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### Title:

“Some Things in My House Have a Pulse and a Downbeat” The Role of Folk and Traditional Arts Instruction in Supporting Student Learning

### Journal Issue:

[Journal for Learning through the Arts, 10\(1\)](#)

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### Publication Date:

2014

### Permalink:

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/3zq7s143>

### Acknowledgements:

Nations in Neighborhoods was funded by the US Department of Education through an AEMDD grant. It was directed by Dr. Gus Hatzidimitriou, New York City Department of Education, and Anika Selhorst, City Lore.

### Keywords:

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### Local Identifier:

class\_lta\_19135

### Abstract:

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overall scores on the exam after controlling for gender, ethnicity, English language learner and special education classifications. These findings suggest that an arts education program featuring folk and traditional arts engages students in practices that have measurable effects on their literacy development.

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“Some Things in My House Have a Pulse and a Downbeat”  
The Role of Folk and Traditional Arts Instruction in Supporting Student Learning

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**Abstract**

The authors investigated the association between participation in Nations in Neighborhoods (NiN), a program of folk and traditional arts instruction and achievement in English language arts in a sample of low-income elementary school students, many of whom were recent immigrants and English language learners. The program drew on the core practices of traditional and folk arts – sociocritical literacies that bridge home and school, multi-modal instruction, apprenticeship learning, and communal effort – to provide students with the confidence and strategies of accomplished learners. English language arts achievement was assessed using a standardized state proficiency exam. Students who participated in the program received significantly-higher overall scores on the exam after controlling for gender, ethnicity, English language learner and special education classifications. These findings suggest that an arts education program featuring folk and traditional arts engages students in practices that have measurable effects on their literacy development.

**Keywords:** art education, folk arts, traditional arts, English language learners, English language arts, urban schools, at risk students

In the last quarter century, budget constraints and mandated testing have combined to force many schools across the country to curtail or eliminate arts education from their curricula (Keiper, Sandene, Persky, & Kuang, 2009). These pressures are particularly acute in large, urban school districts serving disproportionate numbers of low-income students, many of whom are recent immigrants or classified as English language learners. These students, placed at risk for educational failure, have inherent strengths – multiple languages, bi-cultural identities, and determination to succeed in new settings – that formal education rarely draws upon (Moll, 2000; Guiéttierez & Rogoff, 2003). For them, the loss of arts instruction is the loss of a subject that builds bridges across cultures and languages, links concrete and conceptual learning, and provides a setting to acquire and demonstrate understanding, even as fluency in academic English is still developing.

Moreover, where arts education persists, instruction in folk and traditional arts is rarely offered. Even in the most recently formulated national educational standards, folk and traditional arts are subsumed into a framework that continues to stress individual artistry, the tools, skills, and techniques of the formal arts practices, and the separation of arts from daily life (NCCAS, 2013). By contrast, in this article, we present evidence that folk and traditional arts, with their emphasis on language that bridges home and school, multimodal forms of communication, apprenticeship learning, and communal effort, can serve a valuable role in the instruction of English language learners. We argue that values and practices fostered in folk and traditional arts help students to build on the knowledge and linguistic strengths that they bring to school and encourage educators to acknowledge and harness those strengths (Jimerson, 2004).

### **The Folk and Traditional Arts: Key Aspects of Pedagogical Practice**

The American Folklore Society (2013) defines folklore as the traditional art, literature, knowledge, and practice that is disseminated largely through oral communication and behavioral example. As such, folk and traditional arts are rooted in, and expressive of, the cultural life and heritage of communities and groups that share a common identity. Often learned informally, these art forms are embedded in the daily lives and cultural traditions of families and communities and constitute an important part of the “funds of knowledge” (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992, p. 133) that many students bring to schools. As repositories of cultural values, symbolic meanings, shared history and aesthetic principles, they are a rich source of complex cultural meanings on which all students, independent of families’ education, language, wealth, or status, can draw as thinkers and creators (Campbell 2004; Green 2008; Dargan 2011; Dewhurst et al., 2013). For example, think of how many five year-olds, long before they read, are fluent in storytelling, riddles, teasing, and game rhymes. Far from being “just” handicrafts or daily rituals, folk and traditional arts can introduce and teach complex concepts like tradition, diaspora, hybridity, and worldview (Campbell, 2004). Speaking about passing on the practices of Hawaiian *lau hala* weavers, Dewhurst writes that arts educators “are not just teaching students how to make the art at hand but also how to *be* in the world” (Dewhurst et al., 2013, p. 5).

In addition, folk and traditional arts may provide an unusually transparent set of practices for developing an identity as a learner. Children entering school flourish if they can acquire *the technologies of self* that will allow them to observe, apprentice, take the risk of performing, learn to recover from errors, ask questions, compete, and eventually mentor or model in this new setting. In short, to be successful, students need more than raw knowledge; they need to acquire the concrete actions, strategies, and ways of behaving, interacting, talking, and learning necessary to enter different communities (Besley, 2005; Foucault, 1988). This process is even

more important for young people who are continuously transitioning between the expectations of another culture and the expectations of schooling in the contemporary United States. Historically, this process has been subtractive, requiring students to discard or deny earlier identities and languages in favor of Americanization and English. In this context, folk and traditional arts may provide contexts in which students can *add* the technologies of self appropriate to Queens, Phoenix, or Cincinnati to those they bring from home or community. At their best, these practices result in cosmopolitan, culturally and linguistically nimble students who have learned how to inhabit an increasingly global world (Appiah, 2006; Dewhurst, 2013; Hansen, Burdick-Shepherd, Marrarano, & Obelleiro, 2009).

But for folk and traditional arts to contribute to these valued outcomes, artist-teachers and their classroom partners have to introduce more than the topics or contents of these art forms. They must also convey the underlying values and practices of their field (Dargan, 2011) in ways that also draw on and respect students' individual circumstances (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2004). Four such practices – bridging literacy, multimodal instruction, apprenticeship learning, and communal effort – are at the root of folk and traditional arts. Through a set of short examples, drawn from the Nations in Neighborhoods (NiN) program, we describe how these practices foster the development of a set of critical technologies of the self among English language learners.

**Sociocultural Literacy.** Sociocritical literacy “historicizes everyday and institutional literacy practices and texts and reframes them as powerful tools oriented toward critical social thought” (Gutiérrez, 2008, p. 1). Translated into the practices of NiN residencies, teaching artists encourage students to bring elements of their own lived cultures, and the cultures they are studying, into the classroom, resulting in a two-way exchange. For example, during a residency of Puerto Rican music and dance, fifth grade students listened to, played, and improvised characteristic rhythms from the island. In addition, they listened to African and Spanish music as part of understanding how music reflects world diaspora patterns. Building on their understanding of the evolution of *bomba* and *plena* rhythms, they discussed how popular Latin music in New York is the contemporary expression of a long hybrid tradition. Many students with family backgrounds from the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico identified a connection between the music and dance they participated in at home and at family gatherings, and the sounds and steps they were learning in class. In addition, one student with a family background from Nigeria also realized the connection to African music. In her first journal entry she writes, “I enjoyed this very much because it reminded me of home in Nigeria and here in New York when my family dance and sing. I was able to make a connection to the type of cultural music the people danced to, because it was very similar to the music and style of dances we practice back home and back in Nigeria.” Later, she makes an even more immediate connection, writing that “Some things in my house have a pulse and a downbeat. When I was looking around I found my hula hoop and jump rope and when I used them to check for a clave [rhythm], I found that my jump rope made a swishing noise when I turned it as I jumped as it hit the ground I heard another beat that kept repeating as I jumped. Then I tested my hula hoop and when I was spinning it I heard swish woop woop woop noise, and I found the clave or pulse and it kept repeating. When I was walking, too, I heard two downbeats. One from me walking – it went click click click and I heard rolling book bags which made a whirring noise. I now realize many things around you have a downbeat or pulse.”

These examples point to another two-way connection: the popular music that students hum and dance to is no longer something they have to “leave at the door.” Instead, this music

becomes the occasion for key literacy practices like research, critical listening, and evidence-based writing and discussion. The music and those strategies for deepening understanding are mutually illuminating, creating what Guitierrez (2008) refers to as a "third space" where students' social and linguistic understandings merge with – and often enliven – academic learning. In this space, created by the study of folk and traditional arts, supported by the practice of journal-keeping, this student presents herself as an original thinker and a cosmopolitan learner.<sup>1</sup>

**Multimodal Instruction.** Since many folk arts are traditionally embedded in rich multi-arts contexts, NiN residencies are often co-taught by two artists from different, but culturally-related, arts disciplines. In fourth grade, students read and retold a *Jakata* tale from Northeast India, in a residency taught by Malini Srinivasan, an Indian Bharatanatyam dancer, and Jenna Bonistalli, a visual artist. Students created a series of painted panels inspired by Mithila painting, a style of narrative folk painting also from Northeast India, enriched by observational drawing sessions of animals at the Bronx Zoo. For the final performance, students retold the story through spoken narration and dance, with the painted panels projected as a backdrop. Reading, speaking, dancing and painting the story reinforced students' understanding of the characters and the narrative line, as well as an understanding of cultural patterns in Indian folk and classical arts. While the written work of many students was several years below grade level, their dance and drawing experiences built a complex understanding of the animals and plants that populate the *Jakata* tales. In a video interview one student narrates her picture, explaining how it captures the moment when the parrot flies over the burning forest on his way to get help. Showing how she drew the hazy smoke with a charcoal pencil, she explains that, "We are working on the leaves right now, and we want the leaves to pop out because they are really small." She points to a pencil: "I'm using this because I want the leaves to look more better." Based on having her drawings at hand, this student can tell a complex narrative, explain different artistic techniques, and discuss specific artistic choices.<sup>2</sup>

In another example, when teaching artist Lu Yu engages students in a dance theater residency, he draws on his training in Chinese opera and acrobatics to show how simple props can imply entire scenes. He turns a bolt of fabric into a river, then engages students in transforming that same cloth into a boat, then a storm, then the rope that travelers cling to, using evocative visual clues to support students' use of figurative language and comprehension of complex meanings. As Echevarria explains, "Authentic, meaningful experiences are especially important for ELLs because they are learning to attach labels and terms to things already familiar to them. Their learning becomes situated rather than abstract when they are provided with the opportunity to actually experience what they are learning about" (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004, p. 29).

**Apprenticeship Learning and Communal Effort.** In many folk and traditional arts, beginners – even children – are treated as serious learners who can be gradually introduced to the values and practices of art forms handed down by family members, elders, or master artists. The techniques demonstrated are not diminished or infantilized, and young learners use the same or similar materials and tools as their teachers, with the teacher carefully scaffolding the learning until the "apprentice" can manage to drum, dance, cut, or stamp cloth skillfully (Rogoff, 1990). As part of drawing on traditional pedagogies, NiN artists often engage students in extended periods of observation and listening ("no questions asked") as they demonstrate a movement, rhythm or brush stroke, insisting that the eye and the hand are instruments of understanding (Sennett, 2008). After this initial period of withholding questions and verbal instructions,

teaching artists attach words to actions and materials, offer and demonstrate suggestions, and respond to questions. In this process, learners first witness and practice embodied learning, gradually acquiring the vocabulary to articulate their learning process and to justify the artistic choices they made.

For nearly all students, the opportunity to become a participant in the fullest possible practice of an art form is engaging. For English language learners, the gradual movement from nonverbal learning to spoken exchange may afford the support for acquiring new vocabulary, asking questions, offering observations, and eventually articulating the artistic choices they make. A printmaking residency taught by Alan Calpe to eighth grade students at the Academy of New Americans illustrates elements of the apprenticeship model. Calpe began the residency by showing students examples of his own work and discussing the techniques and ideas he explored in his work. He introduced them to printmaking terminology, tools, materials, and techniques. Students then explored the work of Latin American printmakers, including Olga Blinder, Livio Abramo, Antonio Henrique Amaral and Jose Guadalupe Posada, in order to understand both the diversity of their approaches and printmaking techniques and the ways they explore themes of self and cultural identity. Inspired by the work of these artists, students created their own design motifs as a template for their collagraph prints. They created a collagraph plate through collaged papers and did rubbings to understand how imagery can be created through relief. Students learned to work with professional printmaking tools and materials, even though some of the tools had sharp edges. Working in pairs, they explored the printmaking process, using brayers and ink to create an edition of their printing plate. They also learned about subtractive printmaking by drawing on and gouging a rubbercut plate. Then they took a field trip to a professional printing studio where they learned about and used other printmaking techniques, tools, and materials. They made monotypes with a resident artist there, and each student created and pulled his own print. They also toured an exhibit and artist's studio. At the conclusion of the residency, students assembled their prints into an exhibition, where the whole was greater than the sum of its parts.

Finally, as a part of scaffolding, or supporting individual learners, folk and traditional arts often feature joint or communal effort. For example, Puerto Rican *bomba* presents a dialog between the improvised movements of the dancer and the responses of the accompanying drummer; neither is a soloist. Similarly, in many NiN residencies, students work in ensembles performing dance theater and folk tales, jointly building huge mosaic patterns, creating murals and doing musical performances. In these settings, students who are in the process of acquiring academic English typically work as the drummer and the dancer do, frequently translating directions, concepts, and questions from English to Spanish (or Farsi or Mandarin).

### **The Present Study**

The present study was designed to assess whether a program featuring characteristic practices drawn from folk and traditional arts (sociocritical literacy, multimodal instruction, apprenticeship learning, and communal effort) would benefit a sample of students including many recent immigrant, English language learners. Given that English language acquisition is the foundation upon which subsequent academic skills are built, we chose student performance on a standardized assessment of English language arts (ELA) as our dependent variable of interest. We hypothesized that students receiving classroom instruction in folk and traditional arts that featured the practices outlined above would exhibit better performance on an ELA assessment than their peers.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**



Participants ( $N = 1,375$ ) attended one of five elementary or junior high schools in a major metropolitan area in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States, each of which serves a substantial number of students at risk for educational failure as determined by income, special education status, and English language proficiency. Across these schools, between 6 and 17% of students were classified as special education, while 6 to 19% of students were classified as English language learners.<sup>3</sup> For the sample as a whole, nearly one in five students (17.7%) were classified as English language learners; 11.3% of students were classified as special education. The schools are therefore representative of the larger school district, in which 14% have a special education classification, and 18% are English language learners (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Prior to the 2011-2012 school year, all teachers of students in grades 3 – 8 at these schools either requested, or were asked by their principal, to participate in NiN. The students of those teachers who participated in the program formed the treatment group ( $n_{\text{treatment}} = 487$ ), while students of teachers who did not participate formed the comparison group ( $n_{\text{comparison}} = 888$ ). Thus, the participants comprised a single cohort in two groups: the treatment-group students and their peers attending the same grades in the same schools. Across groups, participants were divided equally by gender (50.5% female, 49.1% male). Among students reporting ethnicity, over a third were of Asian/Pacific Islander (37.3%) or Hispanic (37.8%) descent. An additional 18.1% of students reported their ethnicity as Caucasian. Table 1 reports demographics and dispersion of treatment group students by school.

### **Procedures**

Whenever possible, each school sent its school-based arts instructor to participate and contribute their expertise about arts integration practices. The majority of teachers remained with the program across all four years, effectively building their capacity for folk arts integration in the curriculum and as advocates for the arts in their schools. Teaching artists then served the students assigned to each classroom teacher participating in the project. The Nations in Neighborhoods curriculum is explicitly designed to engage young people in a wide range of activities designed to support the development of their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills through residencies that feature art forms that cross home and community life with school practices like observation, research, and discussion. Both artists and classroom teachers reinforce language learning through: 1) ongoing classroom and small group discussion that focuses on complex objects, texts, and concepts; 2) journal writing where students formulate and record their individual thoughts; 3) interviews that provide practice in expressing concepts and experiences for external audiences; and 4) the opportunity to represent experiences and ideas in a range of media (visual arts, performance, written language, and oral presentations). In the summer preceding each school year, teachers attended a three-day summer workshop designed to build their understanding of the region and the folk or traditional art their classes would be studying in the coming year. In the fall, teaching artists began a 14-session residency that included classroom sessions, a field trip to a related cultural site (museum, business, or artist work space) or a visit by a guest artist or community expert, and a final performance or exhibition of student work at the conclusion of the artist residency.

### **Measures**

Information regarding students' gender, ethnicity, special education classification status (SPED), and English language learner classification status (ELL) were provided by each school using records pulled from a centralized District-wide database. Gender was coded dichotomously (0 = female, 1 = male). Ethnicity was coded as a categorical variable with five

levels corresponding to the five classifications used by the District: American Indian/Alaskan Native (coded 0), Asian/Pacific Islander (1), White (2), Black (3), and Hispanic (4). Special education classification was coded dichotomously (0 = no classification, 1 = classification) using District records for each student. Any student classified as special education in the 2011-2012 school year by the District was coded as SPED = 1 *unless* the District's classification was based solely on a physical disability (e.g., use of a wheelchair or other mobility-assistance device). Similarly, any student classified by the District at any level of limited English proficiency for the 2011-2012 school year was coded as LEP = 1. The focal predictor, participation in Nations in Neighborhoods, was also coded dichotomously, where 0 indicated that a student was in a classroom that did not participate in the program.

Given the program's emphasis on English language development, the measure of primary interest was students' scaled scores on the English Language Arts (ELA) exam designed by the McGraw Hill Companies for the state's Department of Education. The exam assesses students' reading, writing, language, and speaking/listening abilities through a combination of multiple choice and open-ended questions. The tests were administered over three days in late April of the 2011-2012 school year and required between 150 and 190 minutes to complete, depending on students' grade level.

## Results

### Preliminary Analyses

Of the 1,375 participants, 44 (3.2%) were missing ELA exam scores. Missing ELA scores were evenly distributed across the treatment and comparison groups, with scores missing for 22 participants in each group. *Missingness* was coded as a binary variable and regressed on school, classroom, gender, ethnicity, SPED status, and ELL status (Jelicic, Phelps, & Lerner, 2009). *Missingness* was significantly related to ELL classification (*Wald* (1) = 18.04,  $p < .001$ ): 2% percent of non-ELL students were missing ELA scores, compared to 8.6% of ELL students. Among the 1,331 students who took the ELA exam, the mean ELA score was 668.4 (SD = 21.7), which corresponds to the lower bound of proficiency as defined by the school district attended by the students. Scores were distributed in an approximately normal fashion, excepting two outliers (score < 500) that were excluded from further analyses.

### Model Specification

The data are inherently hierarchical in their structure, with students nested within classrooms, which are in turn nested within schools. As such, a multilevel model was used to estimate ELA scores as a function of participation in Nations in Neighborhoods while accounting for the nested structure of the data. The ELA score for the  $i^{th}$  child in the  $j^{th}$  classroom attending the  $k^{th}$  school was estimated as:

$$\text{score}_{ijk} = g_{000} + g_{010}\text{participation}_{jk} + g_{100}\text{ethnicity}_{ijk} + g_{200}\text{gender}_{ijk} + g_{300}\text{ell}_{ijk} + g_{400}\text{sped}_{ijk} + u_{00k} + u_{0jk} + r_{ijk}$$

Where  $g_{000}$  is the grand mean for the sample,  $g_{010}$  is the fixed effect for NiN,  $g_{i00}$  are the fixed effects for the variable child-level predictors, and  $u_{00k}$ ,  $u_{0jk}$ , and  $r_{ijk}$  are the school, classroom, and child-level residuals, respectively. To evaluate the possibility that the effects of program participation may vary as a function of child-level factors, a series of interaction terms among participation and gender, ethnicity, ELL and SPED were created and added iteratively to the model above.

### Model Results

A random-effects ANOVA was performed within the multilevel modeling framework to assess the contribution of students, classrooms, and schools to the pooled variance in ELA

scores. This model revealed that 54.6% ( $s^2 = 378.6$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) of the variance in ELA scores was attributable to student factors; 24.4% ( $t^2_{00} = 145.5$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) of the variance was attributable to classroom factors; and 21.0% of the variance was attributable to school factors ( $t^3_{00} = 169.4$ ,  $p = .105$ ).<sup>4</sup> Thus, as one might expect, the student (and factors related to the student) exerts the strongest influence on ELA scores, but the school and classroom within the school to which the student is assigned are also associated with these scores.

The final model (see parameter estimates in Table 2) revealed a significant effect for participation in NiN after controlling for gender, ethnicity, ELL and SPED status (entered into the model as covariates) as well as school and classroom ("controlled for" via the multilevel model). On average, children who participated in NiN scored 6.43 points higher on their ELA scale scores ( $t(40.6) = 2.29$ ,  $p = .027$ ) than students who did not receive the program. This effect is roughly equivalent in size to one-quarter of the effect for being classified ELL. In other words, participation in Nations in Neighborhoods is associated with an *increase* in ELA scores that is 25% as large as the *decrease* associated with ELL status. Effects were also observed for ELL and SPED status. Students with an ELL classification scored, on average, 24.2 points lower on the ELA scale score ( $t(628) = -11.03$ ,  $p < .0001$ ); students with a special education classification scored, on average, 14.0 points lower ( $t(1039) = -7.20$ ,  $p < .0001$ ). Interaction terms between program participation and child-level factors (gender, ethnicity, SPED and ELL) were not significant.

### Discussion

Students who participated in the Nations in Neighborhood program earned significantly higher ELA scores than students who did not participate in the program. Thus, consistent with our hypothesis, participation in a program of folk and traditional arts instruction incorporating sociocritical literacy, multimodal instruction, apprenticeship learning, and communal effort was associated with better ELA skills. The size of the effect was equal in magnitude to approximately one-quarter of the decrement in scores associated with ELL status. Given these results, and the fact that many districts across the country also serve large numbers of ELL students, we focus this discussion on why the featured practices may be supportive of literacy learning. Consider this example:

In a dance theater residency focused on stories of Chinese immigration to the United States, teaching artist, Lu Yu draws on his experience in Chinese opera, acrobatics, and contemporary theater, as well as on his years of practice. He models how a single gesture can symbolize the essence of a character, putting his entire face, body, and voice to work to become a villain, a frightened villager, or a storm-tossed traveler. He questions each child closely to develop an understanding of her character's intentions, nature, and wishes. Once a student arrives at that essential posture and movement, Lu urges her to speak from that embodied understanding, improvising toward increasingly articulate body movements, facial expressions, and speeches that evolve across each rehearsal. Because there is no memorized text, there are no fatal mistakes or forgetting. With each performance, a student practices translating complex meanings into words. The student is the playwright as well as the performer. Because every student witnesses how each character is built, they command the narrative communally. When someone forgets or gets confused, anyone can jump in at any moment to fill a gap or amplify the tale.<sup>5</sup> On one hand, Lu acknowledges the resources students bring from their personal experiences to development and performance of the narrative, creating a third space that places novel concepts and ideas in a familiar context. At the same time, he relies on observation and movement to support the development of character speech and narration. A student recently

arrived from Bangladesh to lead a scene where Chinese railroad workers remember that it is Chinese New Year back home. Lu instructs him to say loudly, “They must be celebrating Chinese New Year back home,” and then directs the students to think about how they would react to thinking of their families celebrating back home. Some choose wistful gestures, and some choose exclamations of chagrin, excitement, and wonder. The student practiced a few different ways to say the line to incite the most varied reactions from the rest of his scene partners. As he collaborated with his peers on the gestures and tones with suggestions from Lu, they built the scene allowing for both an English Language learner to feel the group responding to his spoken line, and to understand the power that a facial gesture or a wordless exclamation can summon to convey a range of feelings, memories and experiences.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

Some caution is in order. This study shares the same limitations as any quasi-experimental study. Although there is a comparison group, it is not a true control group, in that children were not randomly assigned to it. Moreover, because the evaluation was conducted over the course of a single academic year, data on ELA exam scores were available only at a single point in time. It is therefore possible that students in the treatment group may have exhibited higher ELA scores at that single point in time without the Nations in Neighborhoods program.<sup>6</sup> The children included in the sample were chosen based on convenience, as they happened to attend one of the five schools in which the program was implemented. Therefore we can’t generalize our findings to broader populations of children. Finally, we cannot say that participation in the program *led to* higher ELA scores, only that participation was associated with them.

Despite these limitations, the study raises some interesting questions for future research. Perhaps the most intriguing among these has to do with causal mechanisms or processes: how, exactly, might instruction in folk and traditional arts come to be associated with improved English language outcomes? We have posited that key practices – sociocultural literacy, multi-modal learning, apprenticeship learning, and communal effort – support increased literacy development. But what changes in children as they experience these practices? If, as we propose, NiN students are developing key technologies of self, is this improvement confined to literacy learning, or is it more global in its effects? Does students’ interest in school increase? Do students’ theories about who can learn or excel change? Alternatively, does the creation of “third spaces” lead to assignments and interactions where larger numbers of students excel, thereby changing teachers’ perceptions of students’ strengths and resources? Only by understanding what underlying factors, or mediators, fuel the observed growth in literacy, can we further refine a practice where the distinctive attributes of folk and traditional arts support the emergence of learners who, like the young girl quoted earlier, energetically use their new understanding of music to investigate the pulse and downbeat of the life around her.

In summary, our findings indicate that instruction in the folk and traditional arts may benefit students, including a subset of those who are often at increased risk for educational failure, despite the experiences and resources they bring to learning. Indeed, these findings suggest that eliminating arts education to devote more time to language arts instruction may ultimately be counter-productive. More broadly, these results underscore the role of the arts to a complete education and suggest how an arts education that includes folk traditions may be particularly effective.

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Table 1  
Demographics by School

	Grade						Gender			Ethnicity						ELL		SPED		NiN	
	3	4	5	6	7	8	M	F	Miss.	AI/AN*	Asian/PI	White	Black	Hispanic	Miss.	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N
1		179 (54.1 )	152 (45.9 )				158 (47.7 )	167 (50.5 )	6 (1.8)	0 (0)	108 (32.6)	24 (7.3)	3 (0.9)	196 (59.2)	0 (0)	50 (15.1 )	281 (84.9 )	52 (15.7 )	279 (84.3 )	95 (28.7 )	236 (71.3 )
2	58 (33.7 )	30 (17.4 )	84 (48.8 )				89 (51.7 )	83 (48.3 )	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	172 (100)	33 (19.2 )	139 (80.8 )	10 (5.8)	162 (94.2 )	172 (100)	0 (0)
3		170 (37.5 )	140 (30.9 )	143 (31.6 )			219 (48.3 )	234 (51.7 )	0 (0)	0 (0)	180 (39.7)	61 (13.5)	45 (9.9)	119 (26.3)	48 (10.6 )	58 (12.8 )	395 (87.2 )	35 (7.7)	418 (92.3 )	165 (36.4 )	288 (63.6 )
4				9 (10.5 )	28 (32.6 )	49 (57.0)	48 (55.8 )	38 (44.2 )	0 (0)	0 (0)	40 (46.5)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.2)	44 (51.2)	0 (0)	82 (95.3 )	4 (4.7)	0 (0)	86 (100)	20 (23.3 )	66 (76.7 )
5				137 (41.1 )	98 (29.4 )	98 (29.4)	161 (48.3 )	172 (51.7 )	0 (0)	3 (0.9)	107 (32.1)	125 (37.5)	17 (5.1)	74 (22.2)	7 (2.1)	20 (6.0)	313 (94.0 )	58 (17.4 )	275 (82.6 )	35 (10.5 )	298 (89.5 )
All	58 (4.2 )	379 (27.6 )	376 (27.3 )	289 (21.0 )	126 (9.2)	147 (10.7)	675 (49.1 )	694 (50.5 )	6 (0.4)	3 (0.2)	435 (31.6)	211 (15.3)	66 (4.8)	433 (31.5)	277 (16.5 )	243 (17.7 )	1132 (82.3 )	155 (11.3 )	1220 (88.7 )	487 (35.4 )	888 (64.9 )

Table 2

*Model Parameter Estimates*

Variable	Estimate	SE	<i>p</i>
Intercept	672.5	4.01	< .001
Gender	-2.06	1.13	.068
Ethnicity	-0.717	0.55	.195
English language learner status	-24.2	2.20	< .001
Special education status	-14.0	0.17	<.001
Nations in Neighborhoods participation	6.43	2.80	.027

### **Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> See example online at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-s\\_a8b\\_Q18&feature=youtube](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-s_a8b_Q18&feature=youtube)

<sup>2</sup> See interview online at <http://tinyurl.com/kbo6nz2>.

<sup>3</sup> One school was an outlier in terms of both special education classification, with no students so classified, and English language learner classification (95.3%).

<sup>4</sup> Although the variance attributable to school was not statistically significant, this may be due to lack of power and the large standard error for the parameter estimate, both resulting from the fact that only five schools were represented in the sample. Therefore school was retained as the highest level in subsequent models.

<sup>5</sup> See demonstration online at <http://citylorenation.wpengine.com/?p=152>.

<sup>6</sup> We are currently working to redress this issue by gathering additional data from the school District.