

Traditional Dance Arts in Education: Embracing our Diverse American Tapestry

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The Beginning

This story begins with a journey about a girl who was born in Lebanon to an Egyptian mother and Lebanese father at the height of the civil war. After 3 years of bouncing around countries in the Middle East and Europe to escape the war, her family finally immigrated to the US when she and her brother were still young. Raised by their mother, they assimilated to American life. This child would giggle when friends made fun of her mother's accent or commented on her bright clothing. She would hide her head in the car while the Arabic pop tunes were blaring, her mom's gold-bangled arms dancing in the front. She would roll her eyes when her mom and grandma showed up in their traditional clothing to pick her up from school. She would shrug her shoulders when friends commented that bad people came from Lebanon. She also loved being able to speak a different language when she didn't want her friends to understand what she was saying. She grew up to be a pretty average American teen while at the same time able to execute all proper Middle Eastern etiquette when needed. She did not think much about her roots until university when she stumbled upon the Middle Eastern music and dance ensemble performance. That moment sitting in the audience watching mostly non middle easterners sing, play and dance to music she had grown up with validated a rich cultural heritage she knew, loved and laughed at but didn't quite respect. That was a pivotal moment in her life and as the reader might have guessed, the child was me.

That experience had a profound impact in my life and 20 plus years later I realize how it has helped to shape the person I am today, a traditional arts advocate, dancer, cultural worker, and community organizer deeply committed to cultural democracy and healthy cross-cultural exchange. My personal lived experience, along with my research, has

led me to understand the important role traditional and folk arts can play in education, not only for their ability to enhance academic studies, but to validate children's own cultural heritage. As a mother raising my children in a relatively homogenous town, it is important to me that they understand the world is full of color, languages, food, music, art and customs that are different than what they are used to. I believe a traditional dance arts program in elementary education will heighten awareness but also help youth develop the skills to engage, understand, respect, empathize and connect with all kinds of people. This capstone, "Traditional Dance Arts in Education, Embracing our Diverse American Tapestry" is a culmination of my original research, education in cultural sustainability, lived experience, and desire to cultivate conversations about immigration through traditional arts.

Introduction

We live in a very diverse world and the United State of America is a country of immigrants. I use the term American Tapestry as a metaphor to represent the multitude of ethnicities, races, languages, customs, beliefs and values of all people living in the United States of America. America includes North America, the USA, South and Central America. For purposes of the paper I am referring to the USA, which is home to many people from the Americas. A tapestry is woven with many different colors of yarn, often textured and the image telling a story. What does it mean to be an American in the United States? I believe that people from all over the world weave our United States America fabric. Whether someone speaks very little English or no English at all, whether someone is brown, black, white, or mixed, whether someone has an accent, is a refugee, an immigrant,

native, or whose family dates back to the pilgrims, whether someone is Buddhist, Catholic, Jewish, or Muslim: we all are part of a community, living, working, and participating in what we now call home, the United States of America. We all are weaving our lives together as part of the American Tapestry of the United States. I believe it is our civic duty to educate children about diversity, inclusion and democracy so they can engage in our diverse communities with understanding, awareness and sensitivity. Through this research paper I will share how folklife education helps children to understand cultural participation as a universal human characteristic planting the seeds of cultural democracy to embrace diversity. I will focus on traditional dance as a part of folklife education, to serve as a program for the classroom. I will discuss arts education and the benefits of including dance in the classroom. I will examine the History and Social Science Framework for California Public Schools in order to develop a program that complements the units of study with the goal of embracing diversity. Lastly, I will offer recommendations for what an effective traditional dance arts program should include. This research and its findings are a launching pad to develop a specific program in partnership with teachers, cultural workers and traditional dance artists. Through interviews, research and conversations, this research hopes to illustrate how a traditional dance arts program, grounded in principles of folklife education, can foster an engaging curriculum with social purpose.

Methodology

I chose qualitative research because I believe in learning from the people on the ground doing the work. The Qualitative Research Consultants association states, "Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience's range of behavior and the

perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues. It uses in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypotheses. The results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive.”¹ There is a lot of value in stories, and experiences, that people share which can be used as learning experiences in developing conclusions and recommendations. The method for the capstone was to conduct research and interview local community members.

Scope of Research

Research involved readings in folklife education, how arts and dance education are used in public schools, understanding the visual and performing arts standards, and examining the History and Social Science Framework for the state of California. I conducted research online of organizations involved in above-mentioned subjects/activities and interviewed individuals. I chose to speak with individuals participating in existing dance programs in elementary schools, both related to traditional dance and/or general dance, traditional dancers, elementary teachers, and community/cultural leaders. I wanted to get the perspective from each of these groups in order to get a holistic picture of opportunities and challenges for each group when engaging with children in the classroom.

My criteria for interviewees were varied. For artists I had broken it down into native and non-native artist. I define native dancer as someone who has grown up in the context and culture of their dance traditions. By non-native I mean someone who did not have the heritage nor shared cultural experience of the dance form they practiced but learned it via classes. Through my research I also realized there is a middle group that I had not

¹ Qualitative Research Consultants Association Website. <http://www.qrca.org/?page=whatisqualresearch>. Accessed 5/13/18

considered, which ironically represents myself. This group of dancers has a shared heritage with the traditional dance they practice but has not grown up in the country or context of that art on a day-to-day basis like a native artist. This category represents the immigrant population usually 1st or 2nd generation who often re-connect to their cultural roots through dance. In total, I interviewed two native artists, three non-native, and two which occupied a middle space. One interviewee was both a 4th grade teacher and traditional dance artist.

Interviewing teachers, I chose to focus on 4th grade teachers, as I wanted to look at the unit on immigration in 4th grade social studies curricula. I reached out to teachers in two different school districts and obtained interviews from five teachers. I chose two districts for several reasons. One district, San Luis Coastal Unified District has schools from the North Coast extending inland to the city of San Luis Obispo, so it encompasses a diverse area. I have my own children in this district, and am most familiar with it. The second district I chose, San Miguel Joint Unified School District (SMJUSD), is much smaller, and more rural. I interviewed three teachers in the San Luis School District and two partner teachers in a school within the SMJUSD.

The final category of interviewees is community cultural leaders. I was able to connect with a professional in the non-profit arts world who had done a lot of work around arts education and an administrator focused on arts education in the Paso Robles School District. I also had informal conversations with four community leaders in the Filipino and Latino communities within San Luis Obispo County.

I developed a set of interview questions (attached as appendices A, B & C) for each group I was interviewing. The one group I did not have set questions for was the artist that

occupied the middle space of native and non-native. I was able to draw on questions that I had developed and through conversation interjected others that inquired about reconnection and cultural pride. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to an hour and were held most often at coffee shops or in teacher classrooms. I developed the questions using the grand tour questions as explained by James Spradley.² From these broader questions, and based on the responses, other questions referred to as "mini tour" questions helped to guide the direction of the interview flowing into a conversation. The research is qualitative in nature; experiences, stories, opinions, feelings, and thoughts. Information was collected in the same way throughout the process. I used a digital recorder to document the interviews. After each interview I wrote my field notes which reflected time, place, feelings, observations and experiences. I also logged the interviews and coded them to better understand qualitative data, overarching themes and findings. These are available upon request.

Limitations

Living in San Luis Obispo County, it is was difficult to find traditional dance artists that grew up in the context of their dance traditions. More time is needed to reach out to community groups and other networks in neighboring counties and rural areas of our county. Later in my research, I was connected to a woman who is part of the Filipino Historical Society in Santa Maria. Santa Maria is in Santa Barbara County, which borders SLO County. She gave me some names of traditional dancers in the area, one of which lived in SLO County but in the South. Unfortunately, he was unavailable to meet due to some

² James P. Spradley. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979.

family concerns. I also was informed of the P'urepecha community in the northern part of our county. The P'urepecha are from San Juan, Mexico and annually participate in a dance tradition to celebrate the coming-of-age for young men. This community however is difficult to connect with and my contact told me it took him 10 years to build trust with them. Community work takes time especially when connecting with marginalized communities. Most of the traditional dancers I have connected with in our community are either 1st generation within their culture or someone with no heritage connection but a passion for the dance. Each dancer has valuable insight to contribute from varied perspectives.

Another limitation was the ability to interview teachers from multiple districts. It would have been nice to get a perspective from each of the ten districts, but with six months it was not realistic. I also would have liked to reach out to the Central Coast Chinese Association and Latino Outreach Council, two organizations that organize cultural festivals, however time was a factor.

Lastly, my own inexperience conducting ethnographic research and synthesizing all the material to develop concluding themes was a limitation. Ethnography is an art and being able to ask the right questions, listen, lead the process, and synthesize material takes lots of skill and practice.

The USA and its Complexities

The United States of America is home to millions of people from around the world. In metropolitan areas, walking down the street, or ordering a sandwich, one can hear many different languages or accents, notice traditional clothing, and witness various cultural

expressions. While some embrace this diversity, others feel threatened. The United States represents freedom and opportunity while at the same time is guilty of systemic oppression and racism. Built on the backs of immigrants and genocide of native peoples, our history is rife with injustices and contradictions, while also championing democracy, liberty and justice for all. With technology today, the Internet, and easy access to news from around the world, we are much more connected than ever before. As a nation, we can no longer ignore the injustices of our past, which has led us to the present condition where institutional racism and oppression are part of some people's everyday lives. By addressing our past and present, we also acknowledge the ability to make positive change in a country where democracy, freedom, liberty, and justice are core values. History, layered with its complexities, both positive and negative, needs to be taught in order to accept, heal and move forward as a united nation.

Our current political climate is tumultuous; racism, sexism, and all the other ism's are brought to the public attention at almost every turn. As we see on the news today, a backlash is upon us, espousing white nationalism, denying that institutional racism exists, and openly displaying bigotry. We are living in a changing United States. Our population has never been so diverse. "More than 300 languages are spoken in the United States. Each represents at least one cultural community and many of them sustain 'classical' art forms and 'folkloric' traditions."³ With the recent US election, we are very likely entering into another culture war, as my professor Robert Baron⁴ stated. The culture wars during Clinton's administration were about history books and how multiculturalism was

³Holly Sidford, "Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change." *National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy*. (2011): 12.

⁴ Robert Baron, conversation, Cultural Policy Class 2017

degrading American culture. In the article, "*The Culture Wars*" Jensen writes, "The conservatives charged that multiculturalism in practice was an attack on dead white men and western civilization in general, and that critics were systematically silenced as politically incorrect."⁵ Almost 20 years later and we have come full circle. Part of the white nationalist movement wants to make sure history books reflect America through the Eurocentric lens, yet this does not represent the many contributions by native peoples, immigrants and people of color in our country. How can we help teach our youth about diversity, inclusion, and cultural democracy? How can we come to a place where all cultures and races are embraced, where we value minority voices, include what we might consider different, and work for a representative democracy at all levels of society?

We can work towards cultural democracy by introducing our complex history in schools, developing units of study that bring in multiple perspectives, by bringing community voices into the classroom sharing their stories and diverse cultural expressions, and by asking students to be reflective. Schools can adopt these practices along with culturally responsive education methods as part of their pedagogy.

California has the largest population of any state in our nation and no single ethnic group forms a majority of California's overall population.⁶ About 26% of California's public school students in the 2011–12 school year identified themselves as white (non-Hispanic), and 52% of the state's students identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. In that year, the ethnic groups that made up the remaining portion of the statewide public school

⁵ Richard Jensen, "The Culture Wars, 1965-1995: A historian's Map." *Journal of Social History* 29 (Mid-Winter 1995): 21.

⁶ "Wikipedia," California demographics https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_California, accessed 5/1/18

student body were Asians (11%), African Americans (7%), Native Americans (0.7%), and Pacific Islanders (0.6%). Students of mixed race made up 2% of the public schools.⁷ According to the History and Social Science Framework for the California public schools, "Of the 6.2 million students attending California's public schools in 2012-13, over 1.3 million were English language learning, 21.6% of the total school enrollment."⁸ California schools are diverse, with multiple languages, races, ethnicities and socio- economic backgrounds.

San Luis Obispo County (SLO) located on the Central Coast of California is not representative of California demographics. SLO has a higher percentage of non-Hispanic whites, 70% compared to the state average of 40%. SLO also has a lower percentage of Hispanic/Latino, 22% compared to the state average of almost 40%.⁹ Other ethnicities in SLO comprise a very small percentage. County poverty levels, according to US Census data, are 13.6% compared to 13.2% in California.¹⁰ The demographics of SLO exemplify the importance of bringing diversity into the classroom for children. SLO County is a bubble of sorts and we have recently been receiving national attention for instances of overt racism and discrimination at our local university. Our children will grow up and enter a diverse workforce, state, country and world. It is imperative that we give all children the tools to engage in our diverse society with knowledge, awareness, empathy, respect and acceptance

⁷ "Wikipedia, CA demographics."

⁸ California Department of Education, "History and Social Science Framework for California Public Schools" 2017: 2

⁹ County of San Luis Obispo Public Health Department, "Community Health Status Report, 2013-2014" (October 2015), 5.

¹⁰ Community Action partnership of San Luis Obispo County, "Community Action Plan 2014-2015", (June 2013), 9.

of all people. It is also critical that minority children feel represented in the classrooms and have their own race, ethnicity, and culture reflected in the classroom. Children spend so much of their lives in the classroom and schools are centers of community. By offering programs that represent our culturally plural society and help students to see the connections amidst differences, we assist them in stepping out into the world able to embrace our beautiful tapestry of people that make up the United States of America.

Folklore

In order to understand folk/traditional arts we must first understand a little bit about folklore. Folklore is practiced everyday by everybody. The informal knowledge we know, the customary do's and don'ts, the way we greet our elders, the way we toast at a wedding, the way we make eye contact or not, the stories we tell at Thanksgiving, the food we serve for a holiday; all these examples are bits of folklore we all have. Jan Brunvand writes:

Folklore is the traditional, unofficial non-institutional part of culture. It encompasses all knowledge understanding, values, attitudes, assumptions feelings and beliefs transmitted in traditional forms by word of mouth or by customary examples... it is the whole traditional complex of thought, content and process- which ultimately can never be fixed or recorded in its entirety; it lives on its performance or communication as people interact with one another."¹¹

Two key concepts in this definition of folklore are transmission and fluidity.

Folklore is passed on and it is never stagnant. Barre Toelken in *Dynamics of Folklore* discusses this as the dynamic interaction of human beings.¹² Folklore is dynamic even

¹¹ Paddy Bowman and Lynne M. Hamer. *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum* (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1978) 2-3, 9.

¹² Barre Toelken. *The Dynamics of Folklore*. (Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press, 1996).

though it is sometimes part of the mundane activities of our daily routines. The dynamism of folklore might sometimes move as quickly as a sloth but it is always living, experienced and recreated. This is where the concept of tradition fits in. Traditions are often time tested, passed on from generation to generation, sometimes requiring years of skillful study to master, other times an act committed to memory learned informally through cultural process. Yet traditions are also dynamic, influenced by contemporary experiences, politics, and resources. Traditions may shift over time a little or a lot depending on individual and group interactions, but traditions, whether informal or formal, public or private, are a fundamental aspect of folklore.

Folklore, when brought into the classroom, connects academic studies to everyday lives. To many, the word "folk," may conjure images of overalls and banjos, or subtly suggest an unrefined art, or may imply the lower class or poor, but these stereotypes paint a miniscule picture of a diverse and complex discipline. Folklore may also be seen as old, historical, preserved traditions of the past. Folklore exists in the past and the present and is in no way pejorative or provincial. Regardless of socioeconomic status, folklore is sophisticated, filled with intellectual value and skill, and deeply rooted in social context, community and culture.

Folklife Education

Folklife education, a tenet of folklore, connects informal knowledge, our cultural knowledge, with formal pedagogy. It can make the invisible visible. The *Standards of Folklife Education* developed by the Pennsylvania Folklife Education Committee states, "Folklife education is not to teach students heritage or traditions, either their own or those

of others. Rather it teaches the skills and concepts necessary for students to explore cultural participation first in their own lives and then in looking at others."¹³ If we do not understand our own cultural participation, how can we relate to, understand and notice differences without judgement. Folklife education stresses the importance of experience, inquiry, and reflection to understand one's own and other's cultural participation. This pedagogical approach is intended to help children navigate our diverse world with respect, curiosity, and empathy; understanding that cultural participation is a universal human characteristic.

Folklife education within formal pedagogy has been around since the 1930's and more consistently since the 1970's through the American Folklore Society (AFS). In 1987 the Folklore and Education Section of the AFS was founded, devoting itself to research, methods and application of folklore education.¹⁴ In the article, *Folklore and Education: A Short History of a Long Endeavor*, Anne Pryor and Paddy Bowman explained that, in reviewing scholarly media on the subject, there was a lot of 'grey literature', meaning there were not a lot of published works, but plenty of documentation.¹⁵ The researchers found that most of the literature around folklife education was based on methods and applications not quantitative research.¹⁶ I can confirm through my research that much of the information available represents qualitative and anecdotal information around folklife education programs. As the authors of the study explained, much of the documentation

¹³ Diane E. Sidener. *Standards of Folklife Education*. (Immaculata, PN: The Pennsylvania Folklife Education Committee, 1997). 1

¹⁴ Anne Pryor and Paddy Bowman. "Folklore and Education: A Short History of a Long Endeavor." *Journal of American Folklore*, Volume 129, no. 514 (2016): 441

¹⁵ Pryor et al. 437.

¹⁶ Pryor, et al. 437

focuses on localized practices in the field, working with communities to address societal issues such as desegregation, immigration, or sustaining traditions. Although the quantitative and formal research around the impact of folklife education is small, the qualitative impact through case studies, journal articles, conferences, organizational newsletters, is abundant.

Folklife education takes place in classrooms across the United States in varying degrees, from yearlong residencies, short-term programs, one-time presentations, to a school whose entire curriculum is based in folk arts education. Often times the activity may not be considered folklife education in the formal sense but is an aspect of it. For example, 4th grade teacher Mrs. Toews shared she was not aware of folklife education but at the same time noted that local Pomo Indians were invited to come into a class and share their basket weaving traditions.¹⁷ Although not billed as folklife education, it was an element of the pedagogy; real voices were brought into the class when students were learning about local native history in social studies. Common threads around folklife education are diversity awareness, community exploration, reflection, and inclusion. Regardless of the tradition, activity, or community being studied, the pedagogical goal is some level of increased awareness and understanding of varied cultural participation in our community, country and world.

In my understanding of folklife education, an underlying concept is cultural democracy. Cultural democracy stands for the universal right of cultural participation by all. Bau Graves in his book *Cultural Democracy* writes, "It [cultural democracy] means that we cannot judge another's culture, only accept it. That acceptance is the beginning of

¹⁷ Mrs. Toews interview 4/10/18

tolerance.”¹⁸ By brining community voices into the classroom through folk arts, a culture of acceptance begins. Cultural diversity, as essential for human survival, was brought to light by ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax in the 1970’s who was “dismayed that mass communications and centralized education systems were crushing local languages and expressive traditions.”¹⁹ The work of Lomax and many others to document, sustain and advocate for diverse cultural traditions leads towards cultural equity and cultural democracy. A well rounded explanation of cultural democracy by blog site CulturalOrganizing.org states, “it [cultural democracy] is a kind of multiculturalism in which there is no hierarchy, no center, no “high” or “dominant” culture. Its goal is pluralism rather than assimilation. It promotes not just inclusion but participation. It goes beyond tokenism to ensure that people of all cultural backgrounds have the resources and access they need to effectively participate in and co-create our national cultural fabric” ²⁰ Folklife education is a method towards achieving cultural democracy. With our current political and social climate, as we work to accept and heal historical oppression, racism and tackle our many biases, folklife education offer a “gentle” approach and tool towards cultural democracy, acceptance and inclusion.

Although, there is little ‘quantitative research data proving that folklife education leads to increased cultural justice, some folklife educators are beginning to make the argument. Recently released PhD dissertation by Linda Deafenbaugh, “*Developing the*

¹⁸ James Bau Graves. *Cultural Democracy TheAarts, Communiy and the Public Prupose* (Urbana: Univ of Illinois Press 2015), 18.

¹⁹ “ Cultural Equity” http://www.culturalequity.org/ace/ce_ace_about_ce.php, accessed 4/30/18

²⁰ Paul Kutner, Cultural Organizing blog. <http://culturalorganizing.org/take-a-stand-for-cultural-democracy/>, Dec. 2016

Capacity for Tolerance through Folklife Education" illustrates how this is done.²¹ In her yearlong study with high school students, Deafenbaugh develops a methodology and program that answers her research question, "How does student learning about cultural processes via the standards of folklife education develop their capacity for tolerance?" Of course the answer is complex but her findings clearly show an increased facility towards social tolerance. Her report goes into depth about the skills students developed to move beyond simplistic notions of similarities and differences, their ability to shift perspectives, moving towards making meaning and connections of cultural participation, leading to the students self-expressed desire to foster cultural action towards social justice. Deafenbaugh writes, "... when students shifted perspectives, they gained access to seeing that the practices others engaged in doing were as guided by rules as their own practices were, just guided by a different set of rules with both logic and benefits, and a substrata of deeper worldview meanings." ²² She continued to illustrate how "students saw the differences as variations, connected to others and expressed new insights into the inherent equality between people and the importance of gaining understanding of another's deep culture."²³ Through her research, Deafenbaugh developed quantitative data, curriculum recommendations and a program model of how folklife education fosters our youth to become global citizens respectful toward diverse cultural groups. In today's multicultural world, this is essential for productive learning, intercultural connections, and peaceful communities. Beyond tolerance Deafenbaugh's, work demonstrates the deep impact that

²¹ Linda Deafenbaugh, "Developing the Capacity for Tolerance through Folklife Education" (PhD diss., University of Pittsburg, 2017)

²² Deafenbaugh, *Developing the Capacity*," 415

²³ Deafenbaugh, *"Developing the Capacity,"* 416

inquiry, exploration, and reflection have to break down the barriers and biases we all have to create a truly inclusive society where we all feel like we belong.

Folklife education brings community knowledge into the classroom, diverse community voices representing our culturally plural society. By sharing folklife and folk arts with students in the classroom, they are being pulled out of their original context and displayed. In doing so, there are some negative consequences that could result without proper preparation and background knowledge. The Philadelphia Folklore Project published an article entitled "Pitfalls and Possibilities: Presenting Folk Arts in the Schools"²⁴ which helps educators understand what some of the pitfalls are and how to avoid them.

Presenting folk arts as equal to other artistic expressions is important to dispel the idea of folk as pejorative, different or someone else's. Presenting folk arts as something we all participate in, but do so in different ways without judgment, builds understanding and acceptance. Sharing a cultural expression by bringing in a guest artist can challenge stereotypes but may also perpetuate them. If a guest artist comes to the class dressed in traditional regalia for example, it does not mean they also don't wear blue jeans and sneakers, or that everyone in their community has the same traditional regalia. No community is homogenous and not everyone within that community shares the same exact traditions. Through folk arts programs, stereotypes can be challenged in order to broaden students' world views.

²⁴ Philadelphia Folklore Project, "Pitfalls and Possibilities: Presenting Folk Arts in the Schools."
<http://folkloreproject.org/educational-tools>

Comparing and contrasting or pointing out differences should be done with awareness of how students might feel and in a way that connects students, not divides them. For example asking a student to share a certain custom or tell a story to honor diversity could be stressful for that student or make them feel like they are being put on the spot or different than the others. It is important to not singularize students but instead to create assignments that all students participate in; offering students the opportunity to not share, if there is discomfort or to share in a way that does supports their cultural values. Presenting folk arts is dynamic, and bringing community voices into the class adds depth. These pitfalls should not deter a program, and projects that honor diversity are vital. Awareness, however, of how they might backfire is vital in order to develop programs that are inclusive, sensitive and connect students to each other and world.²⁵

Folk Arts

*"Traditional arts embody community aesthetics, identity and values; they are not just about techniques, skills, or pieces of information but about people and a way of learning about the world, responding to and being responsible for the world."*²⁶

– Steve Zeitlin, City Lore

Folklore expressions are broad and range from subtle gestures to skilled performances. Folk arts are one expression within the dynamic world of folklore and include activities such as music, stories, dance, craftwork, vocational trades, and cooking. The Alliance for California Traditional Artists defines folk & traditional artists as, "tradition

²⁵ Philadelphia Folklore Project, "Pitfalls and Possibilities: Presenting Folk Arts in the Schools."
<http://folkloreproject.org/educational-tools>

²⁶ Steve Zeitlin and Paddy Bowman, "Folk Arts in the Classroom: Changing the Relationship between Schools and Communities." 1993

bearers: people who transmit what they believe, know, do, and create with others who share a common heritage, language, religion, occupation, or region. These expressions are deeply rooted in and reflective of a community's shared standards of beauty, values, or life experiences. Folk and traditional arts are, ultimately, passed on from one generation to the next and express a collective wisdom, rather than a unique personal aesthetic."²⁷ Folk arts are these activities practiced within communities, sometimes formally taught and other times learned through observation and experience, but all are woven into the social fabric of the community, rich with context and meaning. Interchangeable terms "folk" and "traditional" arts relay a continuum of practice and represent more than a single point of view. Art in our western world lens often denotes fine art with a focus on product versus process, an individual versus collective, and self-expression often outside of community context. Folk and traditional arts offer a different perspective towards embracing art that does not fall into the categories of fine art yet requires just as much skill and training and should demand the same amount of respect. In "Resources for Folk Arts Education," the Philadelphia Folklore Project justifies the use of the term folk arts by stating "...because in this country, the creative expressions of ordinary people are not always seen as art, or as significant, or as part of a tradition. Because mainstream and elite notions of art generally marginalize the majority of world cultural and artistic traditions, the notion of 'folk' art is a way of making equal room for all peoples' habits of expression and creativity..."²⁸

Introducing folk arts to students through this lens reinforces the work folklife education lends towards cultural democracy.

²⁷ Alliance for California Traditional Arts, <http://www.actaonline.org/content/what-are-folk-traditional-arts>. Accessed 5/13/18.

²⁸ Philadelphia Folklore Project, "Resources for Folk Arts Education" 8/2009, 2

Within folk arts is the genre of folk dance, which communities around the world practice. Through this Capstone I will look specifically at traditional dance in order to narrow the focus and better understand its applicability in formal pedagogy through folklife education practices. For purposes of this Capstone I will use the term traditional dance instead of folk dance. An interchangeable term, the word "tradition" minimizes the derogatory innuendos of the word "folk". From the dance discipline I feel "traditional dance" creates space for people to understand collective dance as a refined art form. Folk dance generally means dancing in a group, line dancing, couples dancing at a party, or on the street. Folk dance is based in community and the collective. For these reasons the term traditional dance will be used in hopes to create space for wider acceptance and inclusion of varied dance expressions from around the world. Using traditional dance as the tool for folklife education, we must understand how dance has been integrated into schools and its impact.

Dance in the classroom

"Nobody invented dance. It is deep in the heart of every culture throughout history; dance is part of the pulse of humanity." Sir Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica²⁹

Art is a privilege in many schools today. As teachers focus on meeting state and national standards for language arts and math; lessons in science, social studies and art have taken a back seat. Although the National Visual and Performing Arts standards (VAPA) require some art in the classroom, the implementation is on an individual level by district or schools and it is not formally assessed by the state. According to Angela Tahti, an arts

²⁹ Sir Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica. "Why Dance is Just as Important as Math in Schools" Ted-Ed Blog, April 2, 2018. <http://blog.ed.ted.com/2018/04/02/why-dance-is-just-as-important-as-math-in-school/>

education professional with over 20 years of experience with arts education, teachers have not received art instruction as part of their education for the past two decades.³⁰ So the idea of incorporating or teaching art is daunting.³¹ In my research and personal experience, our local public schools incorporate art programs through afterschool classes or art programs for limited times and funded through Parent Teacher Associations (PTA). For example, the elementary school where my children attend receives 12 hours of art each year, which is solely funded through the PTA. Other opportunities are offered through afterschool programs. At Pacheco Elementary, a dual Spanish/English immersion school in San Luis Obispo County, students receive art instruction through artist-in-residency programs, afterschool programs, and a teacher initiated afterschool *baile folklórico* (Mexican folkdance) class for 5th/6th graders. In speaking with teachers, parents and administrators, I have found that artist residencies and afterschool programs are the most common way for students in our area to receive art instruction and how the VAPA standards are met. One exception in our county is the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District, which has a dedicated visual and performing arts program. As noted by Brent Moser, the VAPA coordinator for PRJUSD, every child in grades K-5 gets 35 minutes a week of music, dance and art.³² This is unique for our county and specific to the Paso Robles District.

All five of the teachers I spoke with through interviews and a few others informally in conversation, expressed an interest for more arts in their classes. They qualified the sentiment however by saying they need to be given the tools and know-how to integrate

³⁰ Angela Tahti interview, 4/6/2018

³¹ Tahti interview

³² Brent Moser Interview 4/13/18

art into the curriculum while also staying focused on meeting the standards. Beyond the artist-in-residency and STEAM programs, art is incorporated through a teacher's own initiative and ability to tie it into their curricula. For example, drawing a picture for the cover of a report, enacting a play about the California Gold Rush, or making bugs out of children's name in cursive writing. Mrs. Vega, 4th grade teacher at Pacheco Elementary School and teaching for 15 years, explained how she sees state mandates on curriculum as a pendulum. She believes the arts will come back as a subject because "they [the California Dept. of Education] are starting to realize how the creative and imaginative skills have been neglected yet are needed in today's world."³³

The argument about the benefits for arts education is abundant. Artsedsearch.org, an online clearinghouse of research focused on the outcomes of arts education, is a project of the organization, Arts Education Partnership.³⁴ Artsedsearch.org hosts a number of research papers about arts education, and its benefits for cognitive development, increased academic achievement, as well as support for English language learners and at risk youth. In 2011 the President's Committee on Arts and Humanities (PCAH) released the report, "Reinvesting in Arts Education."³⁵ This report highlights the results from an 18-month review of arts education programs surveying research about its benefits. Two main themes emerged from the report; arts education was a complex patchwork of implementation and there exists a persistent inequity in the distribution of arts education. The report also illustrates the benefits of arts education exemplifying a narrowing achievement gap, higher attendance rates, fewer discipline problems, improved test scores, motivation to 'difficult

³³ Mrs.Vega Interview. 4/17/2018

³⁴ ArtsEdSearch. <http://www.artsedsearch.org/about-us/about-artsedsearch/>. Accessed 5/22/18

³⁵ President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. "Reinvesting in arts education" May 2011

to reach' students, and providing challenges to more academically successful students. Another important point the report stresses is the creative and critical thinking skills students develop, which are integral for higher education and today's workforce.³⁶ As Ms. Tahti, arts education professional, shared, "We don't really need to prove it anymore, the research is there, we just need to figure out the mechanics to get it in [the classroom]."³⁷

There are several mechanisms by which arts education can happen; integrated, correlated or subject specific.³⁸ Arts Integration incorporates an art form into the teaching of a unit of study in school curriculum; for example, a lesson in fractions using dance. Correlated art programs happen when the art activity supplements a unit. For example, students might be learning about native peoples of their region. A local tribesperson might come into the class and share a basket-weaving project. Lastly, subject specific refers to art for art's sake, learning about the positive and negative space in drawings for example. Dance can be integrated, correlated, or subject specific and has been incorporated in schools through all three avenues

Dance can feel daunting, embarrassing and intimidating especially to someone who has never taken a dance class. When I come into a class to teach, some adult students usually let me know right away that they don't know how to dance, or have never taken a class, they have no coordination. Dance can be scary but exciting. Children, often carry less inhibitions about dance compared to adults, and as creative, kinesthetic, imaginative beings, dance can help children synthesize, retain and understand information. Dance connects the mind and body, and is a tangible expression of embodied cognition, a

³⁶ President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. p.2.

³⁷ Tahti interview

³⁸ Tahti interview

relatively recent area of study in cognitive psychology illuminating the importance of body knowledge. In the article, "Embodied Cognition is Not What You Think it is" the authors explain:

Embodiment is the surprisingly radical hypothesis that the brain is not the sole cognitive resource we have available to us to solve problems. Our bodies and their perceptually guided motions through the world do much of the work required to achieve our goals, *replacing* the need for complex internal mental representations.³⁹

How we respond to the world around us and make decisions involves perception, our memory system, physical ability and body knowledge, not solely brain function. The podcast *Voices of VR* [virtual reality] aired an episode, "*Embodied Cognition; Using dance to teach computational thinking.*" The host Kent Bye explains "this new research [embodied cognition] asserts that we learn about the world by manipulating and interacting with it through our body and all of our senses and that context turns out to be an extremely important part of learning as well."⁴⁰ In the field of arts integration, the research around embodied cognition is vital in arguing for the impact dance can have on student learning. Dance uses space, the environment, physical movement, mind exercises and body memory. Dance is an excellent active learning strategy that uses mind-body connection, which is essential in cognition. Research demonstrates that the learning environment should support the use of the body and gesture as important components of the curriculum.⁴¹

³⁹ Andrew D. Wilson and Sabrina Golonka. "Embodied Cognition Is Not What you Think It Is." *Frontiers in Psychology*, Feb 2013: 1

⁴⁰ Ken Bye. "Embodied Cognition: Using Dance to Teach Computational Thinking." *Voices of VR*. 2016. <http://voicesofvr.com/412-embodied-cognition-using-dance-to-teach-computational-thinking/>

⁴¹ Roth, Wolff-Michael. "Gestures: Their Role in Teaching and Learning." *Review of Educational Research* 71, no. 3 (2001): 365-92. <http://www.jstor.org/goucher.idm.oclc.org/stable/3516003>.

Many case studies of dance programs in schools exemplify academic, social and emotional benefits to children. The 2013 Report by Art Works, "Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting", reviews reports from the US Department of Education's Arts in Education programs to better understand the impacts of dance in school programs.⁴² The report highlights the benefits to English language learners and at-risk youth to narrow achievement gaps, and illustrates that dance activities provide deeper comprehension and more visible engagement in the learning process itself.⁴³ The report stresses the need for more quantitative studies, which is often sought after when developing curriculum, but difficult to conduct. However, the report highlights a number of case studies of dance programs that supported math, science, language arts, special education, and cultural participation along with a component on teacher's perspectives. These case studies, although qualitative and even anecdotal, demonstrate the benefit to a wide spectrum of students across all intelligence levels, developing critical thinking skills, problem solving, language development, engagement, and enjoyment. Alongside the academic benefits, research also points out the deeper social benefits of incorporating dance. Karen Bradley writes, "This area [of cognitive research] concerns the capacity for dance and other arts to change the way people think about and experience the world around them."⁴⁴ This concept of dance affecting our worldviews is critical when exploring the ways a traditional dance arts program could engage children in cognitive learning around diversity and inclusion.

⁴² Karen Bradley, et al. "Evidence: A Report on the Impact of Dance in the K-12 Setting." Art Works.arts.gov July 2013

⁴³ Bradley, et al.,11

⁴⁴ Bradley et.al., 39

As I begin to think about traditional dance programs, I had to learn a little about what is being done in schools today. The more I looked, the more programs I found across the United States that work with schools to bring in dance and sometimes traditional dance. In speaking with leaders of organizations, their stories of impact matched what I was finding through my review of published research. Although programs are abundant, I was able to connect with three organizations bringing dance into schools; two in California and one in New York.

Experiences of Dance Organizations

Through my research I have found dance incorporated into schools in several different ways. The most common include afterschool programs, Physical Education class, and artist-residency programs during the school day. Beyond online research of organizations bringing dance into schools, I was able to speak with three individuals working in non-profit organizations that bring dance to elementary age students in school settings. These include the Santa Barbara Dance Institute (SBDI) in Santa Barbara, California, Tandy Beal & Co. in Santa Cruz, California and City Lore in New York, New York. Each organization has over a decade of experience bringing arts [dance?] into the schools. Each organization has a unique program and method of delivering dance to students. My focus was to look for programs that offered a "world or cultural" element to the dance to better understand the logistics, the organization's and school's goals and the impact of the programs on the students. Although I spoke with only three organizations, I think their successes and challenges are indicative of many non-profit programs working to bring arts into classrooms. Each of the programs is funded through a mix of grants and school-

allocated funds. Each organization is continually advocating and reaching out to schools to bring in their programs. Consistency of dance classes within some schools fluctuate; while some schools maintain programs for many years, all programs end in some form of assembly or showcase to highlight accomplishments, and artists had to be mindful of how much they could ask of teachers and administrators. All had beautiful stories of engagement, impact, and growth in children that participated in program.

Both SBDI and Tandy Beal & Co. programs' primary focus is dance and movement. Getting children to connect to their bodies, connect to the music, and be proud of their accomplishments through end-of-program showcases. SBDI does not market their program as world dance, yet the executive director and primary instructor Macisco explained how she uses music to bring in cultural elements, especially Spanish language music.⁴⁵ With the children, she talks about the history of the song, the meaning, the context, and gives Spanish speaking students the opportunity to let others know what the song means. Macisco said, "Sometimes I will teach the whole class in Spanish and the kids who speak Spanish are beaming. They feel honored and proud to have their language represented. Other kids' minds are opened to the fact that other kids in the class understand it."⁴⁶ Although anecdotal, this is something I have heard often from artists, through my own experience as a teacher as well as from my two other interviewees. Saki, from Tandy Beal & Co. recounted an incident that happened rather spontaneously in one of her classes. One of the students was from Guam and told her a story about his grandmother. She asked if he

⁴⁵ Rosalina Macisco interview. 2/27/2018

⁴⁶ Macisco interview

might be interested in sharing it during the assembly and without rehearsing and at the last minute did. That experience might have served as a window for his peers into his culture.

Thinking about the principles of folklore education and planting the seeds of inclusion, Macisco's method of sharing Latin music, dance and language is a step in that direction and clearly impacts the children she works with. One year, Macisco presented the end of year assembly all in Spanish. People told her how "this was the most Latin integrated program these kids and families are ever going to get in a predominantly white school." Macisco added that teachers were also very supportive and appreciative to see their students who don't usually shine, blossom. Through this experience, a secondary impact to students and teachers took place as explained in Linda Deafenbaugh's article, "Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities."⁴⁷ Deafenbaugh uses folklife education as a tool for children to understand their own culture and honor the community knowledge each student has by bringing it into the classroom. Macisco's program does not have the focus, but by incorporation of Spanish songs and language, the Hispanic children see their culture represented. The secondary impact as described by Deafenbaugh is two-fold. The first is to students experiencing other classmates' cultures and secondly to teachers who advance their own understanding of their students, becoming more aware of the informal knowledge they carry with them. I found this so interesting because as I am trying to figure out the best way to develop a program, which helps students embrace diversity, Macisco's subtle yet powerful methods gracefully sublimate the concept through experience. What is most striking is that the SBDI program does not stress the cultural

⁴⁷ Linda Deafenbaugh. "Folklife Education: A Warm Welcome Schools Extend to Communities." *Journal of Folklore and Education* 2 (2015): 80

impact yet Macisco delivers cultural awareness by embodying the experience through action, language and music. From a folk arts education perspective, adding components of inquiry and reflection to the class or assembly could deepen the experience for the students. At the end of each year, SBDI reports on impacts of the dance program in schools. They highlight the skills children are learning, changes in behavior, attendance, academic achievements and teacher's perspectives of impact. The elements of diversity and inclusion are not highlighted but are clearly a personal mission and subtle yet powerful component of Macisco's program.

Tandy Beal & Co. has been in the community for over 40 years bringing dance and theatre to the public and youth in schools. Over the past decade, they have been bringing dance to schools through their ArtSmart or Educational Outreach Program. Speaking with Saki Olsson, the ArtSmart coordinator and teacher for the Dance Around the World program, it became clear that the primary focus was creative dance; getting children to experience their bodies. The world element was an added bonus by bringing in a guest artist for one out of the eight classes and including master world dance artists in their culminating shows. How much they dive into one country is really dependent on the Tandy Beal & Co. teaching artist and with the classroom teacher, if they are studying a specific country. Saki shared how she brings in the world aspect through music from different countries for the first 2-3 weeks. She does not always teach the dance steps associated to that music. That is left to the guest artist who comes for one of the sessions. However when a single country has been chosen as the focus, then she will bring in maps, examples of written language, or, if there is a student in the class from that country, she might offer them the opportunity to translate or share a story. Saki shared "Other than bringing in like

a writing sample, or I have visuals I may share, such as an Indonesian shadow puppet, in visually prompting ways... I don't know how it would... other than having a less movement-involved class, how deeper we may go. I hope that it happens with the classroom teacher...but that I just don't know."⁴⁸ Very little time is spent on this educational aspect though as they only have 45 minutes for 8 weeks and children want to dance. What teachers do to add to the educational component of the country is up to them in order to engage in this curricular component, This is a common thread when talking to teaching artists and program leaders, the balance between too much talking and the desire for students to dance.

Billed as a world dance program, students are exposed to world dance mostly through the one class that master artist comes to teach. This might be a dancer from Bali, Mexico, or Japan, for example. Artists are asked to come in costume and teach class as they would in their community. She says although it is only one time, the impact is huge. "Kids often ask me when is so and so coming again, or they will show me the movements they learned." She added, "My hope is to pique the curiosity of the students to keep wanting to know more... to show the brightness of any situation, even if they can't understand the English, it has a huge impact...we want to honor that person and their tradition, they are part of the community and in our community."⁴⁹ So again, the world dance program is planting the seeds about diversity, showing children that their community is bigger than they might think with people from all over the world. Tandy Beal & Co. exemplify diverse cultures through the one guest artist and assembly. SBDI sublimated culture through

⁴⁸ Saki Olsson interview 3/8/2018

⁴⁹ Olsson interview.

music, language and teacher instruction. Planting the seeds of diversity is a first step in the process of embracing diversity.

Considering some potential pitfalls, teaching culture with sensitivity, and the ability to provide more context and conversation with guest artists would help to dispel stereotypes and broaden the worldview of the children. By asking a student to translate or share something from their culture might single out a student, make them uncomfortable and create unwanted attention. Being sensitive to the multiple ways a student might respond, whether proud, embarrassed or something in between is important when teaching about culture. Providing more context and conversation can broaden a student's worldview as well. For example, having the artist come in costume might lead students to think this person from this country always dresses this way. Or a student might assume that their peer also from Japan, for example, might inherently know these same dances and share the same experiences. Including presentations of diverse cultural expressions is important and when there is an added component of inquiry, reflection and conversation the pitfalls are less likely to occur.

Unique to Tandy Beal & Co. program is their emphasis on incorporating the VAPA standards, PE standards and common core curriculum as a mechanism to justify the program's acceptance and value in schools. Saki shared though, that this is for administration, and gave the example, "If I walk into a class of 7th graders and none of them have had movement classes before, it makes no sense for me to turn to the page for 7th grade national standards."⁵⁰ The standards assume that students have received dance through their elementary years, yet VAPA standards are inconsistently implemented

⁵⁰ Olsson interview.

throughout schools in the state. Nonetheless, knowing the language, terminology, and standards for school administrators is important in promoting a dance program. Tandy Beal & Co., like SBDI, offers dance classes through Physical Education minutes as another means to incorporate dance into the school day.

Another program goal for both organizations is to teach teachers how to integrate dance and movement. Both Macisco and Saki shared how a goal of their programs is to help teachers feel comfortable and offer tools on how to incorporate dance. Through this manner, dance will be sustained in the classrooms, whether through PE or integrated in curriculum. City Lore offers professional development for classroom teachers around folklife education. Macisoso has developed "Dance infusion" which instructs PE teachers on dance methodology and Saki shared how she works closely with teachers to do what they are interested in and hopes to offer deeper learning to them so they can incorporate dance in the future.

City Lore's Traditional and Folk Dance program had the most in-depth platform and awareness of principles around folk arts education. A non-profit organization with decades of experience, City Lore states, "[our] mission is to foster New York City -and America's - living cultural heritage through education and public programs. We document, present and advocate for New York City's grassroots cultures to ensure their living legacy in stories, histories, places and traditions."⁵¹ They do this through a variety of programs working collaboratively with diverse communities, agencies, non-profits, artists and offering programs in schools and community organizations. Through their arts education program, dance is one of their many offerings, and traditional dance is a subset within that discipline.

⁵¹ City Lore. <http://citylore.org/about-city-lore/who-are-we/>. Accessed 5/12/18

With their expertise and ability to offer profound programs in cultural affairs, they still have to work within the confines of the public school setting; teachers who already have a lot on their plate, classrooms, resources and time. Amanda Dargan, City Lore's Education Program Director, shared the need for "flexibility and going with the culture of the school".⁵² As a folklorist, her approach matches the fundamental practice in public folklore: approaching the work from the grassroots, and working from the ground up with input from those involved. The school in this case is the main partner in providing a program. Like SBDI and Tandy Beal & Co., Dargan shared how they do not ask or expect much from teachers in between their classes. City Lore provides all the materials; they set up the program through a school coordinator or principal, sometimes the teacher if that is an option. Dargan offers support, encourages journals and discussion, and through professional development with teaching artists develops a system of delivery that provides for context and story along with dance. Dargan shared that the main value of having an outside person come to the class is to share their stories. She spoke of wanting "kids to get a sense of the whole tradition; the rituals, the space, how connected the dancer and dance are to the geography, the land, the relationships between the movement and country. They are encoding cultural values."⁵³ Like other interviewees, Dargan also mentioned the balance of not talking too much and getting to the dance. The first day is Q &A and the final day includes more Q &A and reflections. City Lore's program is a minimum of 12 sessions, ideally 16. Different than Tandy Beal & Co., the guest artist teaches for the entire length of the program. Dargan stated that she brings in artists who grew up in the culture, where

⁵² Amanda Dargan interview. 3/13/18

⁵³ Dargan interview

dance was a part of their everyday lives whether socially, through celebration, or ritual but experienced and learned in the context of their native environment. The tricky part for artists is sometimes being able to let go of the technicalities and discipline of the dance as many have a codified system of learning and it takes years to master. When coming into the classroom where students will participate for only for 12-16 meetings, they will most likely forget the steps but remember the experience. She asks artists, "What are your non-negotiables?"⁵⁴ For some it is dancing barefoot or giving thanks to the earth at the start and at the end of the class, or honoring the ancestors. For each artist it is different but their input is invaluable in partnering and creating a class that meets the needs of the program, the artist and the school, while transferring cultural tenets. Through professional development, City Lore provides the tools for guest instructors to teach their pedagogy in a way that is mindful and relatable to children. Dargan gave the example of working with a dancer and asking them to explain why they give thanks to the earth, to say... This is the reason we give thanks... so that it is not misconstrued as some weird custom from another place, but is taught in a way that the children can relate to in their own life.⁵⁵ She works with teaching artists to think in broader terms than just the dance. How did they learn, were their parents ok with it, was it handed down to them, when did they do the dances, what is their story? All of these elements are weaved into the residency through story while teaching. "During warm ups, the teacher might tell a story, a certain foot pattern might indicate digging in the earth, the arms represent the river near their town where they would gather fish." City Lore's traditional and folk dance program is assessed in

⁵⁴ Dargan interview

⁵⁵ Dargan interview

different ways dependent on funding and culture of the class. Similar to SBDI and Tandy Beal & Co., a final show takes place at the schools and through this culminating performance students and teachers feel and see their accomplishments and growth. From the singular dance perspective Dargan explained how at the very least children amaze themselves with their capability to learn something completely new. Some kids never danced before and that experience alone is monumental. Dargan said to me, "Teachers and staff are amazed at what they learned when they read what students write. They also convey their learning of tradition and dance when it's performed. Many connect it to their own experiences as many are immigrants themselves."⁵⁶ The ultimate goal is to understand others and make connections to their own culture, a fundamental principle in folk arts education. Beyond the final performance, occasional journals and what teachers share, there is not much other evaluation or impact. Assessment tools are ideal but again with time constraints and teachers feeling overwhelmed, they do the best they can. The qualitative data and anecdotes exist of children's minds opening to other cultures, leading to understanding and empathy

Evaluation and assessment of programs varied. SBDI had a strong evaluation component through surveys and attendance reports. They include these results in their year-end reports. Tandy Beal & Co. and City Lore's assessment varied. A formal evaluation or assessment component was not shared and each organization relied on their own observations of engagement, conversations with teachers, reviewing any journal or writing material teachers shared with them, Q &A and reviewing school data if grants required it. Dargan and Saki both noted the tricky balance of having a limited amount of time in the

⁵⁶ Dargan interview

class, making sure there is enough time to dance, and leaving any follow up in the teachers' hands. They want to make it as easy as possible for teachers and not ask too much. For all three organizations the final show is a main assessment tool. This culminating event demonstrates how much students can learn through the residencies. Saki did share that they are working on some evaluation components and in the short time between our conversation and writing this paper, Tandy Beal & Co. has posted a residency evaluation component and study guides for teachers, to their website. This is the first time they have provided an online platform to submit entries where as in the past it was done in the classroom when possible.

Speaking with Macisco, Saki and Dargan provided valuable information into the do's and don'ts when thinking about traditional dance arts program. As demonstrated earlier, when dance is incorporated as a learning tool, results include increasing retention, narrowing the achievement gap, reaching kinesthetic learners, supporting English language learners as well as at-risk youth, and improving attendance, while bringing joy to the classroom environment. Adding a component of cultural diversity through dance and incorporating principles of folk arts education, a traditional dance arts program becomes a tool for embracing diversity and promoting equity, while capitalizing on the established benefits of dance and embodied cognition. Incorporating these elements into a traditional dance arts program that also complements classrooms teachers' unit of study around social studies is the goal.

History and Social Science Framework to support Traditional Dance Arts Program

California schools are beginning to implement the new standards and framework for History and Social Studies. These were developed and adopted by the state of California in 2016, however they are currently being rolled out in SLO County and teachers are just receiving trainings. For purposes of this paper, History and Social Science Framework refers to the 2016 framework. There is plenty of language in the "History and Social Science framework for California Public Schools (HSSF)"⁵⁷ that supports the principles of folklife (FL) education based in inquiry and reflection. There are also innuendos into the importance of self-identification within a larger system, which also coincides with the FL principle of understanding our own cultural participation in order to understand others. The introduction to the HSSF states, "This framework guides educators as they design, implement and maintain a coherent course of study to teach content, develop inquiry based learning and critical thinking skills... the subject areas in the framework offer students the opportunity to learn about the world and their place in it..."⁵⁸ Layered throughout the framework is a focus on inquiry as a tool to learn, with a goal of educating children to become engaged, knowledgeable and active citizens in their communities and the world. The framework states, "It is the obligation of the state of California to provide all students with an engaging and relevant history-social science education that will shape how they participate in their world."⁵⁹ The language in the HSSF leads students to learn by asking

⁵⁷ California Department of Education, "History and Social Science Framework for California Public Schools" 2017

⁵⁸ California Department of Education: 1

⁵⁹ California Department of Education: 2

questions, doing research, writing reports, sharing findings and also invites introspection into how each student is a participant in their community, state and country. Embedded in the language is the desire that students show empathy and understanding of our diverse world, multiple voices, cultural expressions, varied perspectives of history and its impact on different groups. "Students must engage in inquiry based learning, organized around questions of significance, developing their own interpretations, which are informed by relevant evidence. This evidence should represent a wide variety of perspectives..."⁶⁰

Incorporating folklife education principles through a traditional dance arts program can support curriculum that complements the goals laid out in the History and Social Sciences Framework.

There are four components within the HSSF that I would like to reflect on when considering a complementary traditional dance arts program. These are content, inquiry, literacy and citizenship. Demonstrating the way a traditional dance arts program with Folklife principles incorporates these elements will help to support the inclusion of such a program.

Content

The first sentence in the HSSF content section reads, "The framework and standards encourage students to learn about the world from several perspectives- local to global-..."⁶¹ A program that brings in a traditional dancer who is local to the community and either an immigrant, first generation, or non-native with decades experience in a traditional dance form offers this local and global perspective. The content sections for teaching the HSSF

⁶⁰ California Department of Education 15

⁶¹ California Department of Education, 4

include "multiple perspectives, primary sources, history as a constructed narrative, and family and community structures."⁶² Having a traditional dancer in the classroom to share their story as a primary source, offering a perspective through their lens, their narrative, teaching an expression of culture through dance, allows for context, geography, history, and art in the lesson to supplement curriculum supporting HSSF content goals.

Inquiry

Within the inquiry section of the HSSF, there are a number of ways that a traditional dance arts program can enhance students' learning. The framework states, "... students must be able to engage in inquiry – using the individual tools of each discipline to investigate a significant question and marshal relevant evidence in support of their own interpretations."⁶³ Ethnography, a fundamental tool to folklife education, uses observation, documentation, interviews and reflection as tools of inquiry. Incorporating these ethnographic methods as tools of investigation, support HSSF goals. These methods of inquiry will also develop life-long skills for students as they engage in our diverse world with sensitivity and awareness. The framework reads, "Students need intellectual power to recognize societal problems, ask good questions, and develop robust investigations into them; consider possible solutions and consequences, separate evidence-based claims from parochial opinions and communicate and act upon what they learn."⁶⁴ Ethnography supports this level of inquiry through asking questions, documenting, and reflecting to develop conclusions. Developing questions is a skill unto itself and a traditional dance arts program with an emphasis on inquiry can help students create questions with sensitivity,

⁶² California Department of Education,. 4

⁶³ California Department of Education, 7

⁶⁴ California Department of Education, 8

awareness, knowledge and introspection. A discussion with the artist as a primary source, sharing their perspective, and teaching aspects of their culture, not only supports the HSSF framework but also deepens the experience.

Community participation and civic engagement along with geography are highlighted themes in the inquiry section of the framework. Inquiry and reflection become vehicles to understand our democratic society, public processes and people's ability to affect societal change. The standards state, "Civics enables students not only to study how others participate but also to practice participating and taking informed action themselves."⁶⁵ Regarding geography, the HSSF wants students to have spatial and environmental perspectives to understand the "whereness": where people are located, how they interact with their environment, that the world is a set of complex ecosystems, and the interdependent relationships between land and people.⁶⁶ A guest artist teaching a traditional dance form incorporates these elements of "whereness" on multiple levels. Educating about the country, city, and village of origin for the dance, the context and relationships to the environment and the community, its history and continued expression outside of its native space can add to larger geographic and spatial awareness of our world.

Literacy

Reading and writing are fundamental factors of literacy in teaching history and social sciences. A traditional dance arts program may not focus on literacy but literacy materials could be added to a program. Language arts are a natural cross discipline to history and social sciences. Working in partnership with a teacher, a traditional dance arts

⁶⁵ California Department of Education, 9

⁶⁶ California Department of Education, 9

program could include reading materials about the country, culture, and immigrant experience of the artist or art form. The experience of a guest artist in the class as a primary source could add to their research material when writing. Vocabulary and language that would add to a teacher's social studies unit can be incorporated along with journaling and report writing. Writing about an actual person they have spoken with, learned from, and who is an exciting guest dancer can be more engaging to a student than reading a story from a book.

Citizenship

The section on citizenship in the HSFF is rich with content to support a traditional dance arts program in the classroom. The focus on citizenship has multiple goals with an emphasis for students to perceive the complexity of social, economic and political problems while understanding democratic systems of government; realizing that they can take an active role in their communities and work for change. The HSSF state,

"Educators want them [students] to respect the right of others to have different beliefs and ideas... By developing a keen sense of ethics and citizenship, students develop respect for all persons as equals regardless of ethnicity, nationality, gender identity, sexual orientation, and beliefs. Educators want students to care deeply about the quality of life in their community, the nation and their world. The desire of educators is to have students recognize their responsibility as members of the global community, to participate ethically and with humanity in their interactions with various nations, cultures and peoples".⁶⁷

That's a tall order yet folklife education incorporates this concept of cultural democracy as a fundamental principle guiding its educational strategy. This idea of citizenship grounded in democracy; of respecting minority voices, of including various perspectives, and acknowledging dissenting opinions, is ultimately arguing for diversity, inclusion and the

⁶⁷ California Department of Education, 11

ability to embrace cultural participation by all community members. Dance as a physical art form teaches elements of citizenship such as empathy through respect of space and boundaries, and offering opportunities to lead and follow. Beyond the physical benefits, a traditional dance arts program with a guest artist brings community voices into the classroom creating a lived experience that embodies cultural democracy. A community member that practices a cultural expression which might be different from the majority of students in the class, or who's English is their 2nd, 3rd or 4th language, they might speak with an accent, look different, and can share stories of their lives, will connect students to the greater American tapestry.

Dance is an important and powerful tool for student achievement and it can be a point of entry into deeper cultural conversations related to history and social studies. A traditional dance arts program that uses ethnographic tools of inquiry, brings local and global voices into the classroom as primary sources, supplements those voices with relevant literature, develops writing assignments that are reflective and critical, and embodies the principles of cultural democracy, supports the goals laid out in the HSSF for California public schools. Not only does it support the goals but can also enhance social studies units through a lived experience, that embody the bigger picture of connecting and accepting the diversity of our United States of America . Through inquiry, reflection and study of traditional dance with a guest artist, concepts of social justice, diversity, and inclusion are subtly introduced in a fun and meaningful manner.

4th Grade History and Social Science Framework

Having examined the HSSF goals and the ways a traditional dance arts program could complement them, we can delve deeper into standards by grade level to find connections to specific curriculum and content. For purposes of this research I chose to focus on 4th grade social studies curriculum titled, "*California: A Changing State*" for several reasons. One reason is the recognition of California as a changing state and the influence of diverse groups of people in the development of California's economics, infrastructure, government and society. Another reason is the pursuit for immigrant stories and multiple perspectives within the 4th grade content. Lastly the age of the children in 4th grade is appropriate as it is a transitional year of growth academically and emotionally. Usually 9 year olds turning 10 are still young "not yet too snarky," as one teacher stated, and open to trying something new. At the same time they are also becoming 'big' kids, developing critical thinking skills, independence and responsibility. All fourth grade teachers I interviewed shared the observation of their students coming into themselves by the end of fourth grade. Mrs. Vega said, "They come in as babies and leave as big kids." Mrs. Crout shared how they learn to be independent and take responsibility for their homework and activities. Mrs. Towes explained that 4th grade students are starting to develop their own voice, and Mrs. Leopard termed it "the sweet spot," where they are young and innocent but gaining a lot of independent thinking skills.⁶⁸

As 4th graders examine California's history to understand California today, standards expect they will develop an awareness of the diverse people that live in our state and country. A traditional dance arts program can bring in the stories of diverse

⁶⁸ Mrs. Toews, Mrs. Vega, Mrs. Leoprd, Mrs. Crout, Ms. Kennedy, Interviews

Californians demonstrating varied expressions of cultural participation. Through a program that complements a unit around California immigration, students begin to grasp their own cultural practices, the various groups⁶⁹ they might be a part of; they understand that although traditions are different, we are all part of the same town, of California, and of the United States of America.

The current curriculum in the classrooms for social studies includes colonial history, The California Missions, the California Gold Rush and Statehood. The focus is a historical perspective. Immigration is taught through the westward expansion to California for the Gold Rush and the Spanish missionaries. Understanding how educators teach the units currently will provide insight into how they might teach new standards as well as how a traditional dance arts program could be incorporated. When I asked teachers how social studies were taught and how multiple perspectives were brought in, I discovered it varied in each school. Mrs. Vega explained, "I tie it into language arts as much as possible, so it's embedded... so we are using the information to create a report from it..."⁷⁰ She shared how she develops the curriculum with her partner teachers and brings in other perspectives from a website called *Newsela*.⁷¹ Mrs. Vega commented, "I put my filter on, asking them to look at it from a native perspective, how they might think and feel. I use Newsela to bring in different voices... I also have a story book called *Encuentro* that is the perspective of a little native boy." Mrs. Vega, from Pacheco School, shared that the 4th grade focus is native peoples, missions and the gold rush. Speaking with Ms. Kennedy, Ms. Crout and Ms.

⁶⁹ Groups should be understood as a collective of people coming together around a similar interest or experience, often creating community. Examples include sports teams, schools, church organizations, sewing circles, a dance class, a 4th grade class, a school, and/or an ethnic group.

⁷⁰ Vega interview

⁷¹ Newsela, <https://newsela.com/> Accessed 5/13/2018

Leopard, they teach social studies using a publication called *California Studies Weekly*. It is a newsletter with social studies units that meet common core standards. Ms. Kennedy, from Del Mar Elementary School, explained that she also adds in primary sources through books. She also asks students to do their own research, "I ask them to think about how a French priest might think about the mission, or how a woman might have experienced the gold rush or a Chinese or Hispanic... we use a lot of online articles."⁷² Ms. Crout and Ms. Leopard from Almond Acres Academy also use the *California Studies Weekly* and focus on the Mission period and Gold Rush. They however did not incorporate multiple perspectives outside of any that were included in the *California Studies Weekly*. When I explained the idea of women's voices and minority voices, Ms. Crout expressed interest and reflected, "You know I just got a bunch of books sent to me. I'm going to look through them to see whose perspective they are from."⁷³ They also did not consider immigration as a unit of study in the curriculum and felt that happened in 6th grade. Almond Acres Academy is a charter school, and although curricula have to align with common core standards, their methods of education may differ from public schools. For example, Almond Acres Academy teaches on the basis of students learning types, kinesthetic, auditory, visual or sensory. Although they follow 4th grade curriculum standards, the push for multiple perspectives by the public school system was not the same at this charter school. They were not aware of multiple perspectives like Mrs. Towes, Ms. Kennedy or Mrs. Vega who each mentioned how they bring different voices into the class. Both teachers were very interested in the idea

⁷² Kennedy interview.

⁷³ Crout and Leopard interview

though and felt it was an important concept to incorporate, a need that could be addressed through a traditional dance arts program.

The last teacher I interviewed, Mrs. Towes from Baywood Elementary School uses the Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) model to teach Social Studies. Baywood adopted this educational model and all social studies units are taught in conjunction with a GLAD specialist who helps develop curriculum for each grade level. Social studies are integrated through language arts and literacy through GLAD. Like other teachers, Mrs. Towes' 4th grade curriculum includes native peoples, missions and the gold rush. She uses primary sources, such as texts, photos and video to bring in multiple perspectives in conjunction with inquiry, research and writing that are part of the GLAD model. It is apparent that the concept of multiple perspectives and diverse voices has entered the language for current social studies units in public schools. However the more contemporary issues related to California's diverse demographics, which are present in the 2016 HSSF are lacking in current curricula. In speaking with the different teachers, it is also clear that each school or even each teacher has their unique way of incorporating social studies. Some follow a school model like GLAD, others use their own materials, while others follow generic texts such as the *California Studies Weekly*. Because social studies are not assessed, there is a lot more flexibility in how, what, and when it is taught.

The 4th grade standards for HSSF are robust with hopes of covering California history from pre-Columbian to modern times. There are eight units: Pre-Columbian Settlements and People, European Exploration and Colonial History, Missions and the Mexican War for Independence, the Gold Rush and Statehood, California as an Agricultural and Industrial Power, California in a Time of Expansion, California in the postwar era:

Immigration, Technology and Cities, and finally closes with Local, State and Federal Governments. Each unit considers the topic of immigration; migration and diversity within California beginning with the historical and moving to modern in a sort of continuum to connect the past to the present. The focus of the HSSF for 4th grade is how California became a state and the multiple influences of people, governments, politics, economics, and geography. The second sentence states, "The study of California history in the fourth grade provides students with the foundational opportunities to learn in depth about their state, including the people who live here, and how to become engaged and responsible citizens." It goes on to explain, "The history of California then becomes the story of successive waves of immigrants from the sixteenth century through modern times... Throughout their study of California history, students grapple with questions to understand the impact of (im)migration to California"⁷⁴. Units discuss topics of segregation, government policies, voices like Cesar Chavez and Larry Itlong who fought for rights of farmworkers, the 1965 Immigration Act, and the shifting political climate.⁷⁵ These are complex and often unpleasant aspects of our recent past for 4th graders to absorb. How they will be taught with sensitivity, gentleness and awareness to individual student's considering diverse heritage or political views is yet to be determined. Thinking about the relative innocence of a 4th grader and wanting to shelter children from the ugliness of our past and present is delicate. Each teacher I spoke to had concerns about the politics of immigration and bringing that into the class, especially with our current political climate. Mrs. Vega, who teaches in dual immersion schools, with many parents undocumented said, "kids are

⁷⁴ California Department of Education, 68

⁷⁵ California Department of Education, 89-90

already scared, I reassure them to let them know they are safe... we have had several workshops for families about their rights."⁷⁶ Mrs. Kennedy shared how she has emphasized to her class that all students are safe and welcome here."⁷⁷ Mrs. Towes demonstrated a deep understanding and concern for how to balance the desire to protect a child's innocence, and assure their safety, while also teaching accurate history and being aware of familial influence and beliefs. "I think about all that when I'm teaching."⁷⁸ The politics of immigration are complex and I think it is important that any study or program around immigration is people-centered, not politics-centered. Politics will be discussed but if we can bring it back to the people, it humanizes the politics. A gentle point of entry to the diverse demographics, perspectives and experiences of immigrants in our community, state and country could be traditional dance.

Reading through the content standards it is clear that people, along with geography, economics, infrastructure, and government play a central role in fourth grade social studies. The effect of people, their perspectives, experiences and their influence on California statehood and modern day existence is a leading theme. Examining how various groups of people interacted with geography, influenced civics, economics, developed infrastructure, and created government; people are really at the forefront. The standards stress that the diversity of California's people is an important part of the state today. Developing students' cognition of multiple perspectives is key in creating a well-rounded student capable of engaging in our diverse world.

⁷⁶ Vega interview

⁷⁷ Kennedy interview

⁷⁸ Toews interview

The HSSF is robust with hopes of covering California history from pre-Columbian to modern times, cultivating students' civic awareness, historical knowledge, empathy and respect for cultural diversity of America. Each of the 4th grade units includes the impact of immigrants, asking questions such as: Why did People migrate? Why did some face opposition and prejudice?⁷⁹ What was life like for newly arrived migrants as opposed to people who had lived in the state for many years?⁸⁰ Why did people come to California? How did people share their environments/ how and why did the state grow?⁸¹ Although these questions are stated in the past tense and reflect a specific unit in the framework, the questions are designed to connect the past to the present to understand California today. As these questions are asked, the framework stresses the importance of multiple perspectives and narratives sharing the times in history that are unjust and actions taken to work towards justice. In theory, the HSSF for 4th grade covers all of California history incorporating the good and the bad with a goal to become engaged citizens with the knowledge that they can affect positive change.

The goals of the framework are great. Realistically, however, the ability for teachers to incorporate this robust framework seems daunting. Because these are new and are slowly being rolled out, it will be interesting to see which units are taught and how. With the increasing demands on teachers, the fact that math and language arts are a priority by the state because they are assessed, the limited resources and time, teachers fit social studies in as best as they can sometimes with little guidance. In speaking with 4th grade teachers, all expressed similar feelings that social studies is included on some level but not

⁷⁹ California Department of Education, 87

⁸⁰ California Department of Education, 88

⁸¹ California Department of Education, 89

consistently and it is sometimes left behind when they have to focus on math and language arts for assessments. Mrs. Towes from Baywood Elementary shared, "if assessments are coming up, I want my students to feel prepared... I do not believe any teachers teach to the test, teachers are good... but it really makes a difference... so if something has to slide it will sadly be social studies."⁸² Mrs. Towes was not alone in this feeling. All teachers shared similar dilemmas stressing they use the resources and tools they have to integrate social studies as best they can and rely on directive from the school.

Considering the incredible amount of work teachers do, the limited time they have to teach social studies, and the demands on them, introducing a traditional dance arts program must be constructed in a way that does not create extra work, but complements their educational goals and includes supporting materials and resources. A program must also offer a component of sustainability so that teachers can incorporate some of the learning's either as follow up or in the future. Teachers expressed interest in the idea of bringing traditional dancers into the class; they just need to know how. Some of the how and their perspectives are highlighted below after we learn the perspectives of traditional dance artists.

Traditional Dance Artists

Arts in education, and dance in particular, can have a strong academic impact on students' achievement. Linking the 4th grade HSSF units related to immigration and the diverse California demographic to a traditional dance arts program has the potential to assist children in embracing diversity. Such a program helps students begin to understand

⁸² Toews interview

cultural participation as a universal human characteristic connecting them to others' cultural expressions. The question remains, what do traditional dance artists think of it and how can this be done?

As mentioned earlier, SLO County is predominantly Caucasian and not reflective of the diversity in California or the state as a whole. Nevertheless there are small ethnic communities working to sustain their cultural traditions and to have a voice in our community. Unlike big cities such as Los Angeles or San Francisco, where diverse communities often have their own cultural centers, organized groups, and native traditional artists, SLO does not have this abundance. Finding traditional dance artists, born and raised in the context of their dance, proved challenging. Many communities rely on Youtube to learn their cultural dances. Albert Calizzo, president of the Bay Area Filipino Association, shared that when they organize their culture night, someone from the group volunteers and does a lot of research on YouTube to expand upon what they might already know. Although there are native dancers in nearby counties the costs of bringing someone to their event is a barrier. It is also too far away for youth to take classes.⁸³ This however does not diminish the dancer or devalue people re-learning their dance traditions, by whatever means they can. Many of the traditional dance artists, locally, are first generation reconnecting to their roots through music and dance and have valuable stories to tell. Other local traditional dancers have no blood connections to the cultural dance they practice but have devoted their lives to the study of the art and culture. Through years of study and practice they often are also teachers and performers sharing the cultural tradition with communities who are both native and non-native to the dance form they practice. The

⁸³ Albert Calizzo, Personal Interview 10/12/17

native, first generation, or non-native dancers are artists and community members locally that could be part of traditional dance arts programs in our county. Speaking with the various artists, several themes became clear about what they hold important in teaching and what they hope their students remember. In creating a program, it is ethical and vital to consider the dancers' perspective of bringing their cultural art into the classroom.

There is a rich cultural emphasis with traditional dance but just as important is the experience and joy of movement. My emphasis is on deepening children's sense of diversity, inclusion and varied expressions of culture. Artists I interviewed stressed joy, movement, and connection. The cultural element or context of the dance is very important to them but they bring it in subtly through the dance instruction and simply through their presence. As traditional dancers, they embody the cultural art form. Carolyn Kreuger who has devoted her life to the study and performance of Uzbek and Central Asian dance said, "Musicality... Cultural part is taken care of by embodying that. Because I'm dealing with a fine art in the theatrical form that's done by professionals...if I can embody that I am going to be mindful of the culture. Culture being the values, aesthetics, context, the feelings that are portrayed in the dance... the key is music, feelings through music."⁸⁴ Carolyn stressed the dancer expresses the culture through the dance. Uzbek dance is disciplined and takes years to study. Technique is imperative yet as a dancer the joy, feeling and expression through performance and/or instruction connects people to its culture. Technique and context sometimes are intertwined with cultural dance and taught at the same time.

Horacio Heredia, a folklórico (Mexican folk) dancer for 20 years stated, "I want them [students] to know where the dances come from, the regions, how it's connected to the

⁸⁴ Carolyn Kreuger Interview 4/10/18.

ocean... the fish... but I mention it...it is brief.... I focus on the footwork. The footwork is very important in traditional dance form"⁸⁵ Through his classes, Horacio is committed to representing the dances in their traditional form while at the same time allowing for creativity through choreography. He focuses on the dance technique and because dances are associated with regions of Mexico and music, he shares the story of the dances and the geography while he teaches them.

The dancers all shared the need to balance dancing and talking during classes and that the feeling of joy and connection to the music is very important. Loubayi, a Congolese dancer who has lived in the United States for 5 years, has travelled the world performing traditional Congolese dance, and teaches regularly. He said to me, "They [students] want to dance, not talk much. For me I am happy to teach my culture. If everything is fun, feel good, feel okay. It's my culture, I explain, if people enjoy and are happy then I feel good."⁸⁶ Loubayi shared how it is hard to teach culture with one class a week. People can only learn so much in a short time but he wants them to feel good and to experience a little bit of his culture. Loubayi's thoughts around this are in sync with what Amanda Dargan of City Lore had explained about their traditional dance programs in the classroom. "Kids might not remember the steps but they will remember the experience."⁸⁷ Loubayi's teaching goals are for the children to feel good and retain some cultural information. He said, "I hope they remember something from my country, not only for fun... they don't know the Congo. I share... maybe when they grow up they will remember."⁸⁸ Loubayi, a dancer who grew up

⁸⁵ Horacio Heredia interview 4/13/18.

⁸⁶ Arnaud Loubayi interview 3/23/18.

⁸⁷ Dargan, interview

⁸⁸ Loubayi interview

in the context and culture of his traditions, knows that students will not embody the culture like he does. Yet,, they will learn something and feel good from dancing. Loubayi mostly does assemblies for schools so he teaches a few steps, a song, he talks a little about the Congo, but it's mostly a show. Loubayi shared how the number one question he gets is about lions and how he dispels the stereotype that Africa is one country full of lions. Having a voice in the classroom that can give first-hand experience begins to break the socially constructed biases we absorb. When I asked what an ideal program for him would include he had a lot to say:

Next time I go to Congo I will make videos of what we do in our village... so I can show the kids the schools, the village, the classrooms. They can see the Congo; they can learn more. Oh so many things to teach, I first tell a story about when I was 12 with my friends, I will show them the dance moves, the languages..... we have so so so many different languages, styles, moves..."⁸⁹

He was excited at the idea of not only dancing, but really sharing some of his culture and story.

Similarly, Josh 'Macaco' Ivey, a *Capoeirista* (Brazilian Martial Art Master⁹⁰), who has achieved the status of Monitor (instructor), shared some of his feelings around culture, context and dance. "To become a capoeirista one must learn the depth of the art over time, the traditions are incorporated through the learning... I do not stress it at the beginning but it is tied in. With kids, I love to see their self-confidence and ability to develop. With kids, it's about the fun first and then they are hooked and want to learn more."⁹¹ So the dance is the hook, the movement, the joy. With children, the technique is not as important in the

⁸⁹ Loubayi interview

⁹⁰ Capoeira is a Brazilian martial art but also a dance form. It is intimately tied to the music and, in speaking with Josh, he explained how it is also considered a dance.

⁹¹ Josh Ivey interview 4/19/18

beginning. As they become more serious, dance becomes the gateway to dig deeper and cultivate conversations around the culture and the people. At first it's about the dance, the music, the movement, the experience and the joy.

However when I asked the other artists for their ideas about an ideal program, most artists would elaborate to include context, meaning, tradition, and story. Sylvia Hambly who has studied Hawaiian traditional dance for over 20 years, explained, "...hands on is always best, having a gourd, or prop, something tactile that they can touch and feel. If I were to do my own program, it would incorporate ukulele, its history, and how to play it with some traditional songs. It would incorporate the craft of making lei's and using tea leaves and flowers with some context about how it's done and the dancing, its history and meanings."⁹²

Most artists I spoke with have decades of experience so their knowledge base is vast and when teaching, the culture and context is learned over time, through dance steps, through music and through the teacher who embodies the culture. Moreover, if given the time and opportunity, dancers also have cultural elements, stories, and experiences to impart to students. A community voice in the class, like Loubayi, Horacio, Macaco, Sylvia, or Carolyn, teaching dance, geography, culture, sharing stories, connecting it to studies around immigration and California as a changing state will leave a lasting impression. Community voices in the classroom, sharing lived experiences, teaching their cultural dance forms, make the learning more concrete and real. It is not information from a book. It is a person engaging, sharing, and connecting to the children, which will help them develop awareness and acceptance of diverse cultural expressions.

⁹² Sylvia Hambly interview 4/17/18

Program Development

In recommending a traditional dance arts program that will help children develop skills to embrace diversity, I combine elements from four areas of my research;folklife education, arts education, the history and social science framework and the theory of embodied cognition. Looking at the program through the lens of cultural sustainability and community building there are key principles and elements to include. Folklife education is grounded in inquiry, documentation and reflection. The arts through VAPA are required in public schools and have proven benefits to academic learning. Culture is founded in artistic expressions. Facilitating an art experience to include dance expressions from around the world expands the western lens of what is considered art. The science of embodied cognition reminds our intellect what the body already knows; that the body carries wisdom and knowledge. Dancing facilitates embodied cognition, connecting the mind and body to transmit valuable information as we move forward in life. Reflection and reflexivity, two tenets of folklife education are fundamental when working with diverse stakeholders. We each come to the table with our own expertise, worldviews, experiences, and goals. Introducing these principles of inquiry, documentation and reflection are a critical aspect. Without them it becomes a dance class and the point of the traditional dance arts program, I am proposing is for children to develop a more profound connection with a community member. The experience offers not only a window into a different culture but it facilitates a deeper sense of understanding that we are all part of the same community. Opportunities for traditional dancers to share their dance traditions with students provide space for transmission, and opportunity to sustain and practice their art. A child in the class of the same heritage as the artist might learn something new about their own culture and feel

represented, proud and honored. A program should exude a culture of care for each other, for our varied traditions, for acceptance and inclusion that builds on folklife education, correlates art education to HSSF units of study, and uses dance as a tool for embodied cognition.

A successful traditional dance arts program in the classroom should be a well-rounded approach looking at dance, culture, context, history. It should also include content reflective of HSSF goals. Examining the HSSF and the push for a new generation of students to receive history layered with the complexities and diverse perspectives of the past, connecting it to our present social, cultural, and political climate is promising in fostering knowledgeable, respectful and engaged global citizens. Speaking with teachers, dancers, dance organizations and arts education leaders, sheds light on some do's and don'ts. In order to develop a program that leads to students not only becoming more aware of our diverse world but also embracing and relating to varied cultural expressions, there are key components to include founded in the folklife education principles examined explored above. Although this research is not meant to develop the exact program or curriculum, it does illuminate some key ideas. These recommendations are a launching pad to partner with teachers, artists and administrators in developing a very specific program that complements a unit of study in the HSSF.

Clarity around components of the program allows us to now develop the program. An approach from the ground up with those involved in the program will create the best results. Teachers, artists, and a cultural worker should work together to develop the components of the program so they meet the HSSF and VAPA standards, and take into account the perspectives and needs of teachers, educators and traditional dance artists.

Flexibility within the program will be an important element as each class, school and teacher is different. Laying the groundwork for the partnership is the job of the cultural worker to create ethical and agreed upon strategies of communication. Implementation of a program should be in partnership. However the choice of the traditional artist will depend on who is available and how it connects to the classroom unit of study. The goal is partnership between teacher, artist and cultural worker and before implementation agreement and understanding of the program is imperative. The cultural worker will bring consideration for the realities of power, influence, transparency, language, agency positionality, implicit biases, assumptions and process to the partnership. Working collaboratively, a traditional dance arts program can be created and presented to educators, administrators and PTA's that provides an engaging curriculum with social purpose.

Language

To build support for a traditional dance program it is important to use the language that teachers, administrators and arts education leaders understand. When I asked if they knew what folklife or folk arts education is, many said no. Although not familiar with the term Folklife education, a few of my interviewees gave accurate examples; such as guest presenters from a native tribe coming in a class to demonstrate basket weaving, or the folk dance they teach in PE. Most however thought of folklife and folk arts as things of the past, historical, traditional. Although this is not inaccurate it is incomplete and could deter someone from supporting a folklife education program simply because they don't understand its depth and relevance in education today.

When using the terms folklife or folk arts I realized it is important to connect it to local, living communities. For example, Brent Moser, VAPA coordinator, had a historical perspective of folk arts, with the fine arts being a focus of their programs. When I connected a folk arts program to bringing in community members representative of the demographics of his schools, such as baile folklórico dancers, it connected, was more easily supported and something, he told me, they had actually considered in the past. In speaking with administrators and developing a program, using language that represents the vocabulary they are used to will foster more understanding and support. For instance a goal of the Paso Robles Joint Unified School District (PRJUSD) visual and performing arts program is; "Exploration and appreciation of the arts, especially their ability to communicate the diversity of the human experience in unique ways through curricular and co-curricular experiences."⁹³ So instead of talking about a traditional dance arts program founded in folklife education, (which is about communicating the diversity of the human experience), I would talk about a program using those exact words. For example, a traditional dance arts program that communicates the diversity of the human experience with guest artists in the classroom who share their cultural art forms and which complements the social studies unit on California and the Changing state. Or I might talk about celebrating the cultural heritage of our communities through traditional dance expressions. It is important to introduce the terms folk arts and folklife in order to counter misconceptions around 'folk', however this can happen subtly over time.

A traditional dance arts program should also include language that connects to the Visual and Performing Arts (VAPA) Standards while also demonstrating benefits of dance

⁹³ Paso Robles Joint Unified School District. <https://www.pasoschools.org/Domain/102>. Accessed 5/10/18

in the classroom. As Saki had mentioned, the Tandy Beal & Co. program highlights areas in the VAPA framework so administrators know their program meets the standards and fulfills the art requirement. Traditional dance meets part of the cultural unit as specified in the VAPA framework⁹⁴ Dance, as its own discipline, is also part of the general pedagogy of arts education and part of national VAPA standards is also.

Using language directly from the HSSF is also critical as this will tie into the frameworks goal of developing global citizens. The standards read, "To bring California's history, geography, diverse society and economy to life for students and to promote respect and understanding, teachers emphasize its people in all their ethnic racial, gender and cultural diversity." ⁹⁵ 'Bring history to life'... why not with community voices and cultural expressions in the classroom? Why not with traditional dance movements that are related to geography, place, culture, and ways of life for many immigrants that now call California home? 'Promote respect and understanding'... why not through self-inquiry, experiential learning, and awareness of the many ethnic and racial groups in our state through guest traditional dance artists?

A common term used in schools is "mirrors and windows."⁹⁶ Ms. Kennedy explained how her class was part of a pilot project to bring diverse books into the classroom. The books were either a mirror (representative) of someone's racial or ethnic background or a window into another person's ethnic or racial identity. A traditional dance arts program will be a mirror or a window for students in the classroom. The phrase 'mirrors and

⁹⁴ Curriculum Development and Supplemental Material Commission, "Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California" California State Board of Education (2004): 60

⁹⁵ California Department of Education, 68

⁹⁶ Kennedy interview

windows' is a school accepted term that will make sense to teachers and administrators when sharing about a traditional dance arts program and it's goal to help children accept and embrace diversity.

Components of a Program

Developing a program that exposes children to diverse people and leads to awareness, inclusion and connection to our varied cultural expressions requires some key elements. It is critical to consider what is feasible, accessible and most realistic for classroom teachers and dancers in order to develop a program. The components identified below incorporate my findings based on research, interviews and conversations. They take into account the HSSF so that a traditional dance arts program can complement a unit of study. They include inquiry, documentation and reflection based in folklife education. The program addresses teacher concerns about implementation, the need for supporting resources, connection to curriculum, class management, and assessment. Based on my research and interviews, a traditional dance arts program should be a minimum of 10-12 weeks, in order to implement principles of folklife education that facilitate children's acceptance, inclusion and ability to embrace the diverse people and traditions of our country.

Teacher Preparation

As noted above, the most successful program will be developed in partnership. Before a program is implemented a meeting with the teacher is essential. As the program expands a teacher might not have been part of the initial development. A teacher will be given materials and have agency to develop some components of the program, should they

choose to. For example, a teacher might want to include specific questions as part of the inquiry, or add a video project, or bring in another community member that might be connected to the culture being studied. Connecting with the teacher to share background information and cultural context about the traditional dancer will provide space for teacher input and understanding. Teachers should be on board with the program as a partnership and be in agreement with the process and goals. This preparation would take place in partnership with cultural worker and artist.

Inquiry

Consistent with HSSF and Folklife education, investigation through inquiry is important to the child's knowledge development. A program should consist of at least two Q and A sessions with the guest artist, three being ideal and taking place at the beginning, middle and end of a program. This could take several forms depending on teachers' needs. Students should help design and ask questions of the artist. Through initial teacher preparation, via meeting with cultural worker and artist, the teacher will have the tools to help this process of inquiry from an ethnographic perspective. Several organizations such as the Local Learning Network and Philadelphia Folklore Project have resources and examples of questions which can be used. The Q and A should also consist of conversation and stories from the guest artist as it relates to the unit of study around immigration.

Self-inquiry

Self-inquiry for the student allows students to connect to different cultural customs with less judgment and categorization or stereotyping. The process of inquiry on one's own traditions helps to avoid some of the pitfalls discussed earlier and allows students to understand how we all participate in culture whether through dance, music, food, jump

rope, etc. Although not a focus of HSSF, combining this self-inquiry piece with the larger inquiry piece enables students to embrace diversity, not simply compare and contrast diversity. Through self-inquiry children might better understand their heritage, their traditions, and how play, food, song and dance are all expressions of culture. The HSSF uses language that leads to self-inquiry such as, "know their [students] world and their place in it, or shape how they [students] participate in their world".⁹⁷ A component that asks students to survey their own family or group traditions connects them to their participation in their community and world. As Deafenbaugh discovered through her research, "Making the personal connections to culturally different people was instrumental in developing these students' skills and impacted their thinking about others and about themselves."⁹⁸ A program would include examples of questions to ask family members and/or community members.⁹⁹ Although the guest teacher will focus on dance as their cultural expression, other elements will be brought in through context, history, and story. Student questions will be broad to include multiple ways we participate, dance being one of them. These interviews can become part of a report, journal, presentation, sharing with classmates in groups, and/or part of conversations with the guest dancer; whichever method best fits with the classroom teachers' goals.

Reflection

Through self-inquiry and reflection we grow, develop, and learn about our self and others. Allowing time for some reflection after each residency class is important; even if it

⁹⁷ California Department of Education, 2

⁹⁸ Deafenbaugh, "Developing the Capacity" 417

⁹⁹ Questions will take into account the varied familial situations students can be a part of so that all have the opportunity to participate in learning their own cultural participation in any setting.

is just 3-5 minutes of journal writing. It could be prompted, with simple questions such as: How do you feel? What was something you learned today? What did you especially like today? What didn't you like? When do you or your family dance? How do you celebrate a wedding? On some days, prompts could also include some vocabulary terms as it would tie into the unit, words like tradition, immigrant, or context. These questions and vocabulary aspects would be further specified in the development of the program but would be an option. Reflection could also be unprompted and spontaneous allowing for children to write what they experience, feel or think in that moment. These journal entries will be part of the assessment and evaluation. As Dargan, from City Lore mentioned to me, "teachers tell me they are amazed by what they see in kids' journals and how much they have learned."¹⁰⁰

Documentation

As students ask questions of the guest dancer and themselves they will be documenting the information. As they reflect on their experiences they will document their thoughts. Observation is also another aspect of inquiry and what students observe should be documented. Documentation can happen through journals, report writing, developing presentations, video, or photography. Teachers will have agency to use documentation tools they feel are most appropriate for their class and in agreement with the dance artist.

Dance

Children will dance, move, learn, connect with their bodies and experience the benefits of dance while learning meaning, context, history and story from a community

¹⁰⁰ Dargan interview

voice, a primary source. Most guest artists have taught children, so they are aware of teaching at a level that children can access. However, this will also be part of professional development for the artists. Children are not necessarily going to remember the steps but they will remember the experience, the stories, and the artist. Because the program is tied into the HSSF units, artists should receive training on what that means, and how they are connected to the lesson. Guest artists will work with the coordinator to add in their unique expressions as it relates to the unit of study. The coordinator will work with the artist to understand what the artist feels must be included as part of sharing their traditions. For example some artists might require that everyone touches the ground before dancing, as that connects them to the earth and is part of their cultural practice.

All of the teachers I spoke with were interested in incorporating dance but did not know how. Mrs. Towes said, "I would need to see someone who is passionate and can teach me how to do it, to partner with me... someone who will explain how it might make a difference."¹⁰¹ Each teacher I spoke with liked the idea of bringing dance in the classroom, but they wanted the tools to know how to implement it and sustain it. So, a 12 week program with the teacher in the class, participating with the guest artist, incorporating the learning into the units will help develop the capacity for teachers to integrate elements into their teaching for the future.

Dance Presentation

At the end of the program a showcase should take place demonstrating what students have learned. This could be an assembly, a presentation for another class or part

¹⁰¹ Toews interview

of a bigger show. In this showcase there should be an element of narration, preferably by the students, to relay meaning and context of the dance. This will illustrate what the students have learned and possibly allow for students to introduce their own stories if they like. Speaking with dance artists and program coordinators, the showcase is really important as an assessment tool. It is also empowering for students to see how far they have come and what they accomplished. The showcase is also a window for teachers and other students to experience a diverse cultural expression that was taught to the class.

Resources

All teachers I spoke with were intrigued by and interested in a traditional dance arts program but were not sure how it would work or how it would tie in to the course of study. Developing resources that can be incorporated into language arts and HSSF would be included in the program. Teachers spoke about books they use as primary sources, articles they have, or other educational material they have to support their units. A resource list should be developed of books, articles, videos, maps and photographs. The program should also include maps that are brought into the class and some links to videos related to the art forms of the guest artist.. The program should also develop some examples of ways the literature materials can be tied into the social studies unit in conjunction with the traditional dance program.

Classroom Management

In speaking with some of the guest artists and in my own experience we shared how teaching children is often a lot harder than teaching adults. Children lose interest more quickly, they might get distracted, they don't always pay attention, and they haven't chosen to be there but are expected to participate. Teachers expressed concern about a guest artist

knowing how to teach at an age-appropriate level and with management skills. Although classroom management is the expertise of the teacher and the teacher will be expected to be part of the class, some tips and tools for artists would be helpful. Part of working with artists includes sharing some tools towards classroom management and different learning styles so they feel confident but not responsible for classroom management. The program is a partnership with both artist and teacher and will work together to address any specific needs or circumstances.

Evaluation and Assessments

The only way to improve a program and continually address the needs of varying stakeholders is through evaluation and assessment. One method of assessing the program would be through any written work the students create; journal entries, reports, presentations, or interview notes. A second is the dance presentation. A third way to assess the program is to include pre- and post- questionnaires that students and teachers complete. This will give qualitative and quantitative data. Attendance could also be measured, to see if there were fewer absences on guest artist days. Consistent attendance in schools is critical for successful learning. Demonstrating to administrators that 'dance days' result in higher attendance offers another reason to support the program. Observation by teachers is also very important. They know their students best and can monitor if they are engaged and their interest level. An evaluation component is essential to understand the impact of the program and how to improve it. SBDI has developed an evaluation model that looks at behavior and skills, measures students feeling's about dance and their level of exercise before and after the program, attendance. They also surveys

teachers.¹⁰² Using part of SBDI's model could help develop part of an evaluation model for a traditional dance arts program. Adding a survey for artists to give feedback would allow for evaluation by all stakeholders. The evaluation and assessment would have to be simple and quick so that it does not create extra work for teachers or take too much time away from the dancing!

Sustainability

Ideally, a traditional dance arts program becomes part of a 4th grade class each year. This will take time though, and little by little as the program develops, is evaluated and shared, it will spread. Outreach to schools, via meetings and presentations to PTA's, school boards meetings, principles, administrators, and teachers will have to be part of the programs sustainability; sharing the successes and challenges. Having the qualitative data and developing brochures will be part of the outreach efforts. Components of the program, however, can be sustained by helping teachers develop their capacity to continue to incorporate certain elements. This could be through teacher trainings, if desired, through program materials, handouts and by teacher participation in the class. As teachers learn from the guest artists and coordinator through participation and experience, they can continue to sustain elements as they see best. The cultural worker can be responsible for conducting fieldwork in the community to identify interested dance artists and create a roster that can be accessible to teachers for consideration.

As the program continues to develop, professional development to teachers can be added, so that they can continue to implement the program without a cultural worker.

¹⁰² Rosalina Macisco. "Annual Report 2016-2017" Santa Barbara Dance Institute

Professional development will assist teachers in using the tools of folklife education to teach their units of study around topics that deal with culture, immigration, diversity and inclusion.

Funding

Like SBDI, Tandy Beal & Co. and City Lore, a traditional dance arts program would be funded through a variety of avenues. This includes grants, schools, PTAs, and donations. The traditional dance arts program can fulfill the artist-in-residence program that many PTA's support. The program can also be counted as PE minutes if that is how a school chooses, funded through a variety of mechanisms, or as a supplemental program to complement HSSF units of study, also funded through a variety of channels. There are a number of agencies that support cultural work such as American for the Arts, the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, California Arts Council and local non-profits. There are also a number of private and government funding sources that address issues of health, specifically obesity. Dance in the classroom is physical exercise and monies are available to promote health and wellness. Grants for at risk youth, English language learners and socioeconomically disadvantaged (SED) populations are available through public agencies. Many schools fall in the category of Title 1, meaning they have a high percentage of SED families. Working with schools to provide enrichment programs like traditional dance to these populations is another avenue of funding. It will take time, commitment and an interested group of stakeholders to find the funding but it is there. A suggested budget is offered as Appendix D.

Conclusion

As Linda Deafenbaugh has noted, "The arts contribute to the education of young children by helping them realize the breadth of human experience, see the different ways humans express sentiments and convey meaning, and develop subtle and complex forms of thinking."¹⁰³ Folklife education helps children develop the skills to understand cultural participation as something we all experience. Folk arts, an expression of folklife, illuminate the breadth of human experience and, when brought into the classroom, can validate and demonstrate the informal community knowledge we all possess. A traditional dance arts program including components of ethnography, self-inquiry, reflection, and dance has the potential to broaden children's worldviews and connect them to the varied cultural expressions. A traditional dance arts program that complements the social studies units is a gentle point of entry for sometimes-difficult conversations around immigration, diversity and inclusion. Using dance as a vehicle for learning allows for joy, movement, and personal growth. Dance benefits academics such as boosting attendance, increasing retention of learning content, closing the achievement gap, supporting English language learners and at-risk youth. Traditional dance by local artists brings culture, diversity, and community voices into the classroom, helping to tell the story of immigration, varied cultural expressions and our diverse America. Through dance, conversation and instruction with a traditional artist, a child will experience a new culture or see herself represented, without over-intellectualizing the experience. Sometimes the most profound learning happens without words, through embodied cognition. Our bodies receive information and

¹⁰³ Bradley, et al. p. 39

knowledge like our minds do. Learning channels such as dance relay information that is processed, stored and develop into knowledge. A program developed with awareness that does not highlight differences demanding that they be respected, but allows children to connect to what might at first be construed as weird or different is fundamental. These teachings and experiences help children realize that all culture has equal value and importance. As Defenbaugh was able to prove through her research, "Folklife education usefully troubles the waters of diversity for students by enabling them to acquire tools for exploring cultural diversity in ways that challenge the divisive notions of difference that under grid concepts like race and ethnicity."¹⁰⁴

This research has demonstrated why a traditional dance arts program is valuable, what it should include and ideas on how to develop it. The next step is to develop the components of the program within a unit of study around the 4th grade HSSF. Implementing the program will help to foster the development of children's capacity to become engaged, compassionate citizens, willing to embrace diversity in the United States. This is a life long journey but it is our responsibility to plant the seeds of cultural democracy and provide opportunities for cross cultural exchange with our youth. As Holly Sidford so eloquently stated, "Culture and the arts are essential means by which all people explain their experience, shape their identity, and imagine the future. In their constancy and their variety, culture and the arts allow us to explore our individual humanity and to see our society as a whole. People need the arts to make sense of their lives."¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁴ Deafenbaugh, "Developing the Capacity" p. 416

¹⁰⁵ Holly Sidford, "Fusing Arts, Culture and Social Change." *National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy*. (2011): 1.

Literature Inspiration

There are so many readings that have influenced, inspired, challenged and changed my way of thinking and acting in the world. For purposes of this thesis I would like to focus on a few readings that I believe had a direct influence on my project.

Linda Deafenbaugh's dissertation, *Developing the Capacity for Tolerance through Folklife Education*, supported the idea that traditional dance could actually lead to social justice. Her research was both illuminating and daunting. Lasting impact happens over time and she spent a year in the class with students to engage and measure the capacity to teach tolerance through folklife education. Reviewing her methods, background, process, challenges, opportunities and findings, I understood how children were developing the skills while at the same time knowing it was a long process and something my work could not demonstrate. In developing my idea around a traditional dance arts program I had to accept that what I was presenting would not be as in depth nor would I be able to prove that a program changes mindsets. However I could use her process and findings to consider important components to include in a program. Her dissertation was one of the few papers that demonstrated quantifiable results and whose focus was geared towards social justice.

There were a number of readings about folklife education and examples of programs that fueled me with information, ideas, and hope that a traditional dance arts program could actually serve as a tool to embrace diversity. These include works by Sidener, Dargan, Deafenbaugh, Bowman, FACTS charter school, Graves and Palmer. There are a number of other readings, but the ones mentioned really helped to shape my understanding and argument for the benefits of a traditional dance arts program and how it could help lead to cultural democracy.

A program requires collaboration, partnership and community building. The book *Cultural Democracy* by Bau Graves¹⁰⁶ had a profound influence on my thinking and understanding of community-based cultural work. The ideas around cultural democracy, the interview process, the opportunities and challenges of working with diverse communities influenced my thoughts not only about developing a traditional dance arts program but how I walk in the world as a cultural worker. How can I work within various facets of private, public, non-profit and educational sector to bridge community, facilitate cultural partnerships, and build inclusion? In answering this question, Graves, challenges us to consistently be aware of power dynamics, biases, reflexivity, positionality, and multiple voices. I need to continually ask myself, who is missing from this conversation when discussions happen and decisions are made. Are all the people that might be affected represented in the decision making process? Being transparent of our own position, goals, and being reflexive in our work helps build trust. Challenging others to do the same is also important so that all are working from the same starting place, in agreement with process and values. The importance of seeking out minority voices and dissenting opinions is also stressed in the book. Listening to diverse opinions, opposing ideas, and making sure there is space for minority voices leads to creative problem solving and representative programs. Graves talked about 'restless border zones'. He references a quote from Homi Bhaba, who states "the in between spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood-singular or communal—that initiate new signs of identity and innovative sites of

¹⁰⁶ Graves, James Bau. *Cultural Democracy: The Arts, Community, and the Public Purpose*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press. 2005.

collaboration and contestation, in the act of defining society itself."¹⁰⁷ It is in these zones where growth happens, paths are crossed, merged, explored and unified. It is an interesting space where self-preservation and cross-pollination takes place to possibly create something new, to foster understanding, and to build relationships.

Readings in folklore (especially Barre Toelken) challenged my thoughts around tradition and authenticity. Understanding culture as dynamic, evolving and influenced by contemporary times allows me to approach traditional artists with greater understanding, sensitivity and awareness. No tradition is stagnant and those practicing their traditions have their own voice, perspectives and influences. Understanding this dynamism allows for deeper understanding of culture and its many facets.

Finally the article, *Wild Grasses and New Arks: Transformative Potential in Applied and Public Folklore* by William Westerman, really made me think about the 'why'? He asks, "What will change, or be changed by this project?" He challenges the reader to think about transformative results of one's work. He continues, "We can choose projects with an eye to what they will accomplish locally and with an eye to their larger impact on culture..."¹⁰⁸ He also puts out a call to action stressing the importance of art for human well-being and community strength. In developing a traditional dance arts program, the question lingers, how will this be transformative, how can this trickle to reach a larger audience or branch out to affect larger segments of the community?

¹⁰⁷ Graves, 211.

¹⁰⁸ William Westerman, "Wild Grasses and New Arks: Transformative Potential in Applied and Public Folklore" *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 119 No. 471, p. 122

Reflections

The process of developing and implementing this Capstone has taught me that interviews are difficult; time consuming, and laborious but worth every moment. The willingness for individuals to share their time, stories, perspectives, and experiences is truly a gift. While some were more reserved or professional others wore their hearts on their sleeve. Each person came from their truth and I was continually challenged to listen deeply, to go with the flow and be mindful of their time. I was reminded that body language speaks volumes, as does the tone of voice. I became better at asking questions and waiting for responses, rather than trying to prompt responses or give too many examples. At the same time, I tried to notice times of discomfort where prompts and examples were helpful for the interviewee to continue. Community work is grounded in connecting with people, in building trust. Sharing your time and sincere interest in people, their thoughts and stories; I believe is a step towards community building.

I also learned that everything people tell you is not always applicable to my purpose, which illustrates a power dynamic. Gleaning out the relevant information for my project, while at the same time trying to stay true to their passion, was sometimes difficult. As the researcher, I am ultimately deciding what to include and have the power to tell a story using people's words. It is uncomfortable. As I was writing about people's perspectives, I was continually thinking to myself, 'if so and so read this would they agree, would they say to themselves... yeah I said that?' I wanted to try and illustrate their perspectives in the context they said them. Our world is full of sound bites and sometimes quotes can be used completely out of context. At times I was tempted to use a quote to illustrate a point I wanted but was not relevant to what the author intended. I knew that was unethical and

knew I would not have felt good about it. If my interviewees were ever to read their quotes, I want them to feel as though the placement and relevance of their thought was accurate and true. I want them to feel as though they had a positive contribution to my research and feel good about what they shared.

I would have liked to interview more traditional artists that were born and raised in the context of their tradition. This is because the two I did interview practiced African drum and dance; Dr. Djo Bi from the Ivory Coast¹⁰⁹ and the Loubayi from the Republic of Congo. Although their dances, rhythms and traditions were different, they both expressed similar ideas about joy and feeling good as the most important aspect. They both shared how they cannot teach the culture completely, it is embodied, but they can teach a little bit about their country and their dance. I don't know if this would be similar for other native artists from other countries. Different than Dr. Djo Bi and Loubayi, artists that were 1st generation and non-native artists were a bit more specific about technique and context. Although they all shared that with children it is about the joy, they had more of an emphasis on proper etiquette and technique than the native dancers did. Again, because I had such a limited scope, I do not want to make any generalizations that this is a norm between native, non-native and 1st generation.

Reflecting on the dancers that were 1st generation immigrants and relearning their cultural dances out of the context was also very illuminating. For one, it dawned on me that I fit into that category. This seems obvious but I have had my personal identity struggles being an immigrant that came to the US at a young age and trying to relearn traditional

¹⁰⁹ Dr. Djo Bi, I did not include specific quotes from him in my paper but what he shared did influence my thoughts around a traditional dance arts program in schools. He had similar feelings that Loubayi shared.

dances of my heritage. Connecting with others who were in a similar position was comforting and enlightening. I would love to do more research and interviews with dancers that fall into this category.

The term traditional dancer is also challenging because I question what really constitutes a traditional dancer. I didn't go into length about this in my paper, as I feel like it could be a research topic all on its own, and I did not want to create too much confusion for those not in the field of folklore. A traditional dancer that is native to their art, compared to a dancer that is of the culture but not necessarily the context, compared to one who learned both the culture and the context, all have a different skew on their craft. No category is homogenous and each dancer within each category also has their own perspectives, yet to lump all three under the term traditional dancer seems too generic. I believe it simplifies things and makes it easier to bring cultural dance into the classroom. However, knowing the complexities of the term "traditional" and the value in someone having grown up in the culture and context, I vacillate between liking and not liking the term to represent the three categories of dancers I interviewed. From an outreach perspective and conveying the importance of traditional dance to educators, it allows for simplicity. However, I do feel somewhere in the development of a program or through outreach materials the various ways in which traditional dance is learned and by whom should be highlighted. The point is not to argue for one over the other but to understand a bit about the complexities of context and how dances are learned and re-presented. Or maybe I should re-visit the term altogether and consider using cultural dance program or ethnic dance arts program. I'm not sure I would be happy with those either but that would take some more research and focus group work to get different people's ideas.

Throughout the process of my capstone, I sometimes felt like it all made sense and other times I felt like none of it made sense and would never work. Although I still have my doubts because the academic demands placed on schools and teachers are vast, yet, I feel much more equipped and confident to develop and argue for a traditional dance arts program in the classroom. I would have liked to have more time to develop an example program with a specific unit of study. I would have liked more time to develop a tiered approach; for example, components for a four-week to a twelve-week program. I would have liked to do more research around immigration and assimilation and connect that to units of study. My initial idea was huge and unrealistic in five months. However, these are ideas I can continue to develop now that I have the foundation and reasoning for a traditional dance arts program that embraces the diverse tapestry of our country.

Gratitude

I am very grateful to all the individuals that took the time to sit and talk with me. It was a gift to listen to their stories, lived experiences and passion in what they do. Without their insight this research would not have been possible. They are on the ground doing the work and the best programs come from the bottom up! Thank you Rosalina, Saki, Amanda, Carolyn, Sylvia, Horacio, Josh, and Loubayi , Angela and Brent for your awesome knowledge about dance and art programs in schools. Thank you Marlena, Hayley, Joanna, Patricia, and Lisa for your invaluable insight, commitment and passion in teaching our children.

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Macisco, Rosalina. Executive Director, Santa Barbara Dance Institute. Phone interview. 2/27/2018

Moser, Brent. Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Paso Robles Joint Unified School District. Phone interview, 4/13/18

Olsson, Saki . ArtSmart Coordinator Tandy Beal and Company. Phone interview 3/8/2018

Tahti, Angela. Cultural leader and Former Executive Director Arts Obispo. Interview, San Luis Obispo, CA 4/6/2018

Toews, Patricia. Fourth grade Teacher, Baywood Elementary. Interview Los Osos, CA 4/10/18

Vega, Marlene. Fourth Grade Teacher, Pacheco Elementary. Interview San Luis Obispo, CA 4/17/2018

Appendix A

Questions for Community Cultural Leaders

Tell me a little about your background in Arts Education.

What do you know is being done locally to integrate arts into schools?

(At county, district and individual levels)

(Have the Visual and performing arts standards VAPA been formally adopted/integrated anywhere besides Paso Robles)

Are you familiar with folk arts education in schools? If so how?

Do you know of any folk arts education programs locally.

My focus is on traditional dance arts. With your experience in the community who are the traditional dance artists you know?

Have they done any work with schools, including assemblies, classes...

What has been your experience with teachers and integrating arts into their curriculums?

With your experience in the arts and education community how do you feel administrators and/or teachers would respond to a traditional dance or event traditional/folk arts program.

What would an ideal arts education program look like for you?

What do you believe are the right conditions for developing a robust arts education program?

What advice could you offer to integrate dance into social studies curriculum.... ?

Appendix B

Questions for Traditiona Dance Artists

Native Artist Questions...

Describe the traditional art form that you teach.

Where,

when and

how did you learn this tradition?

Beginning to understand how they learned and how they teach.

How does that learning translate into teaching.

(Choices they make when teaching and what to teach)

What role does it play in your everyday life, and in the life of your community?

How are they a practitioner in their own community vs. a teaching artist.

Teaching:

Have you taught this art form within your own community?

How did you know you were ready to teach?

(codified system, through osmosis in community, not a master but sharing what they know)

Is teaching this art form in a school different than teaching it in your own community?

How?

Initial expectations...

Is dance your main livelihood? Is this how you want it?

Initial feelings, intentions or expectations when teaching? Has that shifted?

By sharing dance traditions what do you hope adults walk away with?

When teaching children what do you hope they take away from it?

If you were to have your own program what would it include?

Besides the great benefits of dance is there an aspect of the meaning or tradition of what you are sharing that you want students to feel or think about?

In your experience teaching children in the classroom, what works?

What could be different?

Any feelings of disappointment or sadness...

Representations of dance? respect/disrespect?

Sustaining traditions:

How would you like to see this happen? It happens back home but do you see opportunities here in the US for non natives to carry it forward?

How do you feel about fusing/shifting of traditional dances as they may be incorporated into other genres or styles?

Moments that brought great joy?

Opportunities and challenges?

Non-native teachers:

1. Journey into dance form... discovery, study, purpose,
Where when and how
2. At what point did you feel ready to teach?
(teacher's blessing, codified system...)
3. Initial feelings, intentions or expectations when teaching? Has that shifted?
4. Would you feel comfortable teaching this within the community native to the art?
Why or Why not?
5. What are you especially sensitive too or aware of when teaching another culture's dance?
6. By sharing dance traditions what do you hope adults walk away with?
7. Have you taught children in an elementary school setting?

8. When teaching children what do you hope they take away from it?
9. Do you do anything special or intentional to bring cultural context/cultural knowledge into the classroom?
10. In your experience teaching children in the classroom, what works?
What could be different?
11. If you were to have your own program what would it include?
12. Ethics around representation? Cultural sensitivity?
13. Experiences of misrepresentation by others?

Appendix C

Teacher Questions

1. How long have you been teaching?
 - a. What district or schools?
 - b. How long have you been teaching 4th grade?
 - c. What do you most like about 4th grade?
2. Are you familiar with folk arts in education?
3. What does that mean to you?

I am looking at 4th grade SS curriculum with an emphasis on the topic of immigration and how traditional/folk dance arts can be integrated into that subject--

4. How is social studies taught at your school? (GLAD, by teachers choice...)
5. How do you teach the unit around immigration?
 - a. Is it historical or are contemporary issues taught?
 - b. What are your primary goals for this unit?
6. How are you sharing different stories of people (immigrants)?
7. Do you teach it from multiple perspectives? If so how?
8. Are you interested in integrating arts into the classroom? If so, do you do it now and how?
9. Have you ever integrated dance? What do you think about that? How would students react?
10. How do you think a traditional dance arts program could enhance your instruction around a social studies unit related to immigration?
11. How could something like this not feel like more work?
12. What would be your do's and don'ts?
13. What is the most fulfilling part of teaching for you?
14. At the end of the year what do you hope your students remember or walk into the world with from your class?

Appendix D - Proposed Budget

Program Development

| Labor | HRS | Per hour cost | Total |
|--------------------|-----|---------------|----------------|
| Artist 1 | 8 | \$45 | \$360 |
| Artist 2 | 8 | \$45 | \$360 |
| Cultural Worker | 8 | \$45 | \$360 |
| Principal | 3 | \$45 | \$135 |
| Teacher 1 | 8 | \$45 | \$360 |
| Teacher 2 | 8 | \$45 | \$360 |
| Meals | | | \$100 |
| Total Labor | | | \$2,035 |

Admin

| | | | |
|----------------|--|--|-------|
| Materials | | | \$200 |
| Graphic Design | | | \$500 |
| Printing | | | \$300 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|----|------|----------------|
| Cultural Worker | 20 | \$45 | 900 |
| total Admin | | | \$1,900 |
| Total Development Cost | | | \$3,935 |

Program Implementation For 12 week session

| | Hrs | Per hour cost | Total |
|-------------------|-----|---------------|----------------|
| Artist Prep | 2 | \$45 | \$90 |
| Artist in class | 13 | \$65 | \$845 |
| Teacher Stipened | | | \$200 |
| Cultural Worker | 20 | \$45 | \$900 |
| Total Cost | | | \$2,035 |