

Engaging Students With Culture and Community: Learning From the Success of Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School

Part 1

PEGGIE:

Welcome, everyone. This is Peggie Garcia from the National Charter School Resource Center. Welcome to the webinar—Engaging Students With Culture and Community: Learning From the Success of Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures [FACTS] Charter School. This webinar is sponsored by the National Charter School Resource Center.



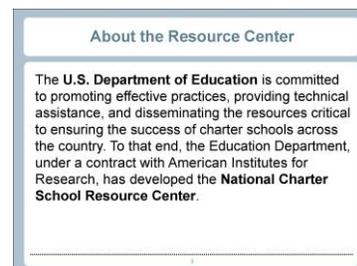
Slides 1–2

We are funded by the U.S. Department of Education. And this is the 10th in our series of 12 webinars on topics that are related to ELL [English language learners].

Thank you all for joining us today. I'm going to be turning it over to our main speaker—Pheng Lim—in a few moments. But before I do that, I want to give you a quick orientation to the webinar platform.

On the left-hand side, you'll see a chat box, and there are some pretty special directions in the chat box for today. This webinar will be a little bit different than some of our traditional webinars.

You can listen to the audio portion of the webinar either through your computer or over the phone. If you do join by phone, please mute your computer speakers to prevent an echo effect. The phone



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number, if you were not prompted to enter your phone number, is available in the chat box.

Although I've just given you the information about joining by phone, we are strongly encouraging people to listen over their computers for this webinar because we have five short videos that we are going to share with you, and you can only hear the audio for the videos if you're listening over your computer. So if it's possible, please try to listen over your computer. If that's not possible, please do go ahead and dial in, and we can make sure you have access to the videos after the webinar.

Below the chat window, there is a window called NCSRC File Share. There are two files there.

If you did not receive the reminder e-mail that I sent out late last night, you can download the slides—FACT Slides PDF. All you have to do is just click on the file and then Save to My Computer, and it will prompt you to open up the file. [In] the second file there is a collaboration contract. Teacher Pheng and her team will be talking later in the webinar about the coteaching model that is really unique to their school, and this is one of the documents that they use in establishing the very successful collaboration that they have going on.

Beneath the PowerPoint slides, there are some participant notes. To ask a question, please enter your question in the chat box at any point during the webinar. We might not answer your question right away but please do go ahead and enter it, and we'll enter it into the cue so that we have a running list to draw from when we start the Q and A. We'll leave about 15 or 20 minutes at the end of the webinar for Q and A.

If you are having difficulty seeing the videos or the PowerPoint at any time, you can use the full screen

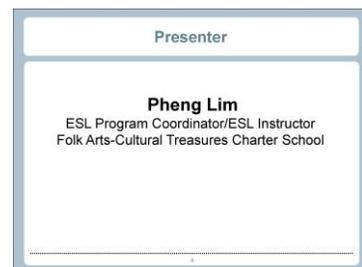
button in the upper right-hand corner of your screen. Or you can use the file share window in the way that I've just described.

If you listen over your computer, please note that your bandwidth will affect the quality of the audio that you hear. To hear the highest quality audio possible, you should use a wired connection for your computer instead of wireless. You should close all applications other than Adobe that are running on your computer and clear your browser's cache and cookies.

The webinar is being recorded, and an archive will be available after the webinar at the website that you see in the participant notes box. Typically, we have the webinars recorded and available on our website within three business days.

So that's it for the overview of the platform. If you're having any technical issues, please write a chat in, and we'll try to get that taken care of as quickly as we can.

I'm really pleased to introduce Pheng Lim. She is the ESL [English as a second language] program coordinator and an ESL instructor at FACTS Charter School. She has over nine years of experience teaching ESL in Philadelphia and helped create and establish FACTS' ESL program. She holds a master's degree in education from Temple University's TESOL program [Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages; <http://www.tesol.org/>] and is certified in Pennsylvania in early childhood, elementary, special ed[ucation], ESL program specialist, and midlevel English. She has quite a few certifications, which is very impressive. She has spoken and presented at several local and national conferences regarding her work and research on ESL education. She was nominated in 2011 for the ASCD [formerly the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; <http://www.ascd.org/Default.aspx>] outstanding young



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educator award for all of her significant work with ELL in particular. As a refugee from Cambodia, she is very familiar with the struggles and challenges that immigrant and refugee families may face.

Thank you, Pheng Lim. She's going to be bringing in some of her team as well later. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to you. Thank you for joining us.

PHENG:

Okay. It is my pleasure to share with all of you some of what we have been working on at FACTS. It is an honor and a pleasure.

The agenda for engaging students with culture and community presentation will be as follows: We will have a “who we are.” We'll talk a little bit about the FACTS Charter School and our ESL program. Then we will talk about the transformation versus tolerance model and multicultural education. We will also spend some time talking about collaboration at FACTS. And we will take some time to answer your questions.

One of the reasons we have such a successful ESL program is because of the history behind our school. We were founded by two grassroots organizations: Asian American United and the Philadelphia Folklore Project. The Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School comes out of a history of struggle.

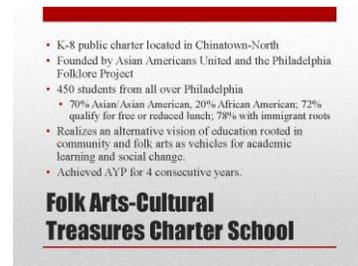
1. For equity and justice for Asian-American and immigrant students of all races in the public schools,
2. For public investments and public space in the underserved Chinatown community, and
3. For public schooling that engages children as active participants in working for a just society.



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Slide 6



Slide 7

Although FACTS is designed to address the needs of Asian Americans and Asian-immigrant students, FACTS founders thought to create a deliberately multiracial, multiethnic school. Such a school base best embodies a model of antiracist education that not only values diversity but also addresses inequalities and promotes justice.

This is just the demographic information of our school. We are a K–8 public charter school in the Chinatown area of Philadelphia. There are about 450 students from all over Philadelphia. We choose our students based on lottery. We also have sibling preferences, and actually quite a few of our teachers' kids do also attend FACTS. Seventy percent are Asian or Asian American, 20 percent are African American, 72 percent qualify for free or reduced[-price] lunch, and 78 percent of our students have immigrant roots.

Our founders realized an alternative vision of education rooted in community and folk arts available for academic learning and social change. And we also have achieved AYP [adequate yearly progress] for four consecutive years.

The name of our school is a mouthful—The Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School and FACTS for short. But the story behind it serves and reflects the mission of FACTS. We use local folk arts and artists as available to teach our students history, identity, and also core beliefs and also life skills.

At FACTS, our cultural treasures are our community members, families, and students. We believe each individual's background and culture should be honored and seen as an asset to our school and society.

- 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 stay, here and now, who we are and who we want to be.
- Who are our cultural treasures?

Folk Arts Cultural Treasures Charter School
(FACTS)

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This slide actually talks about our intentionality. Intentionality at FACTS is extremely important to us. It helps keep us grounded and reminds us of our mission by showing students the value in history and also the history of our school. It also helps us build and maintain our school culture. So here's a list of some of our school rituals and traditions.



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The one I would like to highlight is our school pledge. Students actually recite our pledge every single morning. This is our pledge:

We care for one another and learn together. There's no limit to what we can learn. Our families and our elders know important things, and we take time to learn from them. We learn to help ourselves and our community. We learn to be strong and act with courage. All people have a right to use their own languages and honor their own cultures. Creative expression is part of our lives and part of our school. We work to build a fair and peaceful world. The earth is our home, and we must take care of it.

Instead of the Pledge of Allegiance, we actually have the students use this every morning. So with all of the above in place, we are able now to build a strong ESL program that truly searches to see the whole picture of a student.

Some of the recipe or components for our ESL program includes the following on the slide:

- Annual ESL evaluations—that also includes strengths and weaknesses.
- We also invite stakeholders like the principal and also parents to really talk about how we could improve our ESL program with high standards and expectations.



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- We also have a flexible program model. So depending on the student's need, we would either push in or pull out for instruction.
- We're looking at how we can better engage family as valuable resources.
- We're trying to affirm the students' culture.
- Collaboration is actually one of our strengths at the school.

Today, we're actually going to take some time to really look at three components. We're going to really look at the home visit, community-based investigation, and also collaboration.

But right now I'd like to do a very quick activity. If you have a piece of paper and a pencil or pen, that would be great.

What we would like you to do is just write your name on top and draw three columns. [pause]

[In] the first column, make a list of identities you hold, for example, for me, I would write mom, teacher, [and] sister. [pause]

[In] the second column, make a list of organizations you belong to, for example, for mine, I would include FACTS [and] TESOL. [pause]

And [in] the third column, make a list of memorable events in your life. For myself, I would probably have holding my daughter for the first time [and] graduating high school.

So we're going to take just maybe a minute to fill out these columns. I wish I had a phone for you, but I don't. [pause for participants to complete activity]

1. Write your name on top
 2. Draw three columns
 3. 1st column: Make a list of identities you hold.
 4. 2nd column: Make a list of organizations you belong to.
 5. 3rd column: Make a list of memorable events in your life.

Identity

The slide features a red horizontal bar at the top, a list of five numbered instructions, a small photograph of three people (two men and one woman) smiling, and the word 'Identity' in bold black text with a red underline.

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Okay, now I'm going to ask you to remove something off column one. [pause] That identity which you value or treasure, it's no longer a part of you. [pause]

Now I'm also going to ask you to remove something from column two [pause] and now column three.

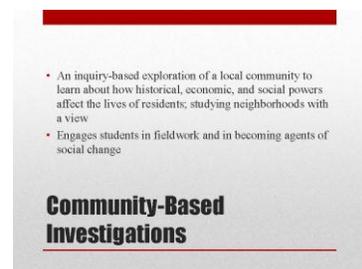
So again, if you're a mother, you're now no longer a mother. If you're Latina or Latino, that is no longer a part of who you are.

When I first did this activity with my former principal, Deborah Wei, it was actually very difficult for me to part with those identities, even though I knew this wasn't for real. However, for a majority of our students, this is what we are asking them to do every single day. This does have an emotional or social impact that does affect student learning and performance. It's extremely important that we value and treasure the identities of our students.

Actually, we're going to talk about home visit now. This year, the ESL team, along with the content classroom teachers, wanted to explore some inquiries. The first one was, "What should parent involvement and engagement look like or sound like in a school where most parents' dominant language is not English? And also how do we utilize parents as valuable resources to the school?"

We wanted to rethink how we were involving and engaging parents. One step was to actually conduct home visits. We did this during the summer and also throughout the year. The purpose of the visit was to really build relationships with the family and also to get to know the students in a different perspective.

At first, many of us were apprehensive. But it was an eye-opening experience. The families actually warmly welcomed us to their homes. They were actually



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honored that we would take the initiative to visit and build these bonds.

Some of the protocols included getting a commission to record [inaudible], also to present the families with a small token or a gift, and also to think of the purpose of the visit to really gather information from the families—things that are positive about their child. And also really asking what are the strengths of your child.

We also walked in with a nonjudgmental mind-set to see things from different perspectives. A home visit should not be a one-shot deal. We should continue with the home visits for individual families that we visited and to also communicate in other forms and also to ask parents if they are willing to or how could they participate in decision making of their child's education and how can we also support them.

Please show the video clip of the home visit. We're going to show you a short clip, an excerpt of a home visit. We actually were there for two hours, so this is just a clip. The family is from Liberia, and they had resettled in the [United] States due to the turmoil in their country.

We're going to show a clip for about four minutes, and this was also to build relationships with the family because we actually did not have a strong enough relationship. There was not a lot of trust there. So we believed, let's try this home visit to see if we can earn that trust from the family.

The child is in sixth grade. After the home visit, the child actually has improved tremendously, so it really did transform the home and school relationship and also transformed how some teachers view the families and also students because sometimes I think, as teachers, we are quick to judge the

students. We would say things like, oh, that child is just not working hard enough or that child is lazy.

[End of Chapter 1]

Part 2

PHENG:

The next segment will be on community-based investigations.

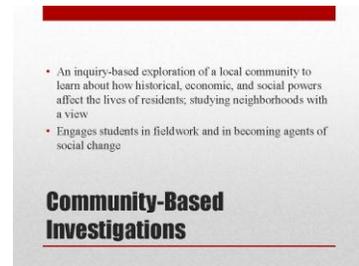
I'm actually going to hand the phone over to my colleague, Annie Huynh. Annie teaches fourth-grade reading, writing, and social studies. We have been meeting weekly to plan out the social studies unit and to help also modify [it] for the ESL students. However, Annie has been the one who has been spearheading the unit. So she's going to explain it in a way that is actually more articulate since she is the person who really has been formulating everything. This is Annie Huynh, thank you.

ANNIE:

Thank you, Pheng, and thank you everyone for being with us this afternoon.

The first thing I want to talk about today is how this community-based investigation actually realizes FACTS' vision of community-based learning.

First, we studied two neighborhoods: Chinatown North as well as South Street West in Philadelphia. We did two community walks for each site as well as invited guest speakers into our school. We did this intentionally so that not only is our school out in the community seeking those connections but also the community is invited into our school to talk about it. For example, Deborah Wei, who is a community organizer in the Chinatown community, came and



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spoke to the students about the history of Chinatown and the struggles it has gone through. We also had scholars from the University of Pennsylvania meet us at our site at South Street West to talk about the history of the neighborhood and also how W. E. Dubois mapped that area, a traditionally African-American neighborhood.

As you're thinking about why do community-based investigations and why local, there are a variety of reasons, for example, social scientist skills that students are learning as well as affirms local culture and also the transformation versus tolerance.

There's a lot of value in studying cultures outside students' own, but we've found that it's very important that history is being made right now in our communities, and it's important for our students to understand that they are part of the community as well.

And so what transformation versus tolerance means is just the way of looking at any culture. For example, tolerance is on the spectrum where in the international day you have students from different cultures, you have dress, [and] you have costumes and songs. But that's the tip of the iceberg. If you go further down the iceberg, transformation would look more like oral stories [and] family recipes. These are recorded stories that you go to your elders to gather, and it's a deeper connection to what the food actually means—the food, within context, not out of context—and celebrating culture in its finite form.

Here's a list of best practices that we followed from doing the community-based investigations. I just wanted to focus on the last one: "Be intentional about the neighborhoods you choose to study."

The two neighborhoods we chose to study were Chinatown and South Street West. We chose

Slide 13 content: A red horizontal bar at the top. Below it, a bulleted list: "Why do you think we should study locally instead of another culture?" followed by "Social scientist skills", "Affirms local culture", and "Transformation vs. Tolerance". To the right of the list is a small photograph of a group of people sitting on the ground. Below the list and photo is the title "Why do it? Why local?" in bold, underlined text.

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Slide content: A red horizontal bar at the top. Below it, a bulleted list of best practices: "Make community connections early", "Visit Investigate the neighborhoods yourself", "Talk to community members who have contacts/leaders and interview leaders", "Structured investigation (interviews onsite, off-site research, recording notes)", "Involve parents and local university as much as possible", and "Be intentional about the neighborhoods you choose to study.". Below the list is the title "Best Practices" in bold, underlined text.

Chinatown because, one, our school is located around Chinatown. I know in charter schools, our students come from all parts of Philadelphia, but we chose to definitely study Chinatown because our school is located there and also the majority of our students are Asian/Asian American, and half of those Asian-American students are of Chinese descent. So it affirms their identity. A lot of the homework was connected to what do you notice in your neighborhood and what did you notice on our walk in Chinatown and compare the two.

The second neighborhood we chose was South Street West, which was a traditionally African-American neighborhood that is now gentrified.

Both neighborhoods are sites of struggle. And sites of struggle are more interesting to investigate. And I think it fulfills our social justice mission here at FACTS.

Also, depending on the resources of our staff, we have a lot of resources and connections with the Chinatown community, and we are building more resources and community context with South Street West.

When you're thinking about the neighborhoods you should choose a study, make sure it kind of reflects your student community as well as if social justice is really important to you and your students, to maybe choose sites of struggle that are traditionally not studied or not written up in the textbooks. Thank you very much for listening. I'm going to pass the phone over to Pheng.

PHENG:

Hello. We're going to try to now show a video clip of students talking about their experience with community-based investigations. Hopefully it'll work

out. If not, we'll just continue talking about coteaching. We actually did have a few clips to show. But if it doesn't work out, that's fine.

PEGGIE:

Pheng, can you see the video on your screen now?

PHENG:

No, no I don't.

PEGGIE:

Okay, give me one second.

PHENG:

Okay. [lengthy pause for technical difficulty]

PEGGIE:

Can you see it now?

PHENG:

No.

PEGGIE:

Oh, Kathy can see it.

PHENG:

Now I can.

PEGGIE:

Oh good, okay.

PHENG:

Thank you.

ANNIE:

These are two fourth-grade students just talking about their experiences. [video plays—not transcribed]

PEGGIE:

Okay, I'm going to play the audio, and you will only be able to hear it through your computer.

PHENG:

Okay.

PEGGIE:

I think we have a little video quality issue. I'm going to go ahead and stop this, and we'll move on. Pheng, go ahead.

PHENG:

Our third segment is actually on collaboration between ESL teachers and also content teachers.

The key to collaboration is defined as—I actually found this definition online, and I liked it a lot—“Two or more coequal individuals voluntarily bring their knowledge and experience together by interacting toward a common goal in the best interest of students for the betterment of their education success.”

Collaboration cannot and will not happen without coplanning. That's what we have found. And when we talk about collaboration at FACTS, it reflects a learner-censored and flexible program model. Sometimes we plan to pull out or coteach or act more as a consultant.

In the beginning of the year, we also established procedures for classroom teachers to use in a contract for a successful partnership. However, it is vital that there is a shared philosophy and also mutual respect. It's very difficult to do if the core beliefs of the teachers do not match. We do have two other video clips to reflect on.

Actually another thing we do is we've been trying to record ourselves teaching so we can really reflect on the lessons.



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So we will be showing two short video clips: The first clip is of teacher Erin, who is our literacy coordinator. She's also here to answer some questions. Teacher Annie and me modeling a mini lesson on how to disagree during book club talk. The second clip is of teacher Kathy, who's a sixth-grade reading, writing, and social studies teacher. And also of teacher Mayuko, who is another ESL teacher, modeling a mini lesson on choosing important topics to discuss during book club talk. May you please play the first video clip?

PEGGIE:

Can you see that on your screen now?

PHENG:

No.

PEGGIE:

Unfortunately, the preloading, which seemed to be a pretty good idea, doesn't seem to be working. I'll reload it. It might be... [pause]

PHENG:

If you can't load it, that's okay. We can just go through the slides.

PEGGIE:

Well, let's try.

PHENG:

Okay. [pause for video difficulty]

PEGGIE:

Can you see it now?

PHENG:

No. [After a pause, video plays without transcription.]

PEGGIE:

Teacher Pheng, you can go ahead and continue now.

PHENG:

Okay.

These are just the different components that would help with collaboration. I'm actually going to give the phone to teacher Erin and also teacher Annie to briefly talk about their experiences with collaboration.

Erin is our literacy coordinator, and she has been working with us within the classroom to also partner with us to really help the students. And also teacher Annie, who is a classroom teacher. And I think just coming from that perspective, I think also shows a variety of successes with coteaching. So, teacher Annie...

ANNIE:

From a classroom teacher standpoint, the coplanning and the coteaching has been really helpful in terms of sharing a responsibility of educating all our learners. It really realizes the inclusion model for our English language learners since teacher Pheng will include modifications or ideas on how to make the content more accessible for our English language learners and also helps other learners as well—our strugglers.

One of the drawbacks from coteaching is just finding the time to plan since all our schedules are so busy. It's one of those things you really have to make intentional. And it can be a headache to find time. But we do make time, and that's one of the reasons why it works because we have trust in each other as well as contracts to make sure that we really follow through with everything. So for me, as a classroom teacher, it's been a wonderful experience.

ERIN:

Hi. My name is Erin Whitney. I'm the literacy coordinator, and I want to talk a little bit about our literacy program and how the ESL and general education teachers collaborate so well together.

I want to talk a little bit about the model that we use for literacy instruction, which is the Workshop model, or Balanced Literacy as it can also be known. We found a lot of success using the Workshop model because it provides a lot of entry points for collaboration. For example, the mini lessons, which are designed to be 10 to 15 minutes of teacher-led instruction, provide a nice framework for teachers to plan and deliver lessons together. And then after that, there's always time for either independent reading or independent writing. And we've found that's very successful for teachers to work one on one with students, doing reading and writing conferences, or to work in small groups, working on whatever skill or strategy students are working on. Teachers work together to make sure the students are getting what they need during that time. Because we're not using a whole class novel or we're not using a basal reader, there are a lot of entry points for collaboration and push into the classroom and pull out as needed for individual students. So that's one way that we have found to be able to provide that sort of collaboration between the teachers.

PHENG:

I can see right now that it is time for our Q and A. I actually have a team of people with me right now. I also have Mayuko Iwaki Perkins, who is another ESL teacher. Again, Erin Whitney, who is our literacy coordinator, Annie Huynh, who is our fourth-grade teacher. So we are ready for questions. And we also will have Kathy Brody, who will be joining us in a moment, too. She actually teaches sixth grade. She was also a part of one of the video clips.



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PEGGIE:

Please go ahead and enter your questions in the chat at any time.

I want to apologize for the difficulty with the video. As long as it's okay with teacher Pheng and her team, I think what we'll do is do a separate recording where I will record in one webinar presentation all of the videos, and then we can post it on our website along with the recording of this webinar. Will that work for you, teacher Pheng?

PHENG:

Yes, that should be fine.

PEGGIE:

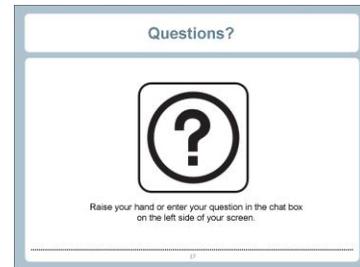
Okay, we'll do that so that people can have access to the videos because there was really some wonderful material there.

So I guess one question I'd like to start with is recruiting. You have certainly a majority of Asian-American students, but you also have a nice mix of cultures in your building. So I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about the recruiting process and how you tell people about your school and inform them and give them the option to come to FACTS.

PHENG:

Okay. I was actually a part of the initial team that actually went out to the different neighborhoods. We did select neighborhoods that had a large district percentage of immigrants and refugees. So, that was actually the first step that we took.

And we also went out to the different communities and did outreach. It was the first year. We actually did not



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have any students our first year, and we were approved in March of 2005, but then we had to open up our school September of 2005. So it was a pretty scary moment thinking that we would be coming to school without students. So that was actually how we had our first batch of students.

Because we do have a good reputation, many of our students do not transfer to other schools. What we do use is actually we have a lottery. We actually choose students by the lottery system, and we also give preference to siblings.

So this year, I believe the kindergarten waiting list was a 100-something. And we only really had like 20-something slots because of the sibling preference and because of teachers who were also sending their kids to FACTS.

PEGGIE:

That's a wonderful position to be in.

After the recruiting, could you talk a little bit about the communication with parents? How many language groups do you have represented at your school and how you inform parents?

PHENG:

Sure. Many of the materials being sent home are actually translated. We have families from Cambodia, so we get things translated in Cami, Vietnamese, Spanish, [and] Chinese. Our Chinese speakers come from Fugal, so they speak Fugalnese, Cantonese, the Aju, and Mandarin. And we do also have ... I said Spanish, right? Indonesian and also Laotian. So those are sort of our core main language groups.

We also use a translation line that's available for teachers to communicate with parents. We also have both in-house and out-of-house translators. So for report card conferences, we actually use both. If we

can't have someone available, we actually do use the language line to share with the parents the report card and everything.

PEGGIE:

Great. I think we didn't see the video of the showcase. But folk arts are one of the important focuses of your school. So if you could talk a little bit about how you engage community organizations... I was lucky enough to visit teacher Pheng's school, and when I was there, there was an African musician who was teaching the kids how to use African instruments. It was something I didn't expect to see, which was great.

So if you could talk a little bit about the types of community organizations and community representatives that come into your school on a regular basis and the types of folk arts that the kids learn about.

PHENG:

Sure. I'm actually going to test something out because I do have the team of teachers who I know would love to chime in also. I'm going to put us on speaker and hopefully it will work out. Can you also repeat that question to the team?

PEGGIE:

Sure. The name of your school, part of it is Folk Arts. We didn't see the video of the showcase, but I know that's a really vibrant part of your school. So could you talk a little bit about the different community organizations and community artists that you bring into the building, how students study folk arts, and the different kinds of folk arts that they study.

KATHY:

One way that we do it is that the school has a list of local folk artists...

PEGGIE:

Could you speak up a bit? You're pretty low.

KATHY:

Sure. Is this better?

PEGGIE:

Yes.

KATHY:

One way that we do it is that the school has a list of local folk artists that they've connected with and collaborated with. And each one has a specialty. The teachers look at their classroom curriculum and work together with the rest of the staff to figure out what kind of project a folk artist might be able to do that's relevant to whatever the students are studying.

At the beginning of the year, there's kind of a calendar every year of which teacher would be working with which folk artist during maybe a six- or eight-week period during the year. The folk artist would come into the classroom and work with the students at whatever time the teacher and the folk artist have designated.

So it means that the teacher would be giving up maybe a language arts period that usually goes in the curriculum, but the students would be working with the folk artist instead at that time. And we make a lot of effort to kind of blend the two together. For example, this year in my class, we were working in a unit on fables in language arts. A folk artist was brought into the classroom who was an expert in telling fables from his country. And the students learned about African fables through him. Then we did some extension kind of activities having to do with the fables and the folk artist.

ANNIE:

Another example is in seventh and eighth grade, they were doing a poetry unit, and they invited a spoken

word local artist to come in and do some workshops with the students, which ultimately ended in them having a poetry slam at the end. So that's another example.

We also have ensembles where students are able to engage in particular folk arts for an extended period of time, such as kung fu, African dance, dan tranh, which is a Vietnamese instrument—various opportunities like that, which are not open to everybody, but some students are able to participate in learning those art forms.

[RESPONDENT]

Along with the folk arts residency Kathy was talking about earlier was one shadow puppet artist from China who shares an art form—shadow puppetry—and she has a huge shadow mask. She came in with our fourth graders in our character unit for our reading. She kind of put on a play and acted behind a shadow screen along with the music. It was great to get the character and really apply what they know about characters using a folk art.

KATHY:

I think in terms of these folk artist residencies, the philosophy of the school is that it's not something that the students do after school. They would stay in a club or something for just a select group of students. We want all the students to participate and be able to learn from the folk artist. That's why the schedules are made in such a way that they're actually here during the school day.

PEGGIE:

Great. That was a very thorough answer. Thank you. You can definitely see when you visit the school how the folk arts are really integrated into the whole curriculum, which is really wonderful.

So another really unique aspect of your school is the coteaching model. So if you could talk a little bit about

that, about the planning and some of the flexibility... I know when I was at your school, there were often several adults in the classroom. If you could talk about how you decide who will be in the classroom, who will be pulling out, who will be pushing out, how you make those decisions, and how you plan for your coteaching models, that would be great.

MAYUKO:

Hi. My name is Mayuko Iwaki Perkins. I teach fifth-grade and sixth-grade ESL. And I work with teacher Kathy Brody. Planning is definitely, I would say, the most important aspect of coteaching. If we can't plan together, then we can't really teach together.

I'm not sure if teacher Pheng mentioned the collaboration contract forms that we have at FACTS. But every partnership of teachers who engage in coteaching is mandated or required to meet weekly for at least 30 minutes to plan out the following week so that both a classroom teacher and the support teacher know exactly what is happening on a daily basis in the classrooms that we work in.

On the collaboration form, we start with defining what collaboration means to us and what it can look like in our teaching context. Then we write down the scheduled meeting times, location, what materials we need to bring to each meeting, unit plans, lesson plans or maybe sample student work or conference notes.

Each meeting is very intentional and purposeful, so that we're not just sitting there, figure out, okay, what we're going to do. Because we don't have a lot of time, we need to be purposeful in that way. Time is limited.

Another thing we do is we assign days to lead a lesson. If I'm teaching or leading a whole group lesson on Mondays, then I'll make sure I e-mail

teacher Kathy the lesson plan in advance so that we can take a look at it—probably usually over e-mail—so we know exactly what we’re doing.

PEGGIE:

And are the structures for planning built into your school day? How does that work?

MAYUKO:

A lot of us meet after school, but after students leave—from 3:30 to 4:00. We don’t really have students, but we are required to stay until 4:00. During that time, a lot of teachers meet. Some teachers meet during lunch time. Some teachers meet during prep periods. It really depends on the team of teachers.

PEGGIE:

Does anyone else from the team want to add to that?

KATHY:

Mayuko and I coteach together. I think what’s interesting about FACTS, having been in other schools, is that the coteaching model is really part of our philosophy.

In other words, the administrator doesn’t have to come down and say, “Did you two meet this week or when are you going to meet this week?” Every teacher just really believes so strongly in it that they do it on their own.

We’ve talked to teachers in other schools who say, oh, well, that could never happen in our school because people wouldn’t do it or something. Here, it’s a little different just because it’s an expectation, and it’s a part of the mission. I guess I wouldn’t say it happens automatically—but almost. The teachers are really devoted to that concept of coteaching.

MAYUKO:

I actually wanted to include that we do a lot of community-building activities to really try to bond with one another. To coteach or to coplan together, you really do have to have that trust.

PEGGIE:

Great. I guess the next follow-up would be about professional development. All of your teachers, it seems like, have really strong expertise in serving ELLs. But I'm wondering about how you select your teachers, how you train your teachers, and how you make sure that everyone is onboard with your mission and the coteaching model.

MAYUKO:

Well now, there is a team of teachers who are a part of the hiring team, I guess. For ESL, it's a part of the induction process. I guess it's a PD [professional development] ESL 101. So that is included. And it's also stated within our mission too, to really hire people who believe and support every single child in the classroom.

PEGGIE:

Does anyone else want to add about ongoing professional development?

MAYUKO:

Yes, we do actually provide ongoing professional development on supporting ESL students throughout the year. We also had once tried sort of monthly cluster meetings to really talk about ESL issues and, I guess, things that work. That was an attempt, but I don't think it worked out that great because of timing. The ESL team, also, we meet weekly to really fine-tune our craft—to really learn from one another.

KATHY:

We have an early intervention process—our RTI process (our response to intervention)—and the ESL teachers for that grade level are always included. I think we're always learning from them in regard to student development. What the language issue and what might be a learning issue and having their assistance and evaluating that and adapting teaching to meet all of the students' needs. So I think that's another piece.

In addition to that, a number of teachers who were not trained ESL teachers went to the TESOL conference here in Philadelphia and then we had a professional development session to share back some of what we learned.

PEGGIE:

Great. We just have a few minutes left. If anyone has a question, please go ahead and enter it in the chat.

I guess my next question would be about time. So one of the autonomies that many charter schools have is they can have longer school days or longer school years than traditional public schools. So I was wondering, in what ways do you use time to support the development of your ELLs?

PHENG:

We don't have enough time. I think that is a challenge for most schools. Even with our summer program, we actually volunteer our own time to continue to support students so they don't, I guess, drop in levels. Just to continue having that language model. So yes, that is a huge challenge for us.

MAYUKO:

We have several ESL homework clubs after school. They're offered for free to students. We do provide extra support after school as well.

PEGGIE:

Great. I think my final question will be about transitions. You do a phenomenal job preparing your students, and they have lots of options once they leave FACTS to go to some of the best high schools in Philadelphia. So I wonder if you could talk a little bit about preparing ELLs to transition to those really competitive high schools and supporting their transitions.

PHENG:

For this year, actually it has seemed to be a bigger challenge because now, I guess, the schools are really looking at the PSSA [Pennsylvania System of School Assessment; [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_system_of_school_assessment_\(pssa\)/8757](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/pennsylvania_system_of_school_assessment_(pssa)/8757)] scores. And yes, we do feel these addendums that state that they're ESL students, but they're making progress and they'd be a great asset for the school, but just recently we've been finding there are more hurdles with that. I think it's important to build relationships—fact-building relationships—with those schools to really establish some sort of, I guess, relationship so they would take in our students and see that the students will be successful.

KATHY:

We also have an alumni association. So students [can] keep in touch with the school, and they have meetings throughout the course of the year. I don't know how often. Two or three times a year I think they get together.

And we're always trying to get information from them about what they did feel prepared for going into high school and what they feel like they need more preparation with. We have gotten some feedback from students and tried to learn from that feedback and make sure that in seventh and eighth grade they're

getting the instruction they need to make them prepared.

PEGGIE:

All right, on that note I think I'm going to say thank you so much to all of the presenters from FACTS who were gracious enough to join us today. It was really wonderful to hear your insights about your lessons learned and your challenges and, of course, all of your successes. So thank you for sharing that with us.

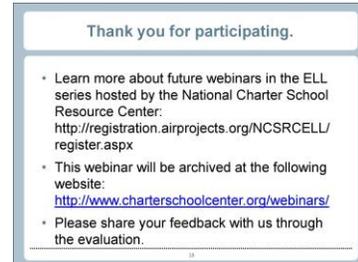
Please go to our website, and you can register for future webinars in the ELL series on the website that you see on your screen. The webinar will also be archived at the following website, <http://www.charterschoolcenter.org/webinars>. And I will also make sure that we put all of the videos together in a separate presentation recording so you can go ahead and access those on your own.

I'm going to send you to a short survey in a moment. It would be great if you could give us some feedback on all of the wonderful things that FACTS shared with us.

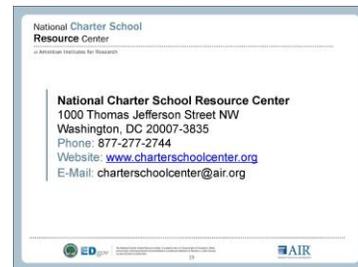
Thank you again to all of our presenters for joining us and have a wonderful rest of your afternoon.

FACTS TEACHERS:

Thank you.



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