

Report From Curriculum Development and Best Practices Consultancy for the Center for Food and Culture

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May 2017

Description of Project

Susan Eleuterio worked with the Center for Food and Culture's Director, Lucy Long, to create curriculum materials for K-12 and adult audiences to help develop new audiences for the Center among K-12 educators, colleges, community-based organizations, and others. Below is the case study with recommendations for expanding audiences for folklore-based organizations, particularly those interested in education and community engagement.

Note: Curriculum materials are attached and will be uploaded to the Center for Food and Culture website <http://www.foodandculture.org/>

Recommendations for Educator and Community Organization Audience Development

Like many small non-profits, the Center for Food and Culture, operates with a small, underpaid staff and volunteers. They have conducted outreach with local schools, churches, libraries and other organizations¹, and have a local educator who has served as their education coordinator, but who also has a full time job with a school and parents four children.

The Center Director, Lucy Long, has published or produced numerous articles, books, museum exhibits and documentary videos about food, including *Culinary Tourism* (2004), *Regional American Food Culture* (2009), *Ethnic American Food Today: A Cultural Encyclopedia*, 2 volumes (2015); *The Food and Folklore Reader* (2015); *Ethnic American Cooking: Recipes for Living in a New World* (2016); and recently, *Comfort Food Memories and Meanings* (ed. With Michael Owen Jones, University of Mississippi Press, 2017) and *Honey: A Global History* (Reaktion Press, 2017). She teaches adjunct at Bowling Green State University and is a guest lecturer and graduate thesis reader at numerous universities around the world.

While Dr. Long has extensive experience teaching at the college level, she has worked more informally with K-12 classroom teachers and community based groups. As folklorists, we share the knowledge that schools have culture, and in order to create materials which can be readily accessible to teachers (particularly when being directly downloaded from a website), teacher and school culture must be considered not only in design but in content as well.

While the initial plan for this consultancy focused on audience development, I came to realize that *engagement* is what will be key to expanding the Center's relationship with schools and teachers. Doug Borwick, an arts and management administrator and specialist, cites work by a fellow Cooperstown graduate of mine, Dr. Candace Matelic, in a blog post discussing audience development versus community engagement, which while developed for museums, applies equally to arts and educational nonprofits such as the Center for Food and Culture. <http://www.artsjournal.com/engage/2012/05/audience-development-vs-community-engagement>

Dr. Matelic and Mr. Borwick advocate for "robust engagement" with audiences. Best practice for this type of engagement with K-12 teachers needs to focus on the current situation for nearly every teacher in the United States, no matter how well resourced their school. Teachers are continually under a time crunch; goals and outcomes for schools (and what these are called), are changed annually, and include pressure from local, state, and federal administrators both financially and in the standards for teaching. While nearly all schools (certainly all public schools) include time for professional development, this does not necessarily focus on curriculum or how to meet the standards of the day. *Materials for teachers need to reference current established state and national standards, be easy to use, consider the wide range of economic and technological access in today's public and private schools, and while referencing academic theory and methodology, be written in a style which recognizes the limitations of time and scholarly interest for a teacher who may have up to 125 students in her class load.*

As Matelic notes, community engagement requires that an organization "look at what matters to the community and how your organization is, or is not responding, focus on developing relationships and increasing partnerships with a variety of community groups benefiting *all participating partners* (italics mine), involves all stakeholders," and with the right efforts, "organizational identity, goals and priorities could be fundamentally transformed in response to community input and ideas, substantially increasing reputation, public service, value and standing in the community."

<http://www.transformorg.com/Audience%20Development%20compared%20to%20Community%20Engagement.pdf>

The materials we collaboratively developed attempt to meet the needs I have listed above. They are tied to both the Common Core standards (adopted currently by 42 of the 50 US states and the District of Columbia) as well as to Ohio State Standards in order to showcase how local standards can be addressed. Each unit includes the grade level, materials needed, resources, outcomes, and the opportunity for students to publish their work on the Center for Food and Culture website. B.J. Wagner and James Moffett demonstrate the power of publication for encouraging excellence for students of language arts in their handbook, *Student Centered Language Arts and Reading*, and I would

argue this is true for subjects in the STEM fields as well. In addition to curriculum materials, I created a student work release form (attached) for the Center.

A description of the needs of teachers in regards to curriculum was emphasized in another AFS consultancy by the Teachers of Local Culture in Wisconsin and underscores the goals of curriculum materials developed through this consultancy for the Center. They noted:

The web site should offer a pyramid of work samples to help educators plan future classroom activities. The top of the pyramid would offer simple, easy-to-replicate "one-pagers"—brief lessons that help make simple points or provide easy-to-replicate exercises for the students. The next layer would offer "curricular material" such as units or lesson plans with several steps. The bottom layer would be complex—year-long projects, or projects with multiple partners

While there was not time in this residency to develop complex year-long projects for the Center, I have recommended to Dr. Long that the Center seek school partners for this purpose. This could be accomplished through also offering professional development workshops to teachers, particularly during the summer by offering college credit. Participants in the gathering of locally focused educators in Wisconsin made this recommendation, which would tie in well with a summer professional development program:

They also suggested professional development opportunities that allow educators to learn new skills and incorporate hands-on work on specific projects so that participants have prepared materials to take back to the classroom; participants also wanted opportunities to observe the work of other educators as possible models to take back to their own classrooms. (AFS Consultancy Report [http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.afsnet.org/resource/resmgr/Best Practices Report s/Wisconsin Teachers of Local .pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.afsnet.org/resource/resmgr/Best_Practices_Report_s/Wisconsin_Teachers_of_Local_.pdf))

Pre-Service Education and Engagement with Educators

Dr. Long's expressed goals in creating curriculum materials for schools were to include concepts of construction, identity, and symbol in foodways. Dr. Long's work in this area is written at the college level, in some cases, at the graduate level. Dr. Long is particularly interested in using "construction" as a means for exploring critical race theory and identity with foodways. I pointed out that critical race theory is still newly being taught, and unlike multiculturalism, has not been taught in my experience in pre-service education for K-12 teachers. (A brief survey of the literature underscores this belief. For instance, see "Teaching in Color: A Critical Race Theory in Education Analysis of the Literature on Preservice Teachers of Color and Teacher Education in the US.")
<http://www.tandfonline.com/author/Brown%2C+Keffrelyn+D>
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13613324.2013.832921>

I was uncomfortable creating materials tied to theory which is still finding its place in teacher education. My recommendation to Dr. Long is to work with two folklorists who are currently working in critical race theory and pre-service education, Dr. Phyllis May-Machunda, (<https://www.mnstate.edu/amcs/meetthefaculty.aspx>) who teaches in the Department of American Multicultural Studies, Languages, Critical Race and Women's at Minnesota State University Moorhead and Dr. Lynne Hamer, who teaches at the University of Toledo in Educational Foundations and Leadership. (<http://www.utoledo.edu/education/depts/efl/faculty/hamer/>) Dr. Long has previously consulted with Dr. Hamer during an AFS project with Dr. Jan Rosenberg. ([http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.afsnet.org/resource/resmgr/Best Practices Reports/Rosenberg STEM Curriculum St.pdf](http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.afsnet.org/resource/resmgr/Best_Practices_Reports/Rosenberg_STEM_Curriculum_St.pdf))

Considering school teachers as cultural practitioners, my recommendation for the Center to seek funding for a collaboration with these two folklorist/educators who can provide the following opportunities for the Center:

- 1) Create engagement with educators both at the college level and pre-service K-12 level to co-create food based curriculum and professional development models focusing on issues such as personal, social, and cultural construction of identity tied explicitly to current critical race theory as taught in schools of education.
- 2) Provide an opportunity to pilot test curriculum materials in schools in two states of the Midwest which could then be shared with teachers in other locales.
- 3) Provide an ongoing relationship with teachers for the Center who could create their own foodways related materials as suggested by the teachers in the Wisconsin Teachers of Local Culture program.

Community-Based Outreach

Many of the same recommendations made above hold for working with community organizations. The curriculum designed for this consultancy builds on Dr. Long's research and publications, but is edited to appeal to adult participants who are unlikely to read long texts, at least in a workshop setting.

Libraries, religious organizations, and community programs such as those who work with English as a Second Language Learners or adult writers are often seeking materials for their participants. Each of the exercises in the attached curriculum is designed for partner work and to provide an opportunity for participants to engage in dialogue using food and foodways for making meaning, exploring cultural differences and similarities, and creating stronger bonds in communities. This material can be used to conduct outreach with organizations who may then wish to engage the Center for additional hands-on workshops and attendance at Center programs.

Some Additional Recommendations for Engagement with Educators and Community

The Center for Food and Culture website includes a variety of resources, some listed under Center Projects, <http://www.foodandculture.org/center-projects/>, which includes educational guides; others under Food Systems <http://www.foodandculture.org/about-food/food-systems/> which includes a link to the Composting Curriculum, but not the curriculum listed under Center Projects; with other educational materials listed under Featured Posts with a link to more educational guides.

I found it very confusing to find all of the Center's educational materials at one glance. Some of the material include You Tube videos, but you have to search to find them.

I strongly recommend the Center make a list of all of their educational materials and put it in one place with links. Busy teachers do not have time to search, and even if they come to the site, its current organization makes it too difficult to find all of the excellent materials which have been developed.

Conclusions

- 1) **Consider the cultural practices, needs and interests of your audience**
Too many folklorists develop extensive text for educators which while beautifully written is too long and complex for those with limited time.
- 2) **Use professional development as both community engagement and audience expansion with K-12 teachers**
- 3) **Make sure your website is easy to use and has clear headings**
- 4) **Use easy to use, free downloadable, curriculum materials as "a hook" to create expanded community engagement with educators and community organizations**

Resources

Moffett, James, and B.J. Wagner. *Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading K-12: A Handbook for Teachers*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983.

ⁱ Interview with Lucy Long