

Strategies to Meet Student Needs Through Family and Community Partnerships

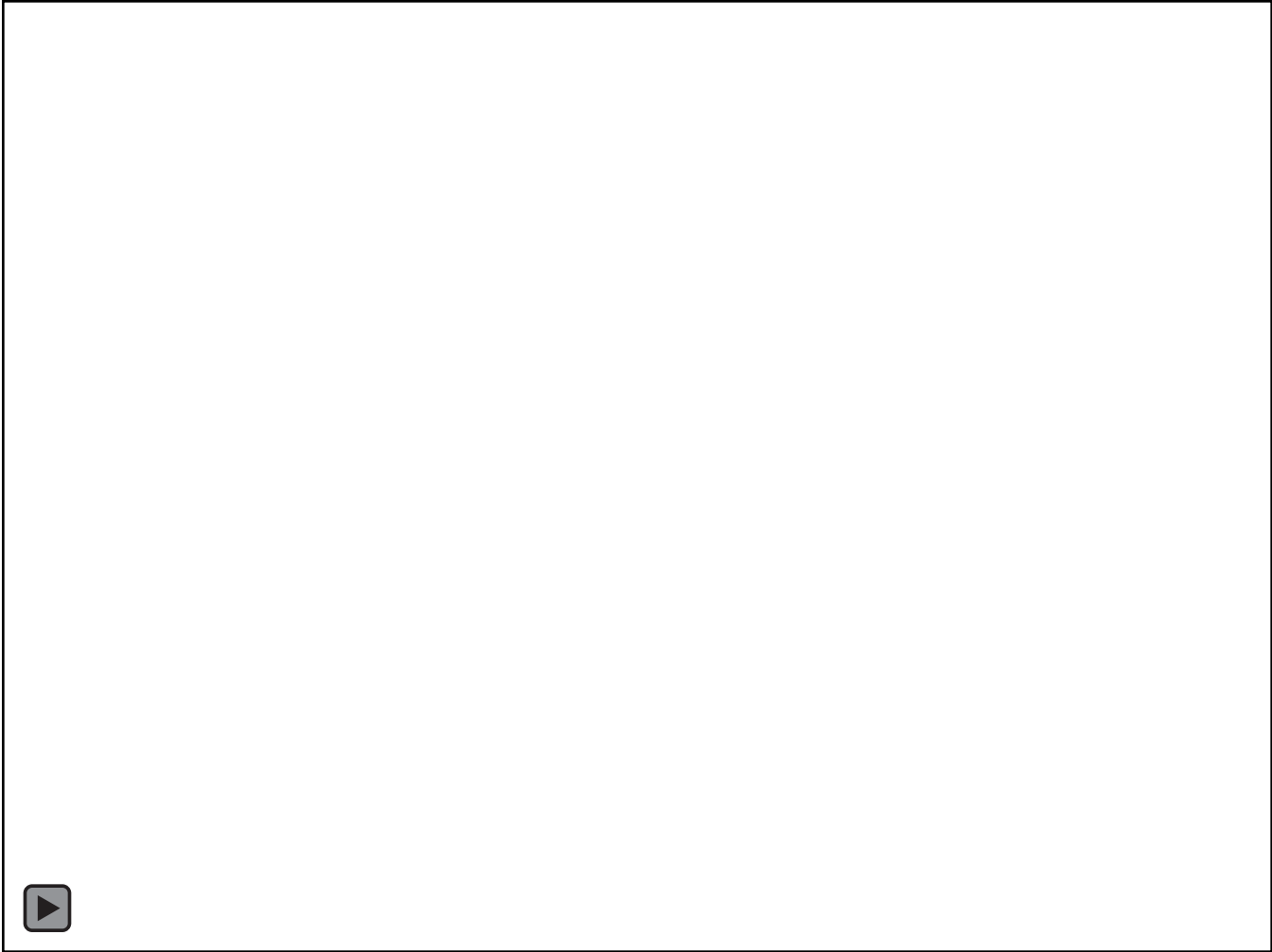
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Why do we do this?

- We teach students from around the world.
- Many of our students are refugee or asylum seekers who come from countries where violence and chaos is common.
 - East Africa (Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania)
 - Burma (Myanmar)
 - Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras
- We have a large number of immigrant students.
 - Mexico and Central America
 - China, Cuba, Haiti
- Our students arrive at all ages. We receive many new students of high school age (14-21 years old).
- We may be our students' first and only schooling opportunity in the United States (or at all).

El Teatro





Benefits

- El Teatro highlights student identities & cultures
 - Tells stories that otherwise might be left untold.
- Families and friends attend event
 - Excitement to see and hear their languages and cultures portrayed
- Student pride and confidence
- Family pride and engagement
- Partnership of all 3 high schools
- Student visibility
- Educational on campus and in the community
- Principal support, school in spotlight
- Community involvement
- Other local organizations
- Local and state media coverage

El Teatro - Beginning to Now

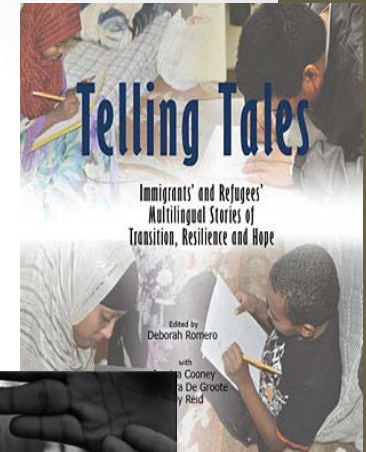
- The El Teatro troupe was created and conceptualized by Jessica Cooney and Jill Tjardes-Garcia at Northridge High School
- Project was a long time in the making.
- Initially no resources, all donations based.
- Started as a bilingual presentation
 - Some story telling and theatre
 - Written by Mrs. Cooney, Ms. Tjardes and students.
- 2nd year more languages
 - Oral histories
 - Using both students own stories and those of community members.
 - Multiple languages.
- Inclusive design:
 - ALL students, all languages, all abilities
- Mixed languages and levels of language proficiency.

El Teatro - Beginning to Now

- Increase in languages (from 2 to 15)
- Growth and use of new technologies
 - Slide show and music
 - Cultural dances
 - Background information on countries and subtitles on screen
 - Set designed and built by backstage crew
 - Increased number of student participants.
 - Increased teacher, staff, and community participation and support.
 - Involves all 3 public high schools in Greeley.
 - Local and out of state travel. (Georgia, California, Arizona)
- Now written in to our English Language Development plan by our school district.

Greeley Young Authors Program

- Small, dedicated group of students who write, design, illustrate, and publish a book about their stories and their lives.
- A way to educate the community and allow the students to have voice.
- A project that has been continually developing since 2009, starting with two teachers and one school and expanding to three schools, 4 teachers, 1 UNC professor and numerous college students who volunteer their time.
- Books are currently used in teacher education programs at the University of Northern Colorado and University of Wyoming as well as in Greeley-Evans District 6 Professional Development.



Greeley Young Authors Program

- Supports English language acquisition
 - To validate use of first language
- Promotes authentic reading and writing
 - To collectively publish their stories
- Supports 21st century literacies
 - Critical thinking and collaborative learning
 - Working across print, image and other media
- Provides access to technologies
 - Computers and digital photography and publishing
- Engages high school students with college students
- Promotes mutual understanding and cultural awareness
 - Shared sense of civic and social responsibility



Elementary and Middle School Partnerships

- We work hard to provide meaningful partnerships with local elementary and middle schools.
- Examples of partnerships:
 - Pen Pal program
 - Reading to elementary school students through school visits.
 - El Teatro and Greeley Young Authors Programs visit local schools.
 - Mentor programs
 - High school students serve as translators for parent/teacher conferences, meetings, etc.
 - Serve as a resource for teachers and administrators who have questions, concerns about refugee/ immigrant students in their schools.

School to School Partnerships Between the Public High Schools

- We work as a cohesive team at the high school level.
- We find that working together we can be better, stronger, and more comprehensive.
 - Promotes student success
 - Prevents teacher burnout
- Examples of collaborations:
 - Greeley Young Authors Program and El Teatro
 - Parent Meetings
 - Curriculum alignment between the schools
 - Collaborative planning
 - Information sharing
 - Registration and transferring of students

Family Outreach

- Refugee Graduation Party
- Monthly Parent Meetings
- Adult English Classes
- Multicultural Mother's Craft Group
- Parents being leaders in the schools
- Cultural liaison between families and schools
- Advocating for students and families

Professional Development

- We offer professional development throughout the year at our high schools for content teachers to better serve and understand their CLD students
- Summer professional development includes:
 - Cultural Proficiency
 - How to Modify Assessments for Students' Success
 - Classroom Management with focus on CLD students
 - Co-teaching for CLD and Content Teachers
 - Language Acquisition and Scaffolding
- Teacher Appreciation Luncheon
- Culture Festivals

Reaching Out to the Community

- Refugee information presentations and El Teatro performances at:
 - Rotary clubs
 - Kaiser Permanente
 - Churches
 - City Recreation Department
 - Retired Teacher organizations.
- Nominating our students for awards and to serve on community boards:
 - National Youth Service Day Awards
 - Youth Anti-Tobacco Coalition
- Inviting the community into our schools and to our presentations and performances.
- Advocating for positive coverage of diverse students in local media.
- Serving on community boards, councils:
 - Weld County Refugee Collaboration Task Force
 - University of Northern Colorado Advisory Boards, community task force.
 - School District Refugee Task Force, Diversity Council, Gifted and Talented Council.
 - Global Refugee Center Board Member.
- Speaking positively about our students in the community whenever and wherever possible.

Collaboration with UNC

- Presentations in teacher preparation classes.
- Collaboration with Health and Human Services students.
- Greeley Young Authors Program.
- El Teatro receives volunteer support and performances
- UNC student volunteers and tutors.
- UNC Community Engagement Task Force.
- ROOTS project-UNC Anthropology students and high school English learners and their families worked together to make connections with the history of current newcomers with the history of previous newcomers to Greeley.
- CLD Teachers host Pakistani Guest Teachers who are teacher fellows at UNC.
- Presentations at UNC International Festival.
- Student visits and tours of UNC campus.
- Journey Women's Conference presentations.

Collaboration with Service Providers in the Community

- Who do we partner with?
 - Lutheran Family Services/ Global Refugee Center
 - City of Greeley
 - High Plains Library District
 - Bonnell Good Samaritan Center
 - Local Churches
- How do we partner with these organizations?
 - Find ways to make our partnerships mutually beneficial and reciprocal.
 - Invite them to come to our parent meetings and events, but we offer to help them as well.
 - These organizations provide tutoring, services, and education to our students and families, and we do the same for them.

Volunteers

- Thanksgiving Event
 - We hosted a large Thanksgiving meal that could not have happened without the support of the community. They made and served the food, provided winter clothes for participants, and provided a location for the event
- Parent Craft Group
 - Outside volunteers have helped us run a parent craft group for Refugee/Immigrant parents
- Bonnell Good Samaritan Center-
 - Residents visit high school and volunteer in Newcomer classrooms
 - High school students go and play Bingo with residents at Bonnell
- Tutoring
 - UNC students, Aims Professors, and other community members volunteer their time to help students academically succeed.
- Church Members
 - Volunteer at high schools closest to their place of worship

Recommendations:

- Start Small!
- Play to the strengths of the teachers involved.
 - Working together eases burnout and frustration.
- Create a systematic approach rather than being person-dependent.
 - Agree in advance who does what, the commitment level, etc.
- Reach into the community for support.
- Be courageous to ask and to start something.
- Be mindful of your students.
- Fill a need that needs to be met.
- Recognize student and staff achievement