

# **Folk Arts • Professional Development**

**September 28, 2010**

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## **Goals for this professional development session:**

- (Re)introduce folk arts as part of everyday life and student learning.
- Build your familiarity (and comfort level) with folk arts, and in addressing these topics in the classroom.
- Work together to integrate folk arts standards into classroom work.
- Share definitions, understandings, tools, and procedures.
- Get you excited! Have some fun!
- Reflect about the practice of folk arts in our own lives, and in our classrooms.
- Open curiosity about ways we connect to community folk arts and traditions.

# Folk Arts @ FACTS includes. . . .

## **Residencies - Visiting Folk and Traditional Artists [5-6 scheduled annually]**

- Class-based, 6 to 8 weeks / 10 – 12 sessions
- Whole school (Teacher Losang)
- Recess clubs and special class mini-residencies
- Mini class-based (lower grades)
- After school clubs & classes

## **Ensembles creating avenues towards mastery - open to all, criteria for enrollment and participation [6-7 scheduled annually]**

- Weekly sessions: 3<sup>rd</sup> week of September – June

## **Everyday Rituals and Practices**

Meal: song & seating / duties

Morning meeting: a non-academic (social / personal) engaging experience

- Each child's name is spoken / greeting
- FACTS pledge
- Sharing and listening
- Group community-building

Titles: All adults are Teachers

School climate and culture: respect for one another and diverse communities; welcoming parents; culture of learners

## **Annual School-Wide Events & Ritual Calendar**

Mid-Autumn Festival	Many Points of View Day	Peace Concert
New Year's Celebration	Spring Concert	Founders' Day
Move Up Day	Play Day	

## **Community Investigations**

Observing / Learning from peoples' experiences: Oral history projects (w/ assistance of coaches and co-teachers); development of documentation skills

Community Service projects

## **Special Projects (examples)**

Grandmas knitting with kids • Family history projects • Honor our elders events  
One-time concerts (with outside agencies)

## **Integration into subject-class content**

Content standards for Folk Arts at FACTS

Direct delivery in content classes: using folk arts and student / community knowledge as part of classroom practice

Supported by professional development

# **THE FOLK ARTS STANDARDS**

(Developed by the Folk Arts Committee, adopted by the Board, 7/09)

## **Content Standards for Folk Arts at FACTS**

- 1. Understanding who I am and who is around me.**
- 2. Learning how I can explore folk arts and folklife, and sharing what I know.**
- 3. Recognizing folk arts as an active force in our society and the world around us.**
- 4. Becoming an active, respectful culture-maker.**

## **Content Standard 1:** **Understanding who I am and who is around me**

Students are able to identify and appreciate who they are – both in terms of cultural traditions and folk groups or communities, and in terms of their own gifts, skills, choices and interests.

Students come to know more about who they are in the world, through the arts, beliefs and practices that express and shape their identity and those of others.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1A – Identify and appreciate who they are and their place in the world.**

#### 1A Benchmarks

- 1A.1 Name and describe folk groups to which they belong.
- 1A.2 Inventory and describe folk arts (traditions, beliefs, practices) of their own folk groups and those of others.
- 1A.3 Recount a genealogy and family history (their own or that of someone else), or a history of a folk tradition.
- 1A.4 Use the term “folk groups” appropriately to define their own membership in one or more folk group.
- 1A.5 Describe their relationship to on one of their folk groups, or the influence of one of their folk groups on them.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1B – Understand what communities and folk groups do and how do they work.**

#### 1B Benchmarks

- 1B.1 Identify cultural treasures and demonstrate understanding that all people have objects and practices made special by the stories and experiences behind them.
- 1B.2 Explore the role that language plays in fostering a sense of who they are.
- 1B.3 Analyze the values underlying various folk life traditions and distinguish between those values that they share and those that they question or reject.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1C – Learn about the group memberships of those around us and in the world.**

#### 1C Benchmarks

- 1C.1 Identify and describe other folk groups around them.
- 1C.2 Place their cultural communities within larger contexts.

- 1C.3 Demonstrate understanding that there are surface cultural markers and there are deeper meanings and beliefs.

- 1C.4 Students will be able to analyze the various ways folklife traditions are practiced and perceived.

Draft Indicators:

Students engage on the topics:

- What's the difference between 1) copying folk artists and practices to learn and 2) copying to mock or make fun? (Involves describing the range of ways folklife traditions are practiced and perceived: making invisible, discounting, shallow mimicry, appreciation, affirming and critically honoring. . .)

## **Content Standard 2:**

### **Learning how I can explore folk arts and folklife and sharing what I know**

Students are able to find, recognize, respect, and study folklife and folk traditions around them.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2A:**

**Students recognize that valuable knowledge can be found within their local communities.**

2A Benchmarks:

- 2A.1 Students can recognize and name people around them who are cultural resources and understand that important knowledge does not come only from books or museums but can be found within our own communities.

*(e.g. I recognize that my mother the gardener knows valuable things. There is a person in my community who knows how to prepare for important celebrations. I see folk artists at FACTS who have special skills that are valued in their communities.)*

- 2A.2 Students are able to figure out what people know that is valuable (to them and to their community), to recognize elements of traditional and folk arts exist within mass culture as well as in everyday life.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2B:**

**Students are able to identify and use appropriate tools for answering their community-based research questions.**

2B Benchmarks:

- 2B.1 Students understand that different tools are appropriate for gaining different kinds of knowledge. *(There are things you can learn from oral history that you cannot learn from the internet. There are times to read a book and times to observe things first hand.)*

- 2B.2 Students are able to use appropriately one or more community research tools (oral history, ethnography, survey, direct participation, etc.)

- 2b.3 Students develop documentation skills and ability to use recording tools (audio, video, writing) to document folk arts.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2C:**

**Students preserve and pass on local knowledge they gain by sharing what they learn with others.**

2C Benchmarks:

- 2C.1 Students pass on or act on knowledge gained from community elders, artists and other community members. Every student gains genuine experience at least one time before they graduate from FACTS in identifying, researching and sharing some aspect of local community heritage knowledge.

### **Content Standard 3:**

### **Recognizing folklife as an active force in our society and the world around us**

Students recognize the range of folk art expression and the range of human experience encompassed by folklife; understand how folk arts are created, transmitted and transformed, and how folklife can be a sustaining and enriching force in communities.

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3A:**

**Students discuss and document examples from the spectrum of folklife traditions (e.g., verbal, belief, dance, music, art...)**

3A Performance Benchmarks:

- 3A.1 Describe different types of folklife from one folk group.
- 3A.2 Investigate and identify key types of folklife within a folk group.
- 3A.3 Recognize a wide range of musical/ artistic traditions.
- 3A.4 Know one artist's "voice" / style from others' (and know something about their artistic family tree).

#### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3B:**

**Students explain the functions of folklife and the relationships between folk artists and their communities.**

3B Benchmarks:

- 3B.1 Reflect on the social responsibility of artists.
- 3B.2 Recognize how and when pressing needs and issues have been addressed and made visible through cultural practices.
- 3B.3 Analyze how folk art can be a way to take a stand, recognizing how upholding cultural expression is standing up for our selves and others.
- 3B.4 Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which communities and folk groups nurture and sustain artists and the ways artists nurture and sustain communities.
- B.5 Distinguish between mass commercial culture and folk arts, exploring questions of; Who is creating the message?, What is its purpose?, How is it transmitted?, What power and resources lie behind it?
- 3B.6 Analyze the values reflected in and underlying specific folk arts practices, and contrast with those of mass media messages.

- 3B.7 Be able to express opinions on the question of how particular traditions support or hurt the practice of fairness, equity, empathy and peace.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARD 3C:**

**Students identify people and groups who carry on traditional arts and culture. Students explain the processes by which specific traditions are created, maintained, altered, lost and revived. Students understand how traditional art forms are shaped by and respond to social, political, economic, and natural conditions.**

3C Benchmarks

- 3C.1 Record and present the folklife of a group in our school and describe how traditions in that group are shared, stay the same and change over time.
- 3C.2 Tell or write about a folk artist or folklife practitioner, including how they learned their art or practice and the value of that art or practice means to their communities.
- 3C.3 Research and discuss the role that a folk artist plays in creating, maintaining, reviving, or changing an art or practice.

## **CONTENT STANDARD 4:** **Becoming an active, respectful culture-maker**

Students know that everyone has creative power and that this power can help make our communities healthier. Students possess the capacity and courage to be artists and culture makers.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4A:** **Students express themselves appropriately within a wide range of culturally meaningful artistic traditions.**

4A Benchmarks:

- 4A.1 Participate actively and appropriately in a range of folk art and expressive genres.
- 4 A.1 a. Have the opportunity to travel from introduction to a degree of competence within a folk art form [age appropriate].
- 4A.2 Able to articulate criteria for excellence in the folk art forms they study.
- 4A.3 Develop their own creative voice and vision.
- 4A.4 Work in ensemble and collaboratively.
- 4A.5 Respectfully engage with elders and others, within and across communities.

### **PERFORMANCE STANDARD 4B:** **Students will have a sense of their capacity as active agents and learners and their ability to impact the world.**

4B Benchmarks:

- 4B.1 Students perform multiple roles as participants in folk arts: performer, helper, hearer, ally, teacher, etc.
- 4B.2 Students demonstrate use of learner tools: discipline, patience, persistence, perseverance, engagement, and humility.
- 4B.3 Display a sense of their own responsibility as culture makers and show awareness of the impact of their work.

# **ABOUT THE STANDARDS: BACKGROUND & CONTEXT**

## **Some overarching goals:**

- **Help students extend the range of places and circumstances where they feel that they belong and can contribute.** *[This involves helping students to feel themselves to be active agents, able to participate in and to build community, able to be a contributing part of a team, working and caring together with others. It reflects our hope to build students' familiarity with, and respect (and affection) for diverse communities, arts and people in our school and outside.]*
- **Deepen young peoples' powers of observation, mental and emotional presence, and curiosity, all of which are fundamental to being life-long learners.** *[This reflects our sense that paying attention, cultivating ways of seeing, hearing and understanding (especially of local issues and folk arts) open fundamental ways of making sense of, and organizing the world. And it reflects our sense that the learning and teaching of folk arts can offer particular avenues to development of observation skills, presence and curiosity.]*
- **Build students' capacity to see, value, respect and sustain local peoples' community heritage and cultural knowledge.** *[This reflects our hopes of nurturing awareness of the taken-for-granted, the too-often-dismissed, the everyday: all that meaning around us which comes from peoples' lives rather than from mass media, or larger structures. It reflects our desire to give students meaningful avenues for making sense of these community-grounded ways of being, and the capacity to critically question and challenge those structures and practices that diminish or disrespect local lifeways.]*

## **1. Understanding who I am and who is around me**

*A positive sense of self is the foundation of a healthy lifestyle through which our children are able to maintain their social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual wellbeing. Folk arts are important ways of naming: ways that people often use to define self (and other) and to create and sustain community. We want our young people to be able to see how folk arts are used in these (positive) self-generating, boundary-making (and community-making) ways, and also to be able to recognize (and critique) stereotypic and problematic uses of "othering." We want students to be able to draw on positive ways of imagining themselves as active contributing members of communities.*

This goal explores self and identity by paying attention to processes of folk arts and culture-making.

- It introduces folk arts as meaningful parts of culture: as resources, processes we can use.
- We see culture as active, dynamic, in flux (as something we make).
- We want students to see that they have choices and responsibilities in defining themselves and in figuring out who they are and who they can be.
- We want to focus attention on ways that folk arts opens our eyes to how groups work, to the nature of community, and to collective arts and action.
- We want to build awareness of the diverse, multiple and distinctive local communities, cultures and subcultures around us.

- We hope to encourage students to be able to see and develop their own gifts, skills and interests.
- We see character and community development, and the cultivation of enduring values (respect for self and others, patience, persistence) as part of folk arts. (Some of these values are named in Learning Area IV, too.)

## **2. Learning how I can explore folk arts and folk culture, and share what I know**

*In the current context of globalization with its increasing pressures towards uniformity and the commercialization of culture, students at FACT Charter School will understand that they have a role to play in the preservation and passing down of local knowledge.*

This goal focuses on critical inquiry, and on helping students to develop tools for gathering first-hand evidences from community and neighborhood life about what people hold to be important. It directs our attention to the processes by which we help students find, recognize, document, evaluate, assess and build on community knowledge around them. We count FACTS as a community whose health we cultivate and whose culture(s) we can attend to: we can model here how to build a school community where we learn to listen to one another, build understanding of different perspectives, value people for what they know and can contribute, and become stronger for our diverse commitments to a common good for all.

- o Here, we hope to engage students with primary sources, helping them to think about who and what to notice, how to pay attention (and care), what and how to ask and listen, how to identify, notice and cultivate community assets and resources— as more than evidences.

We hope for young people to develop solid observation and documentation skills, including

- o attention skills (caring, awareness of genre/pattern, detailed looking, surveying instruments, ability to notice what isn't said/present [negative space, silence]),
- o documentation in multiple media (sound, images, video, writing: connection to technology),
- o transcription and reporting skills (awareness of fidelity, pattern and meaning)
- o critical skills
- o [a sense of what is alternative and why]

## **3. Recognizing folk arts as an active force in our society and the world around us**

*Participating in the community, having meaningful interactions with elders, and learning how to be a good communicator (about and within folklife traditions) students learn to be active agents/actors in community building.*

Here, students learn to recognize the range of human experience encompassed by folklife and the range of folk art expression around them. We aim to build their understanding of how folk arts are created, transmitted and transformed, and how folklife can be a sustaining and enriching force in communities. Students learn to explain processes by which specific traditions are created, maintained, altered, lost and revived. They learn to recognize how traditional art forms are shaped by and respond to social, political, economic, and natural conditions. Here, our focus

is on recognizing folklife, and on the utility and meaningfulness of folk arts: students have opportunities to see and show how and why alternative and minority traditions function, how folk arts may be good equipment for living. We hope for young people to:

- Gain significant knowledge about the traditions practiced: be able to recognize a range of folklore genres, understand how and why they are used, be aware of contexts of use.
- Understand what is at issue in use of folk arts: how recourse to traditions may serves in everyday community life, and in movements and struggles occurring around them.
- Consider what they choose to preserve and why.
- Understand who folk artists are at FACTS and in their families and neighborhoods: know why and how they are important; be aware of the background, training, and experiences of the artists; understand the challenges and possibilities in the folk arts people practice
- Value and respect elders and those around them – including others in the school community – for what they can each contribute.

#### **4. Becoming an active, respectful culture-maker**

*All our children need the capacity/courage/ability/permission to try: knowing and believing that everyone can have responsibility and creative power and can help make our communities healthy,*

As part of helping our students to develop multicultural awareness and competences, and out of the belief that doing is an important pathway to learning, we want to create ways for students to 1) be exposed to, 2) have chances to try, and 3) be able to make significant progress in learning a range of traditional folk art forms— in particular, music, dance and crafts/visual arts. We want students to be able to show others (including other students) their skills in heritage languages and arts, and to be good representatives of these forms, capable in doing, knowing what they are doing, and knowing about these arts and where/who they come from.

# What are folk arts?

They are arts that come out of peoples' experiences.

They are shared within a community. (They are not just one person's invention).

They are ways that we keep a connection to the past, to people who came before.

And they are ways that we say, here and now, who we are and who we want to be.

# What are cultural treasures?

They are priceless.

They are special.

They hold our memories.

They are dear to us.

There are about more than a single person's experience.

In this school, and in our families, are many different people, from many different communities, who keep folk arts alive.

These arts are among our cultural treasures. What are yours?



## Defining FOLK ARTS

“Folk arts,” “Folklore,” and “Folklife” are all used to refer to the cultural and creative work that people make and do.

All three are names we use to clear a space for paying attention to

- arts, culture and practices that we **shape for ourselves**, rather than learn in school or from formal institutions; ways that we make meaning out of our experiences, folk arts represent “*an enormous and deeply significant dimension of culture*”<sup>1</sup>

- arts that we learn by observation, share and pass on **informally**; they are transmitted by **word of mouth**;

- traditions that are **collective**, more than a single person’s creative invention; forms that exist and persist because they are valued and held dear by communities; “*everyday and intimate creativity that all of us share and pass on to the next generation*”<sup>2</sup>

Here at FACTS – the Folk Arts and Cultural Treasures Charter School – we use “**folk arts**” as a primary term because of its emphasis on active doing and making, and on the skills and knowledge central to living cultural traditions in our communities, and because we aim to integrate (folk) arts-based learning into the school.

**From the initial FACTS implementation grant: . . . FACTS chooses to focus on folk arts because they represent collective action and shared values, and because use of these arts embeds the things which are most meaningful to the communities themselves into the life and culture of the school. For diverse populations such as the students we anticipate at FACTS, folk arts serve as vehicles to bridge children to elders, school to community, and school community members to each other. FACTS will incorporate folk arts in our school in a number of ways.**

**History:** All of these terms (“folk arts,” “folklore,” “folklife”) reflect slightly different intellectual traditions in the field of folklore. The term “**folklore**” was coined by British antiquarian William Thomas in 1846— one of a generation of British scholars/antiquarians interested in documenting the lore— the expressive culture and traditions—of local country people whose ways of life were threatened by industrialization. The American Folklore Society was established here in 1888, and the field has continued to develop means for looking inclusively at culture and creativity. The term “**folklife**” became important in the U.S. in the

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/whatisfolklife.html>

1970s, as a means of emphasizing not only oral traditions but also the expressive traditions and practices of everyday life. The American Folklife Preservation Act of 1976, which provided for the establishment of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, articulated reasons why a pluralist notion of culture- and art-making is important to democratic life.

**Why folk arts are important:** We see folk arts as rooted in community traditions, in collective experiences. This means that while individuals make up folklore, new stories, songs, or sayings, these arts endure because they name the experiences of many people. When we share stories at the end of the day, recall a proverb that gets to the heart of a situation, or eat traditional foods at holidays, we are using our own folk arts. Calling these arts "folk" is a way of naming what is collective, community-based, or a peoples' tradition. It is a way of distinguishing arts that represent more than an individual point of view. The term is also used 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. See **“What are folk arts” [PFP]** <http://www.folkloreproject.org/programs/education/dancer/folkarts.cfm>

Other terms:

**Folk groups:** This term helps us focus on the social and cultural contexts in which folk arts are created, that is, on the many different kinds of social groups and communities— named and unnamed— that share in common some kind of identity and expressive culture. This may include ethnic, cultural and tribal groups, kin and peer groups, age sets, friendship circles, teams and “gangs,” groups of fellow workers, people who like, play or do similar things together on a consistent basis. While all of these (and more) may be folk groups, there are wide differences in peoples' membership in groups, and in the depth of connection, sharing and involvement they may have. That is to say that all folk groups may not be sites of the same kind, depth or significance of culture-making or folk arts and folklife. We like the idea of folk group because it helps students move past ethnicity and/or culture as the only feature of their identity, and as the only source of folklife.

**Cultural treasures:** This term has come into currency in the last thirty years, as one means of naming, valuing, documenting and preserving significant living intangible cultural heritage: arts and traditions perpetuated by individual people whose roles as custodians of priceless legacies are worth celebrating, especially as distinct local and vernacular traditions seemed increasingly fragile and threatened by inhospitable forces. The annual National Endowment for the Arts Heritage Awards, honoring “American folk artists for their contributions to our national cultural mosaic,” modeled after the Japanese "National Living Treasures" concept, UNESCO's work on national and cultural heritage, Native cultural repatriation struggles, and the Alaska Native Knowledge Network (and other resources) are a handful of examples of complex attempts to grapple with how best to maintain meaningful and living legacies of cultural diversity and distinctiveness.

## Definitions/resources:

- “What is folklife” [The American Folklife Center]  
<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/whatisfolklife.html>
- “What is folklore” [The American Folklife Center]  
<http://www.afsnet.org/aboutfolklore/aboutFL.cfm>
- And an example: “Leadbelly’s ‘Old Man’ and the Work Song Tradition. By Stephen Wade (with Archie Green).  
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyid=5686572>
- **National Heritage Award Winners** [National Endowment for the Arts]  
<http://www.nea.gov/honors/heritage/Heritage06/NHFIntro.html> (And by looking at the lives of people who are “cultural treasures” )

### **ADDITIONAL LESSONS AND RESOURCES:**

Teacher’s Guide to In My Heart I am a Dancer:

<http://www.folkloreproject.org/programs/education/dancer/index.php>

Teacher’s Guide to Walking on Solid Ground:

<http://www.folkloreproject.org/assets/pdf/education/grade7module.pdf>

Teachers Guide to Folk Arts of Social Change (in AAU/PFP office)

Materials at [www.folkloreproject.org](http://www.folkloreproject.org)

MacDowell, Marsha, ed. *Folk Arts in Education: A Resource Handbook*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Museum

Wisconsin

Louisiana

## AN INTRODUCTORY LESSON ON FOLK ARTS

**Adapted from** David Taylor, “Duval County Folklife Program: A Guide for Fourth Grade Teachers” in MacDowell, Marsha, ed. *Folk Arts in Education: A Resource Handbook*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Museum, 1987, pp. 219 –224\*. His working definition: “Folklore is the vast body of knowledge passed on, shared, informally, usually by word of mouth or observation and imitation, within particular groups of people. “

- Write “folk arts” on the board and ask students what the word means. Urge students to take a guess. Record responses.
- Then pull the two words apart. Ask what folk means. Record responses. [It means people: we are all folk. What if we think of it as referring to different groups of people?]
- Ask what different kinds of groups students belong to. [Differences in background, gender, age, neighborhood, classroom, interests/skills may emerge. Probe: Consider differences within these categories of “belonging”: beginner/expert, comfortable/uneasy; and differences in ways of belonging, in attitudes, perspectives, closeness (face-to-face relationships) vs. distance (all 4<sup>th</sup> graders in city).]
- Ask what “arts” are. Sort out answers: something that is beautiful/meaningful, created/shaped/made/crafted, skilled. Probe for examples: music, song, craft, riddles, proverbs, home-made food, gardening, names and nicknames, greetings, farewells, games (jump-rope rhymes, catch, kite-making). Discuss what seems to count as art, what doesn’t, and why.
- Ask what “traditions” are: list abstract definitions. Probe for examples. [“When I use the word “tradition,” I mean the knowledge about how to do something that is passed on, shared, among members of a community. Can you share examples of traditions?] i.e. Mid-Autumn Festival, birthdays,
- Choose a single example (say Mid-Autumn festival) and ask what people do then? [Probe for specific foodways, customs, clothes, behavior, crafts/ lantern-making, special music or stories, family reunions, gathering with friends/ more freedom and different rules!]
- How do you learn these traditions? [From family, friends, others: person-to-person. By watching, learning, copying— not by books or lessons or TV.]
- Choose samples of audio or video of FACTS residency artists, and ask students to identify what kinds of traditional arts they can identify.

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\* We have this massive publication, in a binder, filled with our lessons, in the AAU/PFP office. It is also available online, and in pdf. It is downloadable here: <http://www.folkartsineducation.org/>

## **And more suggestions for instruction:**

### **Learning about folk artists**

Students can research traditional artists in whom they are interested, create maps and timelines, curate exhibitions, or write reports. They may do a report on artists present at PFP, or other heritage artists on resource lists, or on people in their own families and neighborhoods. We can offer books, audios and videos, as well as web resources. They might want to answer some of the following questions.

- 1) Where were artists born, and when? Where do they live now (and when did they move here?) Can you locate where they were born on a map?
- 2) Can you re-tell their life story, or biography? What were important turning points, challenges or opportunities? Are there parts of their stories that are important to you, that interest you, or that remind you of something?
- 3) How did they learn their art form? (How was it hard or easy? Who were teachers? Who influenced them? How did they get good at what they do?)
- 4) What were important achievements in their lives? What are they proud of? (How do you know? How can you tell?) Are these common things to be counted as achievements? Why or why not, do you think?
- 5) Compare the lives of two artists. How are they the same and how different? What else do you want to know/ wish you knew about these artists?
- 6) Why do these artists do this art form? What rewards do they get?

### **Learning about folk arts and cultural traditions**

- 1) What is the name of the art form(s) that an artist practices? Students can learn to recognize and identify cultural traditions (Nigerian, Liberian), and **genres** (kind) of art, in as particular a way as possible: for example, a Liberian celebration dance from the Kru people, or a Nigerian women's dance in honor of Oshun (rather than African dance).
- 2) What is the history (or the stories) of a particular example of folk art? How much can they learn and tell about a particular art—without jumping to conclusions for which there are no evidences? (For example, know that one Southern African American folktale, told by Linda Goss is the story of “The frog who wanted to be a singer,” and she learned it from her father in Alcoa, Tennessee in the 1950s; it was one of his favorite stories. “Oshun” is both the name of a Yoruba dance, and a Yoruba deity in whose honor the dance is done; there are particular colors and rhythms associated with the dance. It comes from the Yoruba people of Nigeria, and Teacher Dottie Wilkie first learned it from dancers and drummers here in Philadelphia, and has been studying it her whole life! She dances it every year at ODUNDE.)
- 3) Can students recognize any of the hallmarks or characteristics of a particular folk art? (Call and response, for example, in Linda's stories).
- 4) Find examples of other artists who work in the same art form, or of two performances, or two versions of the “same” story. How are they the same and how are they different?
- 5) Name all the kinds of genres of folk arts you see, hear and learn about at FACTS. Keep track of different kinds of song traditions, story traditions.

## Folklore Genres (Types or Forms): A Quick and Informal Survey

What are some of the folk arts present and practiced around you? Here is a very rough “finding list” to get you thinking. Consider some of the arts that you learned face-to-face, from personal contact, as well as arts that you think of as “folk” (or coming out of community experience) that you have seen or experienced. **Your assignment:** Mark “**R**” for those which you **recognize**, “**F**” for those with which you are somewhat **familiar** (you can report, or say, something about them), and “**P**” for those you do, practice or **perform**.

	<b>R</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Oral Traditions</b>			
Legends: how a place came to be, stories of historical figures			
Folk tales: “once upon a time”			
Trickster tales: Ah Chey, Anansi, Coyote			
Personal experience narratives: first person stories, most embarrassing moment			
Jokes			
Tall tales			
Riddles			
Proverbs and proverbial sayings			
Folk poetry: toasts, <i>ayaii</i> , <i>kwx txhiaj</i> , signifying			
Other:			
<b>Performance Traditions</b>			
Folk musical forms: lullabies, corrido, pleña			
Dance: social dance, cultural dance forms			
Chants, taunts: “The people united will never be defeated,” “You can’t catch me,” “Nana nana boo boo”			
Games / play: double dutch, tag, hide & seek, divination games, horse			
Hand gestures: finger, clenched fist, cut-throat, “L” (loser)			
Folk opera and drama			
Other:			
<b>Crafts</b>			
Foodways			
Textile arts: <i>paj ntaub</i> , needlework, quilting, embroidery, weaving, basketry			
Carving: wood, gourds, food			
Folk toys: tops, kites, dolls			
Folk sculpture: snowmen, dough sculpture			
Puppetmaking: shadow, rod, hand and finger, giant			
Paper arts: paper cutting, folding			
Painting: brush painting, calligraphy, graffiti			
Musical instrument making			
Other:			
<b>Festival, Ritual and Custom</b>			
Rites of passage: naming, coming of age, birthdays, weddings, funerals			
Calendar customs: seasonal celebrations (Mid-Autumn festival; New Year traditions; Day of the Dead/ Hallowe’en; Three Kings)			
Occupational, family and other “group” observances: family reunions, homecomings, Founders’ Day, Move Up Day, birthdays			
Other:			

## FOLK ARTS CLASS PROVERBS HOMEWORK

NAME:

GRADE:

CLUSTER:

Q: means the questions you will ask. A: is where you write the person's answers.  
You may write the answers on this front or back of this paper or on a separate sheet.

Q: We are studying proverbs, or popular expressions, that give a lesson.

Some examples include:

- Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
- A book contains a house of gold.
- Rajin pangkal pandai, malas pangkal bodoh.
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

Q: Where did you grow up?

A:

Q: When you were younger, what proverbs, or common sayings did you hear?

A:

Q: Who would tell these to you?

A:

Q: Please pick one of your examples and try to explain what it is about. What do you think it means?

A:

Q: Have you ever told proverbs to your own family members? Tell about a specific situation when you told a proverb to someone. What was happening?

A:

## **ABOUT PROVERBS: “Proverbs are the wit of one and the wisdom of many.”**

### **Definitions:**

“Of the various folklore genres (i.e. fairy tales, legends, tall tales, jokes and riddles), proverbs are the most concise but not necessarily the simplest form. . . . Proverbs fulfill the human need to summarize experiences and observations into nuggets of wisdom that provide ready-made comments on personal relationships and social affairs.”— Wolfgang Meider, *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004, p. 1.

“A proverb is a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation.” — Wolfgang Meider, *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004, p. 3.

Proverbs about proverbs: “Proverbs are the children of experience.” “Proverbs are the wisdom of the streets.” — Meider, *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004, p. 3-4.

### **Some features of proverbs:**

- **Artfulness:** They are not ordinary language: but are in some way recognizable / patterned [i.e. they are examples of heightened and not “ordinary language” with noticeable formal features, including use of metaphor, alliteration, parallel structure, (and of course, wit)]
- **“Equipment for living”:** They carry wisdom or values relating to observable phenomena or recurrent situations; they continue because they are useful in relation to such recurrent problems. They have *function and utility*.
- **Readily shared:** They are brief, portable, memorable, and are transmitted and shared person to person, i.e., existing *outside official structures* [but not only: i.e. popular culture and commercial uses, etc.]. They are ubiquitous: all around us.
- **Collective wisdom:** They are shaped by an individual but stay around because people collectively find them useful: they are shaped by community values and needs. Precisely because they are recognizably “other peoples’ words” rather than that of an individual, they can often convey opinions indirectly, but with authority.
- **Varied topics and positions:** They are flexible and multiple: can be used to give opinions without committing self; taking different positions. They exist as a body, representing repertoires of ready-made responses.

## The Proverb Project – Eric Joselyn (on [www.culturetools.org](http://www.culturetools.org))

**1. Introduction and context: What are proverbs?** Begin with definitions of folk arts (from FACTS) that students are provided.\* All people have histories and experiences that they share in different ways. Then to language: there are lots of ways that we pass on ways of talking, use other peoples' words to make our own points and to say things. Introduce the term "proverb" and give working definitions. All peoples have some shared commonalities, but there are many different traditions and ways of talking. Proverbs are a genre (or recognizable type) of folk speech common in many cultures (but not all).

**2. Explore examples of proverbs.** Who has ever heard of "don't count your chickens before they're hatched"? Have you ever heard someone say it, or something like that? "A book contains a house of gold" is a commonly heard proverb in many Chinese families. Get kids in discussion mode. Generate and record proverbs kids have heard, or heard of. Ask: Who did you hear it from? Responses tend to be adults / elders. Ask: Are there other things that you have heard more than once, from more than one source? Another prompt: If you are a kid and you do something foolish or dangerous, what have you been told by an aunt or an elder? Kids share these. Look for light bulbs of recognition from other kids.

**3. Explore metaphor and symbol.** Go back to chickens and hatching. Ask questions about this. Has anyone here raised chickens? Do you have them in your home? Why are people talking about chickens? Most people can trace our families back to some kind of country, rural or farm life in previous generations, times and places. These were times when people had more of a connection with animals in everyday life. If you are dealing with chickens (and other animals), what you observe in the animal world sometimes helps you to reflect on how people act. (Here, the aim is to help students make connections about how the natural world can anchor descriptions of life. This is a way in to explaining symbols and metaphors. The point is to show how you can be talking about one thing but also talking about something else.)

Then, go into particular proverbs – generated by kids or using teacher examples, i.e.: "Lay down with dogs, wake up with fleas." What does this mean literally? When someone tells you this, what does it mean? What are they trying to tell you? Kids are asked to rephrase proverbs, in terms of how they are used; they are asked to use their own words to "translate" (or "gloss") proverbs— explaining how proverbs are used to explain about / comment on bad choices, consequences, and so forth.

**4. Build understanding of meanings and uses of proverbs.** Back to universality: everybody uses proverbs and sayings. But we don't always recognize one another's sayings. We can read them, but (a lesson on specificity): we may not understand them. Some proverbs we hear and we don't really know what is being said— unless we can study them, investigate them, put them in context. Do a survey of the room to show that everyone has proverbs but we don't all know the same ones. As we get to know each other, we may exchange them.

**5. Assignment: Proverb Documentation Project.** Each kid is then charged with going out and interviewing an adult or an elder in their family or community to see if they can find someone who can share a proverb. [See worksheet]

Explain the worksheet. Model interviews to help kids know how to ask questions and be able to understand the task. Anticipate / prefigure some of the difficulties kids may have in asking/doing interviews.

**6. Processing the assignment.** Returned worksheets are collected and kids do selective sharing of different proverbs. Grouping student's proverbs by geography (country/place of origin) helps to highlight context and history: Philadelphia, China, Vietnam, Cambodian, African American, European. Try to identify situations of origin: do some speculative analysis about what the proverbs mean. For example, with "Just because you hear thunder, don't dump out the rain barrel," peeling apart layers of what kids need to know to understand the proverbs they are hearing and sharing.

Kids then select one proverb they brought in, or one they heard others share, or one from the teacher's collection of examples.

They then illustrate a proverb in terms of its particular context and geography of origin. First they develop sketches and get feedback on formal aspects of their sketch, i.e.: How do you translate this visually, for different groups? Kids can choose to be literal or symbolic /interpretive. Formal features they address include scale and composition (what do you want to emphasize by making it big or bold?), use of multiple images or montage structures, together building visual literacy.

Kids then execute the proverb illustrations.

**7. Activity: Proverb Theater.** Small teams did proverb theaters. Teams of 4-6 kids selected a particular proverb and presented it in dramatic form to the class. Some were literal. Some were symbolic/ interpretive. This activity helped kids to polish the meaning end of it: to say more about what proverbs are about. This resonated more with kids who are in middle school, for example dealing with social exclusion issues. They can find more contexts in which a proverb may apply. (For example, "Lead the donkey but beware of its rear." They enjoyed literally acting it out— Girls in a mall dissing each other over a boy. They were able to dramatize common social interactions as bases and texts for proverbs.

**8. Activity: School-wide Display.** Finished proverb illustrations were displayed on the wall. There was some identification done, in terms of sources (people, and place of origin). Some proverbs were presented in the heritage language and translated into English.

\*

**What are folk arts?** Folk arts are names for the arts that we shape for ourselves, rather than learn in school or from formal institutions. Folk arts are rooted in community traditions, in collective experiences. This means that while individuals make up folklore, new stories, songs, or sayings, these arts endure because they name the experiences of many people. When we share stories at the end of the day, recall a proverb that gets to the heart of a situation, or eat traditional foods at holidays, we are using our own folk arts.

(<http://www.folkloreproject.org/programs/education/dancer/folkarts.cfm>)

## **PROVERB WORKING GROUPS: INTRODUCTION**

**How can you use folk arts in your classroom?** Beginning with **proverbs and quoted speech** that students may observe and document in their own lives, we are asking that we take some time to consider how this particular folk art form may be useful. We frame some tasks and ask you to consider how to make use of this “simple” genre— proverb presence, content, form, and function— in your classroom.

**This exploration addresses the following FOLK ARTS STANDARDS:**

**Content Standard 1: Understanding who I am and who is around me.** Students are able to identify and appreciate who they are – both in terms of cultural traditions and folk groups or communities, and in terms of their own gifts, skills, choices and interests. Students come to know more about who they are in the world, through the arts, beliefs and practices that express and shape their identity and those of others.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARD 1B: Understand what communities and folk groups do and how do they work**

- 1B.2 Explore the role that language plays in fostering a sense of who they are.

**[What words do they share and pass on? How do these proverbs and sayings hold community knowledge and opinion?]**

- 1B.3 Analyze the values underlying various folk traditions [**like proverbs**] and distinguish between those values that they share and those that they question or reject.

**Content Standard 2: Learning how I can explore folk arts and folklife and share what I know.** Students are able to find, recognize, respect, and study folk traditions around them.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2A:** Students recognize that valuable knowledge can be found within their local communities.

- 2A.1 Students can recognize and name people around them who are cultural resources and understand that important knowledge [**like proverbs and sayings**] does not come only from books or museums but can be found within our own communities.
- 2A.2 Students are able to figure out what people know that is valuable (to them and to their community), to recognize elements of traditional and folk arts exist within mass culture as well as in everyday life.

**PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2B:** Students are able to identify and use appropriate tools for answering their community-based research questions.

- 2B.2 Students are able to use appropriately one or more community research tools (oral history, **ethnography, survey, direct participation, etc.**)
- 2b.3 Students develop documentation skills and ability to use recording tools (audio, video, writing) to document folk arts. [**Paying attention: remember, report, repeat, perform, enact. . .**]

**PERFORMANCE STANDARD 2C:** Students preserve and pass on local knowledge they gain by sharing what they learn with others.

- 2C.1 Students pass on or act on knowledge gained from community elders, artists and other community members. Every student gains genuine experience at least one time

before they graduate from FACTS in identifying, researching and sharing some aspect of local community heritage knowledge. [**Students use proverbs in relevant ways in content classes**]

Here we offer some **general resources**. A number of websites, useful across learning areas, offer lists of proverbs.

### **CAUTIONS:**

\***We avoid** those sites, and lessons, which make comparisons across cultures, or which make **generalizations** about how proverbs represent cultural attitudes, worldviews or character. We think that these approaches generalize in dangerously problematic (and often stereotypical) ways. Proverbs are used in particular situations and contexts, and these contexts— removed in lists— make proverbs meaningful. Nevertheless, if you want access to wide ranges of proverbs, the following sites and search engines are useful:

\* **We are selective about origins and uses.** Proverbs can originate from many places— from literary sources (Old/New Testament versions of the Book of Proverbs), individuals (Ben Franklin, for example, and other writers), and from “popular” (i.e., folk and unnamed) sources. We aren’t focusing here on where proverbs come from, or how they are reused and recirculated (i.e., in advertising). We have generally highlighted proverbs deriving from folk sources, and avoided lessons with Biblical proverbs. We want to create space for people from many belief traditions to participate fully in discussion.

### **Examples of general resources and proverb lists:**

- Proverb resources: <http://cogweb.ucla.edu/Discourse/Proverbs/>  
Developed by Francis Steen, a Professor of Communication Studies at UCLA, as part of his work on cognition.
- Searchable index of “international” (largely European and African) database compiled by scholar Matti Kuusi: <http://lauhakan.home.cern.ch/lauhakan/etsi.asp>
- Open source list of sites on proverbs:  
[http://www.dmoz.org/Society/Folklore/Literature/Proverbs\\_and\\_Sayings/](http://www.dmoz.org/Society/Folklore/Literature/Proverbs_and_Sayings/)
- Creative proverbs: 12,000 proverbs from 300 countries and cultures, with lists and links to country info, sorted by their own type system (“components of creativity”):  
<http://creativeproverbs.com/>

### **Basic sources in the PFP/AAU office:**

Wolfgang Meider, *Proverbs: A Handbook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004.  
\_\_\_\_\_ and Deborah Holmes. “*Children and Proverbs Speak the Truth*”: *Teaching Proverbial Wisdom to Fourth Graders*. Burlington, Vermont: Queen City Printers, 2000.  
A sampling of other proverb books / booklets; Printouts from today

**Online sources:** <http://www.culturetools.org/playing/proverbs.html>

# 1. SCIENCE WORK TEAM A - Weather / Earth Science

## Tapping into local knowledge in proverbs about weather.

**Question:** Many proverbs offer memorable observations about natural conditions. How can you use these traditions to explore local scientific and practical knowledge, and insights about ways in which the weather impacts our lives?

**Resources: Weather Stories.** Folklorists, scientists and educators from Wisconsin have shaped a website offering classroom resources for integrating folklore with study of earth science, social studies and language. (The group has collaborated on other folk arts education resources which are terrific, like the *Kid's Guide to Local Culture*. See <http://artsboard.wisconsin.gov/subcategory.asp?linksubcatid=3327&linkcatid=3384&linkid=1652&locid=171>. Using Wisconsin folklore (including proverbs about wind and weather), this particular site includes lesson plans (primarily grades 4 –8), resource links, and more. See Weather stories: <http://weatherstories.ssec.wisc.edu/index.html>. We share here the **Wind from the West** weather unit: [http://weatherstories.ssec.wisc.edu/sayings/wind\\_west.html](http://weatherstories.ssec.wisc.edu/sayings/wind_west.html). They built their unit on weatherlore (<http://weatherstories.ssec.wisc.edu/about/index.html>) through the following investigations:

A scientific analysis, which included:

- Reading weather maps, analyzing local variables such as temperature, moisture, cloudiness, and precipitation, analyzing concurrent larger weather systems, graphing weather reports, and making weather observations.
- Understanding different types of predictive methodologies used in meteorology

A folkloric analysis, which included:

- Identifying the traditional elements in stories and proverbs related to weatherlore; documenting peoples' observations of weather; exploring how weatherlore is part of everyday life and linked to experiences of particular cultural communities

Also see “Everyday mysteries: fun science facts from the Library of Congress” (Red sky at morning), which considers the truths behind the proverb:

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech/mysteries/weather-sailor.html>

Weather proverbs: True or False: <http://www.wxduke.com/proverb.html>

**TASK: Consider the following questions:**

- What scientific observations and analysis are you asking students to do of weather?
- What observations of weather can students derive from studying / collecting proverbs about weather?
- How can you imagine adapting any of the Wisconsin materials to Philadelphia, and FACTS?

## 2. SCIENCE WORK TEAM B - Insects / Life Science

### Tapping into local knowledge in proverbs about bugs.

**Question:** Proverbs offer memorable observations about insect life. How can you use these traditions to explore local scientific and practical knowledge, increase students' observational skills, and consider how we use insects as sources of insight?

**Resources:** Browse how a group of Wisconsin folklorists and science teachers outlined integrating science and folklore in building a unit on **weatherlore**:

<http://weatherstories.ssec.wisc.edu/about/index.html>

The following two websites include lists of proverbs about insects, totally decontextualized, but suggesting various ways that people around the world, in varied times, places and cultures, have made observations about bugs into folklore (proverbs).

• **Proverbs and quotes about insects** — from Ants to Worms — can be found at a site developed by Hein Bijlmakers, who collects proverbs as a hobby:

[http://www.bijlmakers.com/entomology/proverbs\\_insects\\_2.htm](http://www.bijlmakers.com/entomology/proverbs_insects_2.htm) and at

• **Anthropod proverbs.** Compiled by Donald Hall, Department of Entomology and Nematology, University of Florida: <http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/proverbs.htm>

**CONSIDER:** Use these proverbs as records of peoples' observations. Discuss:

- **What observations of insect behavior can students derive from studying / collecting proverbs about insects?** How might you analyze proverbs to derive a list of insect characteristics? How might you use a proverb documentation project to explore what students and their families may already know or say about particular insects?
- **How are insects “good to think”?** That is, how have people used observations about insects to reflect on the behavior of people? What characteristics of insects do people note in proverbs; how do insects provide useful metaphors?
- **How are proverbs useful tools for remembering?** How can you use “new” (or traditional) proverbs as means of remembering useful knowledge? How might you encourage students to observe insects and generate their own proverbs to make memorable what they see?

**TASK:** • Review source materials and begin to visualize ways, in teaching natural science, that using proverbs can be a useful and enriching tool.

- What kinds of things do you think students could learn?
- How would using proverbs and common knowledge in science lessons highlight issues of expertise and authority in these areas?

### 3. ELA WORK TEAM

#### **Proverbs as artful (quoted) speech.**

**Question:** Proverbs are metaphorical expressions, making connections between different categories. They are often recognizable because of their artfulness: their use of rhyme, alliteration and other patterned speech. How can these formal features be used in teaching ELA? How can we use proverbs to stimulate creative writing?

**Resources:** A number of online lessons for grades 6-8 introduce proverbs, and offer lesson plans, standards, handouts (for some of these, we have modified versions), and other resources. For example, a few created by John Paul Walter, a Missouri teacher, who posted them on readwritethink:

Proverbs: An Introduction: [http://198.104.156.44/lessons/lesson\\_view.asp?id=184](http://198.104.156.44/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=184)

Proverbs: Contemporary Proverbs: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/proverbs-contemporary-proverbs-186.html>

Eric Joselyn: The Proverb Project: <http://www.culturetools.org/playing/proverbs.html>

**Consider.** Review these lessons, and some of the lists of proverbs available through the general search engines noted above. How could proverbs be used to teach stylistic and poetic devices in language? Examples:

Alliteration: **W**here there is a **w**ill, there is a **w**ay. **P**ractice makes **p**erfect. **L**ook before you **l**eap.

Parallelism: Where **there's** a will, **there's** a way. **Nothing** ventured, **nothing** gained. **Easy** come, **easy** go.

Rhyme: Many a **slip** 'twixt cup and **lip**. When the cat's **away**, the mice will **play**. A little **pot** is soon **hot**.

Contrast: Like **father**, like **son**. One man's **meat** is another man's **poison**.

Personification: **Love** will find a way. **Hunger** is the best cook.

Imagery and metaphor: A watched **pot** never boils. The squeaky **wheel** gets the grease. **Birds** of a feather flock together.

Indirection and allusion / using figurative speech to make a point: Your eyes are bigger than your stomach. Good fences make good neighbors. You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

**Other lessons** described include asking students to explain proverb meanings; to write stories about when a proverb was used; and to create new proverbs using some of these speech features. Creative writing or essay tasks might include asking students to update or extend the meaning of a traditional proverb; to critique, or to argue against a common proverb (i.e., Better to be seen than heard. A woman's place is in the home.)

**Consider:** What source materials do we currently use to teach these concepts? What are advantages and disadvantages to using folk arts (like proverbs) to teach language concepts?

**Tasks:** • How can you use proverbs to teach the poetic and artistic features of language?  
• How would you design lessons using proverbs in the teaching of ELA?  
• Student acquisition of language skills is improved when they pay attention to how language is used around them: How can you use student documentation of proverbs to advance this?

## 4. CHARACTER / VALUES EDUCATION WORK TEAM

### Using proverbs as tools for character education.

**Question:** Many proverbs deal with how to behave, with how to manage difficult situations; they communicate values. What kinds of values do we/students want to practice in our classrooms? How can we use proverbs to address conflicts in indirect and gentle ways?

Rhetorician Kenneth Burke famously described proverbs as a kind of “medicine.” He wrote: “Proverbs are strategies for dealing with situations. Insofar as situations are typical and recurrent in a given social structure, people develop names for them and strategies for handling them.”

In “Literature as equipment for living,” in his *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941, pp. 296-297.

**Resources:** Wolfgang Meider and Deborah Holmes. “*Children and Proverbs Speak the Truth*”: *Teaching Proverbial Wisdom to Fourth Graders*. Burlington, Vermont: Queen City Printers, 2000. A folklorist and a fourth grade teacher designed a curriculum teaching values-based proverbs to 4th graders. The book includes a description of the overall project, what they did, student work, evaluations from students, bibliography and resources.

Gyula Paczolay, “Proverbs and Reality”:

<http://www.mek.iif.hu/porta/szint/tarsad/nyelvtud/proverbs/html/proverbs.htm>

This scholarly piece includes examples of pairs of proverbs that offer exactly opposing advice (See section 2.2: Many hands make light work vs. Too many cooks spoil the broth.)

Proverb lesson from the Anti-Defamation League (some parts of this we like, other not so much!)

[http://www.adl.org/tools\\_teachers/lesson\\_proverbs.asp](http://www.adl.org/tools_teachers/lesson_proverbs.asp)

John & Sarah’s TEFL: a lesson that focuses on how proverbs offer advice on recurring situations:

<http://www.lingolex.com/proverbs.html>

**Task:** Do an initial outline of lesson activities where proverbs are tools to engage our kids in values education.

Possible steps or directions: Identify key attitudes and behaviors for study or discussion. Here are some initial ideas. See what else you can come up with:

- Begin with the school pledge and find proverbs that relate. (We’ve pulled lists of proverbs using words from our school pledge from Matti Kuusi proverb index:

<http://lauhakan.home.cern.ch/lauhakan/etsi.asp>. What are other ways that people say what we are saying?

Where else can you go with this? When you find alignment, what steps would you use to process this with the students? When you find conflicting advice/proverbs, how can you use this as a teaching tool?

- Find differences in value systems: Provide specific examples of proverbs that kids might say, and others that adults might say. Consider which is used by whom, and why.

- Have students identify key values, and explore what others have said about it. (i.e., respect).

Each kid could be provided 5 examples from what is generated and have them rank them by clarity, or where they agree. Students could document proverbs from their families that represent values. What do they hear when kids are disrespectful?

- Point out that proverbs can be used to help resolve conflicts. Have students describe/visualize a conflict and role-play what they could say using proverbial speech to address or respond to the situation.

## 5. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS WORK TEAM

### Special features of proverbs for ELL students.

**Question:** Here, we share work that finds that study of conventional metaphors (i.e. proverbs) can be productive for English language learners to learn language and culture simultaneously.

#### Resources:

Yu Ren Dong, “Don't Keep Them in the Dark! Teaching Metaphors to English Language Learners,” *The English Journal* 93(4), pp. 29-35. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4128977>. This study says studying proverbs and conventional metaphors can be productive ways for English language learners to learn language and culture simultaneously. **What do you think?**

“Can Pigs. . .?” offers exercises/lessons that invite students to fill in the second half of proverbial comparisons. A way to explore metaphor or proverb structure (for high school EFL students, but can be adapted: <http://teachingrecipes.com/2009/08/08/can-pigs-proverbs/> **Is this pedagogically sound. Would you consider doing it?**

John & Sarah’s TEFL: a lesson that focuses on how proverbs offer advice on recurring situations: <http://www.lingolex.com/proverbs.html>

The website <http://www.manythings.org/proverbs/> has a number of “Interesting Things for ELL students”: online exercises (crosswords, matching games, fill in the blank) that used proverbs to teach: <http://www.manythings.org/proverbs/proverbs2.html> (You need to be online to check this out).

Task 1: Discuss the value of teaching proverbial speech to ELL students. What priority do we put on this?

Statement: “We should emphasize teaching ELL students proverbs from the dominant culture.” Do you agree or disagree?

**Browse** the article “Don’t Keep Them in the Dark,” and **consider** the points made to support this kind of instruction.

**Discuss:** Can you see any particular uses of proverbs? Is there some profile of ELL students for whom this is more important than others?

Task 2: Explore web-based instructional tools to consider strengths and weaknesses of these resources. Consider their relative value, weaknesses of design, as well as their possibilities. Feel free to share resources that you know of.

Task 3: Consider how you could have students record and share proverbs in their first language, from their families and 1) use documentation as an ELL task; 2) use explanation of the proverbs as a resource for writing or speaking. In your discussion, feel free to think about particular students you work with together.

## **Folk Arts Professional Development: Lesson Sketch Worksheet**

Subject Area:

Target Grades(s):

Working Title of Lesson / Project:

Lesson Focus:

Desired Outcomes:

Steps:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Content Area Standards Addressed:

FACTS Folk Arts Standards Addressed:

Possible Assessments:

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Notes on References / Support Materials:  
(For Teachers / Students)

## **Folk Arts Professional Development: Evaluation**

9/28/10

Highlight of the workshop:

Can you list a useful learning?

I wish that this workshop had:

Other comments or input for future folk arts trainings:

Thanks!

