an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class of Bhutanese Nepali elders—parents and grandparents old enough to have grown up in Bhutan before the exile to refugee camps. We walked into that class on a Tuesday in November 2010 and joined about a dozen men and women dressed in American clothes, winter jackets, and knit caps. They seemed tentative and disconnected. We had in common only a few words—*good morning, my name is..., thank you*—enough to show we cared about communicating, but not enough to achieve much communication. The classroom walls were vivid with the elders’ drawings of Bhutanese houses, temples, flowers, animals. We wanted to ask about them, but the communication gulf was too wide. We tasted just a hint of the disempowerment that refugees live with.



Nilhari Bhandari interpreting. The author stands to the right.

We were very grateful for our interpreter, Nilhari Bhandari, our tenuous bridge across the gulf. Through him we introduced ourselves and I explained the project. I said that we had come as their students to learn about traditions, and especially folk tales, that they remembered from growing up in Bhutan. I started asking about everyday traditions, and bits of folklore began popping up around the room. A proverb about being old and toothless led to my question about baby-tooth customs—and some nervous sidelong glances until someone revealed that they used to wrap the tooth in cow manure and toss it up so it would stick on the house roof. I was glad I was a folklorist. “Ah!” I said, “What would happen if the tooth were on the ground and someone stepped on it?” “The child’s teeth would decay!” Slowly the elders’ formal postures relaxed. Childhood games were remembered, along with singing and dancing—and then suddenly five of the women went into a huddle, whispered, laughed, and burst into a courting song that started out (according to Nilhari, who might have been blushing) “Let us go collect firewood....” Everyone laughed with delight.

Hari Tiwari



Then I asked, “How did people tell you stories?” Hari Tiwari, a grandmother of four who had spoken little to this point, raised her head and said, quietly, “My father told me this story,” and proceeded to tell us “The Story of a Pumpkin,” a fully developed, elaborate wonder tale. That unleashed more tales—long, intricate stories that seemed to leap full-grown from their tellers’ memories. Bishnu Mishra said that his great-grandfather had told stories, adjusting their length to keep him and the other boys working in the cardamom fields till the job was finished. Others remembered hearing tales while gathering wood, herding cattle, threshing rice, learning to cook, and chasing monkeys away from farm fields. When class time ran out, I said, “Your assignment for Thursday is to come with one story to tell in class.” They nodded and grinned.



Tuesday's class.



Thursday's class.

Walking into class two days later, we were stunned by the transformation. People were excited; they laughed and waved and welcomed us. And they looked different. Most of the women had exchanged vivid saris for Tuesday's dark skirts and sweaters; many were wearing celebratory green-glass *pote*—their wedding necklaces. One woman had brought her young granddaughter to class. They wanted their photos taken. Wonderful!

“So,” I began, “tell me stories!”

And—they didn't.

Kunti said, “There is a very small tree. You can climb it. What is it?”

Chandra said, “The ox is dead, but it is still barking.”

Another volunteered, “There is a white gull. When it drinks water, it turns red. What is it?”

It was a game! Riddle after riddle. . . “I don't know!” “I don't know!” Each explanation came with gales of laughter. I was racking my brain to find a true riddle to offer back. Blank. Finally, I remembered only one: “No doors there are to this stronghold, but thieves break in to steal the gold.” “We don't know!” “An egg!” More laughter. I had played the game, but I had been overwhelmed, and we all knew it.



The teacher provided art supplies and the students drew pictures of scenes from their stories.

Then the stories could begin.

They flowed from person to person around the room. Wonder tales. Wisdom tales. Stories about clever, ravenous Fox and stupid Bear. Mughul Emperor Akbar and his trickster advisor Birbal. Cannibal demons. Story after story, and then, a pause. The women began to talk together. Then all of them this time—nine, plus the granddaughter—gathered together at one end of the room and sang a remembered love song. That brought the storytelling session to a close.



What had happened? Why had the tentative, subdued refugees in that gray-walled classroom suddenly become celebratory Bhutanese Nepalis? Certainly their transformation had something to do with our delight at hearing their traditions—and with their having shared them together as a group and with us, the official American visitors. But two other factors were probably at play as well: power and gift giving.

I thought again about the situation in which these elders live. Coming from a culture in which gifts are bonds that must be reciprocated, here in the U.S. they must feel themselves always inadequate, always on the receiving end of social services (housing, clothing, food, ESOL classes), disempowered (and even ashamed) by their inability to give back in response to American generosity. But Terry and I had shown them that they did indeed have something of value to give, that we esteemed and in fact *needed* what they offered. Perhaps our hunger for their stories released the elders to be Nepalese in public, in relation to us. Sharing their traditions, they became our generous hosts, inviting us, the dislocated strangers, into their home culture to receive their gifts.

And how did they dramatize our new relationship? With riddles!—traditional poetic, metaphorical enigmas, so often used by elders worldwide to teach and acculturate the young and test their wits.¹ In challenging us with riddles that drew on esoteric Bhutanese experience, the elders were assuming a position as our teachers (in fact, taking me up on my introductory assertion that we had come as their students). They chose the playing field, deliberately pointing out our need for education. When I asked *them* a riddle, I accepted the terms of the game—and then the stories could begin.

Even before the book was made—even before we selected a story for publication—the folk tale project had powerful, positive effects. Within the ESOL class, the excitement was not only that English-speaking Americans were listening to their stories; it was that we wanted to make a *book*. The storytellers were empowered not only because they were becoming our teachers, but also because they were becoming participants in American literacy *even before they could read with any fluency*. The change in their attitudes was surprisingly wide and powerful. Their ESOL teacher,

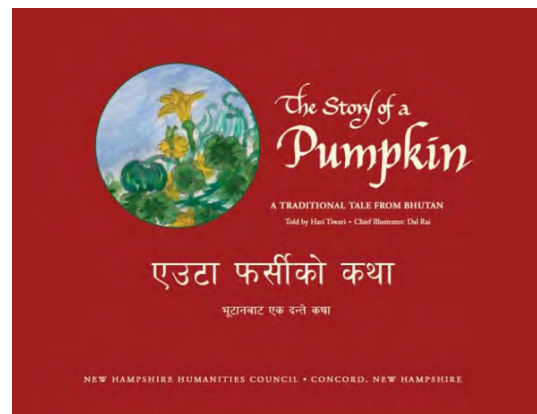
Laurie Lalish, remarked after our meetings, “My students have been much more willing to speak English in class. I think, in the telling of their stories, a language barrier pressure valve was released and [they] are much more relaxed in their experimentation in speaking English.”

The folk tale book project soon began to link the new Bhutanese Americans with their New Hampshire neighbors. Terry Farish and I collected some 20 stories. Choosing one for the book was a significant challenge. (There were some other challenges, too, to be discussed later.) For now suffice it to say that we wound up choosing the very first tale we heard, Hari Tiwari’s “The Story of a Pumpkin.”

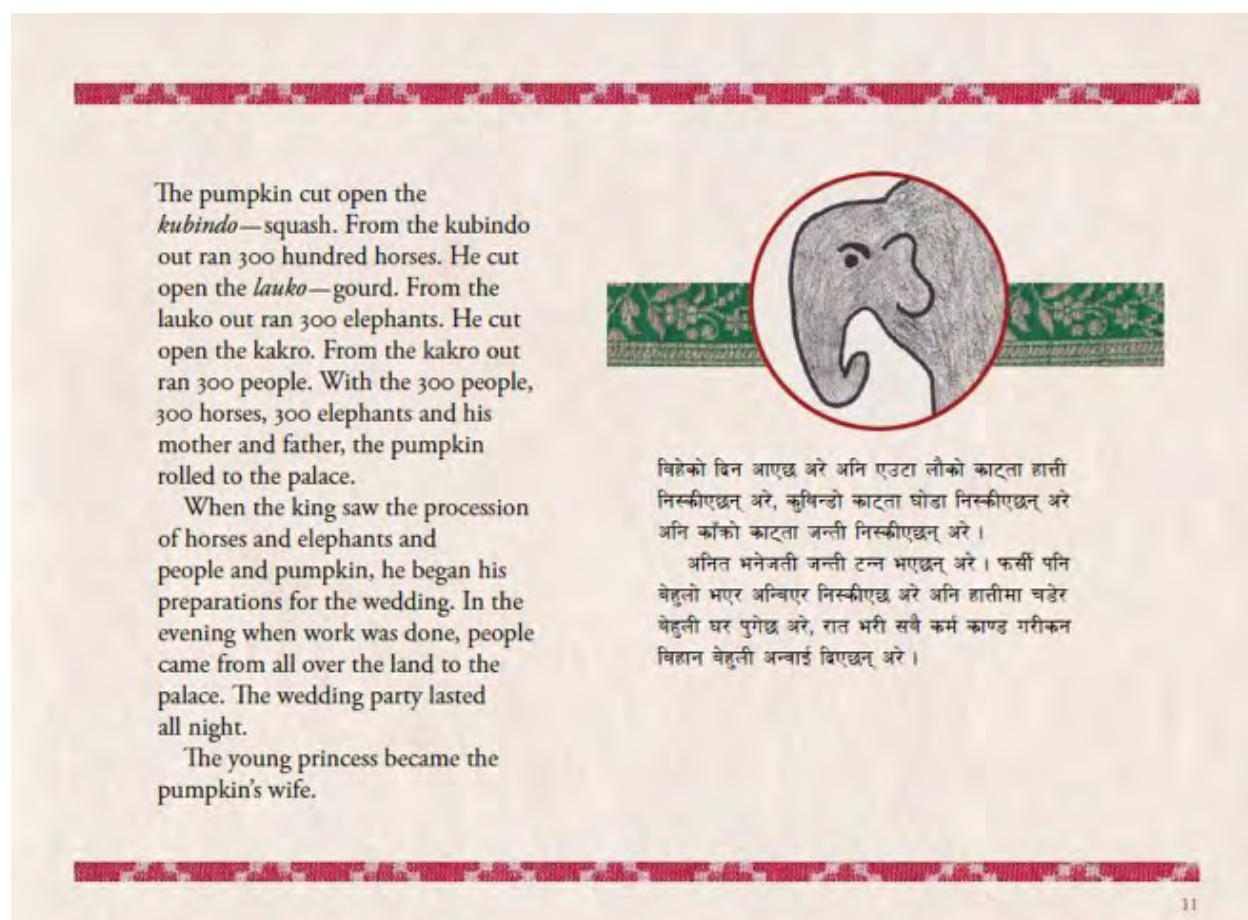
The editorial committee included several Bhutanese Nepalis, and book production involved extensive collaboration within that community—carrying forward the refugees’ consciousness of giving a gift back to their American neighbors. Ambika Sharma in Laconia provided her wedding sari and other traditional textiles to be scanned and used as borders and design elements throughout the book. The designer also scanned handmade paper from Bhutan and used it as the background for each page. Dal Rai, an artist who had taught himself to draw when his parents in the refugee camp presented him with a precious pencil, was invited to paint watercolor illustrations for the story. He even illustrated the scene in which Hari Tiwari had first heard the story: her mother died when she was five, so it fell to her father to take care of her. To keep her quiet during the painful process of combing her long hair every morning, he told her stories.



Sam Evans-Brown from New Hampshire Public Radio records the students’ tales and the translations; his appreciative story about the Bhutanese Nepalis, their stories, and the forthcoming book was broadcast across the state.



Other Bhutanese refugees made cameo illustrations of individual elements of the tale to be distributed throughout the book: brooms, a cucumber, an elephant, a cow, and a tea kettle. Several members of the community labored over the Nepali transcript of Hari's story, trying to get its true flavor into print. Kapil Dhungel, who laughed and sometimes almost cried as he proofread the Nepali text, commented with delight, "This is in the simple country style!" With Hari's permission, he added to the end of the tale a traditional closing formula: "The teller of this story will receive a flower garland. The listener will receive a golden one. Whoever tells or listens to this story will find a place in heaven." And Ambika Sharma's interpretation fit that formula neatly into the new purposes of the story. "In our culture," she said, "gold is most valued. By offering a golden garland, we honor listeners who have gained knowledge of the culture and the history of our people."



When the book was published, New Hampshire Humanities held the Folktale Festival, a multicultural party extravaganza. More than 250 diverse guests ate Indian curry and American pizza; they heard African drumming by a New Hampshire women's drum circle; they listened to a Yankee joke told by New Hampshire storyteller Rebecca Rule and translated into Nepali, and a bilingual telling of "The Story of a Pumpkin" in which Hari Tiwari and I alternated. Then they witnessed a traditional Nepali friendship dance. Finally, the whole audience joined in a French Canadian contra dance in which the Bhutanese seemed bemused but performed far more gracefully than the rest of us. (My contra dance partner, a Bhutanese dancer, responded to the caller's "bow



to your partner” with a deep bow and the traditional gesture of *namaste*.) Children made and presented golden garlands. And everyone received a book.

In the four years since the party, at least 600 free copies of *The Story of a Pumpkin* have been distributed within the state, mostly to schools and libraries, and University Press of New England sold 300 additional hardcover copies.² The book has a Facebook page and blog. New Hampshire Humanities distributed a discussion guide for librarians, a teacher’s guide for grades 2-5, and a simplified readers’ theater version for adult literacy classes. Hari Tiwari and Dal Rai, the book’s author and illustrator, have presented it at conferences, festivals, and classrooms and to the Laconia School Board. Concord Hospital has used the book to ease the anxiety of Bhutanese Nepali patients. News of the book spread across the country; it was ordered by a librarian in Sioux Falls, SD, who wrote, “We have a large Bhutanese population here and it is very affirming for them to see their culture being appreciated in America! Write more, please!”

The book has been a curriculum inspiration for at least one English language teacher, Tina Proulx, working with students from all over the world, who has asked her students to collect folk tales from family members, translate them into English, and then, as a culminating project, rewrite their stories to create picture books for elementary students or limited English speakers and “publish” them digitally. New Hampshire Humanities created a one-page handout (appended, below), “Seven Steps to Create a Bilingual Book with English Language Learners.”

Within Bhutanese refugee families in New Hampshire, hearing and retelling the story in Nepali is helping young children maintain fluency in their elders’ language and encouraging parents and grandparents to revive their storytelling traditions. Tika Acharya, Executive Director of the Bhutanese Community of New Hampshire and New Hampshire Refugee Congress Member for the United Nations High Commission on Refugees USA, recounted the value of the book to his community:

Bhutanese in America love the story, which reflects the natural events of village life in Bhutan. Folk tales help us remember our traditional customs, names of different tools we used in the village, and life on the farms back home. Our elders and seniors who read the story remember their own contributions of hard work on land they once owned and virtually travel back to our home. Our youngsters can ask questions and learn how life used to be in Bhutan and understand our culture in better ways. (qtd. in “Schwartz...” 2013)

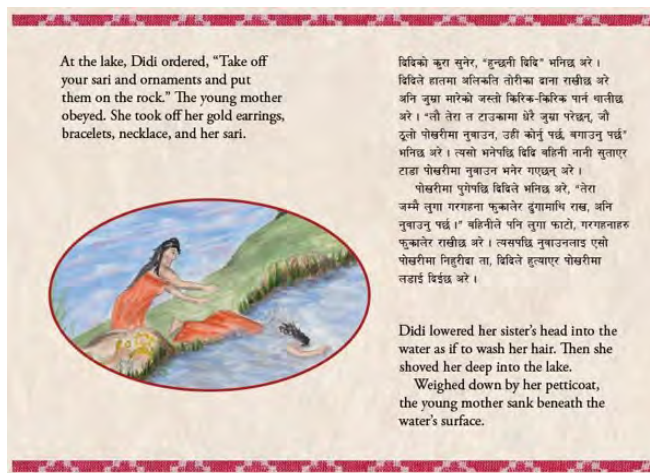
The path to these successes was not without challenges. Some difficult aspects of cultural representation came up in the course of the project. The first appeared as we tried to choose a story for what was to be a picture book for children. Most stories the Bhutanese elders remembered from their childhoods would have puzzled or troubled American elementary schoolchildren. The Hindu religious stories and historical legends would be too esoteric. Many other tales we heard reflected harsh responses to harsh living conditions and presented ethical situations that might horrify American families. Caught stealing rice from a very poor man, for instance, a fox saves his own life and makes amends by lying, stealing, and killing to get a rich bride for the poor man. In another tale, a fox manages to trick a goat and eat up all her kids. We knew that reading such tales would do little to foster local welcome and understanding for the refugees.

From the beginning we were drawn to “The Story of a Pumpkin,” but even that tale caused some concern. Here is a very brief summary:



A magical pumpkin becomes the “son” of a childless farmer and his wife, helping with chores around the farm until one day, proclaiming that he is mature and needs a wife, he woos one of the king’s daughters. Overcoming the king’s obstructive demands with the assistance of other vegetables in the garden, he marries the daughter and takes her home to the farm. Returning on a visit to the palace, the pumpkin climbs a tree (!) to pick mangos for his wife, falls from a branch, smashes to pieces—and walks out of the shattered shell as a handsome young man. The king and the other princesses are astonished.

After the birth of a baby daughter to the pumpkin man and his wife, the eldest sister, Didi, overwhelmed by jealousy, makes a visit to “help” her younger sister, contrives to drown her in the lake, dresses in her clothes, and goes back to the farm and the pumpkin man, impersonating her sister. For three nights an apparition resembling the younger sister visits the house at midnight, nurses and massages the baby, makes rice pudding for the husband, and leaves filth from the barn on Didi’s pillow. On the third night the husband lies in wait and catches the intruder, who explains that she is his true wife and tells the story of Didi’s betrayal. Didi is punished severely, and the pumpkin man and his family live on happily.



Initially, some American listeners thought Hari had told us two tales and suggested that only the first, happy one, up to the marriage and transformation, should be published. But it was clear that Hari regarded the two phases of the story as a single tale. The dark half was needed; jealousy can be murderous and must be expunged. In fact, when I asked Hari what her favorite part of the story was, she said, “When the mother comes back”—and I remembered that she had been only five years old when she had lost her own mother, and that this was the story she had asked her father to tell over and over again.

So all agreed that the whole story should be in the book, but then we had to face questions about how it should be presented. One immediate issue was the ending. In Hari’s first telling, the pumpkin husband catches Didi and mutilates her, cutting off her nose and ears. The editorial board feared that for American readers this violence would overshadow the happy resolution of the story. We consulted with Hari, who readily changed the punishment to banishment from the kingdom (a solution that, like mutilation, removes Didi’s chances of a husband and family of her own). We felt this alteration was justified, not only because it was an available motif within Nepali narrative tradition, but also because it preserved the emotional truth of the story.

But what about other cultural elements in the story that would elude American readers? The illustrations carry visual information about material culture—brooms, tea kettles, clothing, the variety of shapes and sizes of Bhutanese pumpkins, and so forth—even though these are not explained in the text. But the cultural resonance of some items in the story is not even hinted at: the symbolic connection between mangoes and marriage, for instance, or what the Laconia class explained to us about the dietary and cultural importance of pumpkins.

Supernatural dimensions of the story also remain deliberately vague in the published book. For the Hindu Bhutanese audience the pumpkin man might be a god. In a later conversation Hari told us that she thinks the wife was actually drowned, returned as a spirit to her baby, and “the pumpkin had divine power to bring the spirit of his wife back to life.” In the version of the story Hari provided for the book, however, the wife tells her husband that she escaped her older sister by swimming under water.

Do such ambiguities, omissions, and discrepancies finally matter in the project? Cross-cultural understanding is a lengthy and always incomplete venture; perhaps it is best to see *The Story of a Pumpkin* as an invitation to further conversation and learning. Certainly the work to create the book led Terry Farish and me to unexpected insights into the range of a community’s interpretation of one of its traditional tales. Over and over again our consultations with our Bhutanese colleagues brought us to consider the ways in which folk narrative traditions do and do not transcend cultural boundaries.

The Story of a Pumpkin is now a book—and, as the South Dakota librarian’s response made clear, the book by itself has made a useful contribution to the integration of Bhutanese refugees into the U.S. Its use in literacy programs has encouraged language learning; in schools it has entertained New Hampshire children and given them positive awareness of their new and very different neighbors; in Bhutanese homes it has promoted bilingualism, foregrounded the wisdom and storytelling of the elders, and kept alive awareness of family origins.



For our purposes as folklorist educators, however, the process of the project was even more important than its product, and like New Hampshire Humanities I hope that it will offer a useful model for work in other regions and cultures. The key was recognizing from the start that the Bhutanese elders were our teachers, and that they and their community could make a significant contribution to their new country. At every stage of the project, Bhutanese people played decisive roles as we collaborated to create a book that would honor their culture. Our genuine, respectful attention had an immediate, lasting transformative effect in that Laconia ESOL classroom and, later, beyond it; in gathering folk tales, we were validating essential memories and receiving esteemed gifts.

Interpretation of any folk tale is flexible and varies according to the life experiences listeners bring to it. As *The Story of a Pumpkin* gained more and more attention in the New Hampshire Bhutanese community, it invited wide-ranging commentary. One man, Bishnu Khanal, compared his entire refugee generation with the man trapped inside the pumpkin. “We have a large communications gap here. But our children will bridge the gap. In the story, the man emerged from the pumpkin and became his true self. In that same way, our children will emerge from the pumpkin and become their true selves in our new home” (qtd. in Schwartz 2013).

Jo Radner is a former president of the American Folklore Society and of the National Storytelling Network. Professor Emerita at American University, she received a BA, MA, and PhD from Harvard University and now works in northern New England as a freelance folklorist, oral historian, and storyteller.

Endnotes

1. See, among many other sources, F.A. de Caro, “Riddles and Proverbs,” in Elliott Oring, ed., *Folk Groups and Folklore Genres: An Introduction*. Logan: Utah State University Press, 1986: 175-197.
2. Figures from New Hampshire Humanities. *The Story of a Pumpkin* has been out of print since March 2016, although New Hampshire Humanities has a few softcover copies. www.nhhumanities.org

Works Cited

- “Bhutanese Refugees Find Home in America.” 2016. White House Archives, March 11, accessed April 1, 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2016/03/11/bhutanese-refugees-find-home-America>
- “Schwartz Prize Nomination for *The Story of a Pumpkin*.” 2013. New Hampshire Humanities Council.
- “Suicide.” 2011. Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center, accessed April 25, 2017. <http://refugeehealthta.org/physical-mental-health/mental-health/suicide>.



Seven Marigolds

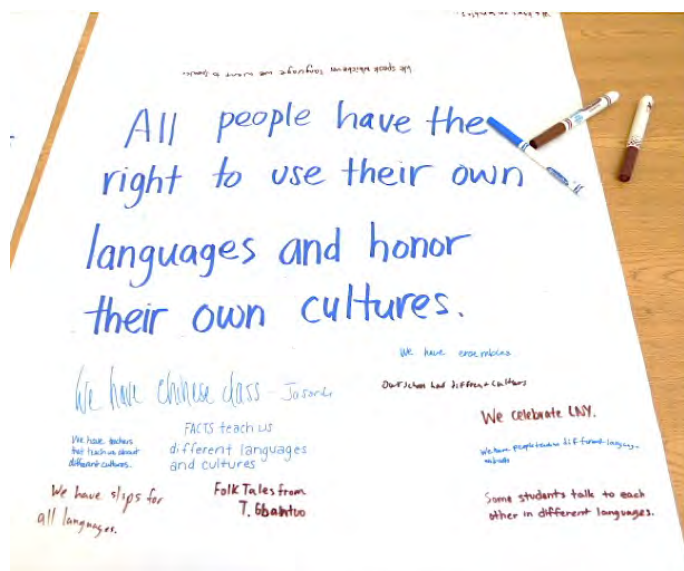
Seven Steps to Create a Bilingual Book with English Language Learners^{*}

Here is a very brief outline of the steps the New Hampshire Humanities Council (Now New Hampshire Humanities) took to create a bilingual Nepali-English book with Bhutanese students in Laconia, NH, in a Lutheran Social Services ESOL class. For more steps, see our blog: <https://storyofapumpkin.wordpress.com>.

- 1. Create a bilingual book committee.** Choose representatives of the culture the tale arises from, an ESOL educator, creators of the book, and possibly a writer, a children's librarian, a community leader, a book designer, a folklorist. Can you pay stipends to creators? Consider writing grants to private or business funders.
- 2. Generate folk tales with the help of an interpreter.** The leader tells a tale as an example to the group of participants. Invite participants to remember a tale told to them when they were children. As a teller tells a story, the interpreter gives a word-by-word interpretation (not a summary). Record each tale in the teller's language and the English interpretation.
- 3. Transcribe the tales.** We selected one tale from the community we worked with to develop into a bilingual picture book. You might choose, instead of a single book, to create an anthology of all the tales collected.
- 4. Illustrate the tale.** Let the community guide you to a respected artist who agrees to serve as illustrator. The illustrator listens to the teller tell the story and, with the book committee, determines the illustrations to be created.
- 5. Write the tale.** If the teller is not also the writer of the tale, identify someone in the community to write the tale in the teller's language, based on the oral telling. English version: adapt the word-by-word interpretation to a telling in English that is accurate and flows for U.S. readers.
- 6. Production and publication.** Layout text and illustrations. Proofread both languages, again and again, with multiple readers. Chose how to publish, from photocopying to e-book to working with a printer.
- 7. Publication party.** Invite people from the community who created the book as well as the wider community. The tellers of the tale are honored and can give the tale to their new countrymen and women.

^{*} "If you listen to a tale you will receive a golden garland." Traditional end to a Bhutanese tale.

Originally published by the New Hampshire Humanities Council / 117 Pleasant Street / Concord, NH 03301 / www.nhhc.org / Terry Farish / tfarish@nhhc.org / <https://storyofapumpkin.wordpress.org>



Newcomer English Learners Building Language and Belonging through Folk Arts Education

by Lucinda Megill Legendre, Janice Prevail, Kristin M. Larsen, Amy Brueck, and Linda Deafenbaugh

Folk Arts Building Language and Belonging

Schools and educational programs intentionally designed to support the academic, linguistic, cultural, and social-emotional needs of newcomer English Learners (ELs) are rare. Even rarer are schools and programs that interweave folk arts into the educational program for newcomer ELs. Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) in Philadelphia’s Chinatown strives to do both. FACTS was founded in 2005 by Asian Americans United and the Philadelphia Folklore Project to provide “equity and justice for Asian American students and immigrant and refugee students of all races in the public schools; for public investment and public space in the underserved Chinatown community; and for public schooling that engages children as active participants in working for a just society” (“Who We Are Statement” 2011, 1). This vision continues to drive FACTS’s mission today.

FACTS was founded not to undermine the public school system, but to serve as a model of innovation to inspire change in the education system. By positioning ELs and immigrant and refugee students and families at the center of its school mission and design, the school provides an exemplary education for ELs and creates a model of transformative education for all students. We believe that the educational experience that our society needs today is one that teaches children to find their commonalities across race, ethnicity, language, culture, immigration status, and other differences; raises academic achievement and ability to think critically and creatively; affirms language, traditional arts, and culture; nurtures values of compassion and kindness; instills a commitment to taking responsibility for themselves and their communities; recognizes parents, elders, and community members as a constant presence in the lives of students; and inspires a vision of justice and fairness and the courage to pursue them. Now in our twelfth year, FACTS provides a high-quality, folk arts-infused education to its diverse, student population—13 percent of whom are current ELs, and 83 percent of whom (including current ELs) are PHLOTEs (Primary Home Language Other Than English). In 2016 the U.S. Department of Education named FACTS a National Blue Ribbon School as an Exemplary Achievement Gap Closing School.

About the photo: 7th graders brainstorm a list of examples of what FACTS does to help them learn this value.



Students in Action

Lili gives a presentation on her experience in the Chinese Opera Ensemble:

When I started school it was boring because everyone was speaking English. But when I started Chinese Opera I became more interested in school.

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Teacher Lucinda's Perspective on Supporting Newcomer Student Lili

Lili came to 6th grade at FACTS as a newcomer EL in January 2016, just a few days after Winter Break ended. Lili's mom was smiling from ear to ear while getting a tour from our bilingual Director of School Culture. Lili was shy and reserved and appeared glad to be with her mom. Although she had studied English at her school in China, Lili was reluctant to speak the words she knew. After a few days it became clear that her English lessons in China had laid a very helpful groundwork for her success in the United States. Lili could say and write the Roman alphabet, read and write basic classroom words, and use some basic social language such as, "My name is...." Through my three periods a day with her I came to realize that she had a very firm foundation but lacked confidence—not terribly unusual for a newcomer, but still an obstacle to optimal language learning. I immediately began to consider different ways that I might help build Lili's confidence and lower her affective filter.

The next Monday it became obvious. One of my 8th-grade students, a newcomer herself four years ago, was heading down to our Chinese Opera Ensemble, and I realized Lili might build her confidence in an ensemble. Ensembles are a huge part of our folk art structure at FACTS and provide students opportunities for deep, long-term learning from experts in their art form. Students can choose to participate and are encouraged to commit to returning each year to deepen their practice. Ensembles can be a place for cultural exploration or affirmation. I have had newcomer students from China and El Salvador participate in ensembles that allowed them to explore the African American traditional art of stepping, and others who moved through the motions of West African dance and drumming. Whether for exploration or affirmation, students who participate in ensembles often walk away with deepened respect for their own culture and the cultures of others. They learn to respect elders and value the hard work and determination required to perfect an art form and work together as a team, an ensemble.

I thought that Chinese Opera Ensemble could allow Lili to use her fluent Mandarin with the instructors, who both used Chinese as the language of instruction for the class. It would also give her a space and time to build relationships with students who shared her culture and language. Finally, I hoped that it would provide her mentorship—both from other students, as well as one of the Chinese Opera Ensemble teachers who had once been a newcomer and now is fluent in English and deeply connected in our wider school community.



Chinese Opera Ensemble class with master artist Dai Jun.

On their second Monday, I had an 8th grader escort Lili and another newly enrolled Mandarin-speaking student to observe the Chinese Opera Ensemble class. The next day I asked her, with the help of Google Translate, how she liked it. Lili said it was good and that she would like to be in the class. I could see over the next few weeks that ensemble was helping her to build friendships and giving her an outlet to use Mandarin for learning. It was also giving her an opportunity to engage physically, mentally, and emotionally with a culture-affirming folk group. As time went on, I learned that Lili loves reading about Chinese history. Connecting to Chinese Opera also nurtured her academic interests, affirming the pride she has in the long history of China.

By affirming Lili's pride in her first language and heritage culture, participation in folk arts education is supporting her English language learning. I have observed that she is happy and has friendships with many girls in her ensemble. She is also positive about her learning and doing well. Her entrance WIDA English proficiency level screener test from January 2016 put her at a Level 1 — which is the most beginner level — in all four language domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The subsequent state-mandated WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 English language proficiency test that Lili took just one month later placed her at a 1.9 overall score. (WIDA tests are scored on a scale from 1.0-6.0, with 1.0 being the most beginner English level and 6.0 being native-like English language proficiency.) Lili continued to make steady progress in all domains throughout the one and a half school years after she arrived.

Having folk arts and artists from the communities and cultural backgrounds of students we serve sends a powerful and important message that students belong, they are valued and celebrated, and they have a right to use their own languages. Further, through practicing an art form students develop friendships and relationships with teachers that give them confidence and support systems as they make the challenging transition to a new culture and new language.

ESOL Teacher Janice's Perspective on Supporting Newcomer Student Vinny

Vinny came to 2nd grade at FACTS in September of the 2016-17 school year, after arriving from China in August 2016. His dad told us that Vinny moved from the U.S. to China when he was four and attended school there. He had no formal schooling in the U.S. before leaving for China. Vinny was not particularly shy and when asked about school in the U.S., he said he was “not nervous.” His schooling in China had prepared him to write the letters of the Roman alphabet and spell his name. He knew the greeting “Hi” and could do math calculations with numbers. Vinny's primary language is Mandarin and he was placed in the homeroom of a teacher who speaks Mandarin. I believe that this helped put him at ease because when asked about school he said, “It's OK, my teacher speaks Mandarin.”

Initially Vinny was very eager to learn and enthusiastic. His WIDA English language proficiency level when tested was a 1.0, the most beginning proficiency level. He picked up new ideas quickly and made strong progress. Then, as with many English language learners, the enormity of learning a new language hit and his enthusiasm waned. Determined to reengage his interest in learning English, I met with my teacher colleagues to discuss how best to do this. At FACTS we have buddy classrooms. Each student gets a buddy as a “big brother or sister.” Remembering the 6th-grade newcomer from last year, I thought perhaps Lili could be a grade-level buddy to Vinny. Teacher Lucinda and I brainstormed opportunities for Vinny and Lili to work with and support one another.

Through cross-grade collaboration, students learned about their school while honoring their language and heritage. The experience helped to reinforce to all these students that both their languages (Mandarin and English) were valuable and valued resources for helping them grow and develop as learners.

Providing time and opportunities for Lili, the big buddy, to take the role of teacher was valuable for setting a purpose and meaningful interaction. Allowing and encouraging the use of their common first language created an academic space where both could interact and communicate authentically. Embedding their times together within our schoolwide calendar and rituals allowed these newcomers to access the cultural milestones of the school calendar along with their native-speaking peers, but in a way that had meaning for them.

Cross-Grade Class Buddies—Lili and Vinny

At FACTS, we provide many opportunities for students to partner and learn in cross-grade settings. With our newcomers, we have found it valuable for students to have authentic opportunities to learn and teach each other, opportunities that enabled the learners to engage in the co-creation of new knowledge. Given the similarities that Lili and Vinny share as newcomers from China who both speak Mandarin, and Teacher Lucinda and Teacher Janice’s willingness to collaborate, pairing Lili and Vinny as cross-grade buddies seemed a natural fit. Lili and Vinny have had several interactions and joint learning times throughout the year. Most recently they met to share projects they had been working on independently.

Lili, now a 7th grader, had been studying food and culture this year. Through many lessons, she explored why we eat (building community, rituals, and tradition); which foods are common for different children around the world; and comparisons and contrasts of food and ways of eating in her experience in her city in China with how, when, and where we eat in Philadelphia. She also documented special foods she ate with her family during the Chinese New Year. Teacher Lucinda asked Lili to review her notes and create a presentation to teach Vinny what she had learned. Lili worked with great motivation, writing her sentences carefully, translating each idea into Chinese for him, and choosing images appealing to a 2nd-grade eye.

One afternoon, Lili shared her presentation with Vinny. For each part she had prepared a question for Vinny to get him thinking and talking about food. It worked. Vinny had a lot to say and the two would descend into several minutes of conversation after each presentation of the slideshow. We had an additional guest, a Mandarin-speaking elder who volunteers in Vinny’s class and is eager to learn English. She also participated in the conversation and took notes to support her English language learning. After Lili’s presentation, Vinny shared his project with both Lili and

the elder. He had been working on a nonfiction, interactive poster about school. The next day Lili prepared vocabulary cards for the keywords from her presentation to help Vinny study for a quiz that she had prepared for him to take a day later.

About a month later, we celebrated Founders' Day, a FACTS ritual calendar day devoted to celebrating the story of our school's creation and those who helped create it. Ritual calendar events are very important to our mission at FACTS. Founders' Day is one such event that tells the story of how FACTS began. The play performed during Founders' Day each year reenacts the founding in English. Newcomers may understand some things about the story through this theatrical telling, but they cannot grasp everything. To help Lili better understand and participate in the event as a new student the previous year, she had worked with a Mandarin-speaking tutor to interpret the story of Founders' Day and generate interview questions for a Mandarin-speaking staff member who had been part of the founding of FACTS. We ESOL teachers asked ourselves how we could get Vinny, as well as another 2nd grader, Steve who just arrived at the school and was having some problems adjusting, to be involved in learning this story. We decided to go with our buddy idea. As Lili was hearing the story once again in 2017, she was now positioned to teach about what she had learned. So after the whole school assembly, our two young Mandarin speakers, Vinny and Steve, came upstairs to the middle-school floor of our school to talk more about the Founders' Day story with Lili.

Lili told Vinny and Steve the Founders' Day story in Mandarin and answered their questions. The 2nd graders completed a storyboard with a beginning, middle, and end. Vinny used pictorial representations and Steve used pictures and words. We could tell that all three students felt at ease. The conversation was lively and engaging, and the students were building deeper connections with each other and with the FACTS community. Through this cross-grade collaboration, the students learned about their school while honoring their language and heritage. The experience helped to reinforce to all these students that both of their languages (Mandarin and English) were valuable and valued resources for helping them grow and develop as learners.

Folk Arts Practices at FACTS

At FACTS, students' home lives, languages, cultures, and ways of knowing are honored and respected in the classroom and throughout the school. Folk arts education practices equip teachers with the tools to "recognize the skills and honor the talents that parents, artists, and people who live in the communities can contribute to the whole education of children" (Folk Arts 2011, n.p.). FACTS has intentionally developed a range of schoolwide folk arts practices that are embedded in our school culture; aim to teach the whole child; and foster a sense of belonging among students from diverse racial, cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. FACTS folk arts practices include 1) attending to the culture of the school on both the schoolwide and classroom levels and 2) attending to the inclusion of community knowledge inside the school pedagogical practices. We discuss these in more detail below.

Attending to the Culture of the School

Classroom Culture

FACTS recognizes that each classroom is an important cultural group (folklorists call this a folk group) in the lives of the students. As teachers, we are the tradition bearers of classroom culture. We seek to establish a caring community where all students feel they belong. Some of our most

important work as teachers is to help students learn that being a member of our classroom community means to care for and support one another.

The school has created many traditions that help students realize that being part of a caring community does not stop at their classroom door, all classrooms are equally caring folk groups and together the classrooms form a large community with all students as valued members. We want our students not only to care for their classmates, but also to extend that sense of belonging and caring to all students in the building. The FACTS “buddy” system that paired Lili and Vinny is just one way FACTS integrates practices that foster caring, respect, and responsibility for each other throughout the school. Each year, every class in grades K-3 is paired with a buddy class in grades 4-8. Within each class, a younger student is paired with an older student, who acts as the younger student’s guide, or a “big sister or brother.” Older buddies accompany younger buddies on fieldtrips, sit beside them at school concerts, and make them gifts for special holidays such as Lunar New Year. This buddy system creates relationships and bonds across grade levels and fosters a greater sense of caring between students throughout the school.

Morning Meeting

One of our important classroom culture-reinforcing folk art traditions is Morning Meeting, which comes directly from the Responsive Classroom and Developmental Designs (The Origins Program 2010) approach to building school community by supporting students’ social-emotional learning. Before starting the day’s lesson, students sit in a circle and greet each other by name. Afterward, they have a space to share an important idea or experience about a particular topic. Finally, students build on teamwork and social skills by playing a whole-class game. This daily practice ensures that students feel valued and cared for as individuals before they begin their coursework. The Morning Meeting tradition affirms that at FACTS, working together as a folk group community is highly valued in addition to academics.

Schoolwide Culture

In addition to the buddy system, FACTS has developed a unique ritual calendar that further nurtures the schoolwide sense of community, family, and belonging through annual holiday celebrations and traditions. Our ritual calendar consists of special days set aside for the whole school to stop regular routines and participate in special traditions together, such as assembly programs or lessons related to the event being celebrated (Long 2005). The ritual calendar celebrates selected holidays with in-school observances, such as the Lunar New Year, a holiday observed by many in the school’s Chinatown neighborhood community, and by some of our students and their families.

While some holidays are intentionally included and celebrated at FACTS, other holidays are intentionally excluded. For example, FACTS students celebrate Many Points of View Day instead of Columbus Day. The structure of the day and lessons presented that day engage students with the histories and perspectives of Native Americans, who are treated as critical, largely missing piece of the mythologized, dominant narrative of the European explorers (Bigelow, Miner, Peterson 1991). Students are challenged to consider not just the arrival of the Europeans, but also the tragic impact that European colonization had on the Native American peoples.

Inclusion of Community Knowledge in Pedagogical Practices

FACTS pedagogical practices bring students' personal experiences and community knowledge directly into the classroom. Community knowledge is "content that is situated within a community cultural group or setting" (Deafenbaugh 2015, 76). Some examples include traditional games, songs, or medicinal remedies. When students draw from their own experiences, *all* students are able to participate in the lesson rather than only a select group who are familiar with a privileged set of academic content. This practice advances academic content because it is possible to use students' traditions and personal observations as a foundation for critical thinking and student engagement. For example, when students write about their experiences as personal narratives in the English language arts classroom and share them with peers, students advance their "understanding of community knowledge that may be similar or drastically different from their own" (Deafenbaugh 2015, 79).

Community knowledge also comes inside the school when parents and other adults present about traditions or cultural practices. It is possible for students to use academic formats to evaluate or compare and contrast the tradition with their own. By involving community members in the classroom, families are regularly integrated into the school setting and students become more engaged in learning (Deafenbaugh 2015, 80).

FACTS students also take part in community explorations built into the social studies curriculum. For example, every year FACTS 4th graders explore the Chinatown neighborhood where the school is located, visit local businesses, and interview community members. These community field investigations also help students practice the valuable skills of inquiry as they explore details about their own and others' cultures. In the process, they become active ethnographers rather than passive bystanders.

Finally, FACTS incorporates arts from students' home cultures through ensembles and residencies. Students in grades 3-8 have the option of participating in one arts ensemble group, such as Chinese Opera (discussed above as part of Lili's experience at FACTS), Indonesian Dance, Step, and African diaspora drumming per year, and there is limited space in each. The ensemble teachers are professionals who serve as artists-in-residence at FACTS. They collaborate with teachers and students to teach their craft and further integrate folk arts into the school day. Through these ensembles, the school actively engages students with arts and traditions from various home cultures of our school community. Students can choose to learn about and engage in the traditions of their own heritage or those of others. In this way, they may acquire a better understanding of their own heritage or further build their empathy and knowledge for the cultures of others.

In folk arts residencies, artists collaborate with teachers and students to teach their craft and embed their work into the content curriculum. As part of a folk arts residency, students may read or write about a traditional art form or the culture from which it comes; write stories rooted in the art form that the artist-in-residence shares with them; conduct community surveys to find people with local knowledge; record and write oral histories; or use their knowledge of textiles to define mathematical concepts such as symmetry and measurement, for example. By integrating folk arts into the curriculum, students engage with practices that are "owned and known" by our students and their communities (Folk Arts 2011, n.p.). The arts serve as a conduit for passing on valued knowledge. They also add to the multiple modes of learning that take place at the school, especially

advantageous for students who struggle with conventional classroom instruction. This generally communicates a sense of belonging and value to students of all learning styles within the classroom. FACTS nurtures the cultural health of its students, teachers, and community and integrates folk arts to “bridge children to elders, school to community, and school community members to each other” (Folk Arts 2011, n.p.).

Conclusion

Folk arts provide the unifying thread across our culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse student body. We emphasize folk groups as the social and cultural contexts in which students, teachers, and families create folk arts, which helps support community building across all aspects of the school day. Newcomer children and families, whether they are immigrants, refugees, or asylees, must negotiate an overwhelming number of factors as they integrate into life in the U.S. These factors may include, but are not limited to, cultural expectations and norms (both spoken and unspoken), U.S. systems and institutions, language barriers, prejudice, discrimination, and potential trauma and feelings of isolation. It is critical that schools are aware of the many challenges that newcomers face and that they provide comprehensive supports for this vulnerable population as they acclimate to their new lives. At FACTS these supports include a multilingual staff, a nationally recognized ESOL program, routine translation of school documents into students’ home languages, multilingual interpretation at school events, and an inclusive, folk arts-rich school culture and instructional program. By recognizing and fostering the folk groups that exist at FACTS, we “move past ethnicity and/or culture as the only feature of [students’] identity, and as the only source of folklife” (Philadelphia Folklore Project 2009, 2) and provide rich, expansive opportunities for students to explore, develop, and confirm their identities. This creates the conditions for all students, including newcomers, to enjoy a sense of belonging, thus enhancing their chances for success.

Lucinda Megill Legendre teaches middle-school ESOL and serves as Middle School Coordinator at FACTS. Janice Prevail teaches Kindergarten to 2nd grade ESOL at FACTS. Kristin Larsen taught 5th and 6th grade ESOL and now serves as FACTS ESOL Coordinator. Amy Brueck taught 3rd and 4th grade ESOL at FACTS. She currently teaches English in Indonesia. Linda Deafenbaugh is the FACTS folklife education specialist and coordinates folk arts education programs and research for the Philadelphia Folklore Project.

Works Cited

- Bigelow, Bill, et al. 1991. *Rethinking Columbus: Teaching About the 500th Anniversary of Columbus's Arrival in America*. 1st ed. Rethinking Schools in collaboration with the Network of Educators on Central America.
- Deafenbaugh, Linda. 2015. "Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities." *Journal of Folklore and Education*. 2: 76-83, <http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Deafenbaugh.pdf>.
- "Folk Arts." 2011. *FACTS*, <http://www.factschool.org/en/folk-arts>.
- FACTS Governance Committee of the Board. 2011. "Who We Are." *FACTS*, <http://www.factschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/FACTS-WhoWeAre.pdf>.
- Long, Lucy M. 2005. "Holidays and Schools: Folklore Theory and Educational Practice, or, 'Where Do We Put the Christmas Tree?'" *CARTS Newsletter*, http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/lucy_long.pdf
- Philadelphia Folklore Project. 2009. "Resources for Folk Arts Education." August, accessed May 4, 2017, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B97s8MFuR6HEWVhhNjN0OV9NZms/view>.
- The Origins Program. 2010. *Developmental Designs I Resource Book*, accessed May 4, 2017, <https://originsonline.org>.



FACTS 2nd-grade student Franka's created pose she calls "the flamingo."

Folk Arts in the Physical Education Classroom: How Folk Tales Enhance the Cultural Meaning of Yoga

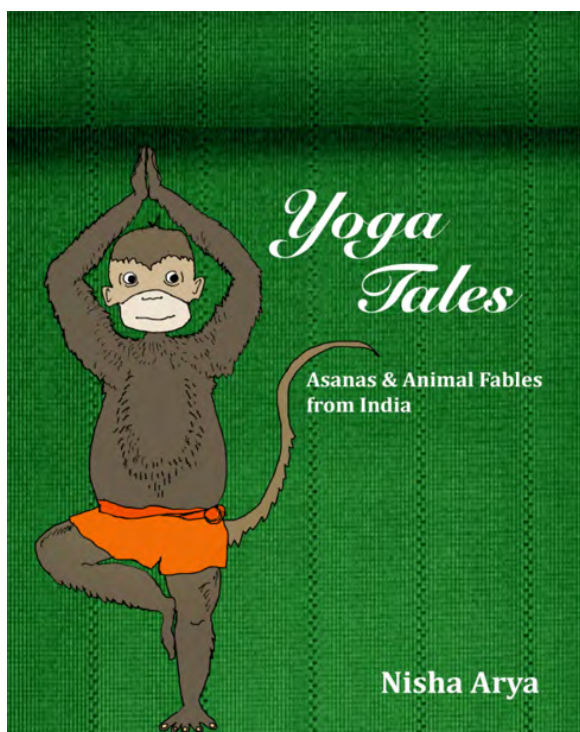
How Yoga Tales Began: The Artist's Story
by Nisha Arya

As a first-generation American born of Indian immigrants, I have often felt that I do not belong to the community in the Philadelphia suburbs where I live. In the predominantly white suburban school where I am a student, I am viewed as Indian. But on my annual family trips to India, unfamiliar with many Indian customs and traditions, I am an American. Where then do I belong?

My Journey of Learning to Belong

Outwardly, in terms of dress and accessories (jeans, T-shirt, backpack, and smartphone), I look as American as any other teenager in my school. I have hardly ever been discriminated against because of my skin color. Yet I have always known that I am different. I grew up with many Indian traditions and values at home. We eat Indian food and celebrate Indian festivals. I learn *Hindustani* (Indian classical) music and how to read and write my family's native language (Hindi). For most of my life, having grown up with these traditions, I have taken them for granted. But as I entered my teen years, I started to resent them as I realized that they made me different from my friends and harder for me to belong and fit in.

In 9th-grade social studies, during the week devoted to India in the Africa-Asia unit, we discussed Indian traditions and cultural practices with which I did not connect, such as the caste system and the fate of widows in medieval India. Later the same year, in an introductory yoga lesson in physical education class, our teacher led us through the Sun Salutation. Although I knew relatively little about yoga at the time, I showed off my knowledge by saying that the Indian name of the pose was *surya namaskar*. The other students were surprised, some were even shocked to learn that yoga originated in India. One insisted that yoga was too sophisticated to be from a country where widows were burned on the funeral pyre. Hurt and angry, I could not find my voice to speak



Nisha's book of yoga poses and Panchtantra Tales.

Art by Susanna Billson.

up. In the days following, I thought: What, if anything, could I do to teach my friends about my culture? Would exploring, learning, and sharing my heritage with my friends assuage my hurt and improve my sense of belonging?

Inspired by a trip to India that led me to study yoga and the ancient *Panchtantra Tales*, I developed a yoga and folk tales project during high school. These fables are whimsical stories of animals with human qualities of greed, generosity, anger, love, revenge, and hate. Composed in Sanskrit thousands of years ago, the stories are rooted in India's customs and philosophy and remain immensely popular. As they have been passed down generations and translated into India's numerous languages and dialects, they continue to provide insights into the dreams, values, and attitudes of people from India's diverse cultures.

I chose ten animal yoga poses to pair with ten fables for a children's picture book. For example, the folk tale for the crow pose (*Kakasana*) features a story in which a pair of crows takes revenge on a snake that ate their newly hatched eggs. The cow pose (*Bitilasana*) is paired with a story in which three young boys steal a cow from a poor Brahmin. Each is illustrated by a Philadelphia artist familiar with Indian culture and traditions.

Armed with my book, I approached the folklife education specialist, Linda Deafenbaugh, at the Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) in Philadelphia. A teacher at FACTS, Daisy Ling, expressed interest in incorporating the book into her 2nd-grade physical education curriculum and invited me to share my cultural knowledge with her students. I served as a visiting artist during an extensive unit on yoga and folk tales. During my visit, I watched with a sense of wonder as seven- and eight-year olds demonstrated their learning from the first two lessons with the classroom teacher by rolling out their mats, taking off their shoes, and sitting still in the lotus position. The teacher invited me to participate. I taught more advanced poses, read a story aloud, and answered numerous questions that demonstrated students' curiosity and interest in a new cultural tradition: How old were you when you learned yoga? Where is India? How many yoga poses do you know?

As I shared my cultural knowledge, I realized that I was helping students, and myself, gain a multidimensional perspective. By enacting yoga and reading folk tales, students not only performed yoga, they experienced it. Folklore gave yoga cultural context and meaning so that it evolved from a physical exercise into a cultural experience. Sharing my narrative also led me to a

Kakasana: The Crow

This is a balancing pose that requires focus and strength. Kakasana stretches the forearms, wrists and fingers, and is especially beneficial for people who spend a lot of time on the computer.

In Hindu mythology, Shani, the god of Saturn and Saturday, holds a sword, and is mounted on a crow. As the protector of property, Shani represses thieving tendencies in birds (as shown in the upcoming story).



more complex understanding of myself. In finding my voice and sharing my cultural awareness, I discovered more of my cultural identity.

I recognized that my heritage was different from that of everyone around me, but now I was unafraid and celebrated it. I felt empowered by the valuing of my work and others' validation of my cultural knowledge. When a 2nd grader in the first row eagerly told me how she had read the stories over and over again and practiced yoga poses at home with her mother, I felt part of a diverse welcoming community. In sharing my cultural knowledge, I had achieved a sense of belonging that had eluded me.

The Clever Crows

A crow lived with his wife in a nest atop a tall tree. The crow's wife laid three eggs. Soon afterwards, a snake came to live in a hole under the same tree. The crows started to fear for their eggs because they knew they were too weak to fight the snake.

One day, when the crows were off to search for food, the snake climbed up the tree and devoured the eggs. When the crows returned, they felt very sad and sought revenge.

The crows made a plan. They flew to the riverbank where the princess of the kingdom came daily for her bath. As was her custom, the princess took off her gold jewelry before she entered the river. Two soldiers stood guard as she bathed.

The female crow swooped down and snatched a glittering necklace in her beak and flew away. The two soldiers chased her to the nest in the tree. The crow dropped the necklace near the snake's hole. The snake heard the noise and slithered out hissing. The soldiers were frightened by the snake and killed it with sticks. Then they grabbed the necklace and left.

The crow couple was very happy with the death of the snake. After some days, the female crow laid eggs again, and the family lived happily ever after.



Each page features a photo of Nisha doing an animal pose, a Panchtantra tale about the animal, and a whimsical illustration by Susanna Billson of the animal doing the pose.



FACTS 2nd graders learning the tree pose.

The Teacher's Story

by Daisy Ling

Folk arts education conversations are a common feature in the Folk Arts–Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS) hallways. We are continually seeking ways to integrate community knowledge from Philadelphia's many cultural communities as learning resources across the curriculum (Deafenbaugh 2015). One afternoon, Nisha Arya was visiting FACTS and presenting the idea of integrating her yoga tales book into our school curriculum to our folklife education specialist Linda Deafenbaugh, when I joined the conversation. Linda was mulling over integrating this folk art by breaking the book's content apart so that movement might be in physical education as well as literacy in the main classroom, but I thought integrating both movement and stories at the same time in a physical education classroom was the better approach.

I had wanted to do yoga with my students but had not thought to do it with 2nd graders until Nisha brought in her great book. Conducting folk arts education lessons with 2nd graders has limitations based upon their developmental ages. Seven- and eight-year olds are fairly concrete learners, so much of understanding a folk art lies in the intangible complexities of symbols, meanings, and worldviews. Stories, however, are tangible and present an ideal approach to accessing deep culture for this age group. Nisha's book matched the stories with the movements, opening up the possibility for these youngsters to grasp the culturally grounded movement practice of yoga and learn the aesthetic values that guide its practice of flexibility, strength, balance, focus, breathing, and calmness.

Yoga would be the third folk art form of movement traditions that these students would be learning this school year. These same 2nd graders had worked with folk artist Losang Samten learning Tibetan meditation and were taught a story through the beautiful sand mandala he made. They had also recently finished a West African dance residency with another folk artist, Jeannine Osayande, in which they focused on dance movements and accompanying songs as telling the stories. To

continue their learning of what folk arts are and the deeper meanings that folk arts contain, these same students would now explore distinctly different Indian cultural values and worldview through the yoga stories and movements. Each movement tradition is guided by a different set of aesthetic values that establish the boundaries for how to move bodies and use space. The opportunity for these students to compare and contrast three movement folk art forms was exciting.

Some students specifically described how they enjoyed the challenge of yoga: “Yoga is amazing because we did this difficult crow pose” and “my favorite pose is eagle because we had to twist our arms like a lock.”



FACTS 2nd graders perfecting the difficult crow pose.

Yoga would be brand-new to our 56 2nd graders. We determined that the unit’s main goal would be for all students to develop a better understanding of what yoga is, make a connection between the animal-named poses and the animal fables that they would listen to and read, and increase their self-awareness by working on their body through the different yoga poses. Our overarching folk arts education goal was for these very young students to deepen their understanding of how folk arts are part of everyone’s lives.

Folk arts integration means accomplishing folk arts education goals and content area goals at the same time. I have wanted to work more on folk arts integration in a physical education setting but have found it somewhat difficult. One of the easiest ways to integrate is to partner with a folk artist in residence, but FACTS could not afford to hire a folk artist for a residency in my class this year. Therefore, I have had to find other ways to integrate folk arts into my curriculum. Nisha was presenting a wonderful folk arts integration opportunity for me. Her availability was limited, so she could only be a visiting artist. Nonetheless, I was excited because students needed to interact with her to make the connection that this art form is her cultural tradition.

Yoga is often practiced in schools and gyms throughout the country, but I wanted to go beyond and teach yoga as a folk art in my physical education class. To maximize learning, students needed to interact with a folk artist and I needed a partnering artist. Nisha was only available to co-teach one lesson with each of my two classes. I had to concentrate student learning time with her, and I had to increase my understanding of the breadth of yoga to support student learning productively. We planned a seven-lesson unit. I would teach two lessons prior to Nisha coming to FACTS to co-teach a lesson, and then I would conduct four lessons after her visit. I could direct students to hold certain animal poses while I read the corresponding story to them from Nisha’s book. This method allowed students to focus on the story and the meaning behind the story as they were working on their flexibility, balance, and strength. It was a good way to train young minds away from thinking about any muscle tension they might be feeling and toward a focus on something interesting and positive.



FACTS 2nd graders learning complex poses from Nisha.

When Nisha visited, she read two stories, performed various movement poses, and told her story. My students worked on their interviewing skills to ask her questions they had for her about her art, her life, and her culture. I felt comfortable teaching most yoga poses, but for some of the more difficult poses I needed Nisha's expertise. Nisha's visit allowed my students to work on those harder poses with her expert guidance and allowed me to aid those students who needed help or modifications so they could progress. With Nisha's photographs modeling a yoga pose on every page of her book, students could maintain their connection with her even when she was not in class.

Although students continually demonstrated their learning and I had been monitoring their progress via observations of each child throughout the unit, we added a final synthesizing activity at the end of the unit to assess learning about folk arts more broadly. We conducted a review in which students discussed what they had learned and remembered from prior units with Tibetan meditation and West African dance. Students then completed a final Venn diagram comparing yoga with their choice of one of the other folk arts forms they studied. The final Venn diagram assessment shows the degree the students were understanding the similarities and differences between the traditions.

The unit plan and individual lesson plans may be found on the [FACTS website](#) and Nisha's book may be found [here](#).

Observations and Reflections about the Unit

Integrating any other subject into physical education is challenging because movement is the top priority, especially in a nation beset by childhood obesity. It is important that we tap the knowledge traditions of the many cultural communities outside our schools to increase movement as part of students' lives. Supporting students' academic advancement is also extremely important and more effective with integrated learning activities that bring the whole child into the classroom. This yoga unit was designed as an integrated unit—not just for physical education and folk arts but also for language arts. Integrating language arts and body movement fully presented many challenges, even with Nisha's book. I had many students who were interested in the yoga poses and challenging themselves to perfect them, but many were more intrigued by the book. I learned that passing out the books to students could be a problem, especially for those who wanted to read more than they wanted to follow along and perform the poses. I found that students were very quiet while I read the tales as they focused on doing the poses. We had great conversations and discussions after reading each tale. Students enjoyed the stories so much, they wanted me to read them over and over.

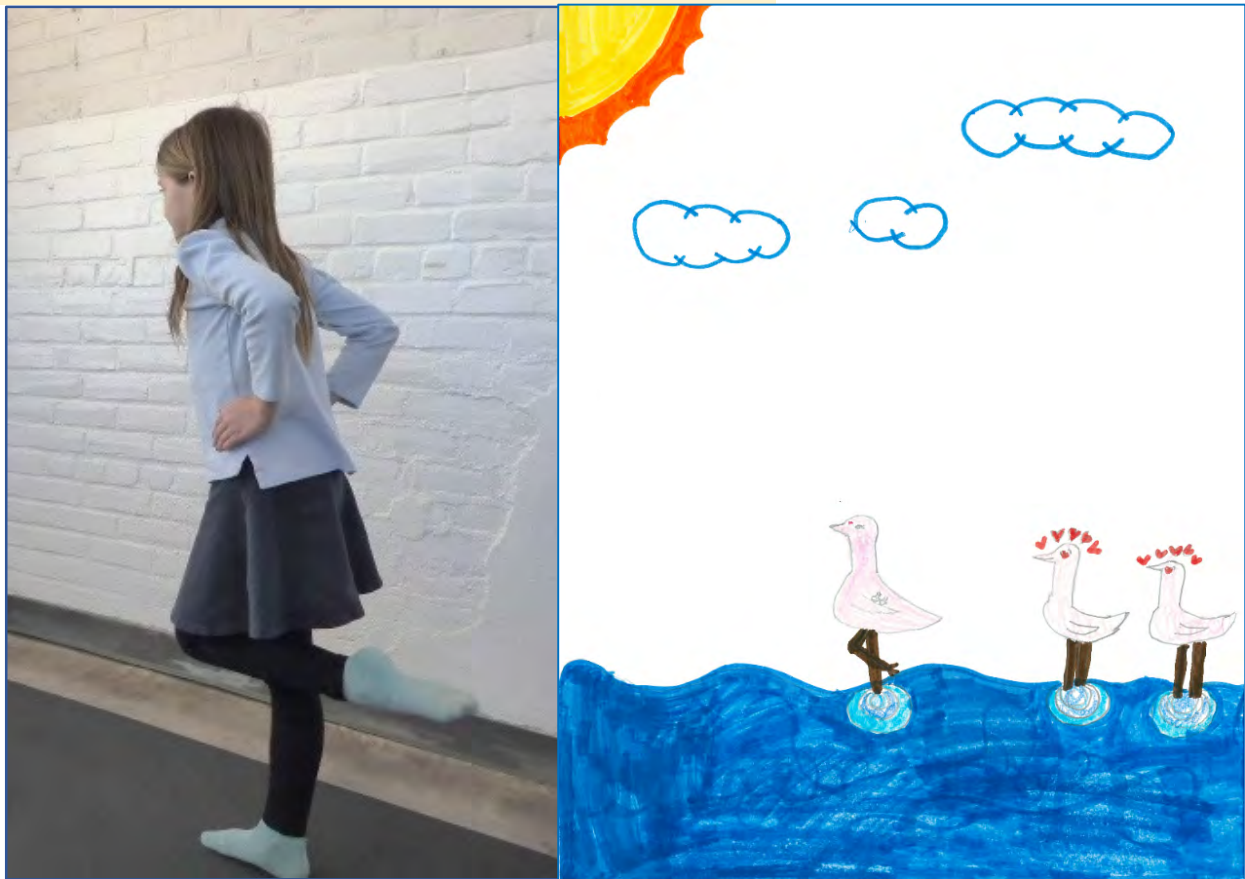
Students were able to connect the ideas behind the Indian traditional *Panchtantra Tales*. Some were able to connect that when they were doing the pose, they were acting out that animal's part in the story. They were being the animal that chose to do the right thing versus the animal that hurt other animals. Students connected most with the "The Foolish Frog." In this story, the frog wanted his siblings to be eaten by a snake because the frog was being teased and bullied. Students understood this gruesome tale and its cautionary moral as a story about bullying. In our discussions, students stated that the story meant that they should "never bully others because it might end up coming back to hurt them in the end." Students were able to make a bigger connection with that story than I thought seven- and eight year-olds would make. There was similar high-level thinking in what they expressed while discussing the other tales. I noticed that discussions became deeper each week. I entertained the thought of having students read the tales to classmates because of how much they were getting out of each story, but I could not give too much class time to non-movement activities; students have precious few minutes in each school day to move as it is.

Another source of insight was a short mid-unit reflective writing activity students did after Nisha's visit. Students expressed how they felt while doing yoga, what poses were their favorite, which pose was difficult, and how breathing while doing yoga helps them. I appreciated their reflections. Many students had similar answers for what pose was their favorite and which they thought was most difficult. We also asked students to state where they heard stories besides reading them in books. Their answers of teachers, parents, siblings, in movies, and at libraries gave me an idea from whom and where these students have opportunities to hear folk tales. I am glad students were able to make a connection to stories being a feature of their lives—that they do not just hear stories in their books at school. This is a small step toward their realizing that folk arts are a regular feature of life.

Providing students the opportunity to create a story and yoga pose in the final lessons really helped them connect more deeply to Nisha's book. Students who create within a folk art tradition demonstrate their depth of knowledge of the boundaries and characteristics of that tradition that they have internalized so far. I was amazed by the creation of poses that went along with their stories. Students created more difficult poses and some showed major flexibility. Students wrote

stories with characters related to their yoga pose just like they experienced in the tales that they had been reading. I was fascinated with their illustrations. Some students drew their pose along with their illustration, although I had not asked them to draw their pose. They told me they wanted their pose to be shown just like in Nisha's book. A photograph of each student's pose was taken for documentation. Homeroom teachers provided students extra time to rewrite their story on lined paper and fully color their illustrations. This level of support by others in the school made it possible to pull the student work into a book that will be available for future 2nd graders. I fully intend to teach this unit for many years, and the classroom yoga tale books are sure to model and encourage future students to engage more deeply in learning yoga. Next year I plan to work more closely with the classroom teachers to align this unit with the 2nd grade language arts units. We hope to have the students spend more time working on their own stories in a classroom setting that is better equipped for the task of writing.

“The Foolish Flamingos” by Franka, 2nd grader at FACTS



Franka's created pose she calls “the flamingo” and her drawing to accompany her flamingo pose and story.



A group of boy flamangos were walking throu a lake and saw the most beutiful flamango they had ever seen. For they did not know that that very flamango was a wicked flamango in disquise. The first flamango went up to the pretty flamango and asked "will you marry me?" The pretty refused and shot a pousin poishon at him! He died but the second flaman- go payed no atention. So he went up to the flam-ango and asked the same quetion. The evil flamango shot him a look and sent another poison pouishon flying at him! He died and this time all the other flamango's saw it and ran away.

The End

"The Foolish Flamingos" is Franka's story to accompany her flamingo pose, also illustrated through her pose drawing.

From a physical education skills vantage point, at the end of this unit I observed that many students had improved in flexibility and balance. Many students were not particularly focused at first, but as lessons went on, this changed. Many students increased their focus and engagement in both the stories and the poses. I was shocked that many students were able to do the more complex poses, as I anticipated young students would have more trouble balancing. So many students surprised me with their ability to perform crow, and other advanced poses, without modifications. Of course,



Anderson and Sabrina, *FACTS* 2nd graders, learning yoga partner poses.

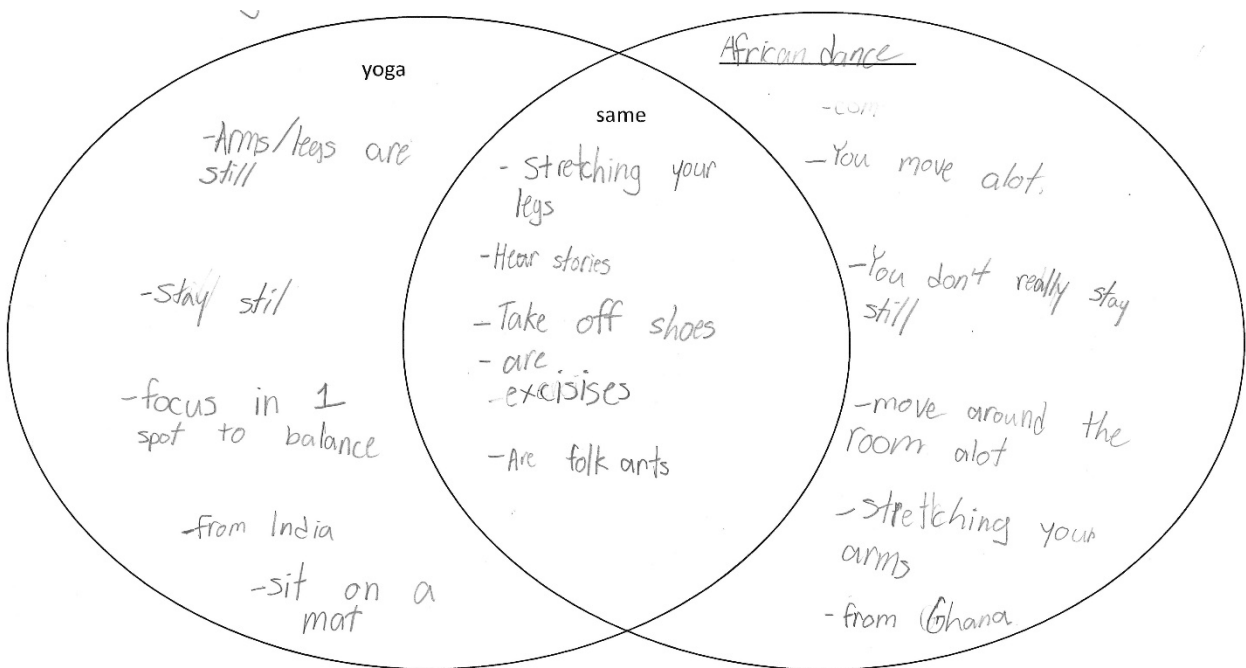
I modified advanced poses for other students. By the end of this unit, I was able simply to name the animal and students showed me the pose without my demonstration.

Students really enjoyed the final extension lesson introducing partner poses. This lesson provided an opportunity to work cooperatively with another student in the class. Interestingly, they had been looking forward to this lesson since the beginning of the unit. Students liked the ideas in the folk tales about not

excluding others. When I assigned students partners, some were paired with students with whom they do not normally work or play. It was great to see them work together, supporting and challenging each other. I recognize that this lesson went outside Nisha's tradition and the aesthetics of yoga as she practiced it, but it reinforced the Indian cultural values she taught. I appreciated finding a good video resource to show the yoga partner pose and movements by expert pairs. With the modeling on the screen, I could walk around and monitor for proper form as the pairs attempted each pose. Some were able to get into each pose right away and some were challenged, but they all tried their best with each partner pose that I introduced. I did not see any groups give up.

The final step was completing the synthesizing Venn diagram. We discussed all three folk art forms that they learned over this school year. Students listed similarities and differences among all three. They could recognize that each tells a story whether it is encoded in a mandala, a dance, or a pose. Students easily recalled the cultural group of each movement form. They talked about each art form's aesthetics and described the differences in body position that were valued, if it contained fast or slow movements, where they would perform this art form, if in their doing the movement it was loud or quiet in the room. In the next class, students could choose the folk art form that they wanted to compare and contrast with yoga. They could pull from the previous week's review to form their own Venn diagram with the similarities and differences that they thought were most important. Some students added other similarities and differences that we had not discussed. They had lots to say about what they were learning about folk arts.

Having a folk artist collaborate with me is always such a valuable opportunity. Working with Nisha made me more comfortable teaching this unit. Without the *Yoga Tales* book I am not sure I would have done a folk art unit on yoga. Perhaps I might have done a few yoga lessons with older grade levels, but I never would have thought about teaching yoga to some of my youngest students. These students showed me how much concrete and abstract learning they are capable of accomplishing. This is what can come from hallway conversations in our school! Actually, I am glad I took on this challenge of creating this folk arts integration unit. I conquered a challenge that I might not have accepted without Nisha approaching my school with her wonderful book that she has created and without Linda Deafenbaugh's guidance and support.



Why does FACTS bring in artists to teach you these folk arts? Facts brings these artists to school so we can learn about diffent cultures (which is on the Facts plodge)

FACTS 2nd grader Kayli's synthesizing comparison between two folk art movement forms.

Nisha Arya is a senior at Lower Merion High School near Philadelphia. She is president of the Intercultural Youth Council, a student-run organization that brings together young people of different faiths and cultures to create and share poetry and work with children at the Philadelphia Children's Festival. She plans to study anthropology and neuroscience with a view to understanding how culture impacts and can be incorporated into science education.

Daisy Ling has been teaching at FACTS since 2015, where she is the Kindergarten-8th-grade health and physical education teacher. She has a Bachelor of Science in Health and Physical Education and Master of Education in School Health Programs. Since she began at FACTS, she has integrated folk arts education in her teaching practices. She is looking forward to creating even more learning opportunities for her students to explore folk knowledge about health.

URLS

FACTS school www.factschool.org

Nisha's book https://www.amazon.com/Yoga-Tales-Asanas-Animal-Fables-ebook/dp/B00X1OEXZ0/ref=sr_1_1?s=digital-text&ie=UTF8&qid=1464700562&sr=1-1

Works Cited

Deafenbaugh, Linda. 2015. "Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities." *Journal of Folklore and Education*. 2:76-83, <http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Deafenbaugh.pdf>



Aceh, Sumatra. Photo by Amy Brueck.

Diversity among Themselves, Diversity in Others

by Amy Brueck

Snapshot of a Skype Session

“It’s Abby’s birthday!” my 6th-grade students announce as they enter my classroom for our morning Skype Club. The faces of our Skype friends appear on our computer screen from across the world in Sumatra, Indonesia. Abby sits directly in front of the camera, surrounded by her friends. The students in Sumatra learn it’s her birthday and immediately start to sing a celebratory song in Indonesian. Abby already knows this song because she is a student of Indonesian heritage, like the other ten students in the Skype Club. Although the students in my Philadelphia classroom listen to the song intently, no one joins in.

On the other side of the camera, 12 Indonesian middle-school students sing us the song by heart. They range in age from 12 to 16. Many have just returned from dinner or evening prayers at the mosque. Since they attend a boarding school, it is possible for them to Skype with us during their evening hours.

After the students finish the song, Abby smiles. The students start to ask about birthday celebrations and traditions, across continents.

This is a common scene in my morning Skype Club at Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School (FACTS). My students Skype with middle-school students from Indonesia for about 20 minutes on Friday once every few weeks during the Morning Meeting period. Both groups of students use a laptop connected to a projector and speakers to enable all students to see and hear the conversation. Although only three or four students are able to sit in front of the camera at one time, they learn to coordinate and take turns before each session begins.

I made contact with the partnering school, Sekolah Sukma Bangsa, after a friend introduced me to the principal during my summer travels in Indonesia. After an inspiring conversation on the benefits of forming friendships across cultures, the principal and I were eager to connect our

students. Although my contact was made in person, it is also possible to use websites such as ePALS to find collaborating teachers in other countries.

All my students have a connection to Indonesian heritage, through one or both parents. However, all have also been born and raised in the United States. They have varying exposure to Indonesian language at home. Additionally, while some students regularly participate in communities of Indonesian diaspora in Philadelphia such as dance groups or religious communities, others have less interaction with people from their heritage culture.

Aceh, Indonesia

The province of Aceh is located in Indonesia at the northernmost tip of the island of Sumatra. Most people observe Shariah law, as Aceh is home to the highest percentage of Muslims in Indonesia. There are ten ethnic groups in the region, the largest of which is Acehnese. In 2004, the western coast of Aceh was struck by an Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami, which took the lives of 170,000 Indonesians. The Sukma Bangsa schools were built after the tsunami in an effort to provide high-quality education for students in the region.

Why Start a Skype Club?

After noticing my students' genuine interest in connecting with Indonesian students of a similar age through Skype, I wondered what I could do to create a space at school where they would feel comfortable not only making new friends from Indonesia, but also using their Indonesian language and learning from one another. This strategy directly draws from the folk arts education practice of using students' experiences as a teaching tool. "When students are asked to recall, reflect upon, and share their life experiences as part of instruction, these memories and stories become available to be used as texts" (Deafenbaugh 2015).

I wanted students to connect and learn from each other's experiences with Indonesian tradition, culture, or language. However, instead of encouraging the students to find "sameness," I wanted them to notice that there are many ways to connect to heritage and individuals can choose the way that suits them best. Some students are interested in language, others want to learn dance, and still others focus on deepening friendships within the club. They are all members of the folk group of our Skype Club, and yet they are each unique within our folk group.

In addition to noticing differences among themselves, I also hoped that the students would form real friendships with their Indonesian friends, especially since the friendships might teach them to see beyond stereotypes. I did not want students to take this single experience as a way to generalize about all the people of Indonesia, but rather as an opportunity to learn about the variety of unique peoples and traditions found, even within a single rural city in Indonesia. I aimed for my students to see themselves and their Indonesian friends as individuals, and thus practice the skill of *decategorization*: "with decategorization, group boundaries are degraded, inducing members of different groups to conceive of themselves and others as separate individuals and encouraging more personalized interactions" (Dovidio 2004). In addition to learning about each other, Skype sessions offer a window for students to gain a more nuanced understanding of different regions in Indonesia.

Since most of my students' family members come from the island of Java, they have limited knowledge about daily life on the island of Sumatra, where their Skype friends live. Additionally,

many students' families emigrated from major cities such as Jakarta or Surabaya, in contrast to our Skype friends, who are from the rural town of Pidie in the region of Aceh.

Tracking Progress

As always, progress takes time. Although my club has met during the FACTS Morning Meeting¹ period roughly once every two weeks for the last academic year, I have set significant learning goals with strict time constraints. The brief 20-minute sessions leave limited time for conversation with depth. Additionally, while the Indonesian teachers are available to schedule and facilitate the Skype sessions, I have not asked them to guide their students in reflections after the Skype sessions. Thus, I can only report data about my students' reflections. Despite the limitations, my students in Philadelphia have certainly made new observations and relationships; they remember each other's faces and look forward to seeing one another. In this article, I share the reflections and learning activities that led to deeper understanding, as well as those that needed improvement. While this is a work in progress, I hope that my experience can be useful to others who want to implement online programs that connect students in different parts of the world.

Thus far, I collected data about my students' experiences from written reflections, Venn diagrams, letters to Skype friends, as well as recorded conversations. This data provided information about the observations of my 6th graders in Philadelphia thus far, as well as next steps for our future Skype Club meetings. I'm unable to share information about the Acehnese students because I have not collaborated with the teachers there on these assignments.

Teaching Students to Become Ethnographers

For the first activity, I taught students to investigate actively the school culture in Aceh by using a basic two-column "I see/I question" ethnographic notetaking style while observing a photo slideshow about the Acehnese school. We use this notetaking tool at FACTS when teaching folk arts education inquiry skills. Since our Acehnese friends all attend boarding school, these initial photos helped the students generate questions so they could understand more details about their friends' daily lives. It was also clear that the students were comparing their friends' school with their school experience, thereby enriching their understanding of their own school culture. For example, after seeing a picture of a group of girls watching TV together at the dormitory, one student asked, "Do girls have different classes than boys? Can they talk to boys?" After seeing a picture of a large, open-air cafeteria, students asked, "Why do they have a better school than us?"

I SEE / I QUESTION notetaking format

I see	I question
<i>Example:</i> <i>I see only girls watching television in the dormitory.</i>	<i>Example:</i> <i>Are girls allowed to play with boys after school?</i>

Do they make their own food? Do they eat everything with their hands?” After observing the clothes, students asked “Do all the girls have to wear head-scarves? Why do they dress fancy?” Students generated questions so that they could find out more about the daily schedule, classes, sports, and hobbies of their friends, because in folk arts education, we stress that culture is ordinary and embedded in easily accessible daily activities.

After the first few sessions, I asked students to express their feelings during the Skype sessions. It has been found that “emotions such as discomfort and anxiety are typically dominant features of intergroup contact and interaction that can interfere with effective communication” (Dovidio 2004), so I wanted to gauge student reactions to address any issues. Students listed a range of emotions, for example, “I feel all different feelings like excited, nervous, scared, happy.” Another stated, “I feel a lot going on in my mind like what will they say about me?” Although students expressed that interactions were often uncomfortable because of long pauses in the conversation, I reassured them that this was a normal part of communication across language barriers. I instructed them to speak one person at a time, slow down, and sometimes give background information before describing everyday experiences so that their friends could have a better context for understanding. Over time, I noticed that some students intentionally changed their communication style in the ways above. When asked what we should do to avoid the “awkward pauses” that inevitably occurred during conversation, one student offered, “We need to find our similarities and differences!” Thus, students selected questions about the hobbies and preferences of their Skype friends for following sessions. Over time, they shared information about favorite movies, video games, sports, and classes. As they grew more comfortable, they began to express opinions on controversial topics, such as our presidential election or the new design for Indonesian currency, which was quite similar to the style of the Chinese Yuan. One student expressed, “The more we talk to them, the more they get comfortable with us.”

As I noticed the communication style improve, I asked my students to fill out a Venn diagram to encourage them to reflect on the similarities and differences that they shared with their Acehnese friends. In doing so, they were also beginning to position themselves in relationship to their friends. Although the diagrams showed that most students shared a similar taste in Indonesian foods, other aspects of Indonesian life, such as eating meals with hands, design of showers or toilets, forms of transportation, currency, and the tropical environment were totally different. With dismay I realized that the Venn diagrams seemed to produce a polarizing effect, in which many of my students lumped the Indonesian students into a homogenous group that had more differences than similarities to themselves.

However, not all students responded in the same way—one showed a greater identification with Indonesian culture than the others. She wrote in her reflection, “It feels nice when we talk to people from **our** culture.” This student actively identified with her Indonesian friends, despite the tangible differences in daily life.

Seeing Our Friends as Individuals

With the guidance of our school's folklife education specialist, Linda Deafenbaugh, I devised a plan to help my students think about their friends as individuals, rather than overgeneralizing. I invited them to join me in a lunchtime conversation and directly asked, "How are our friends different from one another on the surface? How are they different from one another deeper down?"

These guiding questions were designed to help students access both easily visible tangible traditions and the deeper intangible culture that undergirds them. These questions proved far more productive than the Venn diagram and allowed students to highlight individual differences among our Acehnese friends.



Photo from slideshow: School cafeteria at Sekolah Sukma Bangsa Pidie, Aceh. Courtesy of the author.

When considering outside characteristics, students showed sensitivity by avoiding assumptions about people based upon their clothing or the way they looked. They said they noticed that, on the surface, some students were Filipino and some were Indonesian. However, one student clarified that "I couldn't really tell if they were Indonesian or Filipino unless they told us." Also, on the surface, many students mentioned that girls wore the hijab as part of their Muslim religion. One student expressed, "You can definitely see if there are people who are Muslim because of their hijab, but if there are ones that aren't wearing the hijab it still doesn't mean that they're not Muslim, but we don't actually know for sure."

For characteristics of personality, students repeatedly mentioned that "some of them are more outgoing than others." The most outgoing and brave Acehnese students performed songs or dances during our Skype sessions. One student explained that she admired a student who "was so brave to sing in front of us and he actually has a good voice. He always starts the conversation and always answers the questions without any hesitation." One student expressed a pattern he noticed, without overgeneralizing about all Indonesians, by saying "A lot of the Indonesian people over there are really nice, like the kids, but...it's just *that* school, so I actually don't know, like, the other people."

Additionally, I realized that students were getting to know each other's personalities through the body language that they observed. One mentioned that there were shy students in the background who never spoke. However, these students were still actively communicating without words. One student expressed, "I remember this one time when...I was sitting with my hand like *this*, and then the guy across from me did the same exact thing, but he did it purposely and then he tapped the girl next to him and was like 'look!'"

Before this conversation, I didn't realize that the students were using body language to communicate about their personalities across the screen. One student described, "Some of our

personalities are like the same. Like the way we talk to each other....When they're in front of us I feel like they're scared, but when they're talking to their friends it's like when *we* talk to *our* friends." Finally, I realized that students were conveying their personalities visually, even by the way that they chose to interact with their peers in the same room while they were on camera. In these informal lunchtime conversations, I also revisited the question of finding commonalities or "connections" with our friends in Aceh. This time, I got more varied responses than through the Venn diagram. In addition to repeating that "we both kinda like to eat the same foods," students also acknowledged that social media, video games, and communication style among friends were commonalities across cultures.

Additionally, I noticed that although students were not always directly comparing their Acehnese friends with themselves, some were reflecting more deeply on the schooling experiences of their Indonesian parents. "I told my parents about what we do here with the Skype and then I always ask them the difference between [the Acehnese] school and my parents' school...." By asking these questions, students were able to uncover more information about their parents' lives in Indonesia. In this way, the Skype sessions led them to inquire about their personal family history on a deeper level.

Finally, I noticed that students were gaining a more detailed understanding of the region where their friends' school was located, which connected back to one of my original goals. One student explained that in Aceh, "they do farming and planting. When I lived in Indo, all I did was go to amusement parks and go to arcades." Another student expressed surprise at the new construction in the area, "Many of the places I've been in Indonesia are really old and not new. But in Aceh it's really new." They connected the new construction to the rebuilding in the region after the tsunami in 2009. Many students were interested to learn more about the impact of the tsunami in the community.

The lunchtime conversations were also fruitful because I got student input into their preferred activities for future Skype sessions. Students responded with a strong motivation to connect with their heritage language. One student, who was more fluent in Indonesian, told me that she often heard new Indonesian words during the Skype conversation and then returned home to ask her father about the meaning. Another student mentioned that it was "not fair" that we were speaking primarily in English to the other students. After that comment, we rehearsed greetings and questions in Indonesian. For the following Skype meeting, students were able to initiate a conversation entirely in Indonesian. This represented an important step for the club, because this was the first time I heard my students willingly speak Indonesian during Skype. In the past, even those students who consistently spoke Indonesian at home had often hesitated before speaking Indonesian aloud during the Skype sessions. I hope that the more we practice Indonesian greetings and questions ahead of time, the more the students in Philadelphia will begin to speak it spontaneously.

Thus far, my students have gained a greater understanding of their peers as individuals and the particular region of Aceh, Sumatra. They have also increased their use of Indonesian language. Some unexpected outcomes were that some students were communicating with body language and that the Skype sessions prompted them to ask more questions about their parents' schooling experiences.

Next Steps

One challenge of the Skype Club is that some students are less inclined to share personal thoughts and feelings in front of a peer group. Some ideas I have for the future include giving each student a specific “pen pal” to write to each week while we prepare for upcoming the Skype sessions. Students could write emails to this person with specific questions, and therefore strengthen individual friendships within the group. Pen pal emails would lead to increased personal communication, as well as trust and understanding between each pair of students.

Additionally, I’d like to have shared objectives with the teachers in Aceh. Although those teachers are eager for their students to gain English language practice, their students don’t share my objectives of exploring heritage and so are not equally focused on conducting inquiry into cultural similarities and differences. If teachers in both countries were united with the same objectives, I believe that all the students would interact with more depth. The principal of Sukma Bangsa and I plan to discuss how to improve our program for the upcoming year.

At the end of the school year when students will engage in reflective writing about the year-long Skype Club experience and their learning about their own and others' cultures, I will ask them to set a goal for how they plan to continue their exploration of Indonesian culture. For example, “I connect to Indonesian heritage in _____ way. I would like to ____(action)___ in order to continue participating as ‘an active-culture maker’ in my heritage culture.” Each student will presumably have different goals or ways of connecting with culture. I will have them present to each other their different goals. We will all support each other in the process.

The Skype Club has taught me a great deal about the challenges of teaching cultural awareness, as well as having a dialogue across difference. However, as I’ve watched the students learn from one another, express themselves more openly, and eagerly arrive at the Friday Skype sessions, I’m quite certain that this program is a step in the right direction as students begin to explore what Indonesian heritage means for themselves, on a personal level.

Amy Brueck is an ESOL teacher with expertise in teaching children and adults from diverse backgrounds in Indonesia, Spain, Philadelphia, and rural New York. She has Pennsylvania teacher certifications in ESL and Spanish language.

Notes

1. Morning Meeting is described in detail in the article “Newcomer English Learners Building Language and Belonging through Folk Arts Education” on page 25, this issue.

Works Cited

- Deafenbaugh, Linda. 2015. "Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities." *Journal of Folklore and Education*. 2:76-83, <http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Deafenbaugh.pdf>.
- Dovidio, John F., et al. 2004. “From Intervention to Outcome: Processes in the Reduction of Bias,” in *Education Programs for Improving Intergroup Relations*, eds. Walter G. Stephan and Paul W. Vogt, eds. New York: Teachers College Press, 243-265.

What We Bring: New Immigrant Gifts

by Amanda Dargan



This is the last picture we took in Afghanistan. I wouldn't see it until years later. We are with my grandad's cousin, Haji Akbar, who took us as far as the easternmost city, Jalalabad. He said he wanted to mark this historic moment, so he had someone take our photograph. My mother is not in the picture. I don't know why. There was a lot I didn't know. I didn't know we would go from Pakistan to Sri Lanka, and from Sri Lanka come to the U.S. I didn't know that a year would pass before I would see my father again and that I would run away from him because I didn't even recognize him.

Sahar Muradi (2nd from left) with her siblings and a cousin on her last day in Afghanistan (1982).

Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

--Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

To counter narratives built from fear, “fake news,” and anti-immigrant sentiment fostered in the current political climate, educators, folklorists, and artists are asking with a renewed sense of urgency: What have immigrants contributed to this country? What gifts do they bring that enrich their lives and their communities, as well as our country at large? How have their cultural expressions—their languages, arts, cuisines, and poetry—contributed to America’s vibrant cultural mix?

The Hart-Celler Act was signed into law by Lyndon Johnson on October 3, 1965, and fully implemented in 1968. This act fundamentally changed the demographics of our nation. Still the foundation of today’s immigration law, it phased out a national origins quota system instituted in 1921 and inaugurated a new era of immigration from Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean. Today, tens of millions of Americans can trace their lives in the United States directly to the impact of the Hart-Celler Act and its successor legislation.

In New York City, three nonprofit cultural groups—CATCH (Center for Art, Tradition, and Cultural Heritage), City Lore, and the Center for Traditional Music and Dance—are engaged in a three-year program titled *What We Bring: New Immigrant Gifts*. The program marks the 50th anniversary of the Hart-Celler Act, also known as the Immigration Reform Act. *What We Bring* includes an exhibition in City Lore’s gallery and a major traveling exhibition, along with three years of accompanying public programs, to commemorate, interpret, and discuss the experiences and cultural contributions of this new immigrant wave. It also will include arts education programs in New York City public schools highlighting the stories and traditional arts of immigrants who arrived after the Hart-Celler Act. The title *What We Bring* is used in a dual sense. Each image of an immigrant artist will be accompanied by a touchstone object that they

brought with them from their home countries. The exhibit object may include ankle bells from dancer Malini Srinivasan, a *cajón* drum from musician Hector Morales, and a costume from the Chinese Opera retelling of “The Monkey King Wreaks Havoc in Heaven” from theater artist Lu Yu. At the same time, *What We Bring* will highlight what these artists bring to American culture through their teaching and their cultural activism.

About the Program

While the program is new, *What We Bring* builds on the arts education program model that City Lore has developed with our partner schools over the past 31 years. It offers in-depth, skills-based arts instruction through long-term artist residencies; opportunities for students to do original research using primary sources such as interviews with community artists and experts; professional development for teachers; activities that engage families in their child’s arts experiences at home and in school; teaching artists’ performances, exhibits, or PowerPoints of their artwork; and a culminating event where students share with an audience what they learned and created. The content and art focus vary from residency to residency, but *What We Bring* draws on the strategies, practices, and community contacts we have developed over many years.

What We Bring will include the stories and experiences of City Lore’s teaching artists in the body of stories that students can draw upon to understand immigrant experiences and contributions. Listening to a wide range of stories that describe the reasons emigrants leave their homes and their challenges adjusting to life in the U.S. can counter the effort to define immigrants with a single story. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, in her TED Talk, “The Danger of a Single Story,” makes a

compelling case for the power of stories and the importance of knowing multiple narratives about people and places rather than one defining story:

I've always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar. (Adichie 2009)

Student Experiences

Working directly with teaching artists and community guests in the classroom, students listen to stories that recount the experiences of immigrants who live in their city. Listening to multiple stories—stories of family members, neighbors, guests, fellow students, and teachers—can give students a deeper understanding of the variety and complexity of immigrants' experiences and the challenges they often encounter. This serves as an important step toward developing empathy. Students learn different reasons people leave their homes to come to this country, but also what they bring with them that continues to enrich their lives and their communities here.

Students quickly realize that through interviews they can learn more about people they see every day but whose stories they do not know, including their own families. Once they get the interview bug, they want to interview everyone. Students interview each other in pairs to develop listening and interview skills. As they learn about one another's stories, they begin to see connections. They explore the experience of leaving their homes or places they know and love, whether that place was a different country or different city neighborhood. Some discover for the first time that their parents or grandparents were immigrants. One student said, "It was kind of surprising because I didn't think my mom had to emigrate from a country. I felt like that was a really, really, really, really long time ago, but it doesn't seem so long ago." Students also hear from immigrants who were forced to leave their homes and from those who chose to leave. The term "illegals" used by some students at the beginning of the residencies, disappears from conversations about immigrants.



Take a deeper look into City Lore residencies and learn how these programs contribute to students' rich educational experiences.

The questions that guide our interviews provide a framework for exploring both commonalities and differences between our shared experiences and the people we interview (see Classroom Application worksheet below).

Find examples of songs written by students interpreting interviews with immigrants [here](#).

We practice asking good follow-up questions to encourage our interview subjects to share more details and compelling stories about their experiences. Students learn to ask questions that elicit more sensory details—colors, smells, sounds, and the landscapes and memories of places and people left behind. Then we analyze and interpret the interview for ideas and images to use in art projects in theater, dance, song, poetry, and visual art. Artist residencies are designed to foster an understanding that one story does not define an individual's or a group's experience nor does one person's experience represent the experiences of a group or country. In some residencies, students interview two immigrants from the same country to encourage discussion about the differences in their experiences. In others, two classes interview the same person separately so that we can compare how each group interpreted one person's stories. This method encourages conversations about ways interviewers' interests, preconceptions, and deeply held beliefs shape the questions they ask and their interpretations of what they heard. Drawing on the work of Bonnie Sunstein and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater (2012), we ask students to consider three questions as they reflect on what they bring to the interview:

What surprised you? ~ What disturbed or challenged you? ~ What intrigued you?

These questions increase students' awareness of how their interests and the preconceptions they held about immigrants shaped the interview and what they heard.

Working with Teaching Artists

What We Bring will include a play that features the stories of six City Lore teaching artists who are immigrants or whose parents emigrated to the U.S.: Sahar Muradi, who, at age three, emigrated with her family from Afghanistan in the early 1980s, just following the Soviet invasion; Hector Morales, who came from Peru in 1999 to study at William Paterson University's jazz program; Malini Srinivasan, a Bharatanatyam dancer whose parents emigrated from India in the 1960s; Lu Yu, who emigrated from Taiwan to the U.S. by way of the South Pacific; Yahaya Kamate, a dancer from Cote d'Ivoire, who traveled here with a professional dance troupe; and James Lovell, a Garifuna musician who emigrated from Belize. We interviewed each artist and enlisted George Zavala to direct the play. His parents migrated from Puerto Rico to New York City, where he was born. As a long-time City Lore teaching artist, George brings many years of experience working with immigrant artists and themes related to immigration and migration to *What We Bring*. Our goal is for students to gain a deeper understanding of both the differences and the commonalities among the stories of immigrants from different parts of the world.

Amanda Dargan is Education Program Director at City Lore.

Works Cited

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "The Danger of a Single Story." TED, 18:49 June 2009, https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story#t-35087.
- Sunstein, Bonnie and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. 2012. *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*, 4th ed. New York: Bedford/St. Martin's.

Classroom Application: Student Interview Worksheet

These questions can be adapted for interviews with community guests, family members, or artists visiting your classroom.

Note to students: Don't forget to use follow-up questions to encourage interview participants to share more details and compelling stories about their experiences. Can you elicit more about the colors, smells, sounds, and the landscapes and memories of places and people left behind?

Why did you leave?

What were your feelings about leaving?

What did you bring with you?

What did you leave behind?

How did you travel to get here?

What obstacles and helpers did you encounter on your journey?

What were your first impressions of this country when you arrived?

How was it different from what you expected?

What challenges and opportunities have you experienced here?

What do you miss most about the home you left?

What do you like most about your new home?

Selections from the Play

What We Bring

FAREWELLS

SAHAR MURADI: On the bus sucking sugar cane. You give us sugar stalks to keep busy with, to keep our mouths shut with. If we speak, the soldiers who stop the bus will know we aren't border people. So you silence us with these sweet, sticky plants and keep us dirty. Two weeks, no baths, and wrapped in three layers. It's how we can pass. Border people carry little, so we take nothing. The hurt in Jawad's hands, from the absence of his slingshot; he wonders if there'll be blackbirds where we're going. Shabnam tries to keep her feet still; there is a little itch, a tiny tickle in them, where the pedals of her tricycle fit. How long would it take to reach Pakistan on a tricycle? I think of my little bag, my *khalta-gac*, the pillowcase that I keep all my treasures in, apple seeds and nail clippings and little webs of lint, everything I drag after me all over the place. Your mother says she will keep it safe, for when we come back from the trip, with new treasures. But you, *madar jan*, you have so many more things than we do, so your missing is so much bigger. It takes up all the room on our seat. It splits the vinyl, fogs the windows, and spreads to either end of the bus. It's already hard to be comfortable, with the rocks under the tires and dust in our eyes and our lips sealed tight around the cane, but now your missing is coming off your face like steam and none of us can breathe.

This play will be performed in the City Lore gallery in December 2017 as a public program to accompany the *What We Bring* exhibit. It also will be offered to schools as a performance in our artist residency programs that explore immigrant experiences. Teaching artist George Zavala worked with six immigrant artists to combine their stories in a script organized by the stages of their departure, arrival, and lives in the U.S.

That was 1982, and I was three years old traveling by bus from Kabul to Jalalabad and then onto Peshawar, Pakistan, with my mother and two siblings. We were fleeing Afghanistan in the wake of the Soviet invasion of 1979 and the political dissolution following. A year earlier, my father had escaped after repeated visits to our home by secret police asking for his whereabouts. Members of the traditional elite, the religious establishment, and the intelligentsia began fleeing or risk being jailed or disappeared. My dad spoke out against the invasion, and he also ran his father's textile factory. My mother was a schoolteacher. They were both from the Qizilbash tribe, a minority Shi'ite group who largely worked in government and trade. We were now passing as Pashtuns who lived on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan, who crossed daily. We were not to make a sound until we reached the border.

Once we were stopped at a checkpoint. My mother was the only woman on the bus and we were the only family. She was asked to lift her veil to check against her photograph, at which point the female guard, who was a classmate of my aunt's, mistook her for her sister, Fauzia. Not only was she not Fauzia, she was also not the person indicated on her passport. My mother begged not to be turned in. She agreed and would later pass a message to her family that we crossed the border safely.

ARRIVALS



Hector Morales playing the cajón at a school assembly program. Photo by Amanda Dargan.

CUSTOMS OFFICER: Can I get your custom declaration form please? Could you please open this bag, Sir? [*Hector takes cajón out of the bag.*] What is this?

HECTOR: It's a *cajón*, a box. [*Officer looks at Hector expecting more information.*] A wooden box. [*Officer remains silent, waiting.*] Oh, yes, well, in my country this box is used as a drum. We use it to play Creole and Afro-Peruvian music. I am coming to America to study jazz. [*Officer looks inside the hole in the cajón and takes out a T-shirt and a sock.*] Well, when I travel I use it to carry some other things too.

CUSTOMS OFFICER: Is this all you are bringing? Aren't you forgetting to write something on this list? [*Officer disappears and Hector sits on cajón.*]

HECTOR: I had the feeling that I was forgetting something, I just wasn't sure what that was . . . and suddenly I wasn't sure if it was me who brought the *cajón* to the U.S or if it was the *cajón* who brought me. My *cajón* was filled with very valuable things, not just my socks, but my memories, my sounds, my view of the world, my culture, my language, my accent, my identity . . . my identity . . . the *cajón* helped me find my identity. [*Hector walks a few feet away from the cajón, and the cajón speaks.*]

Cajón: Oh, yes, of course . . . my *cajón* . . . how I love my *cajón* . . . blah blah blah . . . yes, it is me talking, Hector, down here, your *cajón* . . . let me tell you the true reason you came to America the *la verdad* why you came is because you want to play jazz . . . you want to play the drum set . . . you know your beloved cymbals, drums, snare drum, bass drums . . . I don't know why you want to do that . . . !

HECTOR: Because I thought it was really cool . . . you know . . . try something different . . . how about thinking a little bit outside of the box for a change? Ay *caramba* I am sorry . . . I didn't mean to offend you. But jazz is part of me too, aren't you curious about other styles of music, other instruments, other cultures? We live in this culturally diverse city and I feel like I could be a mediator, a bridge, between cultures, between sounds . . . I love the sound of jazz, and you're right, that's why I came here (*sound of jazz music*). The sound of the piano, the harmonies and the cymbals, the rhythm, so elegant . . . so free . . . [*Hector plays along for a little bit.*] So many possibilities . . . (*sound fades out*) . . . You don't have to be jealous, I also love your sound . . . you are the . . . sound of my homeland . . . of my childhood . . . the sound of my father . . . [*Hector looks at his hands, the right one holds a stick, the left is free. He plays both instruments.*] From the *cajón* to the drum set . . . from the *cajón* to the drum set . . . (*repeats, looking at his hands*). It's perfect . . . This is what I brought to America (*hits cajón*) . . . and this is what America brought to me (*hits snare*), what I mean is that I do not consider myself a *cajón* player or a drummer either, maybe here in America I can be both. I bring my cultural duality, I am a mediator, a bridge between cultures, between sounds, from the *cajón* to the drum set.

WHAT WE BRING

MALINI SRINIVASAN: What my parents brought to America was dance, a family of three children, and a strong will to bring India with them to America. My mother studied Bharatanatyam dance in India from a young age; she learned from her mother. Ironically, though this art was passed on from mother to daughter, neither woman called herself a “dancer.” They were “dance teachers” because women of their community were forbidden from dancing after puberty; it was considered obscene for a woman to show herself on stage. My mother and grandmother gave all the children in our family the gift of Bharatanatyam dance: the stories, the music, the colorful costumes, and, of course, the ankle bells that keep the rhythm. But more than anything, this gift of dance gave us a vibrant experience of being in our bodies. My mother and grandmother were subversively conscious we should feel proud of this gift, and unafraid to dance. I am the first woman of my family to become a professional dancer who experienced none of the approbation formerly attached to the act of dancing . . . Sometimes the most beautiful gift also comes with the heavy weight of the past; and sometimes it brings with it the possibility of liberation. And sometimes, the gift carries both.



Malini Srinivasan teaching Indian classical dance to students at Public School 11. Photo by Tal Bar-Zemer.

JAMES LOVELL: I left Belize in 1990. I came with my Garifuna music inside of me. I found it among my people who were living in Brooklyn and the Bronx. The Garifuna drums, maracas, conch shell, and turtle shell drums were all here in New York City waiting for me! Life in the city was exciting! I was constantly exposed to music from other cultures, and I saw drums of different makes, sounds, and sizes. I was exposed to musical instruments that I never knew existed. The beautiful costumes, the different types of dancing—it expanded my cultural and musical horizons! I began to see myself among these amazing musicians, bringing my story, the Garifuna story, through our unique voice and musical sound onto the world stage! Living in New York opened my mind and soul and forced me to reach deeper into my culture and learn its history. I felt pride for and became an advocate of my rich Garifuna heritage. My homeland of Dangriga prepared me. I have all the elements of my Garifuna music in me. All I have to do is play my drums, my maracas, my turtle drum, and sing! During this journey of cultural awareness, I realized that the Garifuna language was in danger of becoming extinct. I made a resolution to keep my music, culture, and language alive! I started using Garifuna songs to teach children and adults how to speak the language.

HERE AND NOW

YAHAYA KAMATE: I came here in 1994 with a group of 60 performers representing The National Dance Company of my country, the Ivory Coast. One day someone saw me perform and asked if I would be willing to work in schools with children . . . When I started teaching I found my place. Teaching, teaching, teaching was all I did and have been doing since. It changed my life. It's been incredible seeing the difference drumming and dancing can make in a kid's life. I've taught in schools, in community centers, in universities, in hospital psychiatric wards, and even in jails. I have seen kids who were depressed and contemplating suicide light up and smile when they were drumming and young men in jails who spend all day arguing sitting side-by-side playing the drums. I am blessed to do this work!



Yahaya Kamate with students at Public School 274 in Brooklyn, New York.



Lu Yu teaching dance to his students at Public School 69 in Queens, New York.

Photos by Amanda Dargan.

LU YU: Many people ask me, what am I doing? Why don't I retire? . . . I don't think of the things I do as work, because so much of what I do is really gratifying, watching children grow. When a child comes up to you after a workshop and says, "I want to be an actor" or "I want to be an artist," that really moves me. Watching them transform and seeing their joy as they shine on stage, I think to myself, this is right. In this political climate with so much division and discrimination, what we do is not only right, it is necessary. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be doing this work for so long.



Children of Shangri Lost Logo

Children of Shangri-Lost

by Maureen K. Porter and Susan A. Dawkins

We are a group of youth in Pittsburgh who want to show the world that despite being displaced and sometimes forgotten, we have not forgotten who we are and what we have to offer the world. Our story is one of survival and of hope. We may be the Children of Shangri-Lost, but we have found ourselves in our new homes around the world.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is home to approximately 5,000 Bhutanese refugees who are building a thriving community of newcomers. In our “City of Bridges,” young Bhutanese have purposefully created a website and a community organization, which the welcome above proudly introduces, that have great potential to introduce different communities and cultural traditions. The website is only the most visible face of a much larger set of cultural endeavors. Young adults in Pittsburgh’s Bhutanese immigrant community share their dynamic, evolving folklife through Children of Shangri-Lost (COSL), a nonprofit organization. Together, COSL members curate an impressive set of social media projects and promote public forums that celebrate their traditional forms of cultural expression. They reach out to their new neighbors and proactively approach writing new narratives of where they have come from and who they are becoming. These resources can provide educators a dynamic model of ways that others can appreciate and incorporate lessons from their difficult journey toward full participation in the United States.

These new immigrants’ strategic, savvy use of new media forms as explicit means of outreach and renewal offers a welcome contrast to increasing public discourses of hate, exclusion, entitlement, and “parasitic” immigrants. It directly counters a deficit discourse about diasporic communities. Instead, they spotlight the shared human saga of their displacement, the folk practices they are actively maintaining, and their aspirations for greater belonging within their host society. By highlighting varied forms of folklife and ways of knowing, for example, dance, poetry, video montages, and blogs, COSL posters’ words and actions demonstrate the community cultural wealth (Yosso 2005) their community possesses and contributes to their new home. Further, by providing thoughtfully curated first-person accounts and promoting events open to their larger neighborhoods, COSL models how newcomer communities can dynamically share their folklife traditions as the foundation for constructing bridging social capital (Putnam 2000).

Young adults’ poignant struggles to create a transcultural identity provide a rich, ever-growing witness for educators who wish to incorporate first-person accounts of resilience and intercultural dialogue into their teaching. That COSL is largely a youth initiative makes it all the more appealing to other teens and young adults whose natural curiosity about identity and belonging is piqued at this time of their lives. We believe that COSL’s core activities are therefore particularly important expressions of folklife that can contribute richly to educational endeavors far beyond the borders of the city they now call home.

In this article, we first contextualize the folk group's worldwide saga of repeated cycles of displacement and integration. We then introduce COSL as a grassroots folklife organization significantly contributing to this community's well-being in their newest hometown, Pittsburgh. Next, we consider the importance of shifting populist discourses of deficit to acknowledgments of community cultural wealth and of shifting from norms of segregation and stereotyping to creating effective events that bridge social groups. In each, we offer examples, taken from the recent COSL repertoire, of resources of particular interest to folklife-inspired educators, along with open-ended considerations about their practical use as part of a larger project of social justice.

The Lhotsampas of Bhutan Become a Diasporic Community

COSL's very name is a call to the mythical as well as the human rights elements of a displacement and resettlement saga. For generations, Bhutan's beautiful, mountainous kingdom counted among its many ethnic populations a Nepalese-speaking Hindu population known as Lhotsampas, or "People of the South." This group emigrated from Nepal to Bhutan to farmland in the south of the country. While they considered and still consider themselves Bhutanese, most maintained their Hindu religion and traditions, including their Nepalese language and customary dress, a key marker of their folk group. Bhutan's Nationality Law, passed in 1958, formally granted them full citizenship (Cultural Orientation Resource Center 2007; Hutt 2003; Rizal 2004).

Three decades later, Bhutan's government, observing intra-national conflicts in neighboring countries, was concerned by the growth of the Lhotsampa population and feared that the country would lose its national and religious (Buddhist) identity (Hutt 2003). Thus began Bhutanization, aimed at "unifying" the national culture. Policies included imposing the language, dress, and Buddhist religion of the majority Druk culture. Protests, largely organized by another group of young adults (university students), were met with Bhutanese military force, who accused Lhotsampas of being illegal immigrants and then confiscated their land in addition to arresting and torturing protestors. In the early to mid-1990s, tens of thousands were forced to flee to refugee camps in neighboring Nepal (Cultural Orientation Resource Center 2007; Rizal 2004; Zeppa 1999). There they were to stay for up to two decades, with approximately 10,000 displaced Bhutanese still in limbo today (Preiss 2016).

In 2003, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced it would seek resettlement rather than repatriation for these refugees. In 2006, the U.S. announced a program to take up to 60,000 (Cultural Orientation Resource Center 2007). As of March 2016, approximately 85,000 Bhutanese refugees have resettled in the U.S. ("Bhutanese Refugees Find Home in America" 2016). Of those, nearly 10,000 have resettled in Pennsylvania. (This number does not account for secondary migration to Pennsylvania by refugees who were resettled in other states and then decided to relocate).

The outcome of this wide dispersal is that Bhutanese stories of displacement and resettlement thus resonate with other diasporic communities' sagas of their ongoing struggle for human rights, sovereignty, and transcultural identity. Thus, COSL's choice of Internet-based social media tools is both apt and effective. COSL's logo thoughtfully integrates their past and current storylines, and could serve as a catalyst for an introductory lesson merging historical and visual literacy. It depicts a core folklore element, their origin story of coming to a new homeland, and its centrality in shaping their current discourse of resilience and new beginnings. The logo shows a family, intact

and holding hands, walking upright into an unknown future. The fading color of their path symbolizes traversing a dangerous liminal state as they leave their family homes, stripped of their national identity. The sun behind them sets over their homeland. But they move forward, and COSL tells the world of their past and present, as well as their hopes and plans for the future.

Multigenerational Families Maintain Dynamic Folklife Traditions

Two common assumptions about refugee populations, that families have been fractured and cultural traditions abandoned, do not hold for this diasporic community. Unlike other displaced groups, Bhutanese families remained largely intact throughout dislocation and ultimate resettlement. In Pittsburgh, we note that families of three generations are common: Parents in their mid-50s through 70s, children in their 30s through 40s, and grandchildren who are of school age through young adulthood. The eldest generation usually has limited reading and writing skills, having grown up in farming communities with limited access to formal education. They are generally the parents of large families, with five or more children constituting the second generation. This middle generation of parents may not have attended school for very long, or at all, because of the difficulties of attending sparsely located schools in the mountains of Bhutan. The third generation, who comprise the membership of COSL, has more formal educational attainment than their parents and grandparents; having been born in Nepalese refugee camps, they had greater access to the NGO-sponsored schools that grew up over the decades there. Their numbers are significant; approximately 35 percent of Bhutanese refugees were under the age of 18 when resettlement began (Cultural Resource Center 2007). In Pittsburgh, these are the teen and young adult immigrants who have come together to form the core of the COSL community.

Bhutanese refugee youth have some advantages compared with other displaced youth around the world. First, refugees in Nepal have more formal educational resources compared with refugees in other countries. Students usually could attend school in refugee camps through 10th grade, after which they could continue in Nepal's public schools, an option refugees in other countries do not have (Brown 2001). Additionally, children have rarely been separated from their parents, and heritage traditions including dance, material culture production, and oral storytelling continue.

This is not to say that refugee life is idyllic; conditions in the camps are overcrowded and unsafe, and food and other necessities are scarce. In addition, mental health problems were as great a concern as physical health challenges (Preiss 2013). Today, residual mental health issues are still a concern, one that COSL refers to other refugee-led organizations in the area. Reclaiming their cultural traditions as they find new folk groups to join and contribute to helps this Generation 1.5 exercise a sense of agency and voice. They are the ones actively seeking—and contributing to—safe, welcoming communities in their new cities.

These youthful newcomers have many proficiencies that have helped COSL grow since its founding in 2013 (personal communication with COSL founder Diwas Timsina). They derive resilience and an optimistic stance because of their prior experiences with successfully navigating transnational educational systems, their ability to incorporate new languages (including initial exposure to English in the camps), and their youthful recognition that return to Bhutan will not be likely (Timsina 2016). These features of camp folklife have proven pivotal in Bhutanese young adults' capacity and desire to continue to generate resources that will enable them and their families to navigate resettlement best in their long-term new home.

As a collective effort, COSL provides multimedia educational and advocacy resources that span a great range of cultural forms of expression. The authors maintain and participate in traditions of their elders, including dance and dress. They also engage in modes of creative expression in their second language of English, including poetry and drama, along with formal public speaking and social media posts. In fusing old traditions and new modes of expression, COSL speaks to the challenges of negotiating belonging as newcomers, whether in classrooms or communities. Some examples of their work, shared below, reflect their dynamic folklife traditions—their ways of knowing, forms of expression, and means of maintaining communal life and rituals in that productive, liminal space between two countries and cultures.

Creative Forums Display Community Cultural Wealth

Immigrants, particularly refugees, are too often stereotyped into two broad categories: drains upon the economy whose numbers flood countries of resettlement, or tragic figures who need to be rescued. All too frequently in classrooms and curricula, their voices are silenced or marginalized (Hogg 2011). Folklife programs provide an effective counterpoint to these trends, spotlighting firsthand accounts and perspectives and adding them to the public discourse available far and wide via the Internet. There is much that we could still do to bring lessons from folklife studies into mainstream classrooms. Bowman (2006) notes that folklore and education share considerable common ground and there are several entry points where each could build upon shared pedagogical goals and priorities. She models a multivocal account of best practices that illustrates practical ways to establish mutually advantageous programs, noting the cumulative benefits of applying folklore's higher order thinking skills to social justice topics. If young people study insider and outsider points of view, position themselves in observing and writing, employ ethical documentation practices, categorize findings, and generate presentations of their ethnographic explorations, they have a leg up on making sense of the world, understanding what it is to be human, and participating in a civil society (77). COSL authors have adopted a similar range of strategies to foreground their collective experiences, their feelings about those experiences, and the consequences for their full membership in communities well-known as well as new.

Funds of knowledge are resources and knowledge that families and communities access in their daily lives (Vélez-Ibáñez and Greenberg 2005, 47). A funds of knowledge approach recognizes that “People are competent, they have knowledge, and their life experiences have given them that knowledge” (González, et al. 2005, i). When teachers access student funds of knowledge, they can use those resources and knowledge to improve classroom practice.

Folklife studies spotlight the dynamic interplay of multiple cultural and political forces in shaping and reshaping the expressive cultures of interacting groups. In this, they share with a wealth-based framework (Yosso 2005) a concern for the ways that folk groups' community wisdom fosters resilience. Youth gain applied wisdom from the funds of knowledge and expressive traditions in which they grow up. Educators gain better understanding of their students and enhanced pedagogical strategies by accessing student funds of knowledge, which in turn can counter the deficit approaches that remain dominant in educational settings (Hogg 2011).

What does this look like in practice? González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) argue for teachers to engage directly with students' home communities through interviews and participant observation.

This type of engagement is not always possible; for some families, it may not be desirable. However, in this age of multimedia, entering student spaces includes entering cyberspace. On websites and social media, participants often demonstrate their funds of knowledge in various creative ways, including written, spoken, and visual performance. Such is the case with the Children of Shangri-Lost, whose vibrant web presence is a gateway to their daily lives and funds of knowledge.

Yosso's Framework of Community Cultural Wealth

This theoretical framework, which arose out of analyses and experiences of non-dominant ethnic groups, primarily Latinx, within the U.S., highlights the strengths and resources that individuals and whole ethnic communities (in this case, refugees) bring to their new places of residence. While there are genuine differences that educators would do well to note between refugees/immigrants/expats who move for economic, human rights, war, and family reasons, they all bring a wealth of tangible and intangible cultural goods when they cross borders (Erel 2010). Yosso's framework (2005,77-80) provides six forms of community cultural wealth:

- Aspirational
- Linguistic
- Familial
- Social
- Navigational
- Resistant

These offer a beneficial framework for helping young people or teachers recognize what their classmates and students have available to draw upon to become part of their new country.

In direct response to public discourses that discount their creative voices, Children of Shangri-Lost promote poetry and drama as two prominent forms of artistic expression. Calls for postings and peer "likes" on their social media pages help youth develop and exercise a distinctive, legitimate voice in recasting this simplistic but pervasive narrative. The poem "Unexpected Journey" by Roshna reprinted below, is one such work that expresses the hopes and fears of many youth who arrive with their families. She complicates one-dimensional narratives with her poem, which exemplifies Yosso's (2005) framework of community cultural wealth.

Through their website, social media pages, and public engagements, COSL participants engage in "counter-storytelling," which Solórzano and Yosso (2002) define much like folklorists describe their intentional scholarly practice, as an interactive, mutually constituting "method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (including those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. Counter-stories can shatter complacency, challenge the dominant discourse on race, and further the struggle for racial reform" (32). By highlighting their own experiences, on their own terms and in a hybrid language, rather than simply responding to normative mainstream ideas of who they might be or how they ought to fit in, COSL teen poets and writers author their own narratives of how they come of age at the same time they come to understand themselves as nested within, that is, belonging to, many communities

at once. As a public website where Bhutanese teens and young adults can freely share their thoughts, COSL's homepage directly links educators, community service providers, and, importantly, other youth to concrete instances of this alternate view of a newcomer community as bringing something of value to the table.

Shifting to the concept of community cultural wealth also helps move the academic discourse beyond definitions of “social” or “human” capital in the U.S. as primarily those things that can be measured by financial gain or income level, as well as reifying transactional views of success as using others in a network to get ahead, to get access to resources, and to attain “success.” Roshna’s poem expresses how funds of knowledge generate “wealth” and challenges instrumental mainstream views of what constitutes success.

Unexpected Journey
by Roshna

Bags packed, rooms left bare,
My Family and I leave with a long stare.
Thinking about my new lifestyle,
I begin to worry for a while.
It may be a wonderful change,
Although, it could be quite strange.
I think about my friends I’ve left behind,
In hope of meeting others so kind,
I shall cherish the memories we made,
Which shall never fade.
They say America is a Land of Opportunity,
With its people come to unity.
Moving may allow me to see different places,
Along with new faces.
It may be a great country at times.
But does have some negative signs.
My parents are concerned about jobs
available,
Some might not be so favorable.
Cost is also a problem,
Sinking many families to the bottom.
America has its difficulties,
Though its people are the first of its priorities.

Classroom Application: Learning through Newcomer Poetry

“Unexpected Journey” lyrically expresses 14-year-old Roshna’s hopes and abilities. Educators could also use the poem, with the lens provided by Yosso, to unpack how Roshna has brought along forms of community cultural wealth. Starting with the second line, Roshna expresses *familial* community cultural wealth with the first of three references to her family. She is saying goodbye and leaving *with* her family, a source of continuity in a precarious environment. Roshna’s poem speaks to the complex nature of resettlement, noting that it is not all positive (her parents are “concerned”) and finances create serious challenges. Folklife resources that candidly acknowledge complex social issues and conflicted personal desires, not superficially focusing on only happy times, are all the more valuable for their honest poignancy. COSL authors have to figure out where they stand and need to go out into their communities as reporters and social scientists to write their pieces.

She speaks of loss and gain in what Yosso terms *social* wealth, noting the friends she leaves behind but remaining hopeful about those whom she may meet. Her young voice thus reflects a shared teenage fear of rejection and desire to make new friendships and connections. She honors the extended set of relations and neighbors who have made the move with her family, noting that that they derive a sense of strength from the Pittsburgh Bhutanese’s overall close-knit identity and cultural continuity.

Teachers can capitalize on this expanded sense of the communities to which she has belonged and prompt classroom conversations about students' diverse types of families and social support networks.

Implicit in Roshna's depictions of relationships with family and friends is her *aspirational wealth*, insights that resonate fully with Yosso. She has hopes for the future despite obstacles. COSL websites and programs provide a means for these transitional generations to fall back on the folklore that their parents and grandparents brought with them, particularly the recurring narrative of making a better future for themselves in a new place. COSL posts contribute to an alternate public discourse about newcomers as intact and rebounding ethnic communities. We note that the poem provides the impetus for discussing what it means to develop a *transcultural* (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001) or *integrated* (Berry 1997; Berry, et al. 2006) identity that honors and continues the folklife of one's elders while also selectively adopting elements of the new home.

The *Standards for Folklife Education* (Sidener 1997) remind us that in addition to enhancing students' awareness of folklife principles and content, educators need to cultivate students' skills in qualitative investigation concurrently. A core feature of ethnographic inquiry, recognizing the emic, or insider, perspective, is integral to folklife approaches to understanding community perspectives. Poetry is an excellent means of conveying insider language and perspectives.

Yosso's *navigational wealth* is also at the heart of Roshna's compelling story, exemplifying how she and her family will locate a place to belong in a "quite strange" place. Because the poem ends on an optimistic note, with a culturally congruent emphasis on people as a high priority, the implication is that her family will indeed steer a course among the new terrain with success, if not ease. Educators can also look to the poem for larger social issues, for example, the meaning of success, including the relative value of individualistic gains and the merits of community uplift and collective accomplishments.

In the act of writing and publishing her poem, Roshna also demonstrates *linguistic* community cultural wealth. She is not only multilingual in the most literal sense of speaking more than one language, she can also express herself in multiple genres, including poetry. Over the years, we have repeatedly been struck that this skill is particularly pronounced among these youth, who as the in-between generation become translators for their families. This role, better described as cultural brokering (Piper 2002, 88), involves not only direct language translation but also facilitating family involvement with individuals, organizations, and institutions in the new homeland.

Finally, one may read in the poem a subtle expression of *resistance*: She is hopeful for her new life in America but knows that it will have its "difficulties" and those challenges will be devastating for some ("sinking many families to the bottom"). This last form of resistance, a willingness to name social problems and inequities, is characteristic of many who post to COSL's website. Roshna's rendering of her family's "Unexpected Journey" is both poignant and provocative. It provides an educational resource that their peers, teachers, social workers, and local politicians would do well to "unpack" using these core principals of cultural wealth and assets brought by newcomers.

In summary, the dynamic social media and information websites curated by COSL youth spotlight their living folklore that counters others' typical frozen-in-time or romanticized discourses about them. By composing and sharing elements for peer review that employ hybrid forms of literacy (for example, poetry, prose, and traditional epic storytelling genres), they provide rich, multilayered accounts for their community, the wider communities within which they live, as well as diasporic Bhutanese around the world who can log in and follow them. Whether collectively gathered composite stories, recounting others' adventures, or forms of individual witnessing (such as Roshna's poem), all are brave acts of counter-storytelling, which Solórzano and Yosso (2002) note serve at least four functions:

(1) They can build community among those at the margins of society by putting a human and familiar face to educational theory and practice, (2) they can challenge the perceived wisdom of those at society's center by providing a context to understand and transform established belief systems, (3) they can open new windows into the reality of those at the margins by showing possibilities beyond those they live and demonstrating that they are not alone in their position, and (4) they can teach others that by combining elements from both the story and the current reality, one can construct another world that is richer than either the story or the reality alone. (36)

COSL is a folklife organization that both in its process and product can serve as a role model for other social justice organizations.

For these reasons, we believe that folklife educators would particularly appreciate the COSL contributions to providing accessible and age-appropriate primary documents authored by other teens and young adults. By supplementing required texts—or replacing them altogether—with first-person narratives, we believe teachers can counter strategic silences about newcomers typical of most current curricula. Encouraging (non-immigrant) students to interview their relatives about their families' stories of movement, migration, and integration can help students make bridging connections between generations and cultural groups. Such stories provide peer-initiated prompts to foster "tough conversations" that dovetail well with the nearly ubiquitous anti-bullying programs in schools. Teachers can also contrast Roshna's language with newspaper or online accounts that emphasize newcomers as sources of risk, danger, threat, or demise; often having contrasting examples enables students to see commonplace labels as pejorative and replaceable rather than simply what has been accepted as normative. Finally, students and teachers can look to Roshna and other COSL participants' use of multiple genres for inspiration to articulate their own and their families' funds of knowledge.

Outreach Activities Bridge Newcomer and Host Communities

In addition to highlighting explicitly the substantial forms of community cultural wealth that Bhutanese can contribute to their host communities, COSL forums provide the means for building effective linkages between social groups. In a nation, and in particular an urban environment such as Pittsburgh where housing segregation by race and social class leads to increasingly isolated, mono-cultural neighborhood schools and churches, teachers need to seek out allies, especially boundary-crossing, even transgressing, institutions such as COSL.

In his analysis of shifting communal relationships in the U.S., Putnam (2000) discusses two forms that social networks can take: *bonding* and *bridging*. While bonding serves the essential purpose of enhancing intra-group coherence and cohesion, bridging creates intentional connections between one's home group and external organizations and institutions. Bonding and bridging are both important for immigrant acculturation, regardless of generation. COSL, in their mission, alludes to bonding and bridging networks:

Our mission is to raise awareness and to educate people about the history and challenges faced by the refugee and immigrant population through short films and blog posts. *We hope to engage youth in community issues and programs as well as inform the public about the experiences of refugee and immigrant communities* [emphasis added]. (COSL website 2017)



Over the years, as young leaders have come up through the organization they have become savvy media users with considerable skill in articulating the Bhutanese refugee crisis to the wider public. One of the most lauded examples is COSL founder, president, and university senior Diwas Timsina, who gave a TEDx Talk seamlessly connecting his personal challenges and successes with those of his family, other Bhutanese refugees, and displaced peoples in general. In business casual attire and at ease onstage, Diwas engages his audience with images of Shangri-La as his metaphor to connect the many points in his brief talk. He speaks of the Bhutan of his parents' past as a mythical place he is from but does not know. He drives home his points about refugee resettlement with other images familiar to his Pittsburgh audience, citing the "City of Bridges" that literally and symbolically connects different ethnic communities. He is optimistic when speaking of family and community survival, and also critical and direct, noting that Pittsburgh has been generally "welcoming, but not always refugee friendly." He affirms that for him and many others, in the end, this is "home" and "We came to America to be part of it" (Timsina 2016).

This outreach recording can be a valuable resource for folklife educators as part of an integrated, candid, extended pedagogy of respect and empowerment, two consistent priorities for folklife and other multicultural education programs. Educators should exercise caution and not misappropriate Diwas' TEDx Talk as a counterpoint to daily disparagements about newcomers or use it to fill an awkward pause simplistically in the typical curricular silence about human rights. It should not be used as part of a U.N. Day of Tolerance video break from "real" classwork or a Refugee Week titillation; COSL leaders' products need to be integrated into ongoing, frank discussions and assessed as artifacts for both their message and media savvy. Taken out of context from among the ceaselessly streaming flow of YouTube headlines or as an exception to the model minority myth, such hyped media presentations can do little alone to educate and transform radically. Folklife education requires educators to situate and personalize the struggles and aspirations of this young man and all the others like him, that is, to mainstream them to avoid what Arends (2000) warns could lead to even further marginalization and trivialization.

Here they note their efforts to bridge their community with others. They also reference the two-way nature bridging social networks should take in their efforts to engage Bhutanese youth in community issues, including home and host communities. Specific examples of the former include intergenerational programming with Bhutanese elders, who help COSL participants maintain home culture practices (such as language, religion, music) that could fade over time. Engagement with host community institutions includes college visits and inviting American friends and neighbors to understand and participate in Bhutanese community festivals. Outreach and advocacy have taken on many forms.

Folklife, while experienced within a specific community, is lived out by one particular person, his story combining with others'. Thus, from the audience's perspective, hearing individualized accounts is important. On the speakers' side, learning to articulate their stories and worldviews to the larger public is an essential prerequisite. In this TEDx Talk, Diwas Timsina's poised stage presence among other experts counters typical depictions of those who are frequently "Other-ed"; this is an important message to educators and other advocates. It opens the door for critical conversations about race, identity, and citizenship.

High-profile online talks like TEDx have been a pleasant extension of the core business of COSL, which is local, in-person programming. Because COSL is concentrated in a small set of Pittsburgh neighborhoods and its members span artificial age and geographic constraints, they can offer programming collectively that fills the need for ongoing presentations in many different school districts and community centers. COSL often engages in creative programming to highlight folklife traditions that they literally brought along with them: their regalia, traditional dances, and styles of storytelling.

Folklife education contributes the message that all cultures both draw inspiration from their expressive traditions as well as innovate new content, forms, and media (both tactile and virtual). A pioneering COSL program illustrates these experimental and improvisational dimensions. The "Showcase of Bhutanese Culture: Featuring Song, Dance, and Poetry" used several art forms to share their folklife traditions in a new American setting. In this showcase, COSL participants shared their history through a brief play by one of their members about the history of the Lhotsampas and their expulsion from Bhutan. The play ended on a note of hope, with actors preparing to move from a refugee camp to the U.S. ("Showcase of Bhutanese Culture..."). At this and other events, Bhutanese music and dance feature prominently. By reaffirming heritage stories and modes of storytelling, reusing material cultural artifacts, and reinterpreting them for new audiences, these performances keep those folklife traditions dynamically alive. We also saw COSL live up to this larger mission of building bridges that facilitate an enhanced, two-way traffic in ideas at a panel, "Come Talk to Me." As its title suggests, COSL panelists literally invite outside community members to join them and learn about Bhutanese refugees in a relaxed, friendly environment at the local library. These open panels, which they plan to repeat periodically, offer people of all walks of life the opportunity to learn about diverse folklife expressions right in their own neighborhood.

These high-energy events starring local people can indeed provide an excuse to gather the community for reciprocal advantage. Past research with youth-centered festivals (Porter 2000) has led us to continue to investigate the mutual benefits that can accrue when adults step back and

support youth in designing, producing, and hosting complex performances of cultural competence. These playful, amateur events require a team effort and thus can help often socially isolated refugee youth extend their networks and social ties across lines of gender, generations, and geography. COSL has wisely continued to foreground the meaningful, versus superficial, contributions and leadership of young adults strategically within the community. Events presented to mixed insider and outsider audiences bring attention to teens' valued traits and skills. These events can reveal another side not always apparent in the classroom, so their teachers would do well to attend such folk group-initiated forums. Having an appreciative audience who recognizes their expertise and skill can be very valuable for those who go through the effort to put on such a production. The attention provides impetus to remain authentic and relevant, reinvent folklife traditions, and "link the past, present, and future in tangible ways...offer[ing] participants an annual opportunity to reinvent their homeplace, to create an amalgam of preindustrial and postmodern, core and peripheral, traditional and avant-garde" (Porter 2000, 210). The results, for newcomers as well as longer-term residents, are enhanced senses of place, self, and of shared community.

Multicultural Education through Public Display and a Word of Caution

Cultural festivals are popular but can be coopted and become superficial, simplistic spectacles. Just as shifting from a deficit discourse to one of cultural wealth requires sustained attention to language use and listening deeply to one another, shifting from an othering discourse of folklife as something done by "exotic" foreigners requires sustained effort and many micro-level tie-ins. This call offers educators the impulse to celebrate local folklife practices as essential, everyday expressions common to all living, thriving cultural groups. It further requires shifts in language use and recasting what mainstream curriculum considers essential versus tangential. Meyer and Rhoades counsel that to be fully transformative and benefit all students, sustained interactions and thoughtful exchanges should be integrated throughout the curriculum, connect across subjects, and carry forward from grade to grade. "Only well-conceived, sensitive, and continuous multicultural curricula will create a real multicultural literacy. An isolated day of food, festival, folklore, and fashion contrives a view of multicultural education that far often denies understanding than enhances it" (2006, 87).

Learning what makes their folk group distinctive and worth celebrating contributes to Giroux's pedagogical project of difference, in which students "engage the richness of their communities and histories while struggling against structures of domination." In public venues such as COSL's folklife festivals, they play with different, often hybrid, forms of literacy and performance, learning adeptly to "move in and out of different cultures, so as to appreciate and appropriate codes and vocabularies of diverse cultural traditions in order to further expand the knowledge, skills, and insights that will need to define and shape, rather than merely serve, in the modern world" (Giroux 1992, 246).

In our work with COSL, we are able to enter into informal, ongoing conversations about the nature of cultural exhibits and norms of public performance and display. With Hogg (2011), we continue to ask questions to drive funds of knowledge scholarship and praxis forward: Which forms of heritage knowledge are most salient and relevant to the youthful Generation 1.5 when they choose

which elements to showcase? Which pedagogies that are effective, embodied ways of knowing used across generations within the group could also be incorporated into diversified classroom pedagogies that would successfully engage this group as well as many learners? Which elements of folklife are highly significant to this group because they have a recent history of migration, but may not be as important to groups still in refugee camps? How can COSL continue to showcase their funds of knowledge well into students' middle and high school years, instead of the current practice of concentrating offerings in the elementary school years? These are great questions for young adult event planners to consider carefully; they are also directly applicable to teachers who are considering inviting local tradition bearers to do workshops in their classes or are designing a school-community multicultural night. Hogg asserts that acknowledging local newcomers' living folklife expertise and incorporating their funds of knowledge into classes could lead to greater "relevance and authenticity of schooling" as well as enhancing Bhutanese immigrant "community empowerment and transformation" (2011, 673).

A final comment about the multimedia aspects of COSL's work is in order. Above and beyond the actual running time for these events, the collectively curated COSL website provides a transcendent "place" outside time or space to replay photos and videos. These interactive archives further expand the range of opportunities and audiences who can interact, share insights, and introduce themselves to one another. Selective representations of the 2015 Bhutanese Showcase provide a second pass for COSL members to learn critical folklife curation skills. Learning which elements to record ethnographically helps them hone foundational fieldwork proficiencies. Writing the synthesis captions, interpreting selected photos, and labeling people and food all are visual literacy competencies they gain. Explicitly naming allies and local supportive political figures (see photo caption below) further enhance their social standing and show their expanding alliances and social networks. They validate group-based expressions of "success" in the "American Dream." The website also offers means for the youth to explore transcultural norms



of politeness and personal expression, not the least of which is publicly stating gratitude for sponsorship, audience attendance, and skilled performances by peers.

The public “thank-you note” function of the website is also a good model for classroom teachers, as they could encourage young hosts who receive folklife tradition bearers as guests and visitors to verbalize appreciation and acknowledge, and thus honor, the gifts that they have shared. Too often this practice falls by the wayside in the early elementary years. However, teens are just as much in need of teachers’ prompts to articulate and express their gratitude to role models in their community who generously share their talents.

In summary, behind diversified COSL events and programs is the message that ours is a vibrant, interesting culture with art forms that we are justifiably proud of and intend to continue. Recitals showcase these teens and young adults not as relatively silent classmates, but as choreographers of their futures. The events that COSL members create and deliver, and then continue to reinterpret and critique online, serve as exemplary practices for multilayered educative experiences for youth and their advocates.

Sharing the Wealth of Folklore-Based Curricula: How Educators Can Bridge Cultural and Civic Gaps

Through their vibrant civic folklife organization CSOL, Bhutanese newcomers offer a dynamic set of public platforms for expanding the impact of their poetic voices and cherished cultural practices. Their advocacy, outreach, and media innovations provide significant resources for their resettled families, their new neighborhoods and schools in Pittsburgh, and their worldwide diasporic community. The young adults of Generation 1.5 have made strategic use of COSL to showcase the many forms of cultural wealth that they have inherited and are actively generating in their new country. Schools and community organizations could adopt some of COSL’s approaches in the classroom, using the growing online resources to inspire and model creative forums led *by* and not just *about* newcomers.

These are ready material to incorporate into ongoing, educative dialogues about belonging, otherness, and representation. COSL members’ commitments to offering community events, and linking these with intercultural dialogue and critique, provide further impetus for what could become transformative community encounters. By welcoming their Pittsburgh neighbors to folklife festivals and panels, they are paving the way for substantial bridges that will facilitate continued, two-way flows of information. In this fashion, we believe that COSL’s advocacy and dynamic, multimedia platforms provide important schoolroom and community assets. Indeed, we believe with Masney and Ghahremani-Ghajar (1999) that respectfully validating differences within the core curriculum, not as a tangent or exception, is a prerequisite for a more inclusive school culture overall. We believe that incorporating folklife-oriented collaborations with newcomer groups will directly contribute to an enhanced school culture that is more welcoming and respectful.

By looking at folklife as arising out of—and in turn contributing to—community cultural wealth, we can see the resources that newcomer communities can contribute uniquely to a more inclusive U.S. civic life. With coursework and activities that draw on a perspective of community cultural wealth, as opposed to newcomers’ “lack of” resources, educators can draw out lessons about the

distinctive, as well as common, experiences of newcomers who seek a place to belong and wish to define “success” on their and their families’ terms. Sometimes those newly introduced to “The American Dream” are most able to articulate its rewards and inconsistencies most poignantly, as Diwas did in his TEDx Talk. Success can certainly include leading feasts, fairs, or festivals. These help youth put their community into perspective as well as envision the kind of community they would like to belong to in the future (Porter 2000). Finding such safe spaces to belong and thrive is a critical aspect of cultivating a resilient transcultural identity in a new place (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco 2001).

In conclusion, Hamer notes that folklife education can directly and substantially contribute to the project of critical emancipatory multiculturalism originated by McCarthy (1994). Hamer identifies five “themes and purposes” in folklife education that we also see directly represented in COSL products:

- (1) valuing nonprofessional, everyday artistic expressions; (2) instilling local and family pride; (3) challenging the authority of elite and popular culture; (4) recognizing "indigenous teachers" as authoritative (i.e., recentring authority outside institutions); and (5) promoting collaborative action within classrooms and extending outside of schools. (2000, 56)

COSL shows us that these themes can come alive in both form and content; the medium is also part of the message. For instance, ESL and other classroom teachers can use COSL’s archived narratives and performances to engage worldwide audiences. Further, using a folklife lens that affirms and honors forms of cultural expressions tied to embodied ways of knowing, such as through dancing, singing, or eating together, benefits the holistic curriculum. Hamer’s five themes dovetail with our assertion that COSL advocacy and direct community outreach are effective modes of folklife education that can bring more voices into the mainstream and thus contribute to the sense of being legitimate, productive community members.

The public website provides a particularly helpful medium to share Generation 1.5’s experiences, now including issues that concern them as they transition from K-12 to higher education. For this generation in particular, cyberspace is an important space for having their unfiltered voices heard. They construct new knowledge, seamlessly remarking on all kinds of topics and genres. Both producers and consumers are hungry to use novel media, and perhaps being online in visually appealing bursts can help capture the attention of students today; folklife teachers will have to report back on how well their students respond to these kinds of peer-generated multimedia modes of storytelling.

COSL members’ eclectic commentaries on folk, popular, and elite cultural forces and artists further trouble simplistic notions, or rankings, of these forms of cultural expression. Folklife-inspired educators can build on this principle of inclusive, nonhierarchical approaches to what counts as “culture” and encourage students to look to tradition bearers in their personal circles as well as on the public stage. In summary, we also encourage teachers to look beyond the bounds of the classroom or school day to acknowledge the allies and tradition bearers who can help identify and work on sociocultural issues of shared concern.

In Pittsburgh, T-shirts and store placards that proclaim “Build Bridges Not Walls” have proliferated since the November 2016 election. The lesson of cross-cultural bridging—and the emphasis on the two-way nature of that bridging—is critically important. This is a message that educators would do well to adopt as a core lesson: It is not about the Bhutanese fitting into a predetermined slot in American mainstream culture; rather, it is about contributing to a reciprocal civic interchange in which all community members can, and need to, participate. It is about mutuality, versus perpetuating an “us-them” orientation to immigration.

This is a timeless lesson for a nation of immigrants. Teachers can use these COSL-led events to update and expand the U.S. American mythos of being a “Country of Immigrants” with much in common, as well as many divergent group histories. A wonderful tie-in would be comparing and contrasting local Bhutanese stories with materials available through the [Tenement Museum](http://tenement.org) in New York City. We especially recommend their movie, *An American Story*, about immigration as something that has personally shaped waves of ethnic groups as well as the nation. Educators interested in museology would also appreciate the explicit mention of how the museum pursues its mission.

Folklife studies are about meeting the Other where they are, at the juncture of what has been and what could yet be. And, as Children of Shangri-Lost poignantly tell themselves and us, we are all “other” at some point and need one another to reframe a collective future. Folklife education that makes critical, ongoing use of divergent forms of storytelling and visual literacy gives us more tools to integrate primary resources into our curricula. Educators who recognize and respect community partners’ expertise are more effective collaborators who have a stake in shared success. By wholeheartedly listening to one another, reading and responding to diverse blogs and photos, and celebrating each of our distinctive contributions within our classrooms, we proactively create school cultures where we all have a voice, feel like we belong, and can thrive.

Maureen K. Porter is an Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh and the Associate Director of the Institute for International Studies in Education. Her work as an engaged scholar in the field of anthropology and education has most recently been enhanced through serving as Program Director of the Fulbright Hays Group Project Abroad on Ethiopian Indigenous Wisdom and Culture. **Susan Dawkins** is a doctoral candidate in Social and Comparative Analysis in Education at the University of Pittsburgh and a reading instructor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Her dissertation research, inspired by her interactions with local refugee communities, is on acculturation processes of Generation 1.5 refugee youth.

URLS

Children of Shangri-Lost <http://www.shangri-lost.org>
 Tenement Museum <http://tenement.org>

Works Cited

- An American Story*. nd. New York: Lower East Side Tenement Museum. DVD, 30 min.
 Arends, Richard I. 2000. *Learning to Teach*. 5th ed. Dubuque: McGraw-Hill.
 Berry, John W. 1997. “Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation.” *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46.1: 5–34.
 Berry, John W., Jean S. Phinney, David L. Sam, and Paul Vedder. 2006. “Immigrant Youth: Acculturation, Identity, and Adaptation.” *Applied Psychology*. 55.3: 303–332. doi:10.1111/j.14640597.2006.00256.x.
 “Bhutanese Refugees Find Home in America.” 2016. White House Archives, March 11, accessed April 1, 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2016/03/11/bhutanese-refugees-find-home-America>.
 Bowman, Paddy B. 2006. “Standing at the Crossroads of Folklore and Education.” *The Journal of American Folklore*. 119.471: 66–79.

- Brown, Timothy. 2001. "Improving Quality and Attainment in Refugee Schools: The Case of the Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal," in *Learning for a Future: Refugee Education in Developing Countries*, eds. Jeff Crisp, Christopher Talbot, and Daiana Cipollone, 109–161. Geneva: United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees.
- Children of Shangri-Lost. 2017. <http://www.shangri-lost.org>.
- Cultural Orientation Resource Center. 2007. "Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal." CORC Center Refugee Backgrounder No. 4. <http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/populations/bhutanese>.
- Erel, Umut. 2010. "Migrating Cultural Capital: Bourdieu in Migration Studies." *Sociology*. 44.4: 642-660.
- Giroux, Henry A. 1992. *Border Crossings: Cultural Workers and the Politics of Education*. New York: Routledge.
- González, Norma, Luis C. Moll, and Cathy Amanti, eds. 2005. *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. New York: Routledge.
- Hamer, Lynne. 2000. "Folklore in Schools and Multicultural Education: Toward Institutionalizing Noninstitutional Knowledge." *The Journal of American Folklore*. 113.447: 44-69.
- Hogg, Linda. 2011. "Funds of Knowledge: An Investigation of Coherence Within the Literature." *Teaching and Teacher Education*. 27: 666-677.
- Hutt, Michael. 2003. *Unbecoming Citizens: Culture, Nationhood, and the Flight of Refugees from Bhutan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lower East Side Tenement Museum. 2017. <http://tenement.org>.
- Masney, Diana and Sue-San Ghahremani-Ghajar. 1999. "Weaving Multiple Literacies: Somali Children and Their Teachers in the Context of School Culture." *Language, Culture and Curriculum*. 12.1: 72-93.
- McCarthy, Cameron. 1994. "Multicultural Discourses and Curriculum Reform: A Critical Perspective." *Educational Theory*. 4: 81-98.
- Meyer, Calvin F and Elizabeth Kelley Rhoades. 2006. "Multiculturalism: Beyond Food, Festival, Folklore, and Fashion." *Kappa Delta Pi Record*. 42.2: 82-87.
- Pipher, Mary. 2002. *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*. New York: Harcourt.
- Porter, Maureen K. 2000. Integrating Resilient Youth into Strong Communities through Festivals, Fairs, and Feasts, in *Developing Competent Youth and Strong Communities through After-School Programming*, eds. Steven J. Danish and Thomas P. Gullotta. Washington, DC: Child Welfare League of America Press, 183-216.
- Preiss, Danielle. 2016. "As Bhutanese Refugee Camps in Nepal Wind Down, Resettlement Program is Considered a Success." PRI Public Radio International, December 28, accessed April 27, 2017, <https://www.pri.org/stories/2016-12-28/bhutanese-refugee-camps-nepal-wind-down-resettlement-program-considered-success>.
- . 2013 "Bhutanese Refugees Are Killing Themselves at an Astonishing Rate." *The Atlantic*. April 13.
- Putnam, Robert. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rizal, Dhurba. 2004 "The Unknown Refugee Crisis: Expulsion of the Ethnic Lhotsampa from Bhutan." *Asian Ethnicity*. 5: 151-177.
- "Showcase of Bhutanese Culture: Featuring Song, Dance, and Poetry." City of Asylum, July 5, 2016, <http://cityofasylum.org/events/category/family/2016-07-05>
- Sidener, Diane. ed. 1997. *Standards for Folklife Education: Integrating Language Arts, Social Studies, Arts and Science through Student Traditions and Culture*. Immaculata, PA: Pennsylvania Folklife Education Committee.
- Solorzano, Daniel G. and Tara J. Yosso. 2002. "A Critical Race Counterstory of Race, Racism, and Affirmative Action." *Equity & Excellence in Education*. 35.2: 155-169.
- Suarez-Orozco, Carola and Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco. 2001. *Children of Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Timkina, Diwas. "Finding a Home in Search of Shangri-La." TEDx Pittsburgh., 9:20. May 2016, <http://www.shangri-lost.org/2016/06/finding-a-home-in-search-of-shangri-la-diwas-timkina>.
- Vélez-Ibáñez, Carlos and James Greenberg. 2005. "Formation and Transformation of Funds of Knowledge." *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. New York: Routledge, 47-70.
- Yosso, Tara. 2005. "Whose Culture Has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth." *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*. 8: 69-91.
- Zeppa, Jamie. 1999. *Beyond the Sky and the Earth: A Journey into Bhutan*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group.

Sheeko Xariir / A Story to Connect Us

Somali-American Storytelling in the Classroom

by Ruth Smith with Qorsho Hassan



In the beginning of every Somali storytelling experience is a beckoning . . .

“*Sheekoy sheeko / Story, story
Sheeko xariir / A story to connect us
Waa baa waaxa jiri jiray / One day there was . . .*”

Macallin Qorsho / Teacher Qorsho

Qorsho is an educator in the Somali community, in addition to being a co-researcher and co-author of this article. She has embraced the expertise drawn from Somali storytelling practices by encouraging her students to share stories, inviting members of the community into her classroom to share their stories, and to tell her own.

Qorsho and her sister were born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Her mother had come to the United States on a student visa. From Louisiana, her small family moved to Canada before settling in Atlanta, Georgia, during her elementary years. They later moved to Columbus, Ohio, where she is now a 3rd-grade teacher at a charter school in Columbus whose student population is primarily Somali.¹

¹ Adapted from Hassan and Smith 2017, 73-75.

66 I think my experiences growing up have made me very much appreciate the hard work that my mother put into our upbringing. I was raised in an area where the people who lived there were very affluent, and I had the opportunity to go to Hilliard City Schools. Thinking about that in my adult years has really given me the opportunity to realize that I probably wouldn't be right here if I didn't go to those schools. I think about the privilege that I've had going to suburban schools and how that's led me to The Ohio State University. Basically pursuing education because I truly believe that no matter where you live you should get the best education and resources, and enforcing that as a reality.



Qorsho Hassan.

Photo by Asia Nuur. Used with permission from the artist. Previously published by Trillium Press.

I think that people assume that everyone has the same rights to education, but the truth of the matter is that's not the case. My family, particularly my mother and my uncle, fought really hard for that success to be attainable for my sister and me. They made sure that we were involved in many activities and I remember my mom, when we first moved to Hilliard, she knew that we would be anomalies, because we were one of the first Somali families. She made sure that while we were being integrated into the school, into the suburban life coming from inner-city schools, that we also retained our culture. Granted, I still went through a phase where I questioned my identity, but I never got to the point where I either didn't see myself as Somali or didn't see myself as American.

My mom made sure that there was a balance, and whether that was at home instilling the cultural values through food and language or whatever, but also making sure that we got the religious component like going to *dugsi* [religious school], and then being very involved in the American life as well. Watching TV and playing outside and doing all of these things that were quintessentially American, so it was a good balance and she made sure of that.

I think that your twenties are for making mistakes and figuring out who you are. I have a better understanding of my family, that component has always been there. Education's coming around full circle being a teacher, but I still struggle with not the identity portion of who I am, but where I see myself.

A lot of the times I think about what I want to do in ten years or twenty years. I don't see myself being complacent. I don't see myself staying necessarily here in Columbus or even in America. I don't know where in the world I might end up, but I just know that I'm not going to stay in one place or even field. I don't see myself being a teacher for very long. That always shocks people when I say that. I really want to write children's books, bilingual children's books that are very much necessary and needed in the community. I see myself doing a lot of outreach work for young women who live in Somalia, either some sort of youth program or even facilitating an all-girl Somali school. Something along those lines, but I see everything as short term and that's part of the religious component, that I know I'm going to die. At some point I need to make sure that all my goals are met, and that's why I don't want to be fixated on one for a very long time.

I didn't have any mentors, but I can definitely say that Mrs. Fulmer, my 4th-grade teacher in Atlanta, she showed me such compassion and as I teach I realize that I embody a lot of her methods. She was both compassionate and kind yet strict. One of the things that Mrs. Fulmer used to do was brain breaks and they weren't called that back then, but basically she let us move and gravitate and go where we needed to. I remember thinking for my ADHD brain and my ADD brain, because I have both, how powerful it was for her to let us move around and be kids. Oftentimes kids aren't allowed to do that today, they have to sit stationary for so many hours. Now, I call my students my friends. Granted they know there are boundaries, but they joke and they play and they are kids around me, and that's really important.

I would like to say that my role in the community first of all as a young Somali female is that I'm not afraid to be heard or seen in whatever capacity that is. I think when people see me they say, “Macallin Qorsho,” which means Teacher Qorsho. They basically appreciate and are respecting my role as a teacher, but I think that I educate beyond that role, or educate beyond my capacity.

Hopefully I'm seen as someone who is trying to shed light on the positive work of young Somalis, but also bring light to the changes that need to happen and the challenges that we need to overcome. There's a balance and I think that's really important, that we have a balanced perspective. It's not one-sided, we're just not saying the Somali community is roses, because no community is. We do have our thorns but we need to be actively removing them, in whatever, whichever way we can. I feel like I do that in my own way, every day.²

”

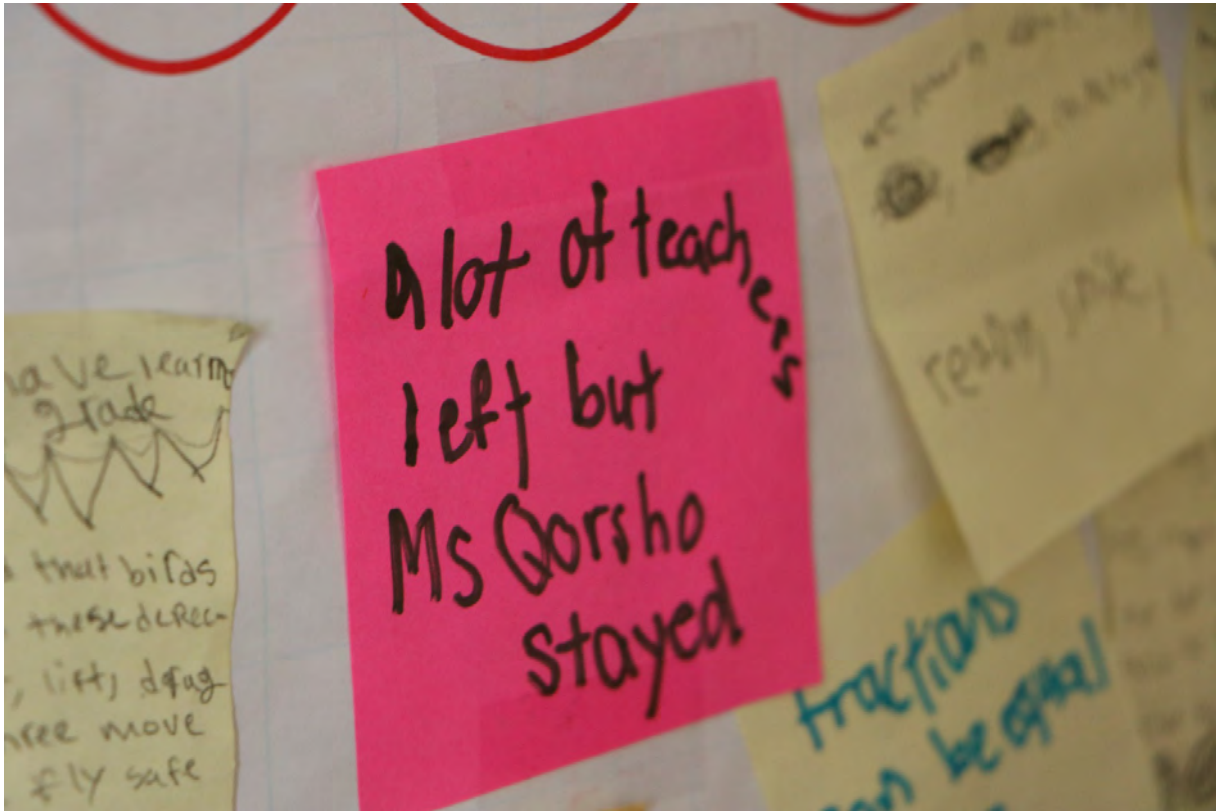
Mashruuca / An Initiative Started through a Partnership

In 2016, the photonarrative initiative *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* documented the stories of Somali-Americans in Columbus, Ohio. *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah*, which means a *Community In-Between*,³ derives its title from the Somali *maahmaah*/proverb: *dhex iyo dhexaad*/betwixt and between. Through the stories of our participants, we identified overarching experiences of navigating multiple identities, the importance of education and giving back to the community, and the unique challenges and assets of community building in diaspora. One of the major themes among 1.5- and second-generation Somali-Americans was the importance of

² Hassan quoted in Hassan and Smith 2017, 73-75.

³ The Dublin Arts Council is presenting *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* in collaboration with guest preparators Ruth Smith and Qorsho Hassan. Additional support is provided by state tax dollars allocated by the Ohio Legislature to the Ohio Arts Council (OAC). The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports high-quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically.

mentorship and how stories helped facilitate mentoring. This finding led to further investigation on how mentorship through storytelling can bring new ways of learning and knowing into educational environments. After a brief introduction to the project and its results, we present Qorsho's story as a Somali-American educator and the ways in which she uses storytelling in her classroom to cultivate a culture of mentorship. We conclude by offering strategies for educators working with newcomer and second-generation students.



"A lot of teachers left, but Miss Qorsho stayed." Qorsho's students wrote reflections on what they learned and felt during a thinking activity on their last day of 3rd grade.

Photo by Ruth Smith. Previously published by Trillium Press.

Qorsho and I met while I was volunteering at an afterschool program in the Global Mall, one of two Somali malls in Columbus. Columbus is home to the second largest Somali population in the U.S., approximately 55,000 in number.⁴ Many Somalis reside in the Northeast area of Columbus where dozens of shops in strip malls include Somali halal markets, home health cares, day cares, and clothing stores. Qorsho was interning at the Somali Cultural and Research Institute, which at the time was across the hall from the afterschool program, translating Somali folk tales for a

⁴ "Counting the Franklin County Population." Estimates range from 15,000 to 60,000. Although 5,935 Somalis have been officially resettled as refugees ("Impact... Report" 2016, 23), the majority arrived through secondary and chain migrations. These migration patterns make counting the Somali population difficult, as no official records of movement are kept.

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is a qualitative research process in which community participants are actively engaged in determining and carrying out the processes of inquiry, analysis, and presentation. PAR forefronts relationships, education and the goal of transformation and social change.

Additional PAR Resources

- Hunter, Lisa, Elke Emerald, and Gregory Martin, eds. 2013. *Participatory Activist Research in the Globalized World: Social Change through the Cultural Professions*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Kindon, Sarah, Rachel Pain, and Mike Kesby, eds. 2007. *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place*. London: Routledge.
- McIntyre, Alice. 2008. *Participatory Action Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- McTaggart, Robin. 1997. *Participatory Action Research: International Contexts and Consequences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Reason, Peter and Hilary Bradbury, eds. 2001. *Handbook of Action Research: Participative Inquiry and Practice*, 363-371. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

bilingual children's book project.⁵ In the years that followed, we worked together on a narrative participatory photography project exploring Somali women's experiences⁶ and met regularly for coffee. At one such meeting, I reflected on my observations of the young Somali-Americans I met through my work who were actively building community. Although Somalis have been living in Columbus for over 25 years, the community is still seen as being in the process of integration (DachenBach 2015, n.p.; Roble and Rutledge 2008; Chambers 2017). This conversation turned to issues of immigrant and refugee identities and the labels and feelings associated with them. We felt that little had been shared about the emerging generation of Somali-Americans, their experiences, and their contributions.

As a participatory action researcher who values collaboration, education toward social justice, and a belief that research should lead to action, when Qorsho suggested we look more at this issue of community building among 1.5- and

second-generation Somali-Americans,⁷ I immediately agreed. I approached a colleague at the Dublin Arts Council about a seedling idea for a photonarrative exhibit, and since then the Dublin Arts Council has generously supported the development and presentation of *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between*:

Narratives concerning the Somali community are often told by outsiders in both academia and popular culture (Ismail 2015, n.p.). To address this disparity, Qorsho and I work intentionally as partners across cultural and religious lines, employ participatory forms of research, and use participants' words and community artists' work. Since that first conversation in 2015, we have interviewed 15 Somali-Americans between the ages of 18 and 40. In addition, we offered a photography scholarship to two female Somali student community artists, who received a camera, participated in a workshop with artist Riya Jama at the Dublin Arts Council, and had the

⁵This project was not published but was meant to be used by the Columbus community and local educators. The Minnesota Humanities Center has published four Somali folk tales, available at <http://www.minnesotahumanities.org/somalibooks>.

⁶ See "A Participatory Photography Project," 2014.

⁷ We define 1.5-generation Somali-Americans as Somalis who were born elsewhere but have spent the majority of their lives in the U.S. and second generation Somali-Americans as those who were born in the U.S.

opportunity to take portraits of the participants. The portraits, narratives, and artifacts collected from participants have been curated into an exhibit at the Dublin Arts Council on view August 8 through November 3, 2017. In addition, our research has been shared in book form with Trillium Press (Hassan and Smith 2017), via social media following the style of *Humans of New York*,⁸ and through programming developed with the Dublin Arts Council and the Ohio History Connection. Our partnership is contributing to knowledge about Somali experience in diaspora, and we maintain a strong commitment to outreach and networking both within and outside the Somali community of Columbus. This manifests in the development of posters featuring the stories of our participants distributed to nonprofits and schools serving Somali youth and community forums on topics raised during our interviews such as representation in law enforcement, political involvement, and resettlement. We also advocate for opportunities such as the photography scholarship empowering two student Somali-American artists.



Qorsho and author with guests at the exhibit opening.

Courtesy of Dublin Arts Council.

Our **photonarrative exhibit** features the stories and portraits of 15 participants. The process of creating this work draws from the PAR method, narrative participatory photography, which engages community members in collaborative photography and storytelling. Its explicit political and educational aim emphasizes collaborative artmaking and storytelling; relationship, community, and research; curation as a form of analysis; and the consideration of multiple audiences and modes of presentation.

Additional Resources

Smith, 2015, 2014 a&b.

Wang, Carolyn. 1999. Photovoice: A Participatory Action Research Strategy Applied to Women's Health. *Journal of Women's Health*. 8.2: 185-192.

Wang, Carolyn and Michelle. A. Burris. 1997. Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. *Health Education & Behavior*. 24.3: 369-373.

⁸ Follow *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ururdhexdhexaadah or on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ururdhexdhexaad>.

Soomaalida Columbus / Somalis in Columbus

Since the years leading up to the Somali civil war (1991-present), millions of Somalis have been displaced around the world. In Columbus, newcomers have been met with mixed receptions. They continue to be welcomed and supported by governmental and nongovernmental organizations offering vital services. Several arts-based and educational initiatives have emerged to raise awareness and provide cultural education.⁹ Yet many agree that the city was unprepared for the large influx of secondary migrants. Fueled by the current political climate, anti-Somali ideologies based on cultural racism, nativism, and Islamophobia persist (Waters 2012, 79), and Somalis in Columbus are caught in the crosshairs of racial tensions, Islamophobia, and an increasingly volatile debate about immigration and refugee resettlement policies.

The Somali community in Columbus has a significant economic and social impact (“Impact... Report” 2016). There are an estimated 600 Somali-owned businesses (“Community Highlights” 2005) and eight Somali mosques. Roughly 2,000 Somalis are enrolled in higher education (“Community Highlights” 2005), several charter and private schools cater to Somali students, and numerous nonprofits run by and employing Somalis provide services such as tutoring, dropout prevention, parent advocacy, case management, and more. There is a strong connectedness among Somalis in diaspora as seen in the sharing of resources and a spirit of entrepreneurship.

Despite their successes, separation between communities, economic disparities,¹⁰ and lack of political representation continues. Somali residential neighborhoods and business opportunities are often developed in areas with overall economic depression, low-performing schools, and high crime rates. The ability to stay within an ethnic enclave, limited human capital,¹¹ financial obligations to family in diaspora and in Somalia, and racial identification present barriers to integration into American society (Abdi 2011, Ali 2009, Waters 2012). For these reasons, some say that although Somalis have achieved much in Columbus, they are still “preparing to fully participate in American society” (Roble and Rutledge 2008, 18).¹² Participation, an alternative to assimilation, entails choosing which aspects of U.S. culture to adopt and those from which to refrain. Benchmarks of participation, including political representation; educational opportunities; involvement with local law enforcement; and the building of schools, community spaces, and businesses, are only the beginning of a strong community.

⁹ For example, The Ohio State University K-12 Somali Teacher Workshop (Moore and Joseph 2011), Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled (“A Participatory Photography Project” 2014; Smith 2014a&b, 2015), The Somali Documentary Project (Roble and Rutledge 2008), Tariq Tarey’s visual ethnography including a collection of photographs from the show “Forlorn in Ohio” permanently housed at the Columbus Museum of Art and the film *Nasro’s Journey*, shown on WOSU public television in 2012 (Tarey 2016), and Mohamud Dirios’ Somali Cultural and Research Institute (“Somali Cultural and Research Institute” 2015).

¹⁰ The average median household income is roughly \$10,000 less for a refugee family than the county average (“Community Highlights” 2005, 23).

¹¹ Human capital includes personal assets such as education, knowledge, habits, social and personality attributes, and competencies that yield economic value. Social capital, on the other hand, is the individual and collective benefits derived from relationships, networks, and connections between people.

¹² DachenBach (2015) and Chambers (2017) also assess the Somali community as still in the process of integration. Chambers attributes the reasons for this to the unique cultural and political systems seen in minimal philanthropic support, fragmentation among community leadership, nonunionized low-wage labor, and a lack of representation in local politics and law enforcement.

Waa baa waaxa jiri jiray /

One day there was....: Identity, Networks, and Mentorship

Through participants' oral histories, photographs, and collection of artifacts, we found that individuals play unique, although often overlapping, roles of mentor, leader, and connector in their efforts to build a strong community. Their stories illustrated the heterogeneity and flexibility of *Somalinimo*/Somali identity within the American context, which has shifted in meaning from an all-encompassing ethnic, racial, and religious identity to maintaining a connectedness across national borders and generational boundaries through shared values, religious practice, and language (Hassan and Smith 2017). Their stories also brought to light the ways that Somalis



Guests at the exhibit opening.

Courtesy of Dublin Arts Council.

growing up in diaspora navigate multiple identities and consciousness (Somali, Black, Muslim, gender, immigrant/refugee, diasporan) and locate their multicultural knowledge, critical and creative energies, and the ways they are creators of their own destinies as individuals and as a community within the many interconnected dynamics of Somali-American life. These stories depict individuals succeeding in response to (rather than despite) challenges and traumas. And while these identities are fluid, we are careful to avoid falling into cosmopolitan, or global, nomadism, which denies a critical contemplation of social, political, and economic disparities (Demos 2013, 1–20). The individuals in this project are aware of the effects of these intersections and well versed in navigating them. They work to improve fluency among themselves and others through participation in a variety of groups aimed to serve, mentor, lead, and connect.

Secondly, we confirmed the importance of internal and external networks. Roble and Rutledge (2008) emphasize the importance of a fluid exchange between other cultural communities. Moreover, in Columbus this entails building reciprocal relationships with host community organizations as we have done within this project through our partnership with the Dublin Arts Council, alliances with other immigrant and cultural communities, and strong interfaith networks. An important element of these relationships is developing an understanding of the diaspora networks. For example, Somali Political Action Group (SPAG) connects with other Somali political groups, especially in Minneapolis, as well as local politicians.

Thirdly, we found that diversification of careers is particularly important, as there is an expectation that youth pursue careers in health care for example. However, to build a strong community, there is need for a range of pursuits: law enforcement, social work, education, arts and culture, business, social services, and more. The first step is letting youth know the options available, from volunteering to creative careers. Because of their positionality and connection to both Somalis and

Americans, Somali-Americans are able to bridge generational and cultural gaps in these fields that have, up to this point, inhibited many from either using their services or pursuing careers in them.

Finally, we discovered a strong proclivity toward mentorship. One aspect of giving back, a value rooted in both Somali culture and Islamic practice, is recognizing the connectedness of individuals and the community. If an individual succeeds, so does the community, but if the community fails, so does the individual. Eight of the 10 participants who specifically addressed whether they had a professional mentor or role model answered no. All but one of these respondents are in careers outside health care. For many, as first-generation college students, there were further challenges ranging from not understanding the institutional bureaucracy to navigating financial aid, all the while not having someone who has been through the process to answer questions. Moreover, our two community artists both responded that Riya Jama's mentorship was one of the most valuable aspects of the scholarship and workshop. Finally, all participants, including the community artists, spoke of ways they wanted to provide mentorship opportunities to those younger than they are. Thus, several participants indicated the necessity for bringing youth into their workplace, talking with them about possibilities, and developing intercultural exchanges.

Lataliyaal / Mentors

Our interviews indicate that much of this mentoring is done through storytelling. Storytelling is culturally important for Somalis (Afrax 2010). Stories document the vibrancy of lived experiences and perspectives; impart a moral or lesson; invoke thoughts, feelings, and inspiration; and transcend time and space.¹³ The Somali oral tradition acknowledges the virtues of memory, which "presupposes two things: the existence of a pool of memorizers and, secondly, a constant repetition of the 'word' for its survival" (Ahmed 2002, 1). In Somali oral culture, young people are taught about their heritage and history through different storytelling mediums, allowing each generation to preserve its wisdom and that of preceding generations selectively for posterity (Ahmed 2002, 1). Even in diaspora, when Somalis come together, they share experiences, encode them through the telling of stories, and increase the number of stories in the cultural repertoire. Agency is cultivated through storytelling in which narrators take ownership of their stories, and, although the telling is autonomous, together stories create a bank of knowledge, tradition, and group memory.

The individuals in *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* share experiences of growing up, and in doing so pass along and contribute to group memory within the diaspora (particularly important because diaspora spans multiple generations, unique from other immigrant experiences). These stories assist in the preservation of culture as well as affirm individuals' cultural identity as they navigate their own intersectionality within community. In the remainder of this article, we continue Qorsho's story as documented in *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between*, and examine how mentorship through storytelling among second-generation Somali-Americans brings new ways of learning and knowing into learning environments.

Waxbarid / Educate: Integrating Storytelling into the Classroom

Qorsho sees her commitment to community involvement really beginning around 9/11 when she started teaching people about what it was like to be both Muslim and American. From that point on, she used whatever resources and power she had to make a difference. First as a volunteer with

¹³ Ahmed (2002) examines the stylistic devices used in the memorization, telling, and craft of poems, stories, and songs.

the Somali Bantu community, then as an AmeriCorps volunteer with at-risk kindergarteners and a Fulbright teacher in Malaysia, and now as a teacher in Columbus.¹⁴ As she reflects upon her classroom, Qorsho shares that her mom calls her *miro dhaliso*, which basically means the sower of seeds:

That's just the perfect way to describe what I do. I cultivate [the students] but they have the power and the means to grow. That's my focus right now, is sowing those seeds and building bright young leaders who are inquisitive, who don't just take information, they question it. Who are both proud of their ancestors but also proud to be an American, which is something that I need to stress often because a lot of them feel very comfortable being Somali, but have questions about being American. It's also just refreshing to have that dialogue with them, because I know that they don't feel safe in certain spaces to have those conversations. (Hassan, personal interview 2016)

She attributes part of her success to her identity as a Somali-American. But, her integration of storytelling—sharing her story with her students, listening to theirs, and bringing the stories of others in the diaspora into the classroom—helps connect students to their past, their present, and their future. Due, in part, to this realization Qorsho also insists that her students “really need to see people who are like them teaching them and understanding them, and understanding the nuances of being a Somali-American because there are a lot of things that they don't really see eye to eye with their parents, but then they see eye to eye with me. I can sense how comfortable and how relieved they are to have me as their teacher versus a non-Somali teacher, but then I also realize how much of an impact they have on me” (Hassan, personal interview 2016). Stories have the power to affirm and promote characteristics of personal identity, including the students’ identity as immigrants, refugees, or children of such, as well as their identity as Muslims and Somalis. Too often the stories that are heard and then retold are crafted by outsiders to their experience. The significance of Qorsho’s work to bring these stories into her classroom and create a space for a culturally centered telling of stories about experiences of both challenges and successes is vitally important.

While stories can reinforce master narratives and structural inequalities that often go “unmarked” in mainstream discourse, we also recognize the opportunities that stories create for self-representation and agency through participatory research practices. Telling stories together and creating a space for participants to speak for themselves cultivates a counternarrative to the stories crafted by outsiders. One way this counternarrative is re-presented is in the creation and distribution of inspirational posters featuring the portraits of each participant in *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between*, a key attribute derived from the values and experiences of the participants, and a quote expanding on that attribute. These attributes include words such as passion, advocate, network, justice, understanding, tolerance, guidance, independence, educate, integrity, advocate, community, humility, self-awareness, knowledge, and respect. Each has been explained and defined through the stories that individuals share. The attributes, the quotations, and the portraits that accompany them on the posters collectively redefine success among Somali-Americans. For example, Qorsho’s attribute is *waxbarid* / educate and her mother’s story, her own

¹⁴ Adapted from Hassan and Smith 2017, 73-75.

experiences growing up in American schools, and her position now as a teacher are interwoven into her narrative as well as her teaching practice.

Another way Qorsho has promoted storytelling in her classroom is by cultivating an environment of mentorship. Qorsho frequently invites successful Somali-Americans into her 3rd-grade class to talk about their careers, their education, and issues relevant to them. These guest speakers share stories of challenges and success to develop a career consciousness, cultivate a new representation of success, and demonstrate Somalis in a variety of careers. These stories create a databank of possibilities for Somali students and become interwoven into their own stories.

An additional crucial element of Qorsho's story is her presence. At the end of the 2015-16 school year, Qorsho assigned her students to write how they felt and what they learned that year on Post-it notes. Posted in the middle of the board of notes, which I saw over the following summer in her home office, one student wrote, "Many teachers left, but Miss Qorsho stayed." Miss Qorsho stayed. Putting in the time, showing up, and making a commitment to a community of students cannot be overlooked. Without a listener, stories cannot be shared. Without a teller, the pool would have nothing to pass on. Without a curator, some stories may be overlooked and a sense of the collective may be missed.

This is the challenge that *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* has sought to address—documenting the stories of 1.5- and second-generation Somali-Americans; exploring the ways that these individuals are contributing to their communities and find themselves in between cultures, communities, and identities; and finally identifying the interconnections between individual experiences. The stories share experiences navigating these waters, contribute to group memory, and connect stories of individuals within the diaspora. This group memory generates a bank of stories to be retold, critically assessed, and internalized, creating deep roots and imparting valuable lessons to youth following them. These individuals are creatively and critically addressing disparities between the Somali community and greater Columbus, the lack of role models for Somali youth, and a myriad of other issues related to community building in the diaspora. Their stories create space for a story about belonging.



Qorsho with her students. Photo by Ruth Smith.

In a recent article posted on The Somali Literacy Project¹⁵ (a great resource for educators working with, and parents of, Somali students), Qorsho shared some reflections on teaching Somali students (“Reflections...” 2016). Much of the article revolved around culturally responsive teaching and having positive perspectives of parents and families brought over the “threshold of the school door” (Deafenbaugh 2015, 76). We elaborate upon these reflections in the context of storytelling in a classroom.

First, learn more about the culture of your students. The more you show interest in your students’ background, the more they’ll open up to you. Asking simple questions like, “What kind of activities do you do for Eid?” will allow your students to share their experiences with you. These questions prompt children to share their own stories, creating as we did in *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* a modicum for belonging. This also provides an opportunity to create group memory within the diaspora, an important element in Somali oral tradition.

Second, incorporate the culture in the classroom whenever possible. You can use Somali folk tales for literacy lessons, place bilingual dictionaries in the classroom library, and display Somali translated number and color charts, all of which can easily be found online. Learning a few Somali words helps too, one reason we write as much as possible in *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between* in both Somali and English.

Third, create a space for appreciation of different cultures in the classroom. Offer opportunities for students to share their culture and their parents’ narratives in the classroom. This allows non-Somali students to share similarities and understand differences. Moreover, within a common experience, individual stories are nuanced. As we analyzed the individual stories within broader themes in the exhibit, we were careful to preserve unique experiences while maintaining an interconnectedness among our 15 narratives.

Finally, engaging parents can be challenging, especially if there is a language barrier. While many newcomer parents are able to understand spoken English, they may have difficulty expressing their thoughts and concerns. Be patient and understanding of their situation and give them time to respond and conceptualize their ideas. This goes for students as well. Providing a space for students to think, conceptualize their ideas, and respond will promote a more truthful and open environment. Time and again in the stories of our participants, education was highly valued, but often there was little knowledge of how to navigate the education system.

Understanding the role of storytelling in Somali culture and the diaspora can transform teaching practice and relationships in the classroom. While these suggestions are specific to Somali students, the underlying value of students’ cultures and the encouragement of storytelling in the classroom apply across the board. The telling and listening of stories is important and imparts valuable lessons for the classroom and all our diverse cultural lives.

Ruth Smith, PhD, is an independent community arts scholar and lecturer in the Department of Arts Administration, Education and Policy at The Ohio State University. She is the co-author of *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between*. In addition to her work with the Somali

¹⁵ Find it at <https://thesomaliliteracyproject.com>.

community in Columbus, she is co-founder of Muslim Neighbors www.muslimneighbors.com and the Interfaith Leaders of Greater Lafayette.

Works Cited

- "A Participatory Photography Project." *Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled*, 2014, accessed May 9, 2017, www.dumarkasoomaaliyeedvoicesunveiled.weebly.com.
- Abdi, Cawo M. "The Newest African-Americans? Somali Struggles for Belonging." *Bildhaan*. 11: 91-107, January.
- Afrax, Maxamed Daahir. 2010. "Towards a Culture for Peace: Poetry, Drama and Music in Somali Society." *Accord*. 21: 72-74.
- Ahmed, Ali Jimale. 2002. "The Somali Oral Tradition and the Role of Storytelling in Somalia." *Minnesota Humanities Center*, <http://minnesotahumanities.org/resources/somalioraltradition.pdf>.
- Ali, Ihotu. 2009. "Staying off the Bottom of the Melting Pot: Somali Refugees Respond to a Changing U.S. Immigration Climate." *Bildhaan*. 9: 82-114.
- Chambers, Stephanie. 2017. *Somalis in the Twin Cities and Columbus*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- "Community Highlights." *Somali Community Association of Ohio (SCAO)*, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.somaliohio.org>.
- "Counting the Franklin County Somali Population." 2009. *Community Research Partners*, accessed May 9, 2017, http://www.communityresearchpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/Databytes/Somali%20Population/DataByteNo2_SomaliPopulation.pdf.
- DachenBach, Laura. "Journeys of the Diaspora." *614 Magazine*, March 3, 2015, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://614columbus.com/2015/03/journeys-of-the-diaspora>.
- Deafenbaugh, Linda. 2015. "Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities." *Journal of Folklore and Education*. 2: 76-83, <http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/Deafenbaugh.pdf>.
- Demos, T. J. 2013. *The Migrant Image: The Art and Politics of Documentary during Global Crisis*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hassan, Qorsho. "Reflections from a Somali-American Teacher." *The Somali Literacy Project*, January 7, 2016, <https://thesomaliliteracyproject.com/2016/01/07/guest-blog-reflections-from-a-somali-american-teacher>.
- . 2016. Personal interview. July 19. Columbus, Ohio.
- Hassan, Qorsho and Ruth Smith. 2017. *Urur Dhex-Dhexaad Ah: Community In-Between*. Columbus: Trillium Press.
- "Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio 2015 Report." *Community Research Partners*, 2016, accessed May 9, 2017, http://www.communityresearchpartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IMPACT-OF-REFUGEES-ON-CENTRAL-OHIO_2015SP.pdf.
- Ismail, Liban. 2015. "Somali Studies in Identity." *Afrikan Sarvi: Horn of Africa Journal*, February, <http://afrikansarvi.fi/issue10/108-reportaasi/274-somali-studies-in-identity>.
- Moore, Leslie and Laura Joseph. 2012. "The Ohio State University K-12 Teacher Somali Workshop Project." *Bildhaan*. 11: 135-149.
- Roble, Abdi and Doug Rutledge. 2008. *The Somali Diaspora: A Journey Away*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Smith, Ruth. 2015. "Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled: Undoing the Hijab Narrative through a Participatory Photography Exhibition." *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education*. 32: 190-206.
- . 2014a. *Young Somali Women and Narrative Participatory Photography: Interrupting Fixed Identities through Dumarka Soomaaliyeed Voices Unveiled*. PhD diss., Ohio State University.
- . 2014b. "Young Somali Women's Individual and Collective Understanding of Cultural and Religious Identity through Narrative Participatory Photography." *Bildhaan*. 14: 25-49.
- "Somali Cultural and Research Institute: Moment Research and Consultancy." 2015. *Somali Cultural and Research Institute*, accessed May 9, 2017, <https://somaliculturalresearchinstitute.wordpress.com>.
- Tarey, Tariq. *Tariq Tarey*, 2016, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://www.tariqtarey.com>.
- Waters, Anita. 2012. "Racial Formation and Anti-Somali Ideologies in Central Ohio." *Bildhaan*. 12: 53-86.

Old Songs New Opportunities: A Museum Program for Young Children and Resettled Refugees

by Kelly Armor



Erie, Pennsylvania, is a Rust Belt city of about 100,000 in the Great Lakes region. Although we have a relatively small resettled refugee community, refugees represent about 11 percent of our population, one of the highest percentages in the nation.

The refugee resettlement process is intense. Most come with great hopes and relief that they can finally set down roots and move forward with their lives, but they also arrive anxious about functioning with limited or no English skills and navigating American culture. Resettlement agencies are under great pressure to find housing for their new clients, teach them English, coordinate medical treatment, enroll children in school, and get adults into jobs within a few months. These social workers, many former refugees themselves, care deeply about traditional culture and their clients, but their federal funding does not support helping refugees in maintaining their folkways. The agencies are judged by their success at getting people into jobs or vocational training programs. The all-consuming nature of acclimating to life in the United States—for example, young children go to one school and older children to another while parents go to different work sites—makes remaining connected as a family, much less continuing language and other traditions, difficult.

Multiple forces threaten refugees' traditional culture. First, whatever caused displacement (civil

Sherain Abdulmjeed works with her students during an internship. All photos and videos courtesy of the Erie Art Museum unless otherwise noted.

war, genocide, ethnic or religious persecution) has done physical as well as psychological damage. Many displaced people find themselves in refugee camps before they are resettled in a more permanent home.

The continuation of folk cultures in these camps is mixed. Some find any celebration of culture too painful, or camp life too trying to enforce traditions consciously. For others, refugee camps actually fortify folkways. The unstructured time and living within close proximity allow some groups to refocus and rebuild music, dance, and craft traditions. In either case, once they come to Erie, refugees find themselves living in a city, not a village, without easy transportation or access to communal space, which makes impromptu community gatherings difficult. Our cold climate makes gardening hard and outdoor rituals almost impossible. Perhaps most devastating, elders who once held a place of status, even in the camps, find themselves isolated and unvalued while their grandchildren more easily acclimate to a new life.

Indigenous Knowledge as Economic Benefit

Because newly resettled refugees must find employment quickly, many end up in low-wage jobs that require few language skills, such as working in factories or cleaning hotel rooms. Yet their indigenous knowledge can be a treasure and a resource for the wider community. In 2004, as the Folk Art and Education Director of the Erie Art Museum, I started Old Songs New Opportunities (OSNO) on a hunch. I learned that our refugees came from rich folk cultures with a living singing tradition, including a large repertoire of traditional children's songs. I figured that some refugee women would rather work with children than in a factory setting. I also suspected that once they learned some basics about American childcare structure, expectations, and regulations and gained practical experience they would be employable. Indeed, OSNO "flips" the negative workforce equation. Whereas refugee women who tried to get childcare jobs were turned away because they were considered too "foreign," OSNO turned that liability into an asset, because they could market themselves as someone who loved to sing and could bring authentic, culturally diverse games and songs to their classrooms—skills that most Erie childcare teachers did not have.



A Teacher's Perspective

Videos throughout this article give the reader a sense of how these songs work in an Early Childhood classroom. The photo above links to a video showcasing a project overview and a teacher's perspective.

The Erie Art Museum has hosted five OSNO trainings in 12 years, working with 63 new American women and two men—primarily resettled refugees, along with a few recent immigrants. Lynn Clint, a certified Early Childhood Educator, and I led the trainings. Ally Thomas, Erie Art Museum Education Coordinator, who has a background in Early Childhood Education, assisted with the fourth and fifth trainings. In four months trainees complete 40 hours in subjects such as rules and regulations, the role of discipline, child development theory, and first aid. We spend a great deal of time comparing how these subjects are treated in different cultures. We also devote time to

trainees sharing their traditional children's songs, explaining their meaning, and collectively creating an English translation that is fun and easy to sing. Every trainee completes a hundred hours of internship in a childcare classroom. Over half the trainees have gained employment working with children, and we have a collection of almost a hundred children's songs from Bhutan, Bosnia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Iraq, Jordan, Nepal, Palestine, Puerto Rico, Russia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Ukraine. OSNO has also expanded to offer professional development for American teachers wanting to present authentic culturally diverse lessons and better support their new American students.

Empowering the “Non-Singer”

Many people in the U.S. consider singing the purview of professionals and those with special talent. Shows like *American Idol* symbolize and popularize this conception. Our material wealth and high production standards bring perfectly polished recordings and videos into our homes, media devices, and automobiles. Often childcare teachers were not raised by singing parents or caregivers; they were raised on CDs and television. In many classrooms there is little singing except along with recordings that also guide children through a variety of movements. There is a double standard for music compared with other disciplines. It is anathema for teachers to proclaim, “I’m terrible at math!” Even if challenged by algebra, they know they can teach basic concepts to preschoolers and putting themselves down may cause children to fear or dislike math. Yet too many teachers disparage their singing, although children's songs are just as accessible as their mathematical counterparts. Too many teachers use recorded music with young children, not allowing the imaginative interplay of manipulating lyrics, tempos, and rhythms that comes when teachers (or children) lead songs themselves.

The Power of Children's Songs

The children's songs collected from Erie's new American community are tiny jewels. One OSNO trainee, Nibal Ab El Karim, realized these songs helped her reach out to her new American neighbors from different countries and said, “These songs are like

Early Education and Music

For thousands of years traditional cultures have used song and dance with children to soothe, teach social skills, build fine and gross motor coordination, and develop language skills. Research has proven that singing with children boosts language development (Gromko 2005). Singing while holding a baby forges an important emotional bond. It provides an intense sensory experience of sound, and the tactile vibrations build important neural connections in the child's brain (Brand 1985, Nakata and Trehub 2003). Yet it is rare to find a childcare teacher who makes use of song and its potential throughout the day. The first challenge is to help new Americans who intuitively use song to calm, guide, and divert children to transfer those skills to more formal childcare settings. The next step is to allow them to coach existing teachers to see their classroom as a microcosm of a traditional village and use song to build community.

Nakata and Trehub (2003) also completed a study that compared babies' responsiveness with their mothers' singing and speech. Babies six months old showed greater interest when mothers sang to them than when they spoke to them, indicated by increased visual focus and reduced movement. We see this at home and in the early education classes as babies “stare and study” when people sing to them. The researchers also noted that the regular pulse of music may also enhance emotional coordination between mother and infant.

passports, they open up doors that were closed to me before.” Learning the songs becomes an act of empathy. They delightfully represent their respective cultures but also are a testament that babies and young children are more like each other than their different cultures. There is a reason these songs have withstood the test of time: their melodies are sticky and tenacious. The “kid DNA” within them makes them disarming to adults as well.

Although the songs sound best in their native language, English versions give them a new life and honor the bilingual lives of new Americans. Creating English versions is akin to repotting a plant, figuring out how it will flourish in a new environment. Translating the songs into English was a collaborative effort between refugee trainees and myself. First a woman would present a song from her childhood to the class. She, along with others who spoke her language, would explain the meaning and how the song was used. Then the song was written out phonetically using the Roman alphabet (often a challenging exercise in phonetics, especially for songs in Arabic). Everyone would then learn the song in its native language. The next class I would present several scenarios of how we might sing it in English that would capture the melody, rhythms, and meaning of the song. The class would discuss their preferences, sometimes come up with new options, and we would come to consensus on an English version.



Ana Behib Il Mama / I Love My Mommy is an Arabic song that helps a mother prepare her daughter for the arrival of a new brother, but when the OSNO trainee realized a new brother wasn't applicable to the children she was interning with she transformed it into cleanup song.

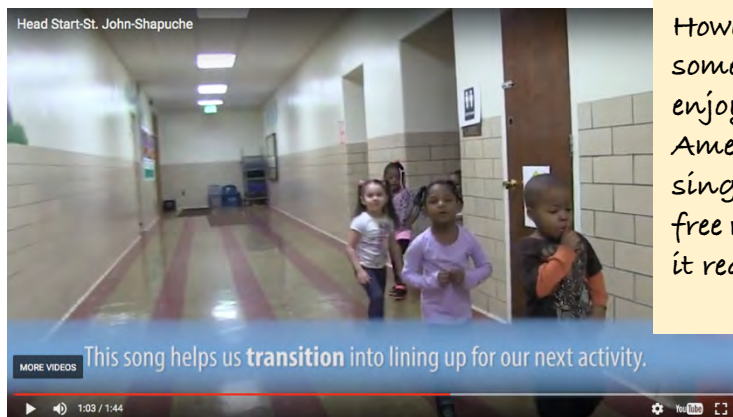
Most English versions are faithful to the original lyrics but sometimes trainees chose to depart from the literal meaning. *Yo Lay La*, a song shared with us by a woman from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is about a small child begging for peanuts and bananas. In English it becomes a song in which students name their favorite food, which became an incredibly useful song in many classrooms at lunch time. A Dinka lullaby's repeating phrase *In Conyeh Dun* morphed into “Let's get it done,” and became a song to keep children on task as they bundle up to go out into the snow. They are all, essentially, work songs. Their job is to soothe or distract a distraught child, focus children to cooperate, teach motor and social skills, vent frustrations, allow physical expression, and bring emotional release. They are ideal for helping children move from one activity to another.

OSNO trainees interning in childcare centers discover that while they feel most comfortable introducing the song in their native language, it is often better to start with the English version. The host teacher is more at ease, and the children immediately grasp the song's meaning. They also find that songs with some kind of participation like movements, gestures, or opportunities for each child to insert a word or phrase are eagerly learned, making the song accessible to a wide variety of learners. Once children master the song, they become curious to hear it in the original language and have little trouble learning to sing it bilingually, eventually preferring it in its native language.

Impacts on American Teachers and Students

A year after our first OSNO training, we realized that our new American trainees could be a real resource to the greater Erie community, so we instituted annual professional development sessions using OSNO graduates as guest presenters. These sessions provided a forum to share songs and have important conversations about culture around childrearing, birthing practices, cuisine, and couture. It was eye-opening for American childcare providers to learn the circumstances of how refugees came to Erie, and they were fascinated with how to make a sling to carry a baby, various childbirth practices, and the myriad ways to cut a mango or bake a plantain. Trainings always included participant reflections on their own culture, something that eluded many until they were able to compare it with the new Americans' culture. Every training covered different OSNO songs and the benefits of considering song in the way of traditional cultures; to use it to ease transitions, to build community, and not to be concerned with their own or their students' vocal quality. These trainings were well received and often filled to capacity. Childcare providers were inspired and moved by refugees' stories and struggles. The providers became sensitized to newcomer cultures and learned about their own cultures as a result. In fact, many teachers stated in evaluations that before the training, they didn't think they had a culture. Learning from the new Americans and the workshop activities made them aware of their own folk culture.

Although providers gained a lot from these trainings, no one was changing how they were using song in their classroom. We realized that a six-hour workshop was not enough to inspire teachers to change their relationship to singing. Empowering non-singers to use the OSNO repertoire required a more sustained, intimate, and personal approach. Thanks to a generous National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services in 2013, we embarked on an ambitious multiyear project that sent ten OSNO graduates as song coaches into over 100 early childhood classrooms at 30 sites across Erie County, reaching 300 teachers and over 22,000 children.



The material wealth of American mainstream society helps discourage people from singing. Many people think of music as something they purchase or stream, not something they create. However, material wealth is not something many childcare centers enjoy. The biggest hurdle is getting American teachers to believe they can sing with their students. Singing is a free resource, and doesn't require money, it requires attitude and skills.

—Kelly Armor

Teachers first attended a two-hour training led by Lynn Clint, Ally Thomas, and refugee song coaches. This training covered how to employ traditional culture as a model for using song to make teachers' jobs easier. We introduced 20 OSNO songs and asked each teacher to commit to learning at least three. Each coach visited her assigned classrooms at least five times over two months to help teachers and children learn and use the songs. This was extremely successful. We observed

firsthand that coaching works in ways that workshops do not. Teachers knew they had to be accountable and learned songs in preparation for the coaches' visits. The song coaches were open and supportive, and host teachers often had them present about their respective cultures to their students. Teachers experimented with using songs for cleaning up, lining up, putting on coats, and waiting for meals. Every class learned at least three songs, many in the native languages. Teachers were given latitude about which of the 20 songs they would learn. Less confident teachers picked the songs they found the easiest to learn. Some chose songs that matched the background of their song coach. Others chose songs that fit their curriculum, such as songs about butterflies, the days of the week, or learning body parts. Others played our demo CD in their classroom, watched children's reaction, and then chose songs the children were most drawn to.



Each trainer was assigned different childcare sites. We visited every classroom at each site at least twice and witnessed how each song coach and teacher made progress. One teacher said to her coach, “I know the songs are great. We had such trouble with cleanup time but using *Simba La La* makes it a celebration. But Nibal [her song coach from Palestine] made it real. Her being from another country, and everything she has lived

through, I so appreciate her visits.” We interviewed site directors and all reported improvements in classroom management, specifically citing an ease of transitions. They said that songs helped make classrooms “calmer.” One director reported her teachers’ classroom management improved, and children were more attentive when teachers used songs. Another director said she knew exactly what each class was doing because she could hear different songs throughout the day from her office. Many teachers had apprehension about learning to sing in another language, so we created slow versions of some songs. One director mentioned how coaches’ visits kept “the teachers on their toes,” and another said, “Hearing songs from the coaches and having guests made the kids and teachers excited and motivated.” All the directors said that singing brought children together and made them happier. The atmosphere and mood in the classroom improved in every case.

We followed up with every class a year later and trained teachers to use video to document how they incorporated an OSNO song into classroom activities to educate families about newcomer cultures in Erie and the importance of singing. Teachers learned basic filming techniques and developed a plan for capturing a mini song documentary in their classrooms. Song coaches, Lynn Clint, Ally Thomas, and I visited classrooms again at least five times. Ninety-one videos were recorded, all uploaded to YouTube and recorded to DVDs for families. Responding to feedback from the first year, we offered cooking workshops led by OSNO graduates with simple recipes to recreate with preschoolers. Every site hosted a parent event with presentations by song coaches, a celebration of the videos and the OSNO songs, and often food prepared by the children.

The videos authentically document influences we saw in the previous year such as increased cultural awareness among students, teachers' use of song to accomplish tasks, and more joyful and music-filled classrooms. The videos also represent how teachers felt most comfortable using the songs: 26 percent demonstrate transitions and 67 percent demonstrate song at circle time. Forty-eight percent of the class videos featured children singing in foreign languages, and 25 percent showed children introducing the context of the song. In the first year, many teachers and supervisors reported little parental awareness of the program. Parent events and videos solved this. Overwhelmingly positive feedback came from families, and parents were very excited to receive the DVDs. Our YouTube channel gives evidence of the popularity of the videos with over 26,000 views and 53 subscribers. Overall we saw inner-city parents were surprised and amazed at the diverse mix of ethnicities in their neighborhoods. The rural locations, not particularly racially diverse, were hungry to learn about the outside world. Some classrooms bonded intensely with the song coaches, and some parents remarked this was their children's first experience meeting people who spoke a language other than English.

Impacts on New Americans

The song coach initiative reached a number of new American parents with a marked effect. One mother was moved to find children singing a tune from her home in Iraq. Previously she had not often spoken to the childcare staff, but the song spurred her to thank the director profusely and share the music videos with her extended family in Iraq and Jordan. She had never thought this song could be used so beautifully with children in America. One childcare director who serves many new American families reported that parents told her when they heard their songs sung at the school it was the first time they felt at home in America.

"When I first came, I did not think a childcare in Erie can use Acholi songs. The training opened my eyes, it encouraged me to use my song and dance with kids to help them learn."

—Victoria Angelo

The greatest impact, naturally, has been for the OSNO trainees. They found that this program strengthened their communication skills, allowed them to bond with American children, and helped them understand American culture more fully. Trainees gave feedback at the end of the program and highlighted the most valuable topics covered during class. These included learning to encourage young children, use positive language in classrooms, delineate between discipline and punishment, and devise strategies for conflict resolution. Many trainees' cultural practices of raising children had included corporal punishment and focused on self-discipline, respect, and patience, but American pedagogy focuses more on developing children's preferences, creative expression, and autonomy. The training gave them a forum to discuss cultural differences in parenting and gave them skills that they put to use in their own homes. This program has demystified the American education system and empowered refugees to work with American teachers as co-workers and as parents.

Trainees discovered that despite cultural differences, song is as valuable a tool here as in their native land. They found songs remain a wonderful way to bond with, cheer, and comfort children. Michou Ntambwe reported that her singing attracted children from across the classroom, who then would always ask for more songs. Gwedet Lado said her songs piqued children's curiosity and led

them to ask more questions about her culture. Bishnu Khadka said, “I am still learning English but I am fluent in *song*. Song helps me lead children, helps me show I love them.” One trainee coach with only beginning English was considered valuable by her host teachers because she had such a large song repertoire and could sing in five languages. One trainee from Bhutan who became a song coach said, “I used to think I'm lost. All of my art is lost now in America because it's all English, English, English. But we've got songs that are really, really good for children and I can use my Nepali language and culture here to help children.”

Thirty-nine of the 65 trainees gained employment as a result of the program. One has started her own home-based childcare. Five have received their CDA, a nationally recognized child care teacher credential. For many, employment was a life-changing event. Instead of being turned away because they spoke with an accent or dressed differently, they were hired because they spoke another language, because they could share about their native culture, because their nurturing skills were valued.

Those who have worked as song coaches or presented at professional development sessions have been given a huge affirmational boost. Some have told me it has been life changing to share their culture and have it so appreciated. During a presentation at the National Association for the Education of Young Children Institute, Marta Sam said, “When I came to America I was like a little baby. I had to learn everything! OSNO helped me to crawl and then toddle. Then I got a job in a daycare and they helped me walk. I get my CDA and now I am running, I am now your teacher, I am really running fast!” She received a standing ovation. Many OSNO graduates have admitted that it is a struggle to retain their songs, dances, food, and language with their growing children. They have told me, ardently, how wonderful OSNO is in validating their culture not just to the wider community, but also to their own children. Seeing mothers perform at a festival or lead a teacher training kindles cultural pride in their children to carry on those traditions.

Kelly Armor is Education and Folk Art Director at the Erie Art Museum.

URLS

Simba La La: World Music for Children CD features songs collected from refugees in Erie, sung by the native speaker in their language and then in English <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/oldsongsnewopportunities>
Ana Behib Il Mama / I love my mommy song in Arabic and English <https://youtu.be/SepVITsYR9w>
 Teacher's Perspective video produced by Old Songs New Opportunities https://youtu.be/g6wmz9v_3e8
 Shapuche / Whispering song in Bosnian and English used as a transition https://youtu.be/dV_tNYAPOKA
 Simba La La song used with young toddlers <https://youtu.be/on6UT9G1Igc>
 Project website <http://erieartmuseum.org/old-songs-new-opportunities/>

Works Cited

Brand, Manny. 1985. “Lullabies that Awaken Musicality in Infants.” *Music Educators Journal*. 71: 28-31, March.
 Gromko, Joyce. 2005. “The Effect of Music Instruction on Phonemic Awareness in Beginning Readers.” *Journal of Research in Music Education*. 53: 199.
 Nakata, T. and S.E. Trehub. 2003. “Infants’ Responsiveness to Maternal Speech and Singing.” *Infant Behavior and Development*. 27: 455-464.

An Interview with Victoria Angelo, Early Childhood Educator and Refugee

by Kelly Armor

Victoria Angelo was born in Uganda in 1967. Idi Amin's repressive regime forced her to move with her family to Sudan, where she attended secondary school. She graduated in 1985, married, and worked as a sports coach and at a health clinic. The civil war in what is now South Sudan caused her to flee to Egypt in 2000. She has lived in Erie since 2003 and became a U.S. citizen in 2014. She has eight children. She participated in the first OSNO training in 2004 and was immediately hired at St. Martin's Early Childhood Center, where she still works. She has received multiple grants from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts to pass on her Acholi song, dance, and drumming traditions to her children and other Acholis living in Erie. She has given lectures and demonstrations on African dance and culture throughout the region and performed at many festivals in Erie, and for Acholi gatherings in Erie, Pittsburgh, and Washington, DC. She is studying to become a nurse.



How has Old Songs New Opportunities helped you?

I knew how to dance, I knew how to sing, I knew how to take care of children, but I didn't know where to start. I believe that Acholi music and dance is very beautiful and important. It communicates strong African values and it teaches our African history. It also brings physical fitness, which is very important in the United States because you have to look to find ways to exercise. But when I first came I did not think a childcare in Erie can use Acholi songs. The training opened my eyes, it encouraged me to use my song and dance with kids to help them learn. At first I was scared and thought I'm going to say or do something wrong but instead it helped me not feel ashamed to be African. At first American kids ask me, "Why are you so black? Why do you talk funny?" But I don't worry, I just think that they want to know about me. It isn't bad that I'm different! Then when I started dancing and singing, they look at me like, "Wow she's not even shy!" One supervisor, Miss Leslie, came to train us about child development. When she finished she said, "Now it is my turn to be the student and your turn to teach me to dance." So we did!

What are some cultural differences you find with childcares?

Where I was raised, we don't have daycares. Sometimes relatives watch the children but mostly we take the child with us on our back. In the village we come together as one; we sit together, eat together, sing and dance together. Children respect all adults. Also, in the village everyone has responsibility to look after all the children. We have the right to talk to them and tell them if they are doing something wrong. In some ways this is like childcare. You must always be able to see all the children in the room. You must have your eyes on them all the time.

We love children the same way all over the world. Infants can't talk but they express themselves by crying. It is the same everywhere; we check to see why they are crying. Are they hungry? Is the diaper wet? Here in an American childcare we not only feed them and play with them, we make sure they have their tummy time and that they get fine motor time. We then write what we fed them and when they were changed and later on we give the paper to the parents and tell them how the day was. In the American childcare we are conscious of why we do everything. In Africa I never think, "Why do we dance? Why is this song important?" We just do it. Coming to America

makes me think those questions. We dance because it makes us physically fit, and it helps us keep our culture, and it makes our community strong. The songs helped us keep our history, our knowledge of traditional medicine. Books would just get wet and rotten in the jungle.

What advice would you offer newly resettled refugees?

There are a lot of different jobs they can do for living, but I would advise those with families to work with children. It helps us be involved with our own children. It helps keep your family strong. In America it is hard because older kids are out most of the time. They go to school in the morning and then go to work and then when they come home it's late. So when I talk to my kids in Arabic or Acholi they talk back in English. Working in the childcare also helps our South Sudanese community and lets us take care of each other just like back home. Other African parents are happy I and other African ladies are at St. Martin's. They see it is like a village where the relatives take care of the kids and our culture will be respected. It also helps other new Americans. We speak Arabic, and although it is a little different from the Arabic in the Middle East, still we communicate and we can help each other more.

Any other thoughts on working in a childcare?

At the childcare I am a floater. I move from room to room and work with all ages. Some children at the daycare were so bad these past two weeks. We are trying to seek special help for them because they have hard lives. They say bad words, when you try to redirect them they kick you. They don't listen when we try to talk. So I started to sing to them, "Can you sit by me so we can play..." It worked! They came and they sit! And then they imitated me, they sing because I sing. I sing, "Why did you do this? Go tell sorry to your friend. Sorry? Sorry for what?" And they sing, "Sorry for hitting you." I then keep singing, "Okay. Let's all play nicely, play nicely with our friends." Then they go get the guitar and sing to their friend, three times, "I am so sorry, for hitting you!" They're singing about how we disciplined them! Some specialists who visited were all so happy that these children now sing what we teach them. It's just our song. I went home, I go to take shower, and I find myself still singing the song! So song helps me a lot, and not only me, but the kids and the people around me. It is not very different from singing in the African village. Music cheers us. Music teaches us to be good.

[Listen to Kaleba](#) from *Simba La La: World Music for Children* CD, produced by the Erie Art Museum ~ Sung and led by Victoria Angelo, Drum by Tasana Camara

This Acholi song is used when a baby starts to toddle. One person calls the child to toddle toward him and then to turn around, and then another person calls the child to toddle to her. Victoria simply inserted her own toddler's name, Henry, into the song. The drummer, Tasana Camara, is a *djeli*, or griot, from Guinea who now lives in Oil City, PA.

Henry agenda (Kaleba!)

Henry mutiti (Kaleba!) 2x

Cho cho chee (Kaleba!)

Chuka nenda bah (Kaleba!) 2x

Choo choo choo (Kaleba!)

Chuka nenda bah (Kaleba!) 2x

Henry is walking! (Kaleba!)

Great big Henry (Kaleba!) 2x

Cho cho chee (Kaleba!)

Jump and turn around (Kaleba!) 2x

Choo choo choo (Kaleba!)

Jump and turn around (Kaleba!)

The Sewing Circle Project in Connecticut: Reflections on Ten Years

by Lynne Williamson

Even when immigrants and refugees embrace a move that takes them to a more stable and prosperous place, resettlement poses challenges of physical, psychological, and cultural adaptation. Many new Americans ease transition by continuing, recreating, or reinventing familiar art forms. For many members of refugee communities now living in New England, practicing their familiar arts of weaving, knitting, basket making, lace making, music, dance, and storytelling helps them cope with the trauma of displacement—often resulting from war and genocide—that their families have suffered (Greene 2009, Dunne



2011). Several folklorists in arts and cultural agencies around the United States have developed arts-based programs with newcomer groups to learn about the traditions within refugee communities and assist them with artistic practices that may enhance health and healing¹. One of these programs based in Hartford, Connecticut, has worked with newcomer artists for a decade to encourage the continuation and sustainability of their traditional arts². The program, named [The Sewing Circle Project](#) has also stimulated artist-to-artist and intergenerational learning and introduced new understandings about refugee communities to a variety of audiences.

Our Origin Story

In January 2007, the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program (CCHAP), then based at the Institute for Community Research (ICR) in Hartford, held a public conversation with Bosnian weavers living in Hartford. This event took place as part of our showing of the exhibit [Weavings of War: Fabrics of Memory](#), a powerful, evocative traveling display of textiles created by women who had experienced war and trauma in countries such as Afghanistan, Peru, Laos, Palestine, Chile, and South Africa. Realizing that Greater Hartford was home to members of these communities, CCHAP and ICR designed a series of events featuring performances, storytelling sessions, and arts workshops given by those who had lived through events depicted in the exhibit.

The Goat Bag was woven by Sewing Circle Project participant Fatima Vejzovic. All photos courtesy Lynne Williamson/CCHAP.

Nilofer Haider, an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) teacher for Catholic Charities Refugee and Migration Services, introduced CCHAP to several Bosnian women in her class, all skilled in weaving, knitting, and crochet hand work. Their stories of surviving genocide in the former Yugoslavia, migrating to Hartford as refugees, and finding comfort through their crafts deeply impressed me. The women's experiences, personal resilience, and eloquence seemed to offer a compelling educational opportunity for public audiences. We presented an afternoon of weaving demonstrations and dialogue with visitors to the exhibit, attended by several other textile artists from different cultures. In the course of questions from the audience, one of the Bosnian women spoke about how knitting, crocheting, and weaving helped her forget painful memories of the war. These pursuits also gave her a feeling of productive contribution. The mutual interest and camaraderie shared by the women was immediate, so I invited them to meet to continue their interaction outside a public setting. The group bonded over coffee, pastries, shared experiences of dislocation, and deep love for their textile arts. Ten years later, the Sewing Circle Project endures, in new and different ways but keeping the same spirit of sustaining traditional fiber arts and, even more significantly, the artists who practice them.

My inspiration for convening the original Hartford group came from the visionary work of the folklorist Laura Marcus Green, who was then in Portland, Oregon, where she and the Oregon Folklife Program partnered to create and coordinate the [Arts for New Immigrants Program](#) with the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization from 1999 to 2003. One of Laura's initiatives with newcomer artists led to a sewing circle in which women from many cultural groups shared materials and techniques with each other and public audiences through outreach programming. For the many Bosnian women I had recently met in Hartford, the idea of a sewing circle that would bring together immigrants and refugees who had remarkable textile skills seemed a powerful tool to reduce social isolation and encourage more production and marketing of their work. Over time, we would see that the effects of the Portland Sewing Circle applied to our group too: improving English skills, involving the artists in American society, learning to negotiate new social roles, helping to support their families, and sharing a healing connection with others harmed by political and personal trauma.

Sewing Circle GOALS

- ~Provide social interaction among the artists
- ~Sustain the cultural heritage that newcomers bring with them
- ~Offer technical assistance to encourage artists to continue their artistic traditions
- ~Enhance opportunities for newcomers to contribute to American society
- ~Expand newcomers' access to cultural resources
- ~Bring new Americans' rich cultural expressions to public attention
- ~Stimulate literacy improvement
- ~Develop marketplaces for newcomer artists and their artwork

Our Sewing Circle Project began with monthly meetings on Saturdays in the ICR conference room, where several women worked on their art forms, learned new skills from each other, and shared coffee and conversation. Participants located through CCHAP fieldwork included Bosnian weavers, knitters, and crochet artists; a Romanian macramé artist; a lace maker from the Assyrian community; Burmese Karen weavers; and a Hmong embroiderer. As I met other fiber artists in the course of my fieldwork, they joined the group—now a dozen strong—as we gathered every month. Language barriers were easily transcended—the artists communicated through their work and delighted in teaching each other new techniques. There were memorable moments

when personal stories, sometimes difficult ones, arose as the women engaged in their needle work. We listened to each other, often without words. The supportive environment fostered our shared goals: providing social interaction among the artists, sustaining the cultural heritage that newcomers bring with them, offering technical assistance that encourages artists to continue their artistic traditions, enhancing opportunities to contribute to American society, expanding access to cultural resources, bringing their rich cultural expressions to public attention, stimulating literacy improvement, and developing marketplaces for their artwork.



Florence Betgeorge showing Rola Mattar her lace.

Learning and Growing Together

In 2008 new members from Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Colombia, Peru, Liberia, and Sri Lanka joined us from ESOL classes at our new meeting place in the Hartford Public Library. Hoping to expand into marketing initiatives, CCHAP applied for and received a \$5,000 grant from the Avon Hello Tomorrow Fund to develop promotional materials, hold regular sales events, purchase fabric and wool, and participate in an ICR international conference in Hartford. In collaboration with Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services and the Hartford Public Library, we offered small business training to the artists and hired a part-time assistant, thanks to new support from the Aurora Foundation for Women and Girls from 2009 to 2013. Other activities sprang up—we participated in many weekend craft shows and markets, where several pieces won prizes for craftsmanship; we created a banner, logo, artist flyers, and marketing tags for sale items. We also began an ongoing association with Hartford Open Studios Weekend, holding an open house at ICR and now at the Connecticut Historical Society, where CCHAP moved in 2015.

Developing a business education track for Sewing Circle participants also taught the project team, which now included several interns and volunteers, the benefits of applying public folklore skills to our work. These lessons have stayed with us as the project expanded to classrooms and other outreach settings. In particular, we have emphasized a commitment to building relationships of trust as a central first step. Service—helping out, giving back—is also central to the project as a way to develop reciprocity. We encouraged each other to view the women as carrying skills, wisdom, personal strengths, and agency, as opposed to a perception that they were passive consumers of social services or that they needed to be “educated” in American ways.

Some examples may help show how these values were put into practice and what we learned from the process. Several interns from a Trinity College (Hartford) class in community psychology and a Vassar anthropology student spent many hours beyond class requirements driving the women to markets, tagging products, creating lists of items for sale, logging sales, researching locations for sales and resources, organizing donations of materials, helping at events, and learning about post-traumatic stress disorder and how to mitigate its effects. Most importantly, through their diligence and respectful approach they gained the women’s trust and understood how that process of trust building underpins all other activities.

In 2009 the Sewing Circle welcomed a local Girl Scout who asked to work with us to fulfill her Gold Award requirements. Over the summer she demonstrated quilting techniques and proposed that the group create a collaborative quilt. This ambitious project, while well intentioned, required considerable negotiation to fit into the business training syllabus we had established for our meetings. The quilting project also needed to accommodate what the artists could comfortably produce. In response to these needs, she adapted her design to incorporate the hand work of each group member, arranged around a central quilted motif and a pattern using outlines of everyone’s hands. This solution honored artists’ skills rather than asking them to adopt an unfamiliar American technique. The women benefitted from working alongside an American as equals, the artists contributed their own work, and they gained prestige from exhibitions of the quilt. We all learned a lot about flexibility and how not to overextend artists’ time commitment or overwhelm them with new information. We liked the quilt’s central motif of a globe covered with Bosnian crochet lace so much that we made it our Sewing Circle Project logo.





Fatima Vejzovic teaching a Bosnian weaving student at Hartford Arts Academy.

An underlying value that CCHAP holds for all our work also guided this project—fostering diverse cultural expressions and aesthetics rather than coercing artistic assimilation. Marketing the women’s work sometimes tested this principle, and as usual, the women showed us the way. We wrestled with an occasional need to create new designs or items for an American market as customers at sales events suggested preferences and new ideas. Fatima Vejzovic, an expert knitter and master Bosnian weaver, started making fingerless gloves because she noticed their popularity. When I became enthusiastic about a whimsical goat design Fatima had woven with the phrase “*Tuzlanska Koza*” (Goat from Tuzla) because she missed her farm, she began to make and sell a lot of them, especially at farmers’ markets. Also, weaving lettering and names into a rug (*ćilim*) created a narrative feature that led to a multi-year commission to produce commemorative banners for the Aurora Foundation’s board members.

Developing business education for Sewing Circle participants also taught the project team of staff and interns the importance of skills of folklore in any classroom or outreach setting: the insistence upon building relationships and trust with the women rather than seeing them as passive recipients of social services and aid, as well as valuing diverse cultural expressions over assimilation for newcomer arts and aesthetics benefited the project.

One of the most challenging issues that artists face stems from the need to find appropriate materials or consider whether to use new threads, fabrics, and types of wool. Seeing how artists address this creatively has been impressive. The Karen weavers prefer a very fine cotton thread that we could not locate, but they wove beautiful scarves with a thicker variety that we sourced from a yarn outlet in Massachusetts. Now the family of a weaver enlists relatives to send the best thread from Thailand in bulk (although shipping is expensive), and I solicit friends who travel there to bring some back. Somali basket maker Fatuma Ahmed substituted baling twine for the warp of her baskets, actually preferring its durability to the palm reeds she was used to but were difficult to access in the U.S. Her market baskets had handles woven from the weft yarn she used for the body, but they needed improvement for aesthetics and strength. Florence Betgeorge, an Assyrian lace maker and seamstress from Iran, crafted a solution that Fatuma uses all the time now—double weaving the same yarn into an inch-wide sturdy self-handle that attaches inside of the



*Fatuma Ahmed teaching Karen weavers
Somali basket weaving.*

basket. Family members have made looms using whatever can be found, for example, PVC pipes in place of bamboo for the Karen backstrap looms. For several years the Bosnian weavers bought a cheaper commercial wool to make carpets when they ran out of wool from Bosnia. We found a wonderful new material that improved the quality, beauty, and feel of the rugs—a local farm whose Shetland sheep graze on the grounds of the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington sold us the processed wool in the natural colors of the sheep³. This soft but durable wool, along with a new strong linen weft thread we found, helped artists create gorgeous weavings that have sold for high prices. The interplay of tradition and innovation seems to come naturally to the Sewing Circle artists, whereas I as a folklorist tend to focus on one or the other process, especially in written or spoken descriptions. They “live” the traditions, demonstrating the most effective way to sustain them.

Essential Education and Outreach

Sewing Circle members believe that sharing their traditions forges stronger connections between their communities and public audiences. They teach young people in their families and the community. They love to showcase their cultural practices and teach others to sew, knit, and weave as a way to connect with their new neighbors. Exhibits also allow viewers to meet these talented artists, learn more about their cultures, and try some of their art forms. For example, in 2011 we partnered with the social justice organization the [Advocacy Project](#) of Washington, DC, to present handwoven rugs (*ćilimi*) and wall hangings by our Bosnian weavers alongside the [Srebreniça Memorial Quilt](#) from Bosnia that was touring the U.S. Called [Rugs of Remembrance: Fabrics of Memory](#), the exhibit at the ICR Community Gallery also featured weaving demonstrations as well as Bosnian music, dancing, and food. The Hartford weavers created their own memory *ćilim* of squares with the names of their villages woven in. I had asked if they wanted to make their squares with names of relatives lost in the genocide, as the Memorial Quilt artists had done in Bosnia, but this was too painful for the Hartford women. Their creative solution incorporated the names of beloved hometowns woven in white, yellow, and blue—the colors of the Bosnian flag. When the Srebreniça Memorial Quilt arrived for the exhibit, it showed some damage from its long journey. Fatima, Ajsa, and Fikreta took it to their home and lovingly mended the fraying fabric, a profound act of connection to homeland and transcendence of sorrow.



Teaching and Learning Traditional Textile Arts

Several Sewing Circle artists teach young people in their community, helping pass on traditions in their new homeland. In 2008 CCHAP's Southern New England Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program with a grant from the Long Foundation supported Fatuma Ahmed to teach her daughter Nurta to make Somali woven baskets, connected Hmong embroiderers from Connecticut and Massachusetts, and enabled Fatima Vejzovic to work with two Bosnian women who learned the basics of weaving. Florence Betgeorge, master Assyrian lace maker, taught her daughter Sharokin a knotted lace technique. Sharokin now produces her own lace, and they demonstrated together at the Lowell Folk Festival in 2015.

Connecting with other newcomer artists has also been powerful for the Sewing Circle women and has helped them see the significant learning and personal growth happening through their participation in this project. In 2011 Bosnian weaver Fatima Vejzovic, Romanian social worker Doina Lechanu, and I traveled to Utica, NY, for a gathering organized by the New York Folklore Society⁴. The occasion was a workshop on building an arts and culture support network for newcomer artists led by folklorists Amy Skillman and Laura Marcus Green through their national initiative Building Cultural Bridges⁵. We presented the Hartford Sewing Circle Project and participated in small group discussions on developing activities that could sustain traditions as well as community social and economic health. Such meetings inspire connections, critical thinking, changes, growth, and ideas, and show artists how much others value their skills and their beautiful work (Overholser and McHale 2013). Based on our participation at that gathering, the New York Folklore Society developed a microenterprise project in central New York, and CCHAP has collaborated with folklorists in New England to implement a regional project for convening newcomer artists and exhibiting their work.

Likewise, [New Lives/New England](#), a 2013-2017 partnership among CCHAP, the [Vermont Folklife Center](#), and [Cultural Resources, Inc.](#) in Maine, brings together several dozen refugee and new immigrant artists living in our states for a series of activities that build on existing connections among the groups. The artists and folklorists developed a traveling exhibit that explored the role that traditional arts play in maintaining artists' sense of community while building a new home in New England. Participants have been inspired by meeting so many peers and encourage each

other to continue familiar artistic traditions and share them with new neighbors. This is seemingly simple, but so necessary as an important part of acculturation as people negotiate and shape new roles and identities in a new land. An unexpected outcome for CCHAP was the discovery that the young Connecticut Karen and Somali Bantu women who traveled with us to Vermont are now learning to weave cloth and baskets from their mothers. The opportunity to visit older women from their cultures, living in another state and very devoted to community, proved to be a watershed for these young women, expanding their sense of community and the value of tradition when so much of American culture pulls them away from that. Farhiyo Aden, a Somali Bantu woman whose sister Sadiyo has been a member of the Sewing Circle from its beginning, is proud to be learning the family tradition of palm basket weaving. Seeing the second generation of artists continue this craft is wonderful. After the trip to Vermont Farhiyo wrote, “It was a great experience to see different backgrounds of cultures. Please, if there are more events let me know. My mother made more baskets that are beautiful. She said she can't wait to meet with you whenever you're available.”



Myint Khin at Bellizzi Asian Studies Academy, Hartford as a part of a Weaving the World Residency. See the Weaving the World educator's guide featuring both Karen and Bosnian weaving at <https://database.hartfordperforms.org/artist/92>.

New Education Partnerships

Since 2014, CCHAP's work with Sewing Circle artists has focused on educational outreach. Hartford area educators have shown a strong interest in the artists and their communities, asking us to bring public school students closer to understanding cultures through engagement with artistic practices and personal connection with culture bearers. These activities generate considerable pride (and income) for the artists as they see their skills and life work recognized and respected. CCHAP often serves as a presenter, introducing the artists, describing the Sewing Circle Project and the context of the art form while encouraging questions and hands-on student activities. CCHAP also lines up English interpreters from artists' families to translate.

Based on pilot projects with educators, CCHAP was invited to join [Hartford Performs](#), a new arts education initiative that places artists in schools for workshops and residencies. We designed two in-school weaving workshops and standards-based lesson plans featuring Karen and Bosnian weavers from the Sewing Circle. These workshops have been accepted for the roster that Hartford Performs markets to schools. Since 2015 we have presented the weaving workshops in seven classrooms as part of Hartford Performs, and we have also taken the Karen program to Trinity College and Miss Porter's School⁶. Our program, [Weaving the World: Exploring Cultures Through Textiles](#), serves 6th and 7th-grade in either an arts or social studies classroom and aligns with the Common Core State Standards for each subject and grade. Fatima's husband and grandson made

ten small looms that we bring to a classroom for students to try Bosnian weaving. There is a strong need for artists who reflect the communities of the students in Hartford, and the artists CCHAP works with can contribute diversity and rich content to local arts education programs. Collaboration with Hartford Performs has created exciting opportunities to involve folk artists more widely and brings new earned income to CCHAP and the artists. We plan to expand by adding additional folk artist programs to the roster and developing curriculum materials for each program. CCHAP's educational work with immigrant and refugee artists was supported by an Ignition Grant from the Greater Hartford Arts Council, with funding from the United Arts Campaign and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.



The Sewing Circle Group, 2010.

Reflections

Not surprisingly, members of the Sewing Circle have changed over ten years, many moving away and others having less time for cultural pursuits as their families grow and they find jobs and educational opportunities. At present, CCHAP focuses on cultivating artists who are able to make a commitment to producing art or participating in outreach activities. What can be said about the effects of the project? Although we have not engaged in a formal program evaluation, some outcomes can be identified through long-term observation and informal qualitative interviews. The Sewing Circle Project has stimulated greater artistic production among several artists, expanded their access to cultural resources, helped to generate income, and acquainted public audiences and students with these newcomers and their unique cultural knowledge. Our initiative has also enhanced health and healing through positive, tradition-based practices that are shared with others from similar circumstances, and it has promoted social integration. Building on the inherent thread

of education that runs throughout the project has strengthened each of us with new knowledge and individual growth. Several Sewing Circle members are passing on fiber art traditions to young community members, and are presenting their cultural heritage in Hartford schools.

Public activities have fostered social engagement, leading to artists' increased confidence in approaching, conversing, and negotiating with local citizens. This has been particularly true for the women who attend farmers' markets regularly to sell their work. Enhanced English language skills arise from these connections, leading to better comfort levels in communication and more independence for the artists. The artists develop a deeper sense of belonging and acceptance by society—rather than being consumers of social services. They demonstrate the skills they have brought with them and feel that they enrich society through their art. We believe that our work has led to a greater public awareness of newcomer groups and the positive contributions they make. In most Sewing Circle Project activities and sales events, we offer written information about the art form, the artist's community, and the artist's traditions. This contextual background, along with the opportunity to connect directly with women from other cultures, increases both the social and financial value of a transaction.

The approach I have taken as a folklorist emphasizes sustaining traditions, rather than developing products according to a marketing imperative. Respecting artists' traditions as well as any innovations that they choose to make remains a central project value and honors the historical and cultural knowledge they carry with them. While integration into American social networks is an important goal, I also encourage artists to maintain links to their homelands and language. Passing on skills and artistic knowledge, opening doors to public awareness, and creating opportunities and funding for this process, are the foundational objectives for the project that have evolved as a joint endeavor between folklorists and artists.

Sometimes expectations—of funders, project partners, myself—have not been met. Small business training, in the usual way of presenting the topic (keeping records, banking, investment, outreach, promotion) has not been effective for our group. We held trainings, but they were in English and did not address the scale of the women's production capabilities or the time they had available to work on artistic projects. Instead, we have concentrated on pragmatic concepts such as returning a portion of sales income to purchasing materials, appropriate pricing, attractive presentation of work at sales events, and communication with audiences.

The artists have to negotiate the place that their work with the Sewing Circle Project holds within their family dynamics. In some cases, other family members do not see the value of spending time making art, even traditional art, especially if the artist has childcare or other family responsibilities. The income from sales and fees for demonstrations and teaching has helped enhance families' respect for the women in the group and can improve family engagement in their artistic activities. It can be a delicate process for the folklorist to maintain a helpful but neutral role, requiring self-reflection and attention to artists' needs as they express them. Watching a talented woman stop making her traditional arts when she gets a fulltime job can be hard. I remain in touch and support what she CAN do, when she can do it. Other vitally important considerations for me include sustaining a long-term commitment to the group as well as a consistent and supportive approach that builds and maintains trust, because the population the project serves is so vulnerable.

The Sewing Circle Project continues with many of the women originally involved taking on new roles as educators and mentors, and we welcome new members often, which bodes well for the future. Our bonds remain strong. For example, although she has moved to Minnesota to join a thriving Somali community there, Fatuma Ahmed will represent our group in October 2017 when she joins me on a newcomer arts panel at the American Folklore Society conference in Minneapolis.

Lynne Williamson directs the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Arts Program at the Connecticut Historical Society, a statewide folk arts initiative developed by the Institute for Community Research, where she worked 22 years. She has Mohawk-Mississauga descent through her late father, an enrolled member of the Lower Mohawk Band on Six Nations Reserve, Ontario. She serves as adjunct faculty at the University of Hartford, teaching a longstanding course on Native American Cultures and has Connecticut Education Department ESOL certification.

Notes

1. For examples of folklorist- and community-led programs see www.newcomerarts.net/newcomer-arts-collectives.html.
2. For more information see <https://chs.org/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program-projects/sewing-circle>.
3. The Clatter Ridge Farm is where we found this material <http://clatterridgefarm.com>.
4. Find a report of the conference and program information see: www.nyfolklore.org/progs/conf-symp/newcomer.html.
5. See the article by Nicholas Hartmann (this issue) to learn more about a recent Building Cultural Bridges workshop and see *The Art of Community* at <http://www.intergroupresources.com/rc/The%20Art%20of%20Community%202006.pdf>.
6. CCHAP also presents Caribbean, Laotian, and Ugandan artists in Hartford schools. Find all the artists rostered with Hartford Performs from the CCHAP at <https://database.hartfordperforms.org/artist/92>.

URLS

The Sewing Circle Project <https://chs.org/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program-projects/sewing-circle>
Weavings of War <http://museum.msu.edu/?q=node/395>
Arts for New Immigrants <http://www.nyfolklore.org/pubs/voic32-3-4/refugee.html>
The Advocacy Project <http://www.advocacynet.org>
The Srebrenica Memorial Quilt http://www.advocacynet.org/quilts_archive/bosfam
Rugs of Remembrance <https://chs.org/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program/chap-exhibits/rugs-of-remembrance-bosnian-weaving-in-hartford>
New Lives, New England <https://chs.org/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program/connecticut-cultural-heritage-arts-program-projects/new-lives-new-england>
Vermont Folklife Center <http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org>
Cultural Resources, Inc. http://www.cultural-resources.info/organization_n.html
Hartford Performs <http://www.hartfordperforms.org>
Weaving the World <https://database.hartfordperforms.org/artist/92>

Works Cited

- Dunne, Susan. 2011. "Weavers' Yarns: Bosnian Refugees Cope, Communicate through Their Artwork" in *Hartford Courant*. Accessed at http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/documents/immigrants/htfd_courant_111111.asp
- Green, Rick. 2009. "Refugees Craft New Lives for Themselves," in *Hartford Courant*, http://www.hartfordinfo.org/issues/documents/immigrants/htfd_courant_111309.asp
- Overholser, Lisa and Ellen McHale. 2013. *Building an Arts and Culture Support Network for Artists in Central New York State*. A Report for the American Folklore Society's Professional Development and Best Practices Program. Written in consultation with Laura Marcus Green and Amy Skillman, <http://www.nyfolklore.org/progs/conf-symp/2013aoc-newcomer.pdf>

Music Teachers Reimagining Musical Focus, Function, and Performance for Newcomer Students

by Christopher Mena with Elia Bojorquez

In recent years, the number of immigrants and refugees to enter the United States has remained significant. According to Krogstad and Radford (2017), 84,995 were admitted to the U.S. in 2016 alone. Refugees bring with them not only culture, language, and traditions, but sometimes the scars, mental and physical, of horrendous experiences in the places they have fled. These issues necessitate teachers to develop specific skills that allow them to address refugee students' need for safety, academic knowledge, and opportunities to socialize and integrate into new communities. Arguably, opportunities for socialization and the development of community building capacity can determine success for many of these students. An additional component of their success can also come from having their cultural knowledge and experiences validated as a meaningful contribution to the school culture at large.

School music programs are uniquely positioned to create spaces for refugee and immigrant students to become socialized through participation for a variety of reasons. First, they can provide a space where students can interact without having to rely heavily on information gathered primarily through spoken language. Since refugee and immigrant students are often placed in English Language Learner (ELL) classes that may limit their engagement with the school community at large, participation in music can allow them to integrate gradually (and gently) in a low-stakes environment. In these spaces, students can often fully participate without having to speak a word. Additionally, music education programs do not have to adhere to stringent mandated curricular regulations, compared with heavily tested subjects like mathematics and language arts. Music teachers can develop activities with their students, not just test scores, in mind. The standards, goals, and desired outcomes are set by the practitioners themselves.

This curricular flexibility leaves the focus of music education open to a reexamination of its purpose, goals, and orientation toward inclusivity. Some institutions, like Harvard University, are anticipating a major shift in music education and have begun to restructure and expand their curriculum to embrace this diversity (Robin 2017); however, most music education programs still adhere to the conservatory model, which values a Eurocentric, Western, atomistic approach. Moreover, while some articles have been published on immigrants and refugees in music education, too few music educators have considered how to engage students beyond improving refugee orientation toward the host culture (Frankenberg et al. 2014) or move past decontextualized representations of heritage culture by emphasizing cultural context (Campbell and Lum 2008; Marsh 2012). This reality is in line with what Ladson-Billings describes with her comment, “manifestations of multicultural education in the classroom are superficial and trivial celebrations of diversity” (1998).

Music provides a perfect medium to foster human relationships because of its unique quality to engage people in a collaborative, creative, and expressive activity. Recent research even suggests that participation in music increases one's capacity for empathy (Rabinowitch et al. 2013). Since

music encompasses so many aspects of life and is present in a variety of settings such as religious worship, family life, or cultural celebrations, it is often deeply connected with cultural identity for immigrants (O'Hagin and Harnish 2006) and refugees (Marsh 2012). This common connection could allow individuals to develop social bonds through shared participation in a relevant activity that reinforces culturally meaningful practices. Since there are so few studies of refugee and immigrant students in music education that have examined the importance of a comprehensive understanding of students' home culture as a starting point for pedagogical interventions, it is currently unclear just how salient culturally relevant music participation is for strengthening these bonds; a massive gap from theory to practice exists.

Considering this background knowledge, this paper provides two examples of how music educators connected with community and campus resources to identity, recruit, and engage refugee and immigrant students. For these examples, I draw upon two cases from Southern California that illustrate that adaptation of music into the lives of newcomers in high schools. Using the concept of funds of knowledge (González et al. 2005) as a framework, I argue that music teachers can design powerful learning encounters for students that help them bridge the gap between home, community, and school.

A School Family of Guatemalan Marimba Musicians

by Elia Bojorquez, San Diego School Counselor¹

North County San Diego is an interesting place. It is a mostly conservative community that is often hostile to those who are not aligned with residents' view of "American values." Being a relatively successful and highly educated Latina, I have even felt unwelcomed at times. An example of this tension is illustrated by parental complaints about my bilingual voicemail message. On occasion, they remind me that "this is America, your message should only be in English." My thoughts turn to my students and the tension they must endure in this environment. I can't imagine how it must

Funds of Knowledge

According to Gonzales et al., funds of knowledge are the "historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (2005). The central assumption of this approach is that students who come to school from immigrant and refugee families possess cultural knowledge distinctive from the dominant or mainstream culture of school. While this knowledge is considered valuable in the student's home, it is often found incongruent with the values promulgated in most classroom settings. Refugee and immigrant students often find themselves contending with the added pressure of abandoning their precious cultural practices to assimilate into classroom settings. To counter the negative effects of this assimilation, scholars using a funds of knowledge framework suggest that these cultural practices require teachers' recognition and validation.

The goal of this approach is to equalize power dynamics between schools and communities so that reciprocal relationships of respect can develop and dominant discourse regarding *whose* knowledge is valued in the classroom can be called into question (González et al. 2005, 40). Since there are often demographic disparities between music teachers and their students that can create tension (Abril 2009), this approach will provide teachers items to consider when attempting to engage students from refugee and immigrant backgrounds. This can be particularly useful in urban areas where refugee and immigrant communities are often resettled.

feel to be a newly arrived student in this hostile community. It must be scary and nerve-wracking, constantly trying to pick up cues, looking for a welcoming face, and dealing with the pressures that come with being a teenager.

In my 13 years of working at the same public high school, I've seen drastic demographic shifts. At one time our beginner ELL students were mostly from Mexico; now most are from Guatemala and other countries in Central America. The majority come from a particular region in Guatemala with a high Mayan population. The dominant language there is Q'anjob'al. I had the honor of traveling through Guatemala years ago and remember being amazed by the abundance of color: beautiful tapestries with intricate stitching adorned bare concrete walls and women wore bright clothing contrasting with black asphalt and shades of jungle green as they walked down highways with piles of wood on their backs. These vibrant visuals left me with a deep appreciation for the richness of that regional culture, which at one point seemed so distant but is now here in North County San Diego schools. Much like the beauty of the weavings found in their culture, the colorful personalities of these Guatemalan students contrasted brightly against the heart-wrenching stories of their journey to the U.S.

As a counselor, I've found enrolling newly arrived students as high schoolers a challenge. School policies mandate that students be placed in courses based on prescriptive academic and language requirements. Over time, I noticed that many of my students had huge gaps in their education because of social issues that precluded them from attending school in their home country. In one example, a newly arrived student had a 4th-grade education and was not successful in a required algebra class. Even with adequate language support the student lacked the conceptual knowledge to be successful. An additional factor is the pressure to start working and contributing to their families. Many are also living with a relative or in a situation where they are charged rent or have to pay toward legal fees with immigration attorneys. A student in this position is unlikely to graduate from high school in four years. Prescriptive education requirements compounded with financial insecurity make educational institutions particularly brutal, especially if the focus is on four-year college admission for all students and high-stakes standardized testing.

Although many aspects of these students' lives are out of the control of educators, we can work toward creating a more inclusive space. In my experience, as the number of Mayan students increased, so did their lunchtime visits to my office. To connect with them I played traditional marimba music on YouTube as they ate. During these visits I learned about their lived experiences. In one visit I shared that I had visited Quetzaltenango and admired their culture. Some shared with me that they played marimba music and told me of marimba concerts in San Diego. This made me think about a recent grant that our music department received to purchase a new marimba. To connect school resources to students' lived experiences and unique cultural knowledge, I offered to invite my ELL students to the music room during lunch one day.

During this visit, the students met our music teachers and were able to get full access to the music room for daily rehearsals. Initially shy, students emerged from their shells as they developed their musical skills. They were eventually invited to perform at an informal lunchtime talent show a few weeks later. Our music teachers immediately asked if they could transfer into a percussion class for second semester, but it was not possible due to a conflict with the master schedule (their sheltered English math class is the same period).

Admittedly, I was nervous about the invitation to perform in front of the school. One of the biggest issues these students deal with is the pressure to assimilate. Those of Mayan descent who were born in the U.S. or migrated as young children are able to pass as Mexican and often do not want others to know their indigenous background. In this climate of tension toward immigrants, I was concerned for them outing themselves as Guatemalan and they also expressed fear about this. This tension was so stressful that one of the main marimba leaders considered backing out of the event. They were also aware of how different their music was and worried that people wouldn't like it. We had a group talk about the power to change perceptions, about their opportunity to claim their space in this school. We also discussed the power behind their culture and identity. I got a reluctant agreement to follow through with the plans for their performance, although they made it clear that they may not consider it in the future. The day of the event came and I was a mess, worried about them. Soon these feelings subsided because my *marimberos* were a hit. Students they didn't know started coming up to them in their physical education classes letting them know how much they enjoyed the performance. It was through sharing their musical traditions with other students that they realized that they were safe. That they were liked.

As a counselor, I feel a great deal of responsibility for helping students be as successful as possible. I am starting a club to provide a more formal structure and make Guatemalan students' presence at our school more official. It has been my experience that these students try the hardest academically and really want to succeed. Although I can't always do much to alter school policies that ignore these students' experiences and unique needs, I can work on integrating their experiences and talents into part of our school culture and give them more reasons to hang on.

In my work, I am also overwhelmed with ensuring that students meet district and state requirements including standardized tests so I am forced to prioritize math, science, and English over other subjects. Since music education does not have required standardized tests it existed mostly outside my professional purview; however, it was this curricular flexibility that was so crucial to connecting with these students. Since they already acquired a musical background in Guatemala, the transition to the school music program was easy. There were no diagnostic tests to pass nor curriculum pacing guides to adhere to. They simply needed to show up and play.



Shadrack practicing guitar.
Photo by Tsava Tuzolana.

Additionally, the low-stakes environment helped them to feel comfortable, allowed them to socialize, and provided an experience of success to develop valuable social capital. It was not until I connected students to the band director that I was able to see the transformative power of music on their lives, particularly in providing them a space to share their culture with peers.

Music Education in City Heights

Christopher Mena: San Diego Band Director

From 2010 to 2015, I was the band director at Hoover High School in the San Diego neighborhood of City Heights. This community is one of the most diverse areas of the city

because of the large refugee resettlement center in its center. As a testament to the diversity of the school and neighborhood, the annual commencement address is presented in all 25 languages of students enrolled in the school, from Burmese to Navajo. It was here at Hoover High School that I “cut my teeth” as both a school band director and a teacher in an urban school. In most high schools, these identities rarely overlap because of the substantial financial investment required by the operating budget of a conventional music program. The reality is that Hoover High School, like most urban schools, cannot afford the luxury of a successful music program. Compounded by the parental perception that music is an ancillary activity that is always first to be abandoned in favor of more “academic” endeavors in tough financial times, I was in a situation for which my musical training did not prepare me. In my preparation for teaching, emphasis was on attaining the very highest aesthetic ideals for students over the achievement of sociocultural aims relative to family and neighborhood realities. These perceived curricular restraints left me with no recourse and few resources to navigate my ethnically diverse, economically underserved classroom. I was pressed to reevaluate the purpose and function of curricular studies in music as they reflect the lives of diverse student populations, including children of immigrant and refugee families.

One year a student from the New Arrival Center² joined my guitar class. Early in the semester I noticed that this student was excelling much faster than the others in the class. One day during students’ personal rehearsal time I asked if he already knew how to play. This question would alter my perspective on the hidden talent students bring to the classroom. He told me how he first learned guitar in a Congolese refugee camp in Tanzania and the great lengths that he and his friend would go to perform. I asked if he knew any songs from his country and he immediately launched into a polyrhythmic guitar riff far beyond anything that I was teaching. After a brief introduction, the most haunting Swahili falsetto cut the rhythmic density and conveyed the pure joy that music making must have brought him in the refugee camp. It was heartfelt, beautiful, and uplifting.

After this brief performance Shadrack shared with me his desire to develop a worship band at his church, which was why he decided to join music class. Over the years as our teacher/student relationship developed, I provided advice on how to run rehearsals and training on how to run the soundboard at his church. I visited a few times to observe and provide feedback. One Sunday he invited me to attend the Swahili language service at the church and I saw just how much joy Shadrack and his group brought to the congregation. This incident forced me to reexamine my purpose and approach for teaching music in a classroom setting. Shadrack was using the skills that he was learning in my classroom and blending them with what he acquired in the refugee camps to create a musical pace where he could help foster deep relationships in his community. Rather than emphasizing an atomistic approach to traditional musical literacy, this experience helped me shift my goals to create musicians capable of creating music to fulfill their specific contextual function based on community needs.

Recently, Shadrack was hired by the San Diego Opera as a teaching artist and to serve as a liaison for African immigrant and refugee students in City Heights. Through this project he is continuing to share his love of music with newcomer students from various countries and also using his unique perspective to help align the goals of the program with the specific needs of these students. In our last conversation, Shadrack mentioned that he was focused on teaching *soukous*, a widely popular Congolese style of dance music. When I first met Shadrack, I had no idea how far he would take the skills that I had helped him develop, but I knew it was important to get him involved as much

as much as possible. Since our first encounter in the classroom he has grown into an adept musician and an insightful young man who is helping to ensure the well-being of future generations of immigrant and refugee students from around the world. The transition into U.S. schools is often difficult for this population, but Shadrack is helping to provide a space where they can feel that their cultural contributions are valued.

This experience taught me several things about engaging immigrant and refugee populations. First, I learned the importance of valuing the knowledge that such students bring to the classroom. This knowledge, often gained from life experience, is what they will rely on to navigate new educational spaces. In Shadrack's case, the musical skills acquired from his previous experience were a way for him to become integrated into the school community at large. With a little guidance, patience, and hard work, he developed these skills to a point where he has now become a change agent within a school that serves immigrant and refugee populations. Second, I learned the value of developing relationships with these students. As mentioned above, they often have difficulty connecting with the school community. Some reasons for this include age differences resulting from disrupted education, language differences, conflicting cultural norms, and emotional stress caused by assimilative forces. Although Shadrack had strong community connections outside school through church, he often struggled with finding friends on campus. Becoming involved with the school music program allowed him to form his own community of musicians, which led to a greater involvement in campus culture overall. Lastly, I learned the importance of flexibility when working with immigrant and refugee populations. Their unique needs do not always map cleanly on the curricular offerings or academic requirements of a school. This reality necessitates creative restructuring of curriculum so that these populations are best served.

Conclusion

Using music classrooms as the setting, these cases illustrate the importance of teachers being able to recognize and validate the funds of knowledge that their students bring to school. In both these cases, educators engaged students in conversations about their lives to gather information about their lived experiences and to determine how best to meet students' needs. Using the unique cultural information that immigrant students brought to the school as a starting point, teachers created a trusting space where students could participate in activities meaningful to them based on their needs and specific skillsets developed outside the music classroom. This process allowed students to integrate into their new settings and with their peers and teachers to acquire an understanding of students' families, communities, cultural practices, dreams, aspirations, and purposes for learning music.

Music is an integral part of identity development for adolescents, and campus music programs can be a site of transformative pedagogy that allows students and teachers to learn from (and alongside) their immigrant and refugee counterparts. As illustrated above, all teachers and educational stakeholders could benefit from evaluating their specific classroom contexts to identify how music functions in the lives of their immigrant student populations and how it can help them participate in the campus community at large. Such an evaluation may serve as a starting point for discussions that explore how to center instruction on the specific needs of immigrant and refugee students. To accomplish this, Fitzpatrick (2015) suggests that goal setting in music programs should be based on three contextual considerations: 1) The expectations of stakeholders such as administrators, parents, and community members, based in part on the history and tradition of our music programs;

2) the resources available to teachers to facilitate plans; and 3) the degree to which teachers are able to motivate students to be successful with the activities and goals that they have planned (70). Essentially, all stakeholders have a voice in shaping how their music programs contribute to the specific context of their campus and community.

The reality of changing demographics currently facing schools necessitates a shift in focus to include various perspectives in curricular decisions. These insights must be gathered from a thorough examination of specific learning contexts so that activities can best reflect the needs of the immigrant and refugee students being served. Additionally, educational stakeholders must be open to a diversity of meaning making in the world. For teachers to accomplish this, it is imperative that they validate students' funds of knowledge by incorporating them into classroom activities. Moreover, teachers should design their curriculum so that students find classroom activities meaningful to their home lives and transfer this learning to their communities. As seen with these two cases, this approach will help to increase student engagement and allow for both communities and schools to be more enriched by these experiences.

Christopher Mena is a PhD student in Music Education at the University Washington, Seattle. His research interests explore the intersection of Music Education, Ethnomusicology, and Ethnic Studies with a particular interest in the identity development of Mexican American students in school music ensembles.

End Notes

1. Pseudonym.
2. Sheltered English instruction center in schools for students who have been in the U.S. for less than 12 months.

Works Cited

- Abril, Carlos. 2009. "Responding to Culture in the Instrumental Music Programme: A Teacher's Journey." *Music Education Research*. 11.1: 77-91. March.
- Campbell, Patricia Shehan and Chee Hoo Lum. 2008. "Musical America: United Yet Varied Identities for Classroom Use." *Music Educators Journal*. 95.1: 26-32. September.
- Fitzpatrick-Harnish, Kate. 2015. *Urban Music Education: A Practical Guide for Teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Frankenberg, Emily, Kristin Fries, E Kamala Friedrich, Ingo Roden, Gunter Kreutz, and Stephan Bongard. 2016. "The Influence of Musical Training on Acculturation Processes in Migrant Children." *Psychology of Music*. 44.1: 114-128, November.
- González, Norma, Luis C. Moll, and Cathy Amanti. 2005. *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Krogstad, Jens Manuel and Jynnah Radford. 2017. "Key Facts about Refugees to the U.S." *Pew Research*. January 30, accessed April 26, 2017, <http://www.pewresearch.org/facttank/2017/01/30/keyfactsabout-refugees-to-the-u-s>.
- Marsh, Kathryn. 2012. "The Beat Will Make You be Courage: The Role of a Secondary School Music Program in Supporting Young Refugees and Newly Arrived Immigrants in Australia." *Research Studies in Music Education*. 34.2: 93-111, October.
- O'Hagin, Isabel Barbara and David Harnish. 2006. "Music as a Cultural Identity: A Case Study of Latino Musicians Negotiating Tradition and Innovation in Northwest Ohio." *International Journal of Music Education*. 24.1: 56-70, April.
- Rabinowitch, Tal-Chen, Ian Cross, and Pamela Burnard. 2013. "Long-Term Musical Group Interaction Has a Positive Influence on Empathy in Children." *Psychology of Music*. 41.4: 484-498, April.
- Robin, William. 2017. "What Controversial Changes at Harvard Mean for Music in the University." *The Log Journal*, April 25, accessed April 26, 2017, <http://thelogjournal.com/2017/04/25/what-controversial-changes-at-harvard-means-for-music-in-the-university>.



Africa on the Prairies

Peggie Hartwell's story quilt tribute to TQC's inaugural Sudanese workshop of 2008.

The Quilted Conscience

by John Sorensen

The Quilted Conscience (TQC) is inspired by the Nebraska born-and-raised social justice pioneer Grace Abbott who, in 1934, said, "Justice for all children is the high ideal in a democracy" (ii). Grace Abbott was a leader in the struggles to improve life for America's children, immigrants, and women. As Chief of the U.S. Children's Bureau, in a speech to the National Women's Trade Union League, she noted, "It is a relatively few people who do accomplish things that must be done. It is a few who really care and keep steadily on the job, who finally convert the larger groups." These two quotes are guiding principles of this project, which began in Abbott's hometown of Grand Island, Nebraska, in 2008, the 130th anniversary of her birth in 1878 (qtd. in Sorensen 2008, 116).

I am also a native of Grand Island, and I wanted to honor Grace Abbott in the spirit, and aspiring to the goals, of her lifelong work—not just a statue or a plaque—but something very alive that would touch the lives of the people for and with whom Abbott worked throughout her life. In discussions with my longtime friend and colleague, noted fabric artist Peggie Hartwell, the idea evolved to create an outreach project with female immigrant children who now live in Grace's hometown. Considering Grace's early work with Jane Addams at Chicago's Hull House and Peggie's long history of outreach in the schools of South Carolina, the notion soon evolved to offer an arts workshop to bring together diverse communities who otherwise might never meet: New Americans—refugees from the crisis in Sudan—and members of families who have been in the town for many generations. The initial goal was to help these two groups of Grand Islanders connect positively and creatively through making a mural story quilt to show and tell (through an accompanying "Quilt Key") students' stories of their "Dreams and Memories"—memories of life in Sudan and dreams for their lives in the United States.

The first step was to partner with the English Language Learner (ELL) Department of the Grand Island Public Schools to engage with an ELL teacher who could identify students interested in and (along with their families) likely to benefit from the experience. The next step was to connect with a local quilt guild whose members were interested in meeting their newest neighbors. We wanted

them to teach basic sewing skills to the student artists and, perhaps more importantly, begin to learn for themselves something about life and culture in Sudan and the challenges of resettlement.

We hoped that along the way, both groups (as well as Peggie and myself) would find new ways to express their creativity and form new friendships. In the end, things worked out better and more unexpectedly than any of us could have predicted, including expansion of this one-time-only event into an ongoing project that has spread across the U.S., from Nebraska to South Carolina to Idaho.



Newcomers Memories and Dreams Quilt, Gates Elementary, Grand Island Public Schools, 2010-2011.

Courtesy Tracy Morrow.

TQC History

TQC's achievements include a film (*The Quilted Conscience*) for public television and our rapidly expanding workshop and exhibition programs that have been developed and disseminated through extensive broadcasts and screenings of the film. Major TQC workshops have engaged with Sudanese American students (girls ages 10-18 of the Nuer, Nuba, and Dinka tribes); Karen American students (mixed-gender, ages 16-20, from Myanmar—also known as Burma—and Thailand); and groups of mixed ethnicity and gender from Iraq, Thailand, Venezuela, Myanmar, Guatemala, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They have explored such questions as “Who am I? Am I African? Asian? American? Or African American or American Asian?” “What is meaningful and unique about my native culture?” “Why did my family come to this new country?” and “How can the lessons and ways of the past help me to be happier in the present and the future?” The young people develop their Dreams and Memories quilt images and find new ways to discover their past lives and potential futures.

We encourage partnering organizations to engage with adults from the students' communities. For example, in our Sudan project we collaborated with a Nuba photographer and musician who was documenting the home-country life of Sudan where many relatives of the girls still lived. He brought his people's visual art and music into our events, teaching his traditions to his new neighbors and the children of his own people. He and others discussed the challenges of keeping ancient traditions alive in modern times amid radically and rapidly changing circumstances, including such issues as “How is it possible for a culture that honors and is guided by its elders (i.e., grandparents, etc.) to survive in a land where none of those elders have immigrated?” For, as he said, “Even if you're born into a fire, you don't want to lose your culture.”



Some of the young quilters' mothers weave a border for the quilt. Courtesy Peggie Hartwell.

In the first of our two Karen projects, we worked closely with a group of the students' mothers who participated in workshops by creating a traditional weaving as a border for their children's quilt blocks. In the finished quilt, the children's artwork was literally embraced by that of their mothers. In the process, these women demonstrated the making of their extraordinary creations to American quilters who have described this exchange as life changing.

Workshops

In TQC workshops, refugee and immigrant students create Dreams and Memories quilt blocks for a large mural artwork, made to last many generations. The blocks are of cultural memories, with student artists answering the question "What is unique in who I am and in where I come from?" and honoring the traditions and heritage of their families and communities, showing what is best and most special to them in their pasts. The dream blocks answer the question "Who and what do I want to be in my new American life?" These images show what students aspire to in their American futures, ranging from hopes of being nurses and doctors to careers as lawyers or judges, football players or poets. TQC has completed 12 successful workshops with Sudanese and Karen refugees and other immigrants from around the world. A TQC-related Newcomers Quilt Program has won five blue ribbons and a red ribbon at the Nebraska State Fair. Also, the extended public exhibitions of the quilts offer opportunities for many people to discover the deeply moving arts and experiences of their new neighbors.

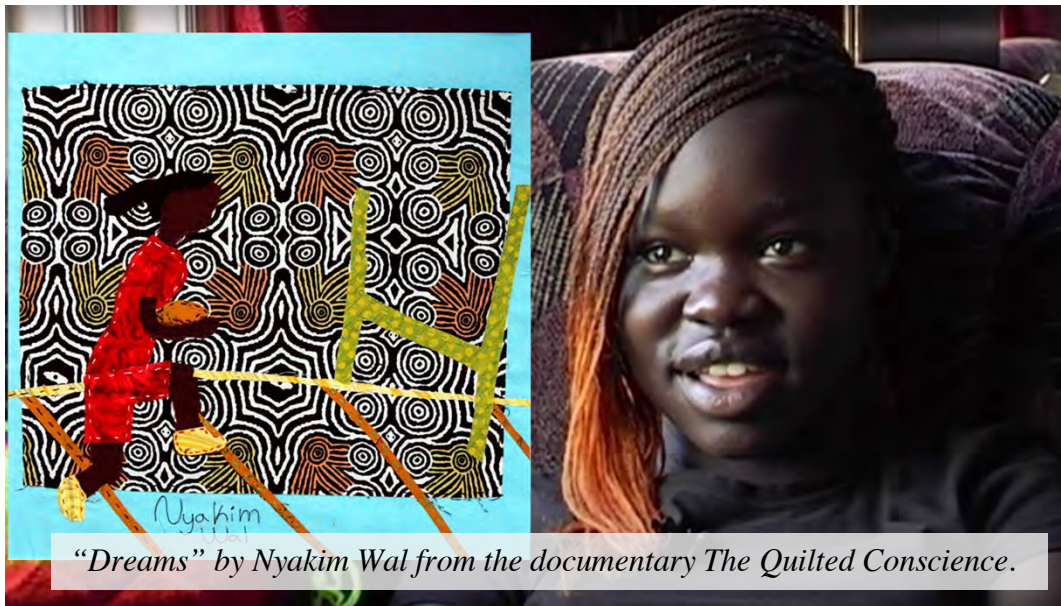


*2016 Newcomers Quilt and Nebraska State Fair
Second Place Red Ribbon.* Courtesy Tracy Morrow.

PERSPECTIVES

Next year is the 10th anniversary of TQC and to mark this milestone, I have assembled a collage of perspectives on the project, in the words and pictures of some students, quilters, educators, and community partners who have helped our work take root, grow, and evolve.

Student Artists



“NUER IN NEBRASKA”

by Nyakim Wal (Grand Island)

To live and reside
To blend in and try not to be seen
To hide aside

So you walk a mile in their very cold shoes
Their unstable moods of sun and storm
You endure every second for there is nothing
left to lose

For this is not where you were born
Long live God’s great gift of memory
That I may embed my taste back to those days

I’ve blossomed in this strange new world
But I’m hungry for my old new world

You’re not human with all that technology
Do you remember those days of pure genuine
beauty
Intoxicating scents of freshly prepared
nourishment
But friendly to the tongue

Those vast horizons
The imprint of permanent, loved sight see
I miss it with little memory

I miss South Sudan
Says the Nebraskan me

NYAKIM WAL (Grand Island)

I was born in Ethiopia in Africa. I was five when I left. It's like a blur really 'cause I was little. I can't remember. We first came to Texas--Houston, Texas. And then we moved to Omaha. And then we moved to Norfolk. And then we moved here to Grand Island. I have friends throughout the community. I have friends that are white. Some that are black. And that are Nuer. I'm "mixed" when it comes to friends. Unless they're gonna be mean to me about my skin color, then we're gonna have a problem. 'Cause I cannot stand racism at all. Back in Norfolk, there would be these kids that just would throw rocks on me and my brother for no reason. I don't really feel that different unless you're gonna single me out about it. But if it doesn't come up at all, I just feel equal to everyone else.

I would like to go back to Sudan someday, 'cause I want to learn more about it 'cause I hardly know anything right now about it. I want to go back and remember this is where I was born. This is where I grew up, but the way that women are treated it's like **WRONG!** 'Cause the women are expected to do all the cleaning and just stay home, do everything, and they're not given like hardly any rights, so it's like I don't want to go over there if they're going to treat me like that. I would not handle it well. I would not. I would get mad easily, if you try to tell me to do something, I'm going to get mad. I was thinking of being a lawyer because I can see myself defending people if they're accused, accused wrongly or something. Like, I can see myself defending people that are not treated right.



Working with young Sudanese American quilters.

Photo courtesy The Grand Island Independent /
Scott Kingsley.

CELESTE PORTILLO (Lincoln)

A note to her ELL teacher, written during her break while working at Wendy's: Hello. I just want to say that the quilt is beyond beautiful.... fantastic!!! I have no idea how these few words can offer up any more than scant reward for such a tremendous effort. I really enjoyed doing that specialty. I learn something new from it. Please know that I'm at my sincerest when I say that the generosity of spirit from everyone involved with the construction of this project of art has truly, truly touched me. I'm thankful, because I have to do this amazing project. And I just want to say thank you for the opportunity.

NOTE: "Celeste Portillo watched her grandmother in Guatemala use a sewing machine and make clothes. But for 15 years, she didn't know her mother, who had moved to the U.S. She didn't know her two younger brothers. She knew pain. While in Guatemala, Celeste's father had hurt her. Celeste's aunt noticed the fresh scars on her arms, and called Celeste's mother. Mom came 'home,' Celeste met her mother for the first time since she was a young baby. Yet she had no

hesitation to move to the States with her mom. Now Celeste is a senior and ELL student at Lincoln High School. She's telling her story. One quilt block at a time." -- from a story by [Lincoln Public Schools Communications](#).

Quilt Coordinators

KAY GRIMMINGER (Grand Island)

I was born in Grand Island. I was the third generation. My grandparents came to Grand Island from Germany as youngsters. I started teaching art in Grand Island in 1962. When I was teaching at Barr Junior High, at that time, it was completely white. Not so now. This country is an immigrant country and I think sometimes we forget that, don't we? And Grand Island was founded with a group of people coming from Germany and settling here in the Platte Valley. It's just more of the same. They're just different colors, but they come the same way, with very little and hopes for the future. My experience with the making of the quilt has forever changed me. I saw and heard firsthand from these girls how their life has changed and how they each perceived their dreams. These are so parallel to the dreams and memories of my ancestors who came to America from Germany seeking a better life.



Ruth Kupfer helps Karen mother show off traditional women fabric. Courtesy Ruth Kupfer.

RUTH KUPFER (Lincoln)

The most enduring outcome of The Quilted Conscience project in Lincoln was the affection that grew from the personal connections quilters and students made with one another. Beginning with touching first meetings and culminating with rich reconnections after the project had ended, relationships were nurtured as students told stories of their homeland and experiences in refugee camps and quilters opened their hearts and let go of assumptions.

As they worked on their memory blocks, the young people and the mature women compared notes on ways that their lives were different yet similar, from farming methods to food preparation to the realization of dreams. One young man wanted to bring his mentor home to cook a meal for her to demonstrate the skills he'd gained from being, as the eldest, his family's primary chef. All the students were anxious to find ways like this to validate their stories for these new friends.

When the project participants reunited several months after the end of their work together, the young people were excited and anxious to see their mentors again and to give them updates about the realization of their dreams. One young man had changed his plans from being a mechanic to being a college student; a young woman who had wanted to be a nurse reported that she was on the path to becoming a doctor. Seeing students on the cusp of adulthood brought even more depth to the quilters' understanding of what it means to be an immigrant/ refugee. Many grateful women said that participating in The Quilted Conscience program was one of the best experiences they'd ever had.

As for me, being the Quilt Coordinator of the Lincoln High School Quilted Conscience project enabled me to experience again the honor it was to work with immigrant students as I had throughout my 35-year career teaching in public schools. Witnessing these students' graceful storytelling and enthusiastic creativity reminded me how important their contributions are to our community. I am also grateful to be part of such a rich quilting community here in Nebraska, from whom I could invite such talented and compassionate women to become mentors for this important project.

ELL Coordinators

SUSAN HERTZLER (Lincoln)

As an ELL educator for 17 years I have learned so much about the world through the eyes, ears, and hearts of my students. Some of their stories have been heartbreaking, some funny, and others uplifting. Above all, there has always been a common thread of family throughout their stories and almost always these stories cannot find their way out of my head.

Over the years, without even realizing it, I have been searching for a way to more concretely share some of these stories with those outside the halls of my school. I felt guilty for keeping them to myself. When I learned about TQC I knew immediately that it would be a perfect way to get those stories into the hearts and minds of others. From the beginning, TQC was a labor of love. I was used to working with my ELL students every day, but when the project began I was reminded of the path that I myself had taken all those years ago in learning about different cultures. I witnessed the mature quilters who had volunteered to work with the students as their eyes widened upon hearing some of the tragic situations that many were illustrating in their memory blocks. I could see the power of hearing these firsthand accounts; they were obviously moved. As the project wound down I could see that it was going to be tough for the quilters to say goodbye to the students.

The quilt is a way for the quilters, as well as others, to have endless opportunities to experience and re-experience the memories and the dreams of these young immigrants. The ripple effect cannot be measured and I feel proud to have been a part of it. Hopefully TQC, and other projects like this, can continue be offered in the future--Life Changing!

TRACY MORROW (Grand Island)

I'm a Newcomers teacher here in Grand Island, Nebraska. So I teach students who are new to America from all across the world. TQC gave me the opportunity to learn about my Sudanese immigrant students and how they have evolved into American young women of today. But even more importantly I have learned so much from the students that I work with today, and I have

adopted and modified this program as a yearly opportunity for each of the immigrant students new to the U.S. and to the English language to share their stories with our schools, our community, and the public at the Nebraska State Fair. I have learned so much from their memories of their homeland and I will continue to embrace the students and their stories from their homeland.

Local Quilters

RUTH CAMPBELL (Grand Island and Lincoln)

In 2008, The Quilted Conscience project began in Grand Island with some of the city's newest immigrants...16 Sudanese girls. I was a member of the local quilt guild and our small sub-group called the "Flatwater Floosies" was asked to work with the girls, teaching and guiding them as they constructed their quilt blocks.

There was a lot of things in their memories of growing up on the African plains that were not so much different than me growing up in the Appalachian Mountains. I've always quilted. Not quilted in the way that I quilt today, but we used our feed sacks and we covered our old comforters every spring to get them ready for another year's use. And we would take our work and go out and sit on the porch swing in the evenings sometimes especially and quilt. We lived very rural. No running water. No electricity. That sort of thing. We always cooked on wood or coal. Always had water that we had to carry in from a well.

Nyakuot, who was doing a block of her memories, was showing an elephant and her grandmother on this elephant's back and I said, "Oh who's on the back of the elephant?" And she said, "Well, that's my grandmother." And she cut out another little figure, a little dark head, bright little red dress, and put it in front of Grandma. And she said, "Oh, that's me. I used to go with her to get water on the elephant." The things that they said about their life then brought back all the memories of my own. And sometimes I would say to them, "Did you know, we had to carry water, too."



Dreams and Memories by Nyakuot Lual.

The Social Studies Department at Barr Middle School was planning a World History Day when the entire school would circulate from room to room for programs developed by students and their teachers. I was asked to share the Sudanese students' work and experiences from The Quilted Conscience program. I had the girls share some life experiences from the Sudan....how the girls are

named in their country was especially interesting! They sang some traditional songs, discussed foods, as well as other aspects of their daily life. Our presentation was voted the favorite learning room of the day!

As a result of World History Day, the girls felt a pride of accomplishment, were much more integrated at school, and the acceptance by other students increased dramatically. I heard many comments such as “Congratulations!” and “Thanks for sharing!” The local newspaper featured several front page clips that followed the Quilted Conscience project, which added to the acceptance and integration of the Sudanese students.

I retired from teaching and moved to Lincoln with my husband. I treasure this Quilted Conscience experience and the team involved. Peggie Hartwell (TQC’s artistic advisor) and I have become close friends and she comes each summer to spend several days at our home. We have both been involved with Quilted Conscience quilts being made in Lincoln and in Omaha with the Karen refugee students. One of the original Sudanese students, Nyakim, of the first project in Grand Island, has moved to Lincoln now, too. She asked Peggie and me to go to her church one Sunday last year. That is a treasured memory.

Other Partners and Observations



TQC Project Director John Sorensen hands the mic to Mu Wah, one of the student quilters.
Courtesy Christine Lesiak.

Project Director, JOHN SORENSEN (New York City/Grand Island)

TQC, as it develops, brings forth many important observations and questions from partners and colleagues. One topic is “Do workshops like this reinforce a tendency teachers and community members have to see immigrant outreach and support as a process of assimilation?”

Another interesting point found in the comments from TQC quilters and advisors is how some partners speak of how they could “relate” to the cultures from which the students have come. One analyst found these comments to be “startling” and asked, “What to make of that? What does ‘relate’ really mean?” My thoughts are that the quilters and advisors simply mean that they have had certain life experiences that are somewhat similar to those of the students. Some of those local

partners grew up in rural or economically disadvantaged areas where they had to walk long distances to get clean water, and where they did not have electricity or plumbing. I think they are relating to a shared experience of living a rural life, working with cattle, things of that sort. The quilters and advisors are very aware that the students had experienced traumas far beyond any that they have known.

In the wider political context of our current historical moment, new questions are asked. “Will these workshops continue? What does it mean for quilters and participants that immigrants may have an even harder time coming to the U.S.? Has the unity and community been disrupted or impacted by the national context?” These are important issues worthy of extensive consideration and analysis in their own right. For now I will simply note that, yes, the workshops are continuing, and I hope that in future community discussions and via online forums these key questions, along with additional assessment of the program goals, will form the basis for careful analysis to inform the ways TQC responds to and engages with the ever-unfolding political environment in the United States of America, our “Nation of Immigrants.”

Parent, YAUNIS ANDINDI (Grand Island)
Statement accompanying his “Life in Sudan” photo essay for TQC exhibitions: My name is Yaunis Andindi. I am from Rikefi village (2,000 people) in the Nuba Mountains of South Central Sudan. I was born in 1974, I think. But no records were kept, so I am not sure. I have ten brothers and sisters. The life was a little hard in my village, which is normal, we didn’t have electricity. The lights. We didn’t have those. We were using just the stars and a moon. When the moon come up, everybody’s happy because they have light now.



Posing for a memory. Courtesy Yaunis Andindi.

There was the civil war going on about over 20 years in our country. The soldiers from the Northern Sudan Army, they came several times—many times to destroy our village. And I decide to leave the country. I left my home village in 1999 because of the Civil War in Sudan. The Government was coming to destroy my village. The Government destroyed my village many times and my people would go to the mountains to hide. The life was hard. Then I decided to go to Egypt. It was difficult for me to escape—but I made it. Two years later, I went to the United Nations Refugee Office in Cairo and told them my story. They accepted me and offered for me to come to America. I lived in Minnesota for almost five years, working as a custodian at a Christian private school. Then I came to Grand Island in 2005 with my wife Simaya Cori and our little son Rams to be close to my cousin Yohana Adenti and to find a better life for my family. I work at Swift Company Meatpacking Plant and worship at the Methodist Church. My wife and I have a new daughter, Gina.

We are happy to be in America, but we still miss our country. You know, even if you’re born in a fire, you don’t want to lose your culture.

Community Partners



Quilt at Joslyn Art Museum.

Photo courtesy Grand Island Community Foundation, Photo by Tammy Morris.

TAMMY MORRIS (Grand Island Community Foundation, Former CEO)

I attended an unveiling of a Dreams and Memories quilt in Omaha and can still remember the smiles on the students' faces and the pride they had in their quilt. They shared sometimes painful memories of their upbringing, but their faces lit up when they spoke of the quilted square that reflected their dreams. They told of how their dreams were much greater now that they saw the opportunity and promise ahead of them. I remember them sharing also their traditional dance and [how] they took pride in their home country. I have seen this project in multiple communities and admired how it brought people together and increased community engagement across various cultures and backgrounds. This is a project that transcends gender, race, and culture and goes down to the core of one single human race.

KATHY STEINAUER SMITH (Woods Charitable Fund, Community Investment Director, Lincoln)

The Quilted Conscience brings together people across generations and cultural backgrounds to share their stories, to build trust in one another, and to learn from the others' experiences. WCF saw a unique opportunity in TQC to support an educational project that, through art and creative storytelling, encourages our community to make connections with Lincoln's New Americans. We could see the affection and trust that developed between the students and the quilters, and we are not surprised that other communities and schools see the great potential in The Quilted Conscience as a way to build this rapport and these relationships.

MARY YAGER (Humanities Nebraska, Associate Director, Lincoln)

Every now and then a project comes along that just seems to take on a life of its own. The Quilted Conscience is such a project! Humanities Nebraska points to The Quilted Conscience project as an example of an investment of its grants funds that has evolved and developed over a period of time and that, because of diverse collaborations, has become much more than it could otherwise have been. Sometimes it's a matter of timing, too. The Quilted Conscience project came along at the right time for Humanities Nebraska, which had launched a *New Nebraskans* initiative. The initiative and the project dovetailed nicely. Requests from a growing number of groups in Nebraska, other states, and even other countries to replicate this project led to the production of curriculum materials and creation of a website (also HN funded) to allow groups in any location to use The Quilted Conscience workshop template and film to host their own projects. The growth has been a joy to see!

Media Partner

CHRISTINE LESIAK (NET Television Producer, Lincoln)

On an unusually warm afternoon in March 2017, I took a walk to the International Quilt Center in Lincoln. It was the last day of the quilt workshop, inspired by John Sorensen's film, *The Quilted Conscience*, and since the TV station where I work is just a block away, there was no excuse not to check it out. The students were cutting fabric for their designs—their dreams and memories—for a new quilt. They come from the troubled places all over the world—Iraq, Burma, Thailand, Venezuela, Guatemala, Democratic Republic of Congo. One of the volunteers told me she had heard stories so violent she could hardly bear it. But as the students quietly worked away I had just one thought—they're safe here now.

Artistic Advisor

PEGGIE HARTWELL (Charleston, SC)

I was born in Springfield, South Carolina, and I grew up around quilters. When I got on the plane to go to Nebraska, I didn't know what to expect. I couldn't imagine because this was the first time that I was going to be working with Sudanese children. So I went there saying, I'm going to show them all my techniques. And I'm going to teach them this and teach them that. But in the end, as always, I became the student. When I look at those girls, I know that everything is possible. To stand in front of their quilt was unbelievable because for the first time, they were able to see their voice on cloth. They were able to see in the complete form those blocks that they had created.

They were able to see it as a continuation of their hope.



Peggie Hartwell with Sudanese American student.

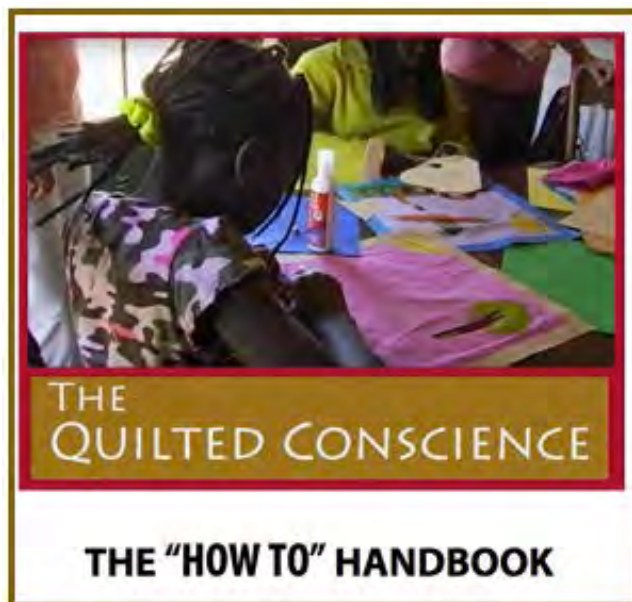
Photo courtesy The Grand Island Independent / Scott Kingsley.

Conclusion

The Quilted Conscience is an ever-evolving project. In its earliest stages, it was a simple arts education program to facilitate the making of a film that would give contemporary form to the ideals and vision of social justice pioneer Grace Abbott's work with and for the children, immigrants, and women of the U.S. There was no thought that our first workshop would be any more than an event focused on the experience of a specific group of female refugee children in Abbott's hometown of Grand Island. But even before the filming was completed, requests came (initially from artistic advisor Peggie Hartwell's home area of Charleston, South Carolina, and Grand Island ELL Coordinator Tracy Morrow) to replicate TQC workshops and exhibitions in their communities. Since then, the project has regularly received similar requests, mostly in Nebraska, but also from across the U.S.

With each new TQC event, fresh ideas and approaches develop through engagement with new students, quilters, educators, and communities. At the beginning, TQC was focused on the idea of "contrasts and connections." We recognized the strong differences between the immigrant or refugee students and the American quilters, while at the same time exploring ways these diverse groups might come to see that they have more fundamental experiences in common than they might at first think, and that this commonality is an opportunity to form positive new community bonds and even friendships.

Slowly, however, a new vision came into our work: the idea of student agency. This wasn't, at first, a conscious choice, but an organic development, put forward primarily through the creative works of the student artists. For example, at a recent TQC exhibition, a student artist (a young Yazidi man) addressed the audience. Showing his memory block



Learn More About the TQC Process

As you consider the project, it may be most useful to give special attention to two key elements: First, the [*"How To" Handbook*](#), our online guide to creating new workshops. We've aimed, with the vital collaboration of our longtime colleagues at Nebraska Educational TV, to make this tool as clear and thorough as possible and allow readers to find how facilitators are engaging with the knowledge of students and their parents (see the list of questions on page 4 of the guide). This may be of particular interest to folklorists who emphasize this ethnographic exploration.

The second supporting element is the collection of photos on our [website](#), which give a direct look at this very visual project as they *show* the Karen students engaged in traditional dance performances or a Karen mother weaving a border for a quilt. As a filmmaker, I'm a firm believer in the power of images, and I feel strongly that the most effective way to understand the TQC story is to emphasize images: show first, then tell.

Reach the project director at johnsorensen10012@yahoo.com for additional information.

concerning the destruction of his home village, he made a strong point that he had created this block to let people know that his village did not exist anymore, it had been completely destroyed. The feeling in what he said was that, by making this image, he was bringing his village back into existence, through his artwork, he was reclaiming his past and making it live again, for himself and his new neighbors.

Finally, by its nature, TQC is an evolutionary project in terms of simple attitudes. Public and personal opinions, even prejudices, may best be changed through experiential means, and patient, persistent actions. One priority is to encourage people (both locals and newcomers) to “open their minds” about “the other.” For example, I think many project partners begin participation by seeing TQC as a way to help others ... and I feel that this is a healthy, very human way to start. But, as Peggie Hartwell notes, although she came to Nebraska thinking that she was on her way to “help” the Sudanese students, in the end she came to see how much they had helped her; how much she and they had helped one another.

The project began with a simple focus, but as the workshops have evolved we recognize and embrace the idea of strengthening the cultural identities of the students. I see this as a major goal for future work. Looking back over the past decade, I think of the passage from the *Tao te Ching*: “The longest journey begins with a single step.” Or, to quote again our project inspiration, Grace Abbott:

Doing the next thing, and making good at it, has this certain advantage: You can never tell what it is going to lead to, or what new and possibly thrilling experience is lying in wait just around the corner.

-- Grace Abbott, 1926

John Sorensen is director and creator of *The Quilted Conscience* workshops and the *Abbott Sisters Project*. His film work as writer/director includes *The Quilted Conscience* and *The Andy Warhol Robot*. For Public Radio he has written and directed dramatic works and is founding director of the New York Public Library's *Four Corners* world culture series. His most recent books are *The Mystical Filmmaker* (with Peter Whitehead, 2015) and *A Sister's Memories, the story of social justice pioneer Grace Abbott* (University of Chicago Press, 2015).

URLS

Lincoln Public Schools Communications <https://www.lps.org/post/detail.cfm?id=11732>

The Quilted Conscience <http://thequiltedconscience.org>

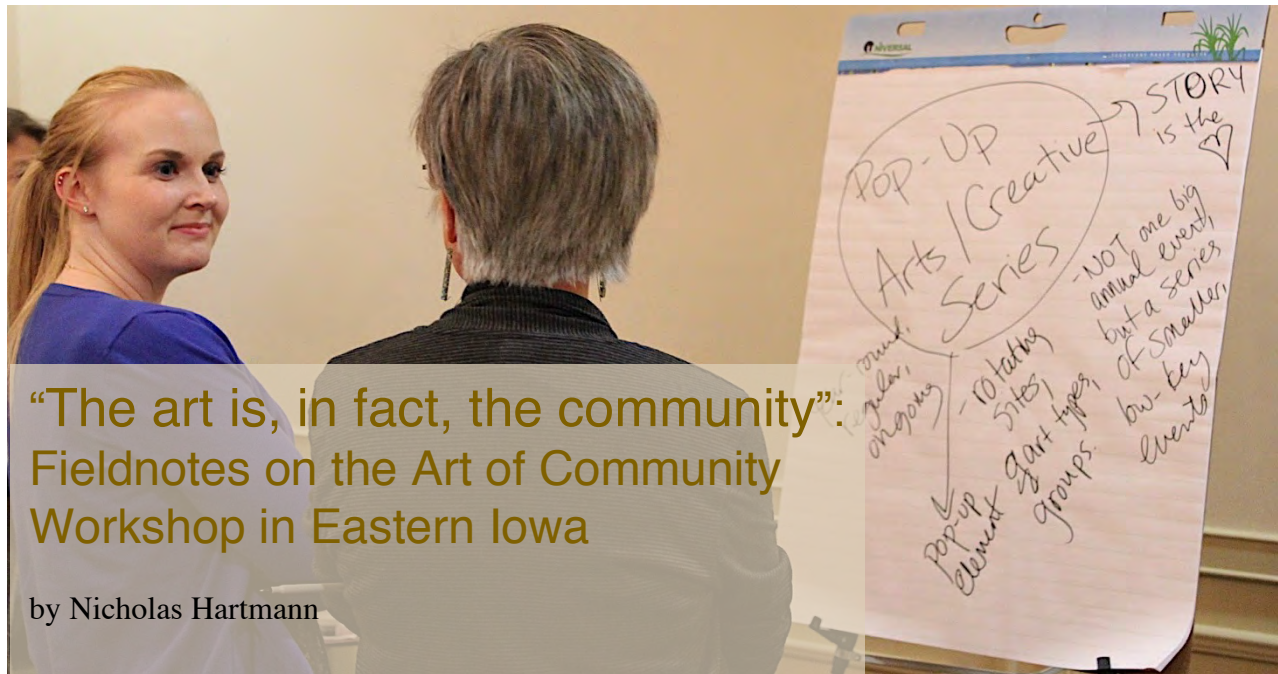
The “How To” Handbook http://thequiltedconscience.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/TQC_handbook.pdf

Works Cited

Abbott, Grace. 1926, July 31. From the Edith and Grace Abbott Papers, University of Chicago Library.

---. 1934. "A New Horizon for Children in the Post-Depression Period," an address on "The Economic Basis of Child Welfare," delivered at the commencement exercises of the New Jersey College for Women.

Sorensen, John, with Judith Sealander. 2008. *The Grace Abbott Reader*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.



“The art is, in fact, the community”: Fieldnotes on the Art of Community Workshop in Eastern Iowa

by Nicholas Hartmann

In the world of ethnic museums, there is often a focus on both art and the everyday life of immigrant communities, often in a historic context. They are often linked, but the focus on art and everyday life as part of historic pasts often forgets the importance of art and everyday life in current newcomer communities.

In the conclusion of the publication *The Art of Community: Creativity at the Crossroads of Immigrant Cultures and Social Services*, the folklorist Laura Marcus Green writes about the indivisibility of art and everyday life for refugees and immigrants: “...in the case of traditional cultural expression, art is organically woven into the fabric of daily life, inseparable from the way we think, eat, build shelter, work, celebrate, or create family. For newcomers who have made the United States their home by choice or necessity, traditional culture is often a thread of continuity between a person’s homeland and a new neighborhood” (Marcus 2006, 30). Through their focus on immigration stories, creative expressions, and tradition, ethnic museums play an important role in bridging homelands old and new. In Cedar Rapids, Iowa, the National Czech &

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Known for its Czech heritage, Cedar Rapids and its surrounding area now include a wide variety of cultures, languages, and ethnicities. Roughly one in every 25 residents is listed as “foreign-born” (U.S. Census Bureau), and this represents statewide change; the percentage of immigrants living in Iowa has tripled since 1990, and it is now estimated that one in every 13 Iowans is either predominantly Latino or Asian (American Immigration Council). Eastern Iowa is home to many sizable immigrant communities, including a large Arab American population in Cedar Rapids, a sizable Latino community in Columbus Junction, and large populations of Burmese and Bosnian refugees in the Cedar Falls-Waterloo region. Other communities in the area include refugees from countries such as Bhutan, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Slovak Museum & Library (NCSML) has focused on celebrating the lives and contributions of Czechs and Slovaks throughout the world, while also promoting visitors to reflect on their own experiences. According to their mission, the NCSML is “a museum that celebrates life. Czech life. Slovak life. American life. We are a museum that encourages self-discovery, a museum that asks what it means to be free. Through extraordinary exhibitions and experiences, we tell stories of freedom and identity, family and community, human rights and dignity. Our stories connect yesterday with today and tomorrow” (National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library).

As part of a new initiative on intercultural collaboration, freedom, and human dignity, the NCSML initiated a series of programs to highlight global experience while promoting local community engagement. Titled *Global Voices, Local Actions*, the series has so far included a public talk by Czech humanitarian Šimon Pánek, a panel discussion on genocide and cultural differences, and a workshop on refugee and newcomer arts led by folklorists Amy Skillman and Laura Marcus Green of Building Cultural Bridges. This workshop is the focus of this article, which highlights how the NCSML is using the work of public folklorists to promote refugee and newcomer traditional arts in Eastern Iowa.

In terms of traditional arts, relatively few programs in the region are set up to support refugees and newcomers who wish to promote their work. Partly this is because there is no statewide program for traditional arts; the folk arts program at the Iowa Arts Council ended in the early 2010s, leaving a major gap in terms of fieldwork, infrastructure, and support for traditional artists. In terms of local resources, there has only recently been an interest in strengthening and developing refugee and newcomer arts. As home to the University of Iowa, Iowa City has a large amount of support for such programs, and events such as the Iowa Dance Festival are inclusive of many forms of traditional dance. In Cedar Rapids, there is interest among newcomers in developing stronger networks and programming for the arts, but such programs are only in the early discussion stages. By bringing the Art of



The Art of Community comes out of Building Cultural Bridges, a national, interdisciplinary project with the goal to bridge the arts and social services to support cultural continuity and artistic growth among refugees and immigrants in the United States. Community-based workshops and conference panel presentations bring the project to local, regional, and national audiences, providing tools and encouragement for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Community workshop to Cedar Rapids, the NCSML strove to act as a catalyst for future program development in the region.

Through local gatherings of human services personnel, museum professionals, and refugee and newcomer communities, we built the workshop audience. Participants included representatives of multiple community groups, arts and cultural organizations, several local universities and colleges, and a variety of local residents who were intrigued by the topic. Interest in the workshop was strong enough that it filled up two weeks beforehand; after expanding the number of slots, there was a full house on the day of the event.

To build community, starting with oneself and affirming shared goals with one's partners and allies are important. Likewise, to build a cultural community it is imperative for everyone to recognize their personal cultural knowledge. To begin this process, participants were invited to describe and share an experience that made them have a connection with culture. The following themes emerged:

- 1) *Mitigating loss*. Moves--both transnational and more local--can include loss or the feeling that there are "holes" where something is not available in the new place. How does one maintain culture and creative life in new spaces that may not have the same supports, materials, or community-wide appreciation?
- 2) *Travel*. Participants mentioned the process of becoming fully enveloped in a community, and doing so in a familial, communal way that transformed them from outsider status to community insider. People do not often recognize their own traditional culture until viewing it side by side with something that is unlike theirs.
- 3) *Unusual situations as a marker of cultural differences*. Discussions about awkward, funny, or uncomfortable situations arising from cultural differences, new situations, or new cultural experiences were a part of this theme.

The final session was devoted to small group breakouts to brainstorm plans for potential projects. Most participants lived near Cedar Rapids and/or Iowa City, which made the feasibility of such collaborations better. Four ideas for projects resulted from these productive sessions:

1) "Lost and Found" Project

Participants in this group thought about the ideas of what gets left behind with change, and thought about it in terms of objects. It was proposed that local community members work with local refugee populations to facilitate regular opportunities for people to bring an object into a circle to tell a story about it. Stakeholders would be involved in producing these circles. It was also suggested that this could become a statewide initiative because, according to one group member, "there are repositories of objects across the state, we could involve those objects to involve people who don't sense themselves as immigrants at all...[there are] multiple levels building up from grassroots [level]." It was noted that objects "are such a powerful universal tool to generate stories."

2) Festival of Cultures

In this group members proposed a cultural festival to "break down barriers and create understanding through activities—dance, fashion, and soccer—to move forward we have to understand each other...to improve communication...to allow immigrants to be more productive

than when they are unable to communicate.” It was proposed that cultural ambassadors could help their communities as a public presence in the community. Others mentioned the power of music, such as an instrumental jam session involving multiple cultures, and culturally specific sports events.

3) Storydory

This project, a play on the words “story” and “corridor” (in reference to the nickname of the metropolitan area around Interstate 380), was described by a group member as “a pop-up series of ongoing art programs in public spaces, ongoing, instead of a yearly festival.” This was proposed as an alternative to renting larger, more expensive venues and is similar to pop-up museum exhibitions. According to a group member, “it’s a space for dialogue, more one-on-one conversations possible, going where people are instead of expecting them to come...the city is a cultural space...people may be economically/geographically disadvantaged in terms of access...” Examples were a refugee foodways demo at the regional grocery chain Hy-Vee, where ingredients might be easily acquired for interested parties, and a group like the Amen Choir performing at a public park. It was discussed that such a project could take six months for social media/marketing but could be quickly implemented afterward. Group members were interested in doing something “unconventional...to be more democratic,” and to “give performers the opportunity to perform in their community.” This could be easily replicable in other communities, particularly rural communities. One person provided the example of bus story time in Iowa City, when the library staff presented story times on the public bus system to reach more neighborhoods and use bus stops as gathering spaces.

4) International Farmers’ Market

This group was interested in reaching out to the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance to work with churches and other sponsors to help promote refugee and immigrant booths and other events at the Cedar Rapids Farmers’ Market. One idea was to create an intercultural activity to represent different cultures at the market. Refugee and immigrant vendors may also welcome economic development opportunities for their businesses.

The After Effects

Currently, multiple initiatives are taking place in the Cedar Rapids area. Akwi Nji, founder of the local storytelling nonprofit The Hook, has initiated a storytelling event called “The Things We Carry” in collaboration with Brucemore Mansion (a historic house museum) featuring immigrants and refugees sharing stories in a living room setting. Additionally, Akwi has included themes from the Lost and Found Project in her ArtLOUD! Series, which combines storytelling, music, dance, and visual art to “tell the true stories of our community.” In her January 2017 installment, Akwi described her event:

It's not traditional theater. It's not spoken word. It's not like anything we've tried before or even anything you've perhaps seen before. We're combining dance, music, visual art, and monologues and spoken-word poetry to tell the true stories of our community.

We're telling stories of an artist who left Sudan and the loss of freedom that sent him packing, memory loss, a suitcase with quite the travel history, the loss of the will to live (thank you, Flatpox)

Mountain Trail), a final goodbye to a little boy's cowboy hat, and the many beautiful things FOUND in the context of loss. We want you to join us. ("ArtLOUD")

The local refugee and immigrant advocacy group Wake Up for Your Rights! has begun to plan a cultural festival that will take place later in 2017, while staff from the Catherine McAuley Center (a human services center dedicated to serving refugees and newcomers) are working to initiate collaboration on opening the Cedar Rapids Farmers' Market more easily to newcomers. There is currently no word about the Storydory project.

The NCSML has started dialogue with the Catherine McAuley Center, Cedar Rapids Museum of Art, BruceMuseum, and the African American Museum of Iowa to create more structured learning opportunities for newcomers and refugees of all ages to develop English language skills through museum visits. In this process, several museum professionals in the area noted that, before any program can be put into place, there must be further training and education for staff on the needs and experiences of newcomers and refugees. Catherine McAuley Center staff are providing this training to the various museums. Additionally, the NCSML staff are working with staff from the Cedar Rapids office of Catholic Charities to develop refugee and newcomer awareness opportunities to students and the public. Overall, the Art of Community workshop has been a catalyst in raising awareness of the need for structured programs that promote refugee and newcomer traditional arts in Eastern Iowa, and it has also demonstrated the need for further education about the cultures, lives, and experiences of those who settle, or are resettled, in the area. Anne Duggar of the Catherine McAuley Center said that, although the Center does not have artistic endeavors, they bring communities together, and "that is the art of community; the art is, in fact, the community."

Nicholas Hartmann is Director of Learning & Civic Engagement for the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. His professional practice focuses on the intersection of humanities and civic engagement, STEAM education in museums, and the incorporation of folk and traditional arts into K-16 education. He has a PhD in Folklore from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Works Cited

- "ArtLOUD," 28 January 2017. Accessed at:
https://www.facebook.com/events/356786731357060/?acontext=%7B%22ref%22%3A%22106%22%2C%22action_history%22%3A%22null%22%7D
- American Immigration Council. 2015. "New Americans in Iowa: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Hawkeye State." Created 1 January 2015; accessed 28 April 2017.
<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/new-americans-iowa>.
- Marcus, Laura R. 2006. "In Conclusion: Working at the Crossroads of Immigrant Cultures and Social Services." In *The Art of Community: Creativity at the Crossroads of Immigrant Cultures and Social Services*, eds. Laura R. Marcus, Daranee Petsod, and Amy E. Skillman. Harrisburg, PA: Institute for Cultural Partnerships and Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 30. Access it at
www.intergroupresources.com/rc/The%20Art%20of%20Community%202006.pdf
- National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library. "About Us." 2016, Accessed April 28, 2017,
<http://www.ncsml.org/about>.
- U.S. Census Bureau. "Cedar Rapids, Iowa." Census 2010.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/RHI805210/1912000>.

Journal of Folklore and Education Reviews

Exhibit Review

Lloyd's Treasure Chest: Folk Art in Focus at the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico, curated by Felicia Katz-Harris, senior curator of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Oceanic folk art, permanent exhibit.

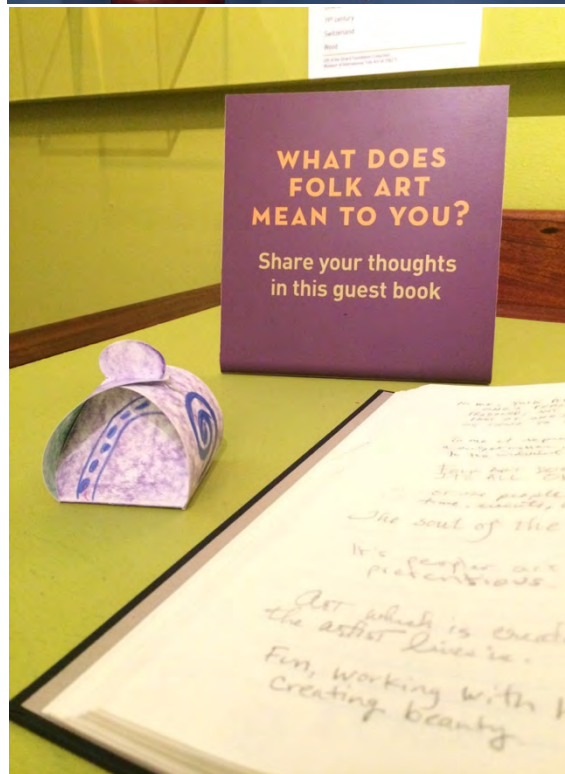
Lilli Tichinin

Lilli Tichinin is Program Coordinator for Folk Arts, Art Projects, and Accessibility at New Mexico Arts.



The aptly named *Lloyd's Treasure Chest: Folk Art in Focus* is an almost-hidden gem of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Named for museum donor Lloyd Cotsen, the gallery recently reopened with a fresh approach and exhibit space after a four-year closure.

Accessible via only one elevator off the main floor of the museum, *Lloyd's Treasure Chest* is a multipurpose space incorporating open storage of the Neutrogena Collections Vault, rotating display space for themed small-scale exhibits, and an introduction to the concepts of folk art. The last of these purposes is most compelling as a pedagogical tool, for while the space offers visitors the classic open-storage viewing, the new exhibit accomplishes much more than a simple peek into the collections. The exhibit is framed through questions and simple prompts. There is no single definition of folk art provided, instead the exhibit encourages visitors to “Explore Folk Art” through books, interactive screens, object handling, video, social media engagement, changing displays, and art-making activities. It asks, “What does Folk Art mean to you?”



When stepping off the elevator and into the single-room exhibit, visitors enter a small but open space with a large activity table and immediately see a colorful wall inviting them to “Explore Folk Art!” Rather than offering a static definition of folk art, the text on this wall introduces concepts that the museum uses in their work:

There are many different ways to think about folk art. In fact there is no one definition of folk art. In collecting and displaying folk art, the museum considers various concepts.

The remainder of the wall is filled with brief statements with words in bold text that folklorists will recognize well: “traditional,” “shared,” “community,” “handmade,” “change,” “innovation,” and, of course, “the people.” This concept-centric approach leaves visitors the intellectual space to explore for themselves and encourages a deeper interaction with the exhibit and the collections than a definitive statement from the “experts” might elicit.

This first portion of the room incorporates open space for themed craft projects, object handling of baskets and musical instruments, and a bookshelf and reading corner. As visitors move through the space they are invited to search through the collections on interactive screens as well as look into the collections storage through the glass windows along one entire wall.

The middle portion of the room consists of space for the rotating thematic displays, accompanied by laminated gallery object lists. As of summer 2017, visitors can view “Artistic Heritage: Syrian Folk Art.”* An alcove with information and an interactive screen about the National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellows introduces the concept of a master artist.

Building on the recognition of multiple interpretations of folk art, the back wall of the exhibit space displays eight objects from the collection to address the question “Is This Folk Art?” Each object is accompanied by a text panel featuring two answers to that question. The answers—a “yes” or “no” and a one-paragraph explanation—are provided by museum curators, educators, researchers, and artists. The one-example-at-a-time-“is this folk art” approach will be familiar to those of us who have been through an Intro to Folklore class. While in a classroom setting this can become cumbersome, the exhibit creates a context in which the visitor does not feel pressured to walk away with a concrete mental checklist of how to determine whether an item is folk art. The inclusion of the quotes subtly reinforces the possibility of multiple interpretations by showing the visitor both that the “experts” sometimes disagree, and that even when in agreement they each have their own interpretation and reasons for the classification. Near these objects is a cabinet of archival drawers and panels addressing the ways definitions of folk art have changed over time. A guestbook is left open in hope that visitors will leave their thoughts about what folk art means to them.



* These rotating thematic displays will be curated by the museum's five curators. *Artistic Heritage: Syrian Folk Art* was curated by Katz-Harris.



For such a limited space, it is impressive that Katz-Harris has created an exhibit with multiple levels of interpretation and engagement to reach a potentially broad audience. There are options for engagement for multiple learning types, ages, visiting times, and interest levels. In addition to hands-on aspects, the hierarchy of text on panels allows visitors to take a quick look or choose to read more deeply. It is conceivable that a visitor may take only a moment to breeze through the space and glance at the words in bold on that introductory wall and at least walk

away with a few questions and words to ponder. Visitors can catch the big ideas and questions about folk art or parse quotes, examine objects, create art, and read books. Even returning museum visitors may feel compelled to make the trip to the *Treasure Chest* on multiple occasions as the temporary displays are changed.

The tone and content of the exhibit are suitable and appealing to audiences of all ages, it is informative enough for adults but simple enough for children. Importantly, I found that even as someone with an advanced degree in folklore, the exhibit prompted me to pause and consider my own definition of folk art. When face-to-face with objects from the collections, with those concepts and big ideas fresh in my mind, and being asked “is this folk art?” I was thrilled to find that I too had to think deeply before answering.

The obvious missing piece from this exhibit is the intangible. The concept of intangible culture is introduced through music via the instrument object handling and could be explored by visitors in the context of the National Heritage Fellows, but there is no mechanism to learn more. Although I recognize the limitations of an object-focused environment and collection I also see the unexplored potential to incorporate additional video and audio to capitalize on the opportunity to broaden visitors’ understanding of folk art.

Katz-Harris has created a useful tool for introducing museum visitors to the concepts of folk art. It is effective in the simplicity of its approach. The exhibit captures the dynamic nature of folk art in a way that we in the field often struggle to accomplish with any one definition. The disappointment is that the exhibit is not required viewing for all visitors to the museum. We can hope that for those who do find their way into the vault, the questions and concepts stay with them and they can apply some of the conceptual thinking prompted by the *Treasure Chest* as they explore other areas of the museum.

Website Review



Teaching Tolerance: <http://www.tolerance.org>

Kathryn R. Taylor

Kathryn R. Taylor teaches 10th grade English at Rowland Hall St. Mark's School in Salt Lake City, Utah, where she also co-chairs the Inclusion and Equity Committee.

The Teaching Tolerance website (<http://www.tolerance.org>), a project developed and published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, puts a huge variety of resources related to inclusion, equity, and diversity into teachers' hands. From curriculum to professional development resources and webinars, the Teaching Tolerance site attempts to cover a wide range of inclusion topics and perspectives such as exploring immigrant communities in America, bringing the Black Lives Matter movement into the classroom, shining a light on the intersectional blind spot of LGBTQ people of color, and unpacking gender stereotypes for students of all ages.

The name itself might make some users wary. Although “tolerance” is an outdated term in diversity work—many people associate it with merely putting up with or ignoring differences rather than embracing them and working toward social justice—the makers of the site have explained their reasoning for the name by referencing the UNESCO definition of tolerance as “respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our world's cultures, our forms of expression and ways of being human.” And even a cursory survey of the resources available on the site prove that they are not merely exercises in appreciating the foods and dances of other cultures but rather lessons and activities that promote anti-bias and a deep examination of culture in America. For example, for high school students, the site offers a set of resources created by Michelle Alexander to support teachers using her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* while one of the K-5 units teaches students how to engage critically with advertising from a social justice perspective.

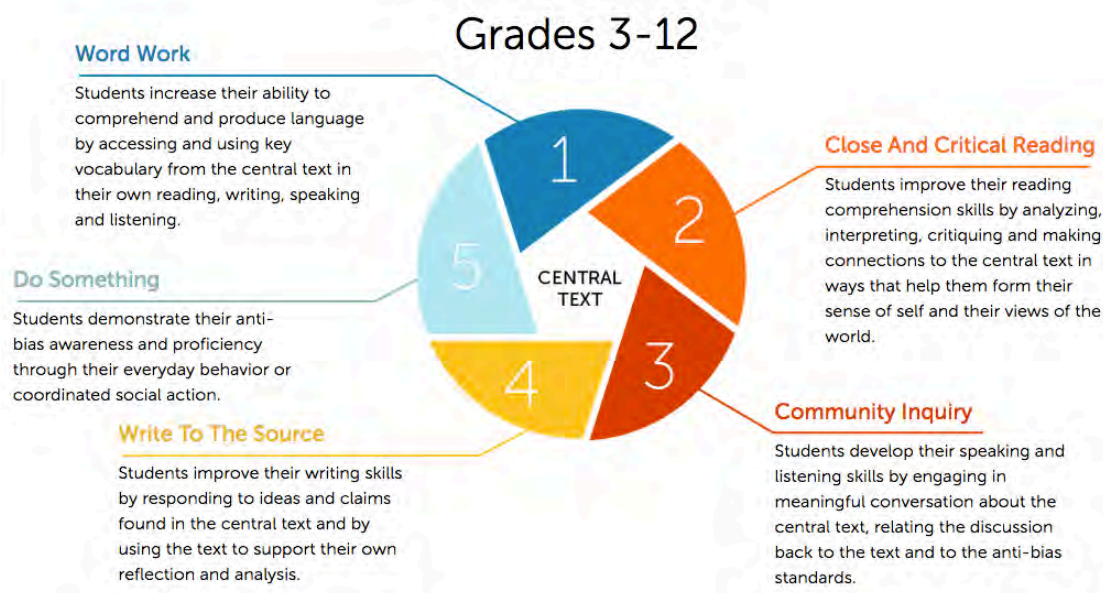
As these examples demonstrate, the most useful part of this site for teachers will likely be the many classroom resources brought together for students from Kindergarten to 12th grade. There are filters for grade levels, topics, and targeted curriculum subjects. In addition, the site allows users to search by four anti-bias domains that the organization uses to target different skills and understandings: action, diversity, identity, and justice. These filters allow teachers to search more effectively within the almost 500 lesson plans and activities gathered under the “Classroom Resources” page.

As with many ambitious projects, the Teaching Tolerance site includes both stronger and weaker materials. The resources labeled lesson plans are quite robust: they include learning targets, essential questions and enduring understandings based on the backward design work of Grant Wiggins, Common Core State Standards alignments, vocabulary lists, handouts, and other items

used in the lesson. The resources labeled “activities” and “activity exchanges” are less detailed and more narrative in nature, but nonetheless, they contain many good ideas that can be adapted and developed according to a teacher’s needs and goals in the classroom. Nearly all the items in this large database include links to other products, texts, and handouts that will be useful for teachers trying to incorporate anti-bias and inclusion into their classrooms. The variety of resources makes this part of the Teaching Tolerance website useful no matter what level of support you are looking for in your curriculum planning.

INTEGRATED LEARNING PLAN

The *Perspectives* Integrated Learning Plan features multiple curricular phases that promote social action and meet the literacy goals of the Common Core. Each phase offers a variety of strategies and tasks you can select and combine based on the needs of your students, your essential question and on the central text you select.

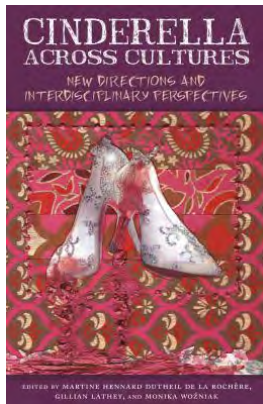


One additional resource is a site called [Perspectives Texts](https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts)¹, an entire literacy curriculum for K-12 based on a highly curated collection of central texts and learning goals aligned with Common Core State Standards. This website, which has been integrated into the Teaching Tolerance site, allows teachers to build a learning plan by choosing an essential question, a central text, and final writing and action tasks from a menu, and then building up smaller “word work,” “close critical reading,” and “community inquiry” tasks that will lead to the chosen goals and assessments. The website puts together and saves the plan along with all necessary handouts, assignments, and activities. This final plan also lists each Common Core State Standard that the different elements of the plan support.

Other resources on the website include the magazine *Teaching Tolerance*, PDF files of print publications, on-demand webinars that provide training on both diversity topics and anti-bias classroom strategies, and film kits that teachers can order at no cost through the website. With all these options and opportunities, the greatest fault of the website is that it may overwhelm.

1. URL for Perspectives Texts is <https://www.tolerance.org/classroom-resources/texts>.

Book Reviews



Cinderella Across Cultures: New Directions and Interdisciplinary Perspectives, edited by Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère, Gillian Lathey, and Monika Woźniak. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2016, 421 pp.

Jeana Jorgensen

Jeana Jorgensen earned her PhD in folklore from Indiana University and splits her time between teaching anthropology, folklore, and gender studies at Butler University; writing; and teaching and performing dance.

Cinderella Across Cultures is an important new publication in fairy-tale studies. With 18 chapters in addition to a foreword and introduction that do much to contextualize the volume, this book offers novel perspectives on a tale familiar to many, scholars and laypeople alike. For folklorists working in fairy-tale studies, or at the intersections of folklore and education (given that “Cinderella” has a history of being adapted in children’s literature with moralizing intentions), this is an important book. The cross-cultural material and less-known historical perspectives alone make it worth reading.

Editors Dutheil de la Rochère, Lathey, and Woźniak do an admirable job situating the essays in a global context in their introduction. Referring to Cinderella as a “global cultural icon” and “a universal metaphor to promote an unjustly neglected subject” (2), they give a short overview of the tale type’s history before mentioning some important picture book and performed versions (primarily in the media of stage, opera, ballet, and film). They cover manifestations of Cinderella in popular culture and criticism, focusing on the expected theoretical approaches (such as feminism and psychoanalysis) but also bringing in a hefty amount of framing from translation studies. They conclude: “Cinderella thus appears as a multilayered and ever-changing story endlessly adapted and reinvented in different media and traditions—very much like the elusive and multifaceted heroine herself” (18). Cinderella’s multiple transformations within the tale’s plot comprise a theme that most if not all the authors in the book address, in their provocative and fruitful attempts to explain the stubborn resilience of this tale.

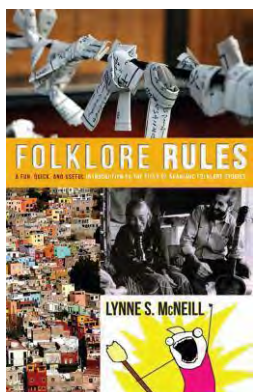
Two issues stood out as particularly intriguing: the varying interpretations of Cinderella in different versions of the tale, and the facets of the tale’s transmission less well known in the West. Exemplifying the first, I found it curious that in essays by Ruth Bottigheimer, Cyrille François, and Jack Zipes, Cinderellas from these classical versions are interpreted in rather different fashions. Bottigheimer characterizes Basile’s Zézolla as amoral, Perrault’s Cendrillon as virtuous and patient, and the Grimms’ Aschenputtel as quiet and pious. In contrast, François argues that Aschenputtel is simultaneously more active and submissive than Cendrillon, who mostly has wit working in her favor. Zipes argues that Perrault’s Cendrillon has innately good qualities, while the Grimms’ Aschenputtel has to earn hers, although “both tales entered the civilizing process of Europe to set a model of comportment: girls are to be gentle, pious, and good, and their beauty and happiness depend on their spiritual qualities” (360). Still, it’s clear from these essays that we’re

not yet done mining the classical versions of Cinderella for new insights. One useful observation to come from Bottigheimer is that the increasing importance of animal helpers in Cinderella retellings (i.e., Disney) has the consequence of reducing her agency, such that “the process of externalizing agency away from Cinderella by introducing animals to solve her problems also effectively strips the heroine of individualizing characteristics” (44). If any of us needed another excuse to be annoyed at Cinderella’s obnoxiously cute animal entourage, this would be it.

My second observation, about the more obscure aspects of Cinderella’s history, is based on a number of the chapters. Kathryn Hoffman’s essay on glassworks in 17th-century France and Italy brings a perspective informed by material culture to fairy-tale studies, which I always find to be a welcome juxtaposition. Hoffman points out associations between crystal and purity, and the legends of incorruptible saints in glass caskets, with which French and Italian consumers of both crystal and glass, and fairy tales, would have been familiar. It’s also helpful to see Hoffman’s thorough refutation of the *verre/vair*, or glass/fur, slipper misconception. Gillian Lathey’s essay on Robert Samber, who translated the first English version of Perrault’s “Cendrillon” in 1729, was also enthralling (not least because Samber translated other well-known children’s stories but also translated materials considered pornographic in their day). Essays by Talitha Verheij and Monika Woźniak also focus on translation, but of Cinderella into Dutch and Polish respectively. I was fascinated to learn in Xenia Mitrokhina’s essay on Soviet adaptations of Cinderella that we don’t have conclusive evidence of an indigenous Russian version of Cinderella that existed before Perrault’s version was translated into Russian in 1768.

Many of the essays also addressed Cinderella as adapted in various literary and visual contexts. Chapters on adaptations of Cinderella in the writing of Margaret Atwood, Emma Donoghue, and Angela Carter demonstrate just how useful Cinderella has been to writers chewing on issues of feminism, femininity, and identity. Mark Macleod’s essay on male Cinderella figures in LGBTI fiction might be of special interest to gender/sexuality scholars as well as educators looking for YA fiction that goes beyond the heteronormative. Similarly, Jennifer Orme’s essay on the picture book *Prince Cinders* grapples with gender norms and queerness in an accessible way, also pointing toward books that educators might want to use in the classroom. The visual arts discussed in other chapters—Polish posters, Dutch picture book illustrations, Soviet films—bring another dimension to this book often lacking in studies that are strictly from a folkloristic perspective. And Zipes’ chapter on Cinderella films is thorough enough to be tough to summarize, fitting given that “there were well over 130 different kinds of Cinderella films made during the twentieth and early part of the twenty-first centuries” (361) to begin with.

All in all, the essays in this book provide a well-rounded examination of the various forms Cinderella has taken over the centuries. From close readings of visual and filmic interpretations of Cinderella to accounts of the history and scholarship of literary and pop culture versions, this book has something for everyone. Ultimately, I agree with Bacchilega’s assessment in the foreword: “The essays collectively provide new insights into contextualizing, retelling, and reimage(in)ing Cinderella, and though they wisely do not aim for a global survey, they do engage cultural traditions that, while remaining rooted in a Euro-American context, decenter the Basile-Perrault-Grimms-Disney genealogy” (xiii). Cinderella’s legacy is not culturally monolithic, and thus scholarship thereon must not be either.



Folklore Rules: A Fun, Quick, and Useful Introduction to the Field of Academic Folklore Studies, by Lynne S. McNeill. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2013, xvi + 94 pp.

Trista Reis Porter

Trista Reis Porter is a PhD candidate in the Department of American Studies, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Folklore Rules provides an accessible roadmap through the field of academic folklore studies for instructors and students of both introductory and special topics folklore courses. As the author, Lynne S. McNeill, details in “For the Instructor,” this book provides more than the expected, basic examples of folklore subjects such as quilts and old wives’ tales, but without attempting to be encyclopedic (xiv). By swapping out the long case studies evident in other introductory texts for succinct, relatable examples throughout, McNeill helps situate folklore studies within students’ lives in an approachable, connected way.

This 90-page book is split into four main chapters. In the first, “What Is Folklore?,” McNeill provides a working definition of the term and connects it to ideas of culture, variation, and tradition. The author acknowledges and expands on previous assumptions before identifying folklore as “informal, traditional culture” (14), a definition useful in its simultaneous succinctness and breadth. In other sections of this chapter, however, McNeill’s examples and explanations are unnecessarily reductive. The author does invite further nuances or problematizing of ideas at the beginning of the book (xvi) and challenges her acknowledged oversimplifications through the example of symphonic melodies and the ways “popular” or “elite” culture can be used and shared in a “folk way” (10). However, several paragraphs are devoted to defining folklore by what it is *not* rather than what it is or could be, and needlessly simplifying important terms. For example, McNeill’s description of “traditional” as simply “passed on” and its opposition to rather than relationship with “variable” or “informal” (13) seems contradictory to the fluid understanding of tradition that is usually taught.

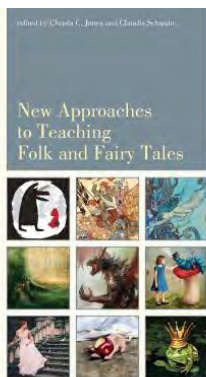
In Chapter 2, “What Do Folklorists Do?,” McNeill addresses assumptions of folklorists’ work and discusses the practices of collecting and analyzing texts, contexts, and texture. This chapter similarly warrants more complexity and explanation, although I enjoyed the author’s comparing of folklorists and criminologists to address playfully the assumptions of what it is folklorists do. The next section on “Collecting Folklore,” however, does not provide enough of a sense of *why* a folklorist would still want to collect, or the ethics of doing so, if the practice is historically tied to scholars’ beliefs that the “folk” were “the poor, the illiterate, the uneducated,” and that “folklore was the leftovers of an earlier age,” which “needed to be rescued from imminent demise” (23). Overall, Chapters 1 and 2 would benefit from a greater emphasis on the complex, connected, and generative capacities of folklore studies, as well as a critical engagement with the field’s history—a challenge that I acknowledge would risk falling into the long historiography of the field’s scope and terms, which the author largely avoids.

The last two chapters of *Folklore Rules* are by far the strongest and most valuable for teaching purposes. Chapter 3, “Types of Folklore,” considers different genres of folklore by dividing them into the categories of things we say, do, make, and believe. I especially appreciated the author’s

accessible identification of terms such as liminality and carnivalesque (48), as well as her inclusion of manufactured goods, found objects, and collections as potential “folk objects” (51-52).

Chapter 4, “Types of Folk Groups,” provides an overview of folk groups and how they are defined, as well as five specific, useful examples, including occupational, religious, campus, children’s, and digital folk groups. McNeill’s detailed elucidations of campus and digital folk groups, which illustrate the variable nature of folklore and how it is shared and practiced in everyday life, are particularly relevant for college-age students and expand the scope of folklore studies in ways that are often lacking in other introductory textbooks. Similarly, each section of Chapters 3 and 4 is supported by examples to which students can immediately relate, as well as brief annotated bibliographies of key folklore texts related to each genre or group. These bibliographies, also found at the end of Chapters 1 and 2, are especially useful for interested students or instructors wishing to expand on specific topics.

Overall, *Folklore Rules* accomplishes the author’s intentions of applying folklore to everyday life in a succinct, approachable, and enthusiastic text. Most of my apprehensions with the book concern McNeill’s means of defining terms and categories related to folklore studies, which at times are too narrow and lacking in complexity and nuance. As with other introductory texts, however, these are points that could and should be mediated by the instructor. Although *Folklore Rules* is less functional as a stand-alone text, much of its utility as a tool for instructors and guidebook for students comes from its brevity, clarity, and organization. Because of the book’s length and the organization of the chapters and sections, McNeill’s text can be parsed and supplemented by outside texts to suit the needs of the particular course and reading expectations. I look forward to integrating parts of this text in my introductory folklore course and observing how students engage with and relate to its subject matter.



New Approaches to Teaching Folk and Fairy Tales, edited by Christa C. Jones and Claudia Schwabe. Logan: Utah State University Press, 2017, 252 pp.

Lewis C. Seifert

Lewis C. Seifert is a professor in the Department of French Studies at Brown University.

Over the past few decades, as fairy-tale studies have become an ever more vibrant field, university-level courses on folk and fairy tales have appeared more and more frequently in the curricula of a diverse range of disciplines, including anthropology, film and media studies, gender and sexuality studies, and language and literary studies, to name but a few. So, the time is more than ripe for a volume such as this, the first anthology of essays devoted to the teaching of folk and fairy tales. In it, editors Christa Jones and Claudia Schwabe have assembled essays by some of the most prominent scholars in the field who present a richly assorted panorama of methodological and pedagogical perspectives. In addition to disciplinary variety, the courses described in the volume approach fairy tales in different ways: many are devoted entirely to folk and fairy tales, but others are not and incorporate them as part of a broader topic. The result is a collection that is enlightening and useful for all those—veterans and newcomers alike—who teach or would like to teach these genres.

New Approaches to Teaching Folk and Fairy Tales is divided into four sections, preceded by a foreword by Donald Haase and an introduction by the editors. In the first, “Fantastic Environments: Mapping Fairy Tales, Folklore and the Otherworld,” three essays describe courses that relate the fairy tale to broader phenomena of myth, fantasy, and folklore. Christina Phillips Mattson and Maria Tatar discuss their course on fantasy and children’s literature that aims to have students read familiar texts otherwise, especially by pairing them with carefully selected historical and theoretical readings. Lisa Gabbert explains how she uses fairy tales in a course on folklore, shifting attention away from tales as texts toward tales as performances within a processual and action-centered framework. And Juliette Wood describes a course on the topos of the Otherworld and demonstrates how this thematic focus allows her to give students an in-depth exploration of fundamental human anxieties and desires expressed by folk and fairy tales.

The second section, “Sociopolitical and Cultural Approaches to Teaching Canonical Fairy Tales,” features four essays on teaching folk and fairy tales in specific cultural and historical contexts. Incorporating insights from ecocriticism, Doris McGonagill presents a course on the culturally specific meanings of trees and forests in the Grimms’ tales. Claudia Schwabe discusses a class on East German film adaptations of the Grimms that focuses on their overt and subliminal sociopolitical import. Christa Jones describes how she sets Perrault’s fairy tales against their historical and literary context and their afterlives. In a course on the figure of Shahrazad, Anissa Talahite-Moodley uses the *1001 Nights* to examine the dialogical elaboration of cultures with a focus on the relationship between the East and the West and the construction of the exotic Other.

In the third section, “Decoding Fairy-Tale Semantics: Analyses of Translation Issues, Linguistics, and Symbolisms,” four scholars present their approaches to questions of language, semantics, and translation. Christine Jones demonstrates how translation can and, indeed, *should* be foregrounded in the teaching of fairy tales in L2 (second language) as well as literature courses. Armando Maggi illustrates how he uses a tale by Basile and the adaptation by the Grimms to show that fairy tales are “inventive and dynamic conglomerations of motifs that travel through space and time” (148). Using the example of Hans Christian Andersen and adopting a literary perspective, Cyrille François insists on the importance of close attention to language—over and beyond motifs, themes, and structures—when studying fairy tales. By contrast, describing an activity on versions of *Little Red Riding Hood*, Francisco Vaz da Silva argues that the meanings of folk and fairy tales should be derived from comparative analyses aimed at identifying “symbolic equivalences.”

The fourth and final section, “Classical Tales through the Gendered Lens: Cinematic Adaptations in the Traditional Classroom and Online,” explores pedagogical approaches to gender and sexuality in folk- and fairy-tale texts and films. Anne Duggan explains how she has students use concepts from queer theory to analyze Ozon’s *Criminal Lovers* and Breillat’s *The Sleeping Beauty*. Pauline Greenhill and Jennifer Orme review the challenges and opportunities of teaching an online course about gender in fairy-tale film and cinematic folklore. And Jeana Jorgensen describes group classroom activities she employs in a course on fairy tales in a gender studies curriculum to foster both critical analysis and creative exploration. Across the board, the essays in this volume are detailed and specific about both the challenges and the successes of the activities, units, and courses described. A truly important contribution, this volume should be required reading for instructors who have a stake in teaching of folk and fairy tales.

2018 *Journal of Folklore and Education*: Call for Submissions

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* is a peer-reviewed, multimedia, open-access journal published annually by Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. Local Learning links folk culture specialists and educators around the world, advocating for inclusion of folk and traditional arts and culture in 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.

JFE publishes work representing ethnographic approaches that tap the knowledge and life experience of students, their families, community members, and educators in K-16, higher education, museum, and community education. We intend our audience to be educators and students at all levels and in all settings, folk culture specialists, and those working in community-based organizations. As a digital publication, the *Journal of Folklore and Education* provides a **forum for interdisciplinary, multimedia approaches to community-based teaching, learning, and cultural stewardship**. It is found at www.locallearningnetwork.org.

The 2018 theme is Common Ground: People and Our Places. Working at the confluence of education with culture and folk arts, environment, and place, this special issue of JFE will create an important space for folklore to engage critically with emerging and established partnerships between the humanities and science. From indigenous ways of knowing to cultural stewardship, urban gardening to mitigating environmental impacts in watersheds, this issue will illuminate the power of local knowledge in influencing our special places. The field of folklore offers tools, strategies, and resources to help educators understand how culture influences ways of learning; creates and strengthens communities; and expresses itself in our schools, universities, museums, community organizations, and landscapes.

Essential questions that contributors may use to inspire their writing include the following:

- ~ What do folk arts and folklore bring to an examination or study of community places, including the relationship between the natural and built environment, the art and culture of the landscape, and a recognition of the people who live in that landscape?
- ~ How can the tools of folklore such as observation, identifying important seasonal traditions and rituals, and collecting personal experience narratives create opportunities for making a positive impact on the environment within a schoolyard or a community?
- ~ How can curricula and programs embrace expertise found in diverse communities to connect learners to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) and STEAM (STEM plus the arts) coursework?
- ~ How can STEAM teachers use Folk Arts in Education practices? How can classrooms and people who work with plants, water, air, or other environmental practices partner with folklore and humanities educators for greater student growth and achievement?
- ~ How does a folkloristic, ethnographic approach to working with learners in a classroom or community setting connect them with cultural knowledge systems different from their own and deepen their understanding of their own places?
- ~ What are local expressions of culture that could inform student research initiatives?

~How can university teacher-preparation programs include folk arts and folklore as part of their science education curriculum?
~ How can the field of folklore help address “tough conversations” or controversy found in contemporary discourse surrounding climate change, science, and narratives about the environment? How might this help us serve learners with diverse perspectives in our classrooms?

More about Submissions: *We seek submissions of articles, model projects, multimedia products, teaching applications, and student work accompanied by critical writing that connects to the larger frameworks of this theme.* We particularly welcome submissions inclusive of perspectives and voices from represented communities. Co-authored articles that include teachers, administrators, artists, or community members offer opportunities for multiple points of view on an educational program or a curriculum. We publish articles that share best practices, offer specific guides or plans for implementing folklore in education, and articulate theoretical and critical frameworks. We invite educators to share shorter pieces for “Notes from the Field.” Nontraditional formats are also welcomed, such as lessons, worksheets, and classroom exercises. Media submissions, including film and audio clips, will also be considered. We highly recommend reviewing [previous issues of JFE](#). Be in touch with the editors to learn more and see whether your concept might be a good fit.

Research-based writing that theorizes, evaluates, or assesses programs that use folklore in education tools and practice are also welcomed. These research articles may intersect with the theme “Common Ground: People and Our Places,” but all submissions with a research component will be considered. We expect that research projects will have appropriate institutional permissions for public dissemination before submission to JFE, including approval from Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) and/or data licensing for the acquisition of existing data, as may be required. See the protocol for publishing a study used by [ArtsEdSearch](#) for guidance.

Format: Articles should be 1,500-4,500 words, submitted as a Word document. We use a modified Chicago style (not APA) and parenthetical citations (you may request our citation template from the editors). All URLs hyperlinked in the document should also be referenced, in order, at the end of the article in a URL list for offline readers. Images should have a dpi of at least 300. Be in touch with the editors to discuss submission and media ideas and to learn formatting, technical specifications, and citation style.

Contact editors Paddy Bowman at pbbowman@gmail.com or Lisa Rathje at lisa@locallearningnetwork.org with ideas for stories, features, lessons, and media productions, and to request a citation style guide. **Initial drafts of submissions are due April 15, 2018.**

Please share this announcement with colleagues and educators in your community. This endeavor is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.

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



Local Learning connects folklorists, artists, and educators across the nation and advocates for the full inclusion of folklife and folk arts in education to transform learning, build intercultural understanding, and create stronger 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.

DONATE

Please support *The Journal of Folklore and Education* so that we can continue to provide this free resource.

Common Ground: People and Our Places

Journal of Folklore and Education Volume 5 will be published in September 2018.

Our advisory committee for Volume 5 issue includes:

Maribel Alvarez

Bror Marcus Leal Cederström

Deborah Fant

Tim Frandy

Todd Lawrence

Ellen McHale

Anne Pryor

Betsy Taylor

Thomas Walker

About the Editors



Paddy Bowman is Founding Director of Local Learning and creator of numerous folklore and education resources. She co-edited *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum* (2011) and co-wrote a chapter in *Folklife and Museums*. She was awarded the 2013 American Folklore Society Benjamin A. Botkin Prize for Lifetime Achievement in Public Folklore and in 2016 was named a Fellow of the American Folklore Society. Reach her at pbbowman@gmail.com.



Lisa Rathje is Executive Director of Local Learning. She also teaches in the Goucher College Masters in Cultural Sustainability program. Reach her at lisa@locallearningnetwork.org.