

## Appendix: Folk Arts Education Pie

*Dig in - Folk arts education is at its core discovery learning.*

### 1. Community Knowledge – The resources we use in folk arts education

- Texts from cultural communities (broadly defined to include songs, sayings, stories, visual art, etc.)
- Students' experiences (families, folk groups)
- Community presenters/visiting artists in the classroom
- Community field investigation
- Home investigation

### 2. FAE Student Skills and Teaching Practice – What students are learning to do and how to teach it.

*Folk arts education equips students to investigate the social/cultural world around us. FAE skills fall squarely under the skills of ethnography.*

#### **Tangible skills of ethnography**

Data gathering = Noticing deeply

Deep listening, observation (subjective and objective), interviewing, reflection, etc.

Data analysis = Making meaning

Finding patterns, making connections, similarities, differences, etc.

Re-presentation = Sharing with others

Presentations, synthesizing projects, building an argument/story, etc.

#### **Developing habits of mind – Intangible capacities that come from skill development\***

- Curiosity, perspective shifting, mental flexibility, working with ambiguity, openness
- Problem solving, inductive reasoning/hypothesis construction, empathy
- Self and social advocacy/action, confidence in engaging with others across differences

\* These skills are elusive to measure but are outcomes of students' educational arc. They support FACTS Social Emotional Learning activities.

#### **Teaching practices**

Me-to-We, attending to ordinary daily life, reflective writing, respectful use of authentic cultural resources, synthesizing activities, constructing new knowledge, inquiry, discovery learning, etc.

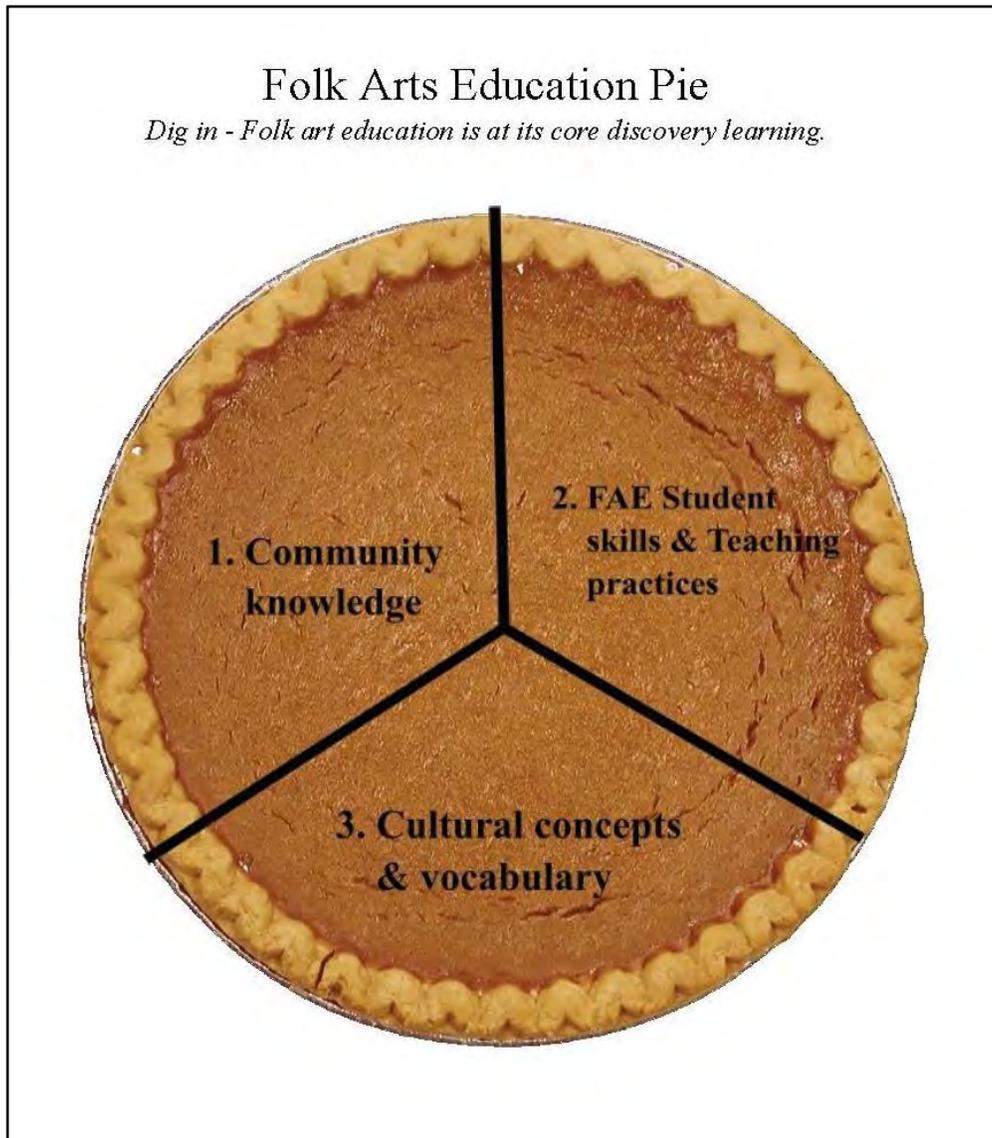
### 3. Cultural Concepts and Vocabulary

**“Big Ideas” about culture, including** Folk groups, traditions, cultural rules, roles and participation, folk/popular (commercial)/elite, worldview, etc.

**How culture works, including** We learn our culture in our folk groups from other people; change is constant in culture; every person is multiculturally constituted; we shape our folk groups, and they shape us; etc.

**Enduring understandings, including** Communities have artistic ways of sharing what is important to them; art forms arise from the needs, history, resistance, struggles in a community; artists go through training in their form; learning an art form is a process that takes time to master; the art form serves as a record keeper of a group of people and is a way to teach about the history of the group and self-identity; etc.

**FACTS folk arts standards, including** Recognizing folklife as an active force in our society; explaining the processes by which traditions are created, maintained, altered, lost, and revived; understanding how traditional art forms are shaped by social, political, and economic conditions; expressing themselves appropriately within a range of traditions; etc.



Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School Folk Arts Education Pie.  
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## Classroom Connections: A Me-to-We Activity

*This pedagogical practice involves starting students with exploration of selected aspects of culture within the student's own experience and then expanding to explore the same or similar aspects of culture within others' experiences.*

### Planning a “Me-to-We” Lesson

Determine what aspect of culture you want students to explore. With primary and intermediate grades, folklife practices like “home remedies” or “stories about how someone got their name” are very accessible for students to explore. With middle school students, folklife practices continue to be accessible, but you can challenge them to dig deeper into how culture works by selecting a cultural process for students to explore.

This instructional practice makes use of **comparison** as the basis for seeing variations and patterns in cultural practices. Starting with self, and then comparing with others, helps students cognitively reframe differences as variations and recognize more nuanced, complex comparisons, especially as they experience this comparative process multiple times, with culturally diverse others. Reframing differences as variations is important to the recategorizing process for eliminating or countering intergroup biases (Deafenbaugh 2017; Stephan & Stephan 2001).

In this activity to illustrate Me-to-We, I have picked a concept “cultural rules” from “3. Cultural Concepts and Vocabulary” in the Appendix above. Key to students gaining an understanding of a concept is to identify when this aspect of culture is likely to occur in their lives. Culture is complex, so any given aspect is likely to occur in multiple ways or re-occur at multiple points. This repetition in culture increases the accessibility of abstract concepts for students by giving them multiple entry points to explore aspects of culture’s inner workings and structure.

### Example:

*Cultural Concept:* Cultural Rules

*Folklife Practices in Student Lives:* Students identify all the “rules” they know about a celebration that they may know well—The Fourth of July. Suggest a different occasion, like Thanksgiving, as an entry point for students with no experience with Fourth of July.

*Cultural Processes for Students to Discover:*

- 1) Many cultural rules are rarely, or never, spoken.
- 2) Culture is both visible and invisible. Like an iceberg, there is a lot going on below the surface.

### Start with “Me”

Assign students to gather data from memories of their own experiences. They are to record everything they can remember about a family/extended-family celebration: What are all the activities, what are the preparations, who does what and when and how and why, etc.? Prompt them to remember deeply and record the details. Once students are inside their memories, ask them to be sure to record things that are always the same, or done the same way, anytime their family does this celebration (Noticing deeply/Data collection).

### Transition to “-to-”

In pairs or small groups, students share their memories with each other. The task of listening is very important, since the listener must ask questions to get the sharer to explain in more detail or

clarify aspects unfamiliar to the listener (Expanding the data collection to include data from someone else’s experience). Pairs/groups can be tasked with figuring out what was the same, or similar, or somewhat different, or very different between their celebrations or the ways each family “always” does them (Making meaning/Data analysis).

**Go to the “We”**

Pull the class back together to discuss what they have found was done similarly or differently. You then can restate/revoice their findings as “rules.” Verify with the students that your rewording is correct and then put these up on the board (e.g., men do all the grilling at one student’s Fourth of July picnic, while anyone can grill in another family). By asking the students what might or did happen if someone broke this “rule,” you can guide them to see that there are indeed cultural rules operating in this celebration. By asking students if anyone ever sat them down and specifically told them this “rule,” you can guide them to discover that cultural rules are not always spoken, yet everyone in that family cultural group knows their rules. To guide students to understanding their common bonds, the “We,” ask students to explain what is the same between these two families whose grilling rules are different. Students quickly grasp that “they both grill” or “they both have rules for cooking” (Making meaning/Data analysis).

Then organize this analytic insight into a way to present it, as in this graphic organizer:

<i>We are the same:</i> We both have rules for who can grill at a picnic	
<i>Variation 1:</i> Only men can grill.	<i>Variation 2:</i> Anyone can grill, but it is usually done by someone who is really good at it.

**Assessment**

Students then return to their pairs/small groups to work together to create their own list of rules by putting them into a graphic organizer that shows the similarities and variations. Instruct students to put a star next to any of their rules that are unspoken, that they have never heard anyone tell them. Then determine how you would like students to share their work, like by presenting to the class or hanging clusters of graphic organizers on a board with yarn linking rules that may be related (Sharing with others/Representation).

Reflection writing prompts after a Me-to-We lesson can usefully direct students to reflect on what they learned about their own culture or what they learned about how culture works.

Activities in which students interact with someone from a different culture in the community should align substantially with the explorations students have been doing of their own culture. In this way, students can repeat the Me-to-We process they just did with their classmates, but this time with whomever they are interacting with from a different cultural community. Alignment between students’ exploration of their own cultural knowledge and their exploration of a community person’s cultural knowledge contextualizes interaction and facilitates the exchange to productively continue the development of their inquiry skills important to Developing the Capacity for Tolerance. (Deafenbaugh 2017)

## Classroom Connections: Defining Culture While Teaching the Skills of Ethnography

Wouldn't it be so easy if there were a one-page vocabulary list about culture containing simple definitions for everything students needed to know? But the reality is that culture is so complex, such a list would become quickly useless. Users would realize how much it left out, how limited its perspective was, or even that the list contained biases.

This folklife education lesson guides a group in defining a conceptual term about culture by leading participants (students or educators) through the ethnographic inquiry process. When I do this activity to define “cultural treasures” with new teachers, it allows them to experience discovery learning, an important aspect of folklife education. I do this lesson with a group of teachers, but it is easily adaptable to do with students.

### Lesson Objectives

- To reset participants' expectations away from seeking simple phrase or sentence definitions of cultural phenomenon and toward more expansive definitions that better embrace culture's complexities
- To develop participants' ethnographic inquiry skills

### Lesson

#### *Step 1: It All Starts with a Question*

I use a metaphor to introduce the task the group is going to do together by asking participants to “think of a basket.” A basket can hold many things. We are going to first fill our basket with the incredible range and diversity that make up just one aspect of the human cultural experience. We want our basket to hold one cultural concept with all its variations. Then we are going to describe what goes in our basket to make a basket-shaped definition of the conceptual term: What is a cultural treasure?

NOTE: I prefer to not explain the ethnographic process we use in the lesson until the end of the activity. Inquiry is powerful when participants engage and experience the excitement of discovering. When we reflect on our learning during the wrap up, we then review the steps in the ethnographic process we followed throughout the lesson.

#### *Step 2: Data Collection or Noticing Deeply*

On the board write: Cultural treasures.

Ask participants to work together as a large group to give examples of cultural treasures. Rather than writing down all the specific items participants call out on the board, I rephrase their examples as generalizations.

→ For example, a teacher says, “my grandmother’s necklace.” I would write “family heirloom,” “special family object,” or even “special object/item.” The way I record their contribution helps all participants think more generally while holding in their memories the specific items that fall within the examples of cultural treasures listed on the board.

Participants begin by drawing examples from their lived experiences and knowledge of the world, and we move together to expand the list to include examples that did not readily come to mind.

Although I am ready with prompts to guide the direction of their thinking, it always happens that when one person comes up with an example, that shifts the direction of the board; others can more easily brainstorm in new directions. At minimum, examples of cultural treasures I would like to see on the board include:

- Physically tangible examples - like artifacts, foods, tools, clothing, etc.
- Temporally tangible examples - like stories, songs, dance, celebrations, etc.
- Ways of doing something - like healing, rituals, governing, cooking, making something, etc.
- Those who know how to do something - like grandparents, folk artists, ceremonial leaders, healers, etc.

This board full of examples becomes our data to work with as a group to form the definition we seek for the cultural treasures concept.

### *Step 3: Data Analysis or Making Meaning*

Ask participants to work independently to find the commonalities between examples on the board. They write down the categories they see in their own words (this is data analysis or making meaning out of our data). Their ways of categorizing help them to come up with, or discover for themselves, what all belongs in the basket for the conceptual term of cultural treasures.

We again work together as a large group to create a new list of categories on the board (or a separate piece of flipchart paper). Individuals share their ideas with the whole group. I do not quickly or necessarily accept all commonalities they suggest. The curated discussion I lead in this step includes asking them to explain their thinking and then possibly asking other participants to build on this or offer a more generalized rephrasing. I then check in with the original speaker to see if the rewording others suggest still captures the common bond that the original contributor saw in the data on the board. With their agreement, I will then add the co-created commonality to our new list of categories.

### *Step 4: Re-Presentation or Sharing with Others*

Once we have generated a list of cultural treasures commonalities, I explain that although we found these as common bonds among some examples, not all the examples of cultural treasures we initially came up with were included in every category and there are millions of other examples of cultural treasures we don't even know about that could fit within our categories. Nonetheless, our list of categories, when considered together, all represent the definition of what can be considered as cultural treasures. At this point, I am modeling the process called re-presentation: re-presenting our findings gained during data analysis.

Next, I present a different re-presentation by introducing the canonical knowledge while honoring the learners' knowledge as being equally valued. I begin to describe what the teachers have found out by using other words—by using terminology from the field of folklife education. I discuss that the teachers have found out or discovered that cultural treasures can be:

- Tangible (like things that can be seen, heard, touched, felt, tasted)
- Intangible (like knowledge that is not readily able to be seen, heard, touched, felt, or tasted)
- People who possess their culture's knowledge and practice it

I then reference the [UNESCO protection of intangible culture](#) and several countries' practice of honoring masters of cultural traditions, for example, the [U.S. National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Fellows](#) and [Japan's Living National Treasures programs](#).

#### *Step 5: It Comes Back to More Questions*

I ask participants to voice any questions they now have. Then I ask them some questions to consider: Are they themselves a cultural treasure? Are their students each a cultural treasure—even the youngest kindergarten students? If the teachers don't bring this up, I can point out how all members of a culture, even the young ones, know something about their traditions. I ask teachers to consider what impact it might have if they could help their students know that each of them is a cultural treasure.

#### *Lesson Wrap Up or Assessment*

This is the assessment point when we review what we learned about culture. We reflect upon participants' experience using the ethnographic process to craft definitions of cultural phenomenon. I can go over the steps of ethnography, teaching into any step that teachers have questions about. We can also discuss ideas for guiding students through exploratory inquiry learning.

I typically like to end with a culminating assessment activity. I challenge teachers to craft a vocabulary definition appropriate for their students' developmental level. To help them do this, I may give them a rough draft they can edit—or scrap—as they write their own, such as: Cultural treasures are the people of a cultural group and what they know about their culture and what they do to practice their cultural traditions.

**One final question I ask the teachers in my workshop, and I ask you the reader of this activity, to ponder: Now that we have defined cultural treasures, which way of gaining definitions has greater impact toward increasing your understanding of culture: 1. Just receiving a one-sentence definition of cultural treasures or 2. Discovering the “basket” definition for yourself?**

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#### **URLs**

Infokit 2011: What Is Intangible Cultural Heritage? <https://ich.unesco.org/en/home>

National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellowships <https://www.arts.gov/honors/heritage>

Living National Treasure <https://www.japanesewiki.com/title/Living%20National%20Treasure.html>