

## **INCORPORATING K-12 EDUCATION AND FOLKLORE**

**by Paddy Bowman, Director**

### **Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education**

#### **OVERVIEW**

Adding a K-12 education component to courses, exhibits, web sites, CDs, DVDs, festivals, and publications broadens the reach of folklorists' work, whether in the academic or the public sector. Given the strong education focus of the late Oregon Folk Arts Program, organizers of the new Oregon Folklife Network (OFN) want to build education into its mission and programming as the agency develops. Thus, OFN applied for an AFS professional consultancy grant to work with Local Learning: The National Network for Folklore and Education to ground Oregon folklorists and folklore students in folk arts in education (FAIE), research educational issues and potential allies in the state, and develop FAIE strategies for the agency.

Each state, school district, and folklore organization differs, so rather than reiterate the report prepared for OFN, which fits only their situation, the following is a simple generic outline to help folklorists who want to add an education component to their work.

As with any folklore project, fieldwork is essential, but there is no need to re-invent the wheel since you may call upon an array of people and organizations to help. The schedule below proposes a sequence to research and develop an FAIE plan.

1. Talk with folklorists experienced in education. A good number of FAIE practitioners around the country can offer practical starting points and relevant, time-saving advice (see Find FAIE Practitioners below).
2. Review FAIE materials related to the type of project you are interested in, for example, lesson plans for a publication or an exhibit, an education portal for a web site, or a teacher track for an existing course.
3. Research local and state education issues, needs, and standards and identify existing resources and potential allies.
4. Identify some key partners, including educators, to advise your project and help vet, revise, and publicize as you go.
5. Document and evaluate your process.

#### **OFN EXAMPLES**

The following sample recommendations made to OFN in the Local Learning report to the agency illustrate the variety of ways that folklorists can incorporate K-12 education into their work.

- Incorporate FAIE training into public program folklore courses and add FAIE publications to introductory courses and the comprehensive exam reading list.
- Observe high-quality teacher and artist training provided by local and state organizations to help you design effective training for workshops, presentations, and courses.
- Review FAIE models and materials to contextualize the field.
- Identify and invite educators to all OFN presentations and programs around the state.

- Distribute to teachers at presentations the free *30th Anniversary National Heritage Fellowships 1982-2011* publication and DVD-Rom, produced by Documentary Arts, featuring a PDF of the *Masters of Traditional Arts Education Guide*. Order single copies from [www.nea.gov/pub/pubCat.php?cat=Folk%20and%20Traditional%20Arts](http://www.nea.gov/pub/pubCat.php?cat=Folk%20and%20Traditional%20Arts) or contact the NEA Folk and Traditional Arts Program for bulk orders.
- Provide a roster of FAIE resources on the OFN web site.
- Collaborate with Oregon tribes to help develop and disseminate authentic Indian education resources for students.
- Establish relationships with the University of Oregon College of Education to find common ground and cross list courses, for example, ethnography.
- Create an FAIE learning community across departments and community organizations and include students from various departments as well as faculty and staff.

## THE BRASS TACKS

Again, each situation will differ, so here are some broad strokes to help paint a picture of how FAIE can be easily integrated into the work of folklorists.

### 1. Find FAIE Practitioners

Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education

<http://www.locallearningnetwork.org> is a loose association of folklorists, educators, and artists working in education in a variety of in-school and out-of-school settings. Contact the director, Paddy Bowman, [paddybowman@verizon.net](mailto:paddybowman@verizon.net) to find an FAIE practitioner in your region.

The AFS Folklore and Education Section is another way of identifying people to help you. Contact the conveners at <http://www.afsnet.org/default.asp?page=FolkloreEd>.

National Endowment for the Arts specialists in Arts Education (for example, Terry Liu) and Bill Mansfield and Barry Bergey in Folk and Traditional Arts may also be able to point you to people, model projects, and resources. Find contact info at <http://www.nea.gov>.

### 2. Review FAIE Resources

Examine the Education Resources below, which offer an array of model FAIE web sites and guides.

Study the Local Learning web site <http://www.locallearningnetwork.org>, paying special attention to articles in the Library, organizations and materials in Regional Resources, National Heritage Fellows' profiles and classroom connections in Guest Artists, and strategies for teaching interviewing in Tools.

*Folklife Resources for Educators* <http://www.loc.gov/folklife/teachers/index.html> is an American Folklife Center portal that allows users to search for free online FAIE materials by region, genre, and subject. Review examples of a variety of guides.

Join the AFS Folklore and Education Section

<http://www.afsnet.org/default.asp?page=FolkloreEd> to access the archive of newsletters, which feature new FAIE resources each issue. Annual dues are \$10. Members do not have to join AFS.

### **3. Research Education Issues, Needs, and Standards**

Each state department of education has curriculum specialists who can brief you on current issues, textbooks, and practices. Link to your state department of education through this U.S. Department of Education portal: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>

In addition to national education standards in each discipline, each state has standards that teachers must help students meet, so resources must address standards in at least one discipline. Since folklore is inherently interdisciplinary, FAIE practitioners work across curricula. Link to state education standards through this *Education World* portal: <http://www.educationworld.com/standards/state/index.shtml>

Local school districts have curriculum specialists for most disciplines who can be helpful in contextualizing what students must study and identifying possible points of entry. For example, state history is often taught in 4th and 8th grades and may include culture, art, or heritage standards that folklore fits well.

### **4. Find Allies and Partners**

Schools of education at local colleges and universities may be useful. Courses such as Social Foundations of Education and ethnography are a good fit. Also faculty for various disciplines such as English language arts and social studies can advise you.

State affiliates of national education associations may provide venues for presentations and workshops as well as help in recruiting teachers (see Selected National Education Organizations below).

State and local arts agencies have arts education managers who are knowledgeable of local issues and opportunities as well as schools and teachers who might make good partners.

State and local humanities councils often provide professional development training for teachers that might provide a venue and a model for good training.

Museum education departments are often good allies.

Research other education efforts such as place-based, heritage, and expeditionary education in your area.

Regional American Indian tribes and tribal councils may have education programs. The Tribal Education Department link might be useful in finding them <http://www.tedna.org>.

Local out-of-school education organizations such as weekend ethnic schools, 4-H <http://www.4-h.org>, and Boys and Girls Clubs <http://www.bgca.org> are other possible partners.

## EDUCATION RESOURCES

### Selected FAIE Web Sites

#### National

**American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress** [www.loc.gov/folklife](http://www.loc.gov/folklife) see especially the *Educators Guide to Folklife Resources*.

**Local Learning** [www.LocalLearningNetwork.org](http://www.LocalLearningNetwork.org) advocates for inclusion of folk arts and artists nationwide and provides virtual artist residencies with National Heritage Fellows, a library of useful articles for teachers, links to regional resources, and tools for engaging young people in fieldwork and folklore. Find back issues of the annual *CARTS Newsletter* in the archive.

**Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage** [www.folklife.si.edu](http://www.folklife.si.edu) has online curriculum guides, exhibits, and the *Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide* in the Education portal. In addition, **Smithsonian Folkways Recordings** [www.folkways.si.edu](http://www.folkways.si.edu) features music lessons in Tools for Teaching.

*The following entries offer models for several types of resources. Find many more on the national web sites above.*

#### Teacher Networks

**Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Culture** <http://csumc.wisc.edu> supports the Wisconsin Network for Teachers of Local Culture, cultural tours, and curriculum guides. See especially the Cultural Tours portal to see how deeply students can connect with local culture.

**Discovering Community** [www.discoveringcommunity.org](http://www.discoveringcommunity.org) is a project of the Vermont Folklife Center that provides methods and resources to create locally designed curricula that support and meet the pressing need for cultural conservation and civic participation. See especially Discovery Projects for model classroom projects.

#### State and Regional Guides

**Iowa Folklife: Our People, Communities, and Traditions** [www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife](http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife) is an award-winning online lifelong multimedia learning guide for all ages. A new volume is at [www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife\\_v2](http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/folklife_v2). Both guides include intergenerational connections, audio, and video and highlight an excellent way to incorporate fieldwork into education guides.

**Louisiana Voices: An Educator's Guide to Exploring Our Communities and Traditions** [www.louisianavoices.org](http://www.louisianavoices.org) This comprehensive interdisciplinary Web-based guide with many lessons, essays, photos, video, and audio is public domain and adaptable for any region. From

student worksheets and assessment tools to dozens of lesson plans and student activities, this guide has something for everyone and is useful in teaching any age group fieldwork.

**North Country Folklife** [www.northcountryfolklore.org](http://www.northcountryfolklore.org) is an educational web site of Traditional Arts of Upstate New York offering several themes through which users can explore the region: music, special places, foodways, oral traditions.

### **Interdisciplinary, All Grades**

**Masters of Traditional Arts Education Guide** [www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org](http://www.mastersoftraditionalarts.org) features National Heritage Fellows who are craftspeople, musicians, and dancers and templates for units of study such as Sense of Place or Sense of Discovery and numerous student activities.

### **Social Studies, English Language Arts, Arts, Grades 3-8**

**Wisconsin Folks** [www.wisconsinfolks.org](http://www.wisconsinfolks.org) teaches students about folk art and artists of that state and provides examples of many genres and artists, from fish decoys to dance and links content to state standards. The site also allows users to book artists for classroom residencies.

### **Music, Pre-K to Grade 3**

**Alabama Folklife Association** [www.alabamafolklife.org](http://www.alabamafolklife.org) provides audio excerpts of children's songs recorded in 1947 in the online *Bullfrog Jumped Children's Folksongs Learning Guide* for pre-K to grade 3.

### **Music, High School**

#### **Introduction to Irish Music**

[http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/docs/lesson\\_plans/ireland\\_songs.pdf](http://media.smithsonianfolkways.org/docs/lesson_plans/ireland_songs.pdf) allows students to explore Irish and Irish-American history and culture through song lyrics, dance, and instrument demonstrations. They may follow the music and play along with melody sheets and band transcriptions.

### **Visual Art, Grades 4 to 12 and College**

**Folkvine** [www.folkvine.org](http://www.folkvine.org) of the Florida Cultural Alliance gives users video, audio, and text options to explore folk artists of Florida, including bobble head dolls who represent real-life scholars of the state's traditional culture. From post-modern theory in themed online guides to a board game for students, the site offers an array of ways to study folk artists and sense of place.

### **Language Arts, Social Sciences, and Film, High School and College**

**Folkstreams** [www.folkstreams.net](http://www.folkstreams.net) is a video-streaming site built as a national preserve of American folk culture documentaries and offers users extensive background materials for each film. Use excerpts or entire films and the Educators Portal, which includes a very useful Film Analysis Worksheet.

## **Selected FAIE Publications**

*This list represents only a few FAIE books and publications for various age groups and situations. For a more extensive bibliography, email [paddybowman@verizon.net](mailto:paddybowman@verizon.net).*

Bowman, Paddy, and Lynne Hamer, eds. *Through the Schoolhouse Door: Folklore, Community, Curriculum*. Utah State University Press, 2011.

Campbell, Patricia Shehan. *Songs in Their Heads: Music and Its Meaning in Children's Lives*. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Congdon, Kristin, and Kitty Kitson Petterson, illustrator. *Uncle Monday and Other Florida Tales*. University of Mississippi Press, 2001.

Govenar, Alan. *Extraordinary Ordinary People: Five American Masters of Traditional Arts*. Candlewick Press, 2006.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. An Accessible Aesthetic: The Role of Folk Arts and Folk Artists in the Curriculum. *New York Folklore* 9(3-4), pp. 9-18, 1983. Retrieved from [www.locallearningnetwork.org/library/the-archive](http://www.locallearningnetwork.org/library/the-archive).

Lornell, Kip. *Introducing American Folk Music*. Brown and Benchmark, 1993.

MacDowell, Marsha, and LuAnne Kozma. *Folk Arts in Education: A Resource Handbook II*. Michigan State University Museum, 2008. Order or download this extensive anthology of FAIE samples from over 50 programs at [www.folkartsineducation.org](http://www.folkartsineducation.org).

Rosengarten, Dale, et al. *Grass Roots: African Origins of an American Art*. Museum for African Art, 2009. Download at [www.africanart.org/uploads/resources/docs/gr.pdf](http://www.africanart.org/uploads/resources/docs/gr.pdf).

Simons, Elizabeth Radin. *Student Worlds, Student Words: Teaching Writing Through Folklore*. Heinemann, 1990.

Sunstein, Bonnie, and Elizabeth Chiseri-Strater. *FieldWorking: Reading and Writing Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002.

Vermont Folklife Center. Children's Book Series features a number of high-quality picture books based on stories from the VFC archive. See <http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/childrens-books/index.shtml>.

Wagler, Mark, Ruth Olson, and Anne Pryor. *Kids' Guide to Local Culture and Teacher's Guide to Local Culture*. Madison Children's Museum, 2004. Download at <http://csumc.wisc.edu/wtlc/?q=resources>.

## **Selected National Education Organizations**

American Association of School Librarians (<http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/aasl>)  
Arts Education Partnership (<http://www.aep-arts.org>)  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (<http://www.ascd.org>)  
Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education (<http://www.kennedy-center.org/education/kcaen>)  
MENC: The National Association for Music Education (<http://www.menc.org>)  
National Art Education Association (<http://www.arteducators.org>)  
National Council for the Social Studies (<http://www.socialstudies.org>)  
National Council of Teachers of English (<http://www.ncte.org>)  
National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (<http://www.nctm.org>)  
National Guild for Community Arts Education (<http://www.nationalguild.org>)  
National Science Teachers Association (<http://www.nsta.org>)  
National Writing Project (<http://www.nwp.org>)  
U.S. Department of Education (<http://www.ed.gov>)  
USDOE portal to state education departments and other organizations  
(<http://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html>)