

# Exploratory Investigation of Traditional Arts Engagement and Health

## Synthesis of Recurrent Themes

The exploratory investigation of traditional arts engagement and health was conducted between July 2006 and September 2007, under the direction of UC Davis's Dr. Elizabeth Miller. In order to explore the range of ways in which people engage in traditional arts and to identify potential mechanisms by which traditional arts involvement may have an impact on health overall, the research team conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with master artists, apprentices, program directors, community leaders, and elders engaged in traditional arts.

The research team conducted 10 individual interviews with five master-apprentice pairs from ACTA's round 6 cohort (2005-2006) of the Apprenticeship Program as well as nine social network interviews with close contacts of each of these apprentice pairs. In addition, Dr. Miller convened two focus groups with a total of 10 participants each, drawn from ACTA's round 1 cohort (2005-2006) of the Living Cultures Program.

### Apprenticeship Program Interview Subjects:

**Master Artist A** was raised in Puerto Rico, where he learned *bomba* as a teenager. *Bomba* is a uniquely Puerto Rican form of music and dance with African, Spanish, French, and indigenous influences.

*[O]nce you explain the history and the background of bomba...it takes a different meaning. ... ..The dancing did the job to bring healing at least for a moment, to bring healing and restoration to that person in whatever ... he or she was going through.*

*(Male Puerto Rican bomba practitioner)*

**Apprentice A** studied Puerto Rican *bomba* with Master Artist A. Already an experienced drummer, Apprentice A refined his skills on percussion, singing, and dancing.

**Master Artist B** began weaving when she was 16 years old and learned the art of making maple bark skirts, used in tribal ceremonies.

*...working on maple bark skirts really impact a young girl's self-esteem and self-awareness and will help her to be less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy at a young age...it is really showing those connections, we know it, we know who makes it and who doesn't and, you know, the ones that have those connections have a better chance.*

*(Female Karuk Native American weaver)*

**Apprentice B** was raised in a traditional Karuk and Yurok family. She had participated in ceremonies primarily as a dancer and singer, but during this apprenticeship she learned each step of the process, from the initial gathering of materials to the skirts' care and preparation for ceremonies.

**Master Artist C** is an expert in Brazilian capoeira. *Capoeira* is an indigenous martial art of the Americas and was developed by African slaves in Brazil. Master Artist C started playing *capoeira* on the streets of São Paulo, Brazil, as a child and later studied with Mestre Suassuna of the Cordão de Ouro Capoeira Academy.

*When you have a really good dialogue with somebody, the music is happening right, the singing is great ... that connection itself is one of the spiritual experiences that you can have in capoeira. Because you start realizing ... that we are all part of one spiritual mind, of one spiritual world.*

*(Male Brazilian Capoeira practitioner)*

**Apprentice C** advanced to the next belt level by learning new elements and adding sequences to her repertoire of *capoeira* movements. She also learned to play and sing new songs, and made the musical instruments that accompany *capoeira*.

**Master Artist D** began studying *Bharata Natyam* dance, a style of movement and expression that depicts Hindu mythological stories and themes, at the age of 3 at the Sri Rajarajeshwari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir in Bombay, India.

*... when the immigrant children were new here and they started practicing, they kind of feel ashamed ... to say to their friends that they are going bharata natyam...But today, everyone ... in the Indian community, the westerners, the non-Indians are coming to my class. ... They think that this is something they got to do in order to ... to feel good.*

*(Female Indian Bharata Natyam dancer)*

**Apprentice D** had studied with Master Artist D for 24 years. Already an accomplished solo dancer, Apprentice D used this apprenticeship to learn the theories and techniques behind choreography in order to choreograph her own dance pieces.

**Master Artist E** became interested in basket weaving 30 years ago when she had the opportunity to take classes with renowned California Pomo basket weaver Mabel McKay.

*We had 22 weavers, accomplished weavers. ... [o]ur thing was to let them go back and teach their communities, ... Now, I think that we have possibly, probably about 45, 50 accomplished weavers that could teach this... What [master] did for us ... she didn't only bring the expertise on how to make these baskets, she brought in the history with it. (Female Pomo Native American basket maker)*

**Apprentice E** had learned some Yurok, Karuk, Wiyot, and Miwok basketry techniques. During this apprenticeship she learned Pomo gathering and weaving techniques and how to weave a Pomo baby cradle of willow and dogwood or hazel.

## **Focus Group Subjects:**

**Advocates for Indigenous CA Language Survival** (Vallejo, CA). This organization received an LCGP grant to present the seventh biannual "Breath of Life/Silent No More" language workshop at UC Berkeley in 2006. The program granted access to UC resources for Native American tribes with no living speakers from whom to learn. The workshop allowed participants to study available materials on their languages and instructed them on fundamental linguistic concepts to allow them to apply the

materials. Over 50 participants attended, representing and impacting language and cultural work in over 20 tribes.

***Diamano Coura West African Dance Company*** (Oakland, CA). This organization utilized a LCGP grant to bring together five master African cultural specialists to conduct classes and workshops in dance, history, music, and craft during “Collage des Cultures Africaines,” its annual education and performing arts series. The artists also engaged in a public discussion on the current state of affairs of African arts and culture. A culminating concert, “Moving with the Masters,” was presented on March 12, 2006.

***Friends of Peralta Hacienda Historical Park*** (Oakland, CA). This organization received an LCGP grant to develop a “Common Ground” project to bring together Laotian Iu-Mien elders who use a community garden, together with their youth, in a gardening and cooking project. Looking at the staples of a Iu-Mien diet, the gardening activities of growing, harvesting, cooking, and eating became one bridge toward learning about other traditional Mien crafts at risk of being forgotten. A public exhibit of video and first-person texts was created by the participants.

***Gen Taiko*** (San Francisco, CA). This organization used their grant to develop and perform a work for seven traditional or *Odori* dancers, accompanied by a five-member *kumi daiko* (drumming) ensemble, with musicians playing the *shinobue* and *shakuhachi* (two kinds of Japanese flutes). The score was developed by Melody Takata and the dance was choreographed by master artist Madame Fujima Kansuma, a National Endowment for the Arts National Heritage Fellow. The work was presented in conjunction with San Francisco Japantown’s 75th anniversary of the Obon Festival in North America, and in Los Angeles in conjunction with Nisei Week in November 2006.

***Maafa*** (Oakland, CA). This organization’s LCGP grant supported the 11th annual Maafa: Black Holocaust Ritual in October 2006, a ceremony of mourning and remembrance memorializing those Africans who jumped into the sea from the transatlantic slave ships. The ritual honors the African ancestors from which African Americans are descendents. The commemoration also included an art exhibit and spiritual meeting.

***Obakoso Drum & Dance Ensemble*** (Oakland, CA). This Afro-Cuban performing company received a grant to purchase professional camera equipment to document their work. This project also re-created traditional costuming and regalia associated with the Afro-Cuban Orisha tradition.

***Unity Council*** (Oakland, CA). This grant supported the mentoring of emerging artists to create altars for el *Día de los Muertos* Festival in October 2006 under the direction of Mexican *cartonería* (papier mâché sculpture) artist, Rubén Guzmán. The event, in which over 200 artists participated, documented, celebrated, preserved, and promoted the traditional celebration of this Mexican ritual in the Fruitvale community.

## Recurrent Themes

*Selection of quotes from ACTA interviews and focus groups*

Health Study Phase I

March 3, 2007

### Individual level impact

Emotional Health	
Spirituality	<p>...in my family, whenever there's a project finished, painting, leatherwork, whatever, they just kind of put the hands up and say, thank God you've given me this. So spirituality ties in with artwork...There's no question about it. <a href="#">D1 771-775</a></p> <p>[Students] feel a lot of joy and they have a great time and a lot of times they don't even know what it is....Technically speaking, you don't need to know. Because as long as you are enjoying and having joy, that is it. That is the highest, the ultimate feeling that you can have. <a href="#">E1 804-810</a></p> <p>It is completely free. It is being able to experience something and not have anything affect you. It is almost like this power, like you have this power to transcend and just connect solely with what the body is doing, the music, and your mind. I am not worried about anything. I am not thinking of what comes next. <a href="#">B2 68-73</a></p>
Building self esteem	<p>...working on maple bark skirts really impact a young girl's self-esteem and self-awareness and will help her to be less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy at a young age...it is really showing those connections, we know it, we know who makes it and who doesn't and, you know, the ones that have those connections have a better chance. <a href="#">A1 69-75</a></p> <p>A lot of pride about their ethnicity. ..they feel so proud. I am an Indian. Now they say: "You know what, I am from India," and my own daughters say, "I am from India. I love to be. Mom, I am so happy that I am an Indian." <a href="#">B1 945-952</a></p> <p>I felt self-confidence, I felt that, I learned that all the fear that I had about conflict before, about fights and stuff like that, it was also created by lack of confidence in myself. It was a fear of myself and a fear of not being able to deal with the conflict.</p>

	<p><a href="#">E1 83-87</a></p> <p>[A student] is suffering from bone infection and it is final and she is losing her foot...she never danced in her life. She doesn't have parents either. So, she comes from a very hard background and when I met her, she refused to even try. And she was very, kind of not angry, but upset. You can see that she is in some kind of suffering. So, I offered her to take the class and she cry after a week and insisted a lot, and right now, after four months, she learned pretty much all the choreography. She is in a wheelchair...and she is amazing. She turned out to be a real dancer. She is going to perform with us on Friday, the 2<sup>nd</sup>....She calls herself a dancer...it turned out positive. She is able to catch up with her schoolwork and she has a different attitude now. And she is really proud of herself.</p> <p><a href="#">E2 237-259</a></p>
<p>Identity development/self-realization – connection to tradition, ethnicity, history</p>	<p>(“melting is unhealthy”)</p> <p>The need of identity, who you are. Unfortunately, school doesn't teach you this. The history of what we went through. I mean, school is not going to teach you that. So, unless you get in the midst of what is going on traditionally, you are not going to know who you really are because unless you know where you came from, you don't know where you are going.</p> <p><a href="#">C1 332-337</a></p> <p>And I think it gives me, I mean it is a cliché, it gives me an identity. I know where I come from. I know what, where my ancestors have come from, directly there as my parents immigrated here, so I have my grounding and in terms of navigating, I think what is really important and what I think is lacking now in this country is just a connection between other people and I think we always, you know, I think we are still seeing others as different.</p> <p><a href="#">B2 162-170</a></p> <p>[Traditional arts] are critical to who we are as a people. Because those are the ones, that is where are our stories are, that is who we are, sense of being is, that is where, the wholeness of who we are.</p> <p><a href="#">A3 574-576</a></p> <p>To [the US-born] individually, I would say the biggest benefit is that they understand their roots. Who are they? Who are their parents? Who are their grandparents? Where do they come from? Have some understanding. It is more than, you know, they grow up in California. There is more to the world than just the Bay Area or California or the places they go and visit on vacation and things. There is more to it. They understand on a deeper level where they really come from and they understand and over time a lot of them develop a love for the stories, the mythology, the language, and the need to, or the wanting to go back and look at some of these places, talk to some of the older people, trying to understand, get some more stories. My daughter always says, “Tell me another story.” It is way for</p>

	<p>them to connect to who they are within themselves. It makes them feel a little more confident about themselves. It gives them, you know, that rooted feeling, that centered feeling that I know who I am....and I feel centered. I feel confident.</p> <p><a href="#">B5 88-107</a></p>
<p>Holistic approach to health and wellness (can't separate physical from mental, emotional, spiritual)</p>	<p>You have to stop and think about who is going to wear it, or who is going to be eating out of that bowl, or you know, what baby is going to be held in there or, you know...you can feel yourself, you can feel your heart rate slow down, you can feel, and you know...I imagine that is the same kind of thing as meditation...</p> <p><a href="#">A1 173-181</a></p> <p>...that we go back into living in communities and experiencing the community living and that we can be there for each other, we are there to listen to each other, to help each other out and getting in touch with the reality and the truth of who we really are. Because I think that we have lost a lot of that..capoeira offers that in many different ways. There is the physical aspect of it, there is the mental aspect and there is this spiritual aspect of it.</p> <p><a href="#">E1 718-730</a></p>
<p><u>Connectedness</u></p> <p>connection to family (family ties)</p> <p>cross-cultural/transcultural experiences (learning about others)</p> <p>gaining knowledge about history, traditions (new knowledge for youth, unaware of traditions)</p>	<p>...the connection, the strongest connection I have in the world are with the kids and young women and men who are part of the dancing....For all practical purposes, I don't see [a community member] all the time. I mean, I see him at community events, at games and things like that, but the connection to him is because of the ceremony, because we both have the same belief system you know. And so these things are really powerful.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 785-792</a></p> <p>But capoeira...provides a lot of good opportunities because it involves so many different great aspects that people like doing, like music, like singing, dancing, fighting with each other, having the community things, you know, community experiences.</p> <p><a href="#">E1 987-991</a></p> <p>Once you explain the history and the background of <i>bomba</i>...it takes a different meaning. And when they dance, they are not just dancing, they are actually letting go of something that they were holding in and there was no way they can find a way to release it and through the dancing, healing was in there and they felt a lot better after the dancing because it was a way of expressing and letting go of whatever it was that was going on in that particular moment in their life. The dancing did the job to bring healing at least for a moment, to bring healing and restoration to that person in whatever area that he or she was going through.</p> <p><a href="#">C1 82-93</a></p>

	<p>...one of the things that got [my apprentice and I] together is music, dancing and that we share the same culture. The same traditions. The same folklore. That got us, you know, closer together. And we stick together...we can build friendships through [playing and practicing together]...we can develop actually a relationship through this, you know. It doesn't have to be strictly come here and rehearse and teach and we can relate, actually another way of building another community just through that friendship.</p> <p><a href="#">C1 531-534</a>, <a href="#">C1 540-546</a></p> <p>It's just being connected, I think, spiritually in a lot of ways, you know, to the drum and the song and everything else, and just her approach to it too.</p> <p><a href="#">C2 741-744</a></p>
Physical Health	
Physical activity (being more aware of body)	<p>...when you are out there, you feel alive...you get out breathing really good air, you are moving, you are testing the limits that you know, falling down a hill, scaling down a hill, having to get back up, relying on yourself.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 317-321</a></p> <p>There is a girl...she was born with [physical] impairment. And I sat and taught her how to do gestures and with great difficulty she would do a couple of gestures. Whereas as a normal human being, I can do the gestures so quickly. I am so well coordinated. What do I have to do with handicap children? But when I started teaching her...she started understanding and today her coordination has improved so much, she is living on her own without her parents and her father was a neighbor of mine in India. It is just a coincidence. And so today, she is living in a home for the disabled, but she is living in her own apartment with some assistance. But she is living on her own. She is able to do a lot of coordinated work because of this.</p> <p><a href="#">B1 370-387</a></p> <p>...you're dancing and you're sweating and you're breathing and you're stretching, so health-wise it's great. It's wonderful and even playing... when you play it's a lot of energy that goes into it, so you're releasing...you're basically sweating because that's the best thing you could do is sweat everything out of your body. So health-wise I think it's great. It keeps you strong. It keeps you on your toes.</p> <p><a href="#">C2 511-519</a></p> <p>[Dancing] provided exercise. I think eye-hand coordination and reflexes and general body, it helps your body...I think it helps when you are growing up [during the] teenage awkward stage at least. I see a lot of people out there that are awkward girls but they are trying to get a handle on their body and I am sure it helps them, you know, eventually like</p>

	<p>gracefulness, just a lot of things that you don't think of but it will come through eventually at the end, or when you grow up.  <a href="#">B4 283-292</a></p>
<p>Specific diseases like diabetes, obesity/overweight</p>	<p>I know of cases at [a ceremony] for example, where one of the little boys that we had in the ceremony, who was born with breathing problems, used oxygen up until...the day of the ceremony and then once he went into that pit, it has been two years and he has never used it since.  <a href="#">A1 1030-1034</a></p> <p>So the way I impacted [my formerly obese student] was in five years of learning, she has lost weight. She has become, her body looks like a dancer's body. Beautiful. She has learned not only weight training, weight management, she has learned how to reach out to her own students.  <a href="#">B1 538-542</a></p> <p>...they could see that our care was just as important as the pills for diabetics that the doctors give, that the art was important for the healing, and we read that and said, "Oh my god, somebody finally gets it." That the art does play that role, you know, it is a very subtle role, because it is like usually it is about telling stories or it is about what it is that we are striving for, or who we are right now, or those sorts of things.  <a href="#">A3 436-443</a></p>
Mental Health	
Mental illness	<p>I have a son who has a mental illness. When my son becomes obstinate, and he's 24...all's I have to do is give him a pencil and a paper and a book of Native Americans, and he will stay focused on that for hours, and the achievement of what he has done and the praise that he gets because it is such gorgeous work, that healing, that niceness, that kindness, is there again. So without art, truthfully, I probably would have adopted my boy out at a young age because he was unmanageable because his thought process was damaged.  <a href="#">D1 440-445</a></p>
Suicide prevention	<p>...the thing that's very prevalent amongst the Indians, especially the youth, is suicide...the tribes are trying to do something about it. They're trying to go back and bring back the dances and bring back the praying before the food and respecting the elders and, you know. You don't realize how much it is that we do, even though we don't have it written down or a lot of us have different backgrounds.  <a href="#">D1 464-471</a></p>
Drug addiction and alcoholism	<p>Severe depression, alcohol, drug addiction. You know, that's the type of people that we had. I mean there were some people that it was just loneliness, you know, and today, those people, you wouldn't believe them today. You know, they can stand up, they can talk to anybody, they... I'm going to back up. What I felt was this. The clinical setting is</p>

	<p>not always the best setting. Sitting in my office is good for some and extremely bad for others because of the confinement, just the type of air in the room. And you have to drag things out of some people. They don't... native people don't open up about their issues real easy unless they're extremely comfortable with you and trust you. It's always a trust issue first...and what I felt was, you know, when you work with the mind and put it to use and the hands, and you can be creative, that's far more therapeutic than sitting there being embarrassed about the problem you came in for and talking about it.</p> <p><a href="#">D1 118-140</a></p>
<p>Despair; loss and recovery</p>	<p>I have had a lot of times where singing is the only thing that can bring me that healing and going through something...and we are playing, and we sing, we are singing, you actually are telling a story of what happened. Whatever it was, a loved one died, there was a plane crash, whatever event that went on, whether in Puerto Rico or throughout the world, there is a plena that is now written and is sung by somebody who either witnessed the event or heard about it and now there is also personal plenas where you go through tough times and you get the inspiration of singing and now you develop one and it is your way now dealing with your hurt and your suffering and this is the way I want to tell you how I am feeling through music. And yeah, it brings healing and it is brings, okay, now I got it out. So, I feel better now. So yeah, I have gone through those times where I had to sing and express what I feel and let it go too.</p> <p><a href="#">C1 100-116</a></p> <p>Well, if you're an alcoholic and you go to A.A., once you're an alcoholic, you're an alcoholic all your life, same with drug addiction. Well, why would we stop a [traditional weaving] class that has been so successful for these people where it actually enhanced their life?</p> <p><a href="#">D1 175-179</a></p> <p>...there's people who are learning rhumba and there's also Cubans, first-generation Cubans, who it's their chance to connect with their friends and play music that they wouldn't be able to played otherwise because you need a community to play the music. And for them, you know, they say, this is our therapy, you know. They don't have money to go to a therapist. This is the therapy and it works. And it's just an amazing possibility when people come together and celebrate culture.</p> <p><a href="#">C3 p7</a></p>
<p>Impact of history of trauma</p>	<p>I told the students that this is a people who made it through the veil of our genocide, you know, our Holocaust. We lost about 95% of our population in three years. You know, and then what lived through the veil, you know, and came forward, that kind of thing. And I said that is what we are today. We are the descendents of that Holocaust, of that genocide. But the thing is, the reason why this is real to us more is that it didn't end in those three years.</p> <p><a href="#">A2 251-257</a></p>

Stress reduction	<p>...what your thoughts are when you are creating...has similar benefits as meditating. It is like a positive focus of your energy and I think that I have gotten to places in my life where I had to.  <a href="#">A1 151-154</a></p> <p>A lot of our students were referred to the class because of mental health issues or stress in their life. So they come in there, they start a project and they complete a project, and just their whole thought process changes.  <a href="#">D1 67-70</a></p> <p>Whenever I feel down or upset, dance will be the first thing I turn to. It is the thing that will make me happy immediately.  <a href="#">B3 44-47</a></p>
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**Family level impact**

Promoting connectedness – participating in an activity together	<p>Like in my family, storytelling is wellness, and the reason it's wellness for my family is because it puts my kids back in touch with my grandmother, of people that they've never got to see. It inspires them to carry on their culture. That's wellness. It's not so much physical form; it's more mental, a mental state. That's what we try to achieve in our family is a better mental state. We do it by blessing... or my son blesses the house. My husband used to. I mean it's quite complex. Because usually when one sits down, all the household will join in on a project, I'll call it. So what happens then is laughing, talking, disagreeing, agreeing, and listening, and then the stories come in. In my home, in my family, then all the stories come in. So you're communicating on such a higher level than you would... even at the dinner table.  <a href="#">D1 394-402</a>, <a href="#">D1 440-445</a></p>
Intergenerational relationships -- linkages and sharing across generations	<p>I think my grandmothers are really happy and here is something we can talk to them about and they understand and they enjoy watching their granddaughter dance and...the student and the grandparents that have this connection. Something they can talk about because they don't understand their granddaughter's homework, and school and what they do at school and that whole thing. But here is something they have a common, or at least they can talk about, there is some connection.  <a href="#">B4 642-650</a></p>
Respect for elders and traditions	<p>And so when they come back and they participate in the ceremonies here, they are not only just healing their souls, they are healing the souls of their ancestors that have crossed over who were moved, they are bringing home.  <a href="#">A2 682-685</a></p>
Gender differences and expectations	<p>And you have to feel a part of it, and you have to know your role and for men, I mean, I see young men at ceremonies going to get wood, packing water for us, you know, clearing trails, doing things that are part of a something bigger and</p>

	<p>succeeding and then a month later, raising hell and getting into trouble because there is really not a place for them in this world with maybe the energy they have or the skills they have or what they want to offer. Because you know, the men are the hell raisers, or whatever, you know what I mean, so it is like, today's world it is really hard to translate for all young men, you know, some are able to do that, but to translate what they have to offer into something useful in today's world sometimes. I think it is just harder.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 255-267</a></p>
<p>Impact of poverty, socioeconomic constraints</p>	<p>And [master artist] was working at [a plant], wearing his fingers out, and becoming a very depressed shell of his former self...and then maybe his work injury was a blessing because it allowed him to re-involve himself more centrally with music, and it saved...I mean, I may be overstating it, but he has come back into himself. I mean, he can be a [plant] worker, but what a waste of a national treasure to have him slaving away in [a] plant when he could be sharing his knowledge with people in his community and the greater public.</p> <p><a href="#">C3 p8-9</a></p>
<p>Immigrant/refugee experiences, second generation experience, homelands</p>	<p>I don't know if I would have been able to have survived here in this country to have lived here for this long if I didn't have capoeira. You know, I don't know. I have a close contact with the Brazilian community and the Brazilian really suffer when they come here.</p> <p><a href="#">E1 560-564</a></p> <p>My parents didn't do any music or dance back in India, but I think they put me and my sister in it, because they were worried like we were going to lose our cultures here in America, like we wouldn't know anything. So, I think that they enrolled us in that and I think to this day are very surprised by how, how much of a part it is in my life. I think they were taken aback about how serious I take dance. I think they put me into it because my friends were doing it, it would be a good way to stay in touch with Indian stuff, but it is probably one of the most important things in my life right now and has been for a long time.</p> <p><a href="#">B3 369-380</a></p> <p>You know, growing up here, seeing everything here and then trying to reconcile that with traditional Indian values and cultural values or what my parents taught me. It is hard. It is sort of like split-level, or split identity kind of thing, which I think a lot of immigrant children have, especially when it is east and west, right? Indian culture and American culture are really different.</p> <p><a href="#">B3 471-478</a></p>
<p>Transmission of culture, traditional practices (whose role?)</p>	<p>And our parents are, they guide you in certain aspects of your life, but here is someone who is almost as important as your parents, but is guiding you in something else. You know, not just raising you. Here is someone, okay in your art form or in your passion and someone who probably feels equally the same about your passion of dance and is there to be a part of that and to guide you in that sense.</p>

	<a href="#">B4 94-101</a>
Impact of history of trauma	<p>We are just on the edge of starting to talk about these pains and how they affect us. I don't think that we are there yet. I think we are just starting to talk about them. I think we have built enough of a support system that we can now talk about boarding schools and what they really did for breaking our ability for totally throwing off generations of people to know how to parent. Because they were parented. And so they don't know how to parent. I think that we are just now to the point of talking about, you know, how our grandmothers weren't treated right, or grandfathers. We are just now there as a community. We always just did...we have to survive and hide it away, and lock it up, laugh it off and we will make it. We will survive, but I think in order to get to the next step as a community, in order to truly thrive and be truly healthy, we have to talk about this. And I think we are just now there and I think art has given us an opportunity to do this in a place that is a little bit safer than just sitting in a circle and [singing] Coumbaya and saying you know, what happened?</p> <p><a href="#">A1 672-692</a></p> <p>Years ago, my grandmother, she was 14 when the Bureau of Indian Agents...would go to the homes on the coastline and: "You let us take your child[ren]...teach them a trade. They'll come out and make money for you, and we'll give you this, this and this." Well, what they did, they put them in there, but their idea wasn't to teach them, give them the trade, let them come out and bring it to us. It was to take the savage out of them. We were looked as total savages, dirty Indians.</p> <p>Language.Culture. Language was forbidden. All of those things.</p> <p><a href="#">D1 633-649</a></p>
Loss and recovery	This space left blank intentionally.

**Neighborhood (Local impact – on social network, place)**

<b>SPACE</b>	
Creating a gathering place	<p>And so, I think that gathering is a venue for people to communicate and I think it is a venue for young people to see older people being nurturing and being responsible and being a parent because you bring your kids along too.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 746-750</a></p> <p>But man, seeing everybody here, celebrating the work, the energy that they put into the crafts and arts that they are</p>

	<p>selling, just hanging out together. That is one of the most healing events that we have in the year. People leave laughing and smiling and happy. They visit old friends. They meet new babies.  <a href="#">A1 878-883</a></p> <p>Because a lot of parents go to the class and they have kids and the kids meet there and they become friends, they become happy to see each other and I think in terms of health, that is a good thing, because then, you know, when you are happy, you are, whatever imbalance you have, disease, whatever, if it doesn't go away completely at least it gets better.  <a href="#">E1 504-510</a></p>
Getting kids off the street	<p>And with youths, I have touched the lives of so many young ones who have gone astray, especially in a dual cultural society. I have had people, mothers, parents come to me and beg me to take their children in because it will give them some kind of a steady purpose to be in life and not to go and fall into wrong ways.  <a href="#">B1 57-62</a></p> <p>...how to connect with these young students who come to my classes because the parents force them, because it's an after-school program, and they don't have where to put the kids, so the kids come after school to my classes, and he or she is rebellious, and they don't want to accept whatever I am offering. So that's one challenge, how to approach that kid. Once I again their attention, they are participating. Well, there's another challenge, how to expose the work of this student to other students who may be touched by the work of art of this person and be interested in taking my classes.  <a href="#">FG2 827-836</a></p>
Addressing displacement, isolation, navigation away from home country	<p>My culture is, it is, for me, it is a way of living, you know, it is part of who I am as a Puerto Rican. That is, it identifies me as a Puerto Rican and it makes it easier to get by because of the struggles that we have had as an island, as a culture, trying to keep the folklore and traditions of ours. So, it keeps me going and motivated being away from home, you know, trying to keep it alive in areas where people don't know that this actually exists.  <a href="#">C1 10-17</a></p>
<b>LOCAL RELATIONS</b>	
Intergenerational contacts	<p>If you don't have culture in the practice and if you don't involve multiple generations, and if you don't reach people where they live, you're doing useless stuff.  <a href="#">FG2 16-18</a></p>
Respect for elders	This space left blank intentionally.

<p>Addressing isolation (getting people to come together)</p>	<p>And so when you participate in ceremonies, when you pray, and you try to live right, when you are around other people like in a ceremony, that gives you support. When you have a good support cast, I say unit, family, we call it our advanced family the spiritual family, they help keep you strong and help you on the right path.  <a href="#">A2 699-704</a></p>
<p><b>ORGANIZING</b></p>	
<p>Artist as local community leader, local healer</p>	<p>The girls will come to me, and come to my office or come to my house and feel like they have to tell me [that they slept with someone], and I always think, they don't have to, you know what I mean, like I will figure it out, but it is really cute because there is that relationship, they really honor and they think that they owe it to somebody, to me, or whomever, to us, and that is, that is powerful. You know, or they come and tell me when they are pregnant or they want us to be there for their kids and you know, that is where we can impact community.  <a href="#">A1 773-781</a></p> <p>That is sort of what I see my role as in the community, both in the spiritual world, cultural world and in my day-to-day work world, is to create those kinds of spaces that allow the magic and the miracles to happen. Not to do the magic and the miracle, but to create the spaces for those to happen.  <a href="#">A1 897-901</a></p> <p>I felt that the benefits that I was getting from capoeira were so good, that I wanted one day to share that with other people. You know, I felt that I wanted to help out other kids that were going through the same difficulty that I was going and so I immediately put that goal in my mind that I wanted to train all the way until I graduate.  <a href="#">E1 72-78</a></p> <p>This particular [anorexic] child wants to give a performance this summer. And [master] has told her that unless you improve your health, you know, you need to build that stamina to be able to dance for 2 1/2 hours on stage, I want you to be eating well, and you know, I want you to look strong and look healthy before I can put you up on stage for that long because it could be dangerous to your health, it could be detrimental to your health if you, if I let you go like this. So, positively reinforcing something with the goal that the child has. And, sort of helping the child get to that point and at the same time, testing the will and the determination of that child at the same time and just destroying whatever it is that pulling her down into something and moving her in the right direction. And those kinds of things, you know, sometimes parents have trouble with. Parents cannot tackle that as easy as somebody who has this role of guru or a teacher in your life can do. Children...parents find it difficult sometimes to connect with their own adolescent children.</p>

**Community (larger sense of 'community', not necessarily place)**

<b>Spirituality</b>	
connection to earth, history	<p>I think that one of the things that perhaps is unique although I don't really know about our traditional art forms is that there is such a long history, a connection, it is not, you know, it is a connection to a culture, a religion, a past that goes back thousands and thousands of years and so I think that it is, and you know that, and you think about it when you are creating. So, I think it is a sense of belonging and how that makes you feel and what other people from other cultures or what other artists that aren't native feel and whether or not they feel that same thing, but I think that is a big part of what makes you feel good, a big part of what makes you feel good when you do it. It is just that. What it involves and what it means and how much farther and bigger it is than you.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 405-418</a></p> <p>...the gift that we have that we can use for that healing process and I really think the bigger part of it is...the connection to a longer line of something that is more than just your own. I remember when I was giving birth to my daughter, and at that moment, you are only thinking, I can't do this, this is beyond my capacity. And then you go, millions and millions and millions of women from time immortal have given birth to children and...in one sense, that makes you completely special and at the same time, not special. You are just a part of a bigger something and I really think that is what it is with the arts too. It is just, on one hand it makes you completely unique, special and totally amazing and on the other hand, it makes you just a part of something bigger and you know, that is why you are amazing and special. So, it is kind of, I really do think that it is that connection to the greater spirit, the greater energy, the life force out there that the arts do for us.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 608-625</a></p>
artist as spiritual leader	<p>You do it to keep balance. In the heart and the soul of the people, in the land. And if you pray and ask for that help from the spirits of the land, they will come and help you.</p> <p><a href="#">A2 496-489</a></p>
<b>Loss and Recovery</b>	
Healing (in context of history of multi-traumas, genocide)	<p>...in recent history, traditional arts have been, has been used as a way to deal with that anger and that historical pain, you know, and a way to heal. Like I am going to do something that my people have been told that they can't do.</p> <p><a href="#">A1 593-596</a></p>

	<p>...they were taken away from us, I would just say conquest in the sense, that elements of colonialism, you know, the forced re-education of our great-grandparents and grandparents and boarding schools and taking away the language and making the dances illegal and taking away the rights to fish and hunt changed all of us within a very short period of time and I think now it is like, how do we live with that in today's society? And a lot of it is about bringing back what we can out of that.</p> <p><a href="#">A3 77-86</a></p>
Artist as healer for community	<p>...you have to be very stubborn and you have to be really strong in your beliefs to stand up and carry on these traditions because there are so many forces trying to stop you from being who you are. The old lady said, to be truly traditional is to be illegal.</p> <p><a href="#">A2 456-460</a></p>
Fear of loss	<p>I remember quotes that we're having in our community rescue book, you know, like, "Our greatest fear is that our culture will die." That was like verbatim from a man and woman, and why do you practice your traditional arts of cultivation in this garden? "Because it relieves stress, because it keeps us healthy." These are verbatim quotes, you know, "Because it keeps us healthy. Because we don't have arthritis and all our aches and pains, unless we come to the garden, we have those aches and pains, and arthritis and stress, and we aren't healthy." I mean, they say these things like just loud and clear, you know.</p> <p><a href="#">FG2 234-244</a></p>
<b>Community Organizing, Building Connections</b>	
Role of artist as community leader (custodian of tradition and history)	<p>I've said many times, "Yeah, it's a dying art," and then somebody will snap and say, "It's never going to die. It's never going to die. It may die with that person, but it's never going to die." Well, I felt it was dying, you know, because you didn't see the baskets anymore and if you did, you saw them in these little gift shops in gas stations, you know. I want to back up again. Out of our class, our first class, all of our students were local. They were from the six reservations. And we started out with 28. Probably out of that 28 only five knew, and these are American Indians, five knew their traditions, their culture. So now you can sit any one of them down and they can tell you why these were made, why they were made the way they were, where do you go get your stuff to do them, what you do and do not do when you're touching the baskets.</p> <p><a href="#">D1 242-255</a></p>

	<p>So I think it's that thing, the bridge between the two generations, that's helpful in this matter. What else have we got? I've been struggling with one of the ideas of what is community and how does community really help, because as an artist, lots of times we're used a lot. And lots of times I've felt myself drowning in it, just being drained out.</p> <p><a href="#">FG2 301-305</a></p> <p>I hear people saying that the sound of the drum makes me feel that there's a presence here. To see the kids playing, that does something for them. And it makes the community feel like they have some strength to offer and that this is important. Some of the frustration was that a lot of the people felt these things but are not able to express them. They're not able to confront it, write letters, you know, make an assertive choice to do something about it. So for a while I was trying to make an effort to step forward with that, but it's such a huge issue. So I think the community in itself is trying to struggle with the idea of how do we make a point and how do we hold on to what we have, because it had been taken away so many times. So that's one of the issues and that's a continued struggle, and I can only hope that working with youth eventually we can bond, or be able to figure those type of things out, and put it back into the community. So a lot of the kids hang out, most of the time in J town, and they come back and they hang out in a group, and it's been starting to get a little stronger.</p> <p><a href="#">FG2 318-336</a></p>
<p>Bridging across different communities through engagement in the arts</p>	<p>...in the initial phase when the immigrant children were new here and they started practicing, they kind of feel ashamed about it to say to their friends that they are going bharata natyam. What are your learning? Some dance stuff I am learning, that kind of thing. But today, everyone talks all, in the Indian community, the westerns, the non-Indians are coming to my class. They look at it and they are literally jealous. They say, "I wish I had something like this, I want to learn it." And I have some non-Indian students with me and they love it. They think it is part of the mainstream. They think that this is something they got to do in order to become, you know, to be, to feel good.</p> <p><a href="#">B1 924-935</a></p> <p>And to bring that here to the United States and offer that to other people, I think gives them a sense of awareness because we have a lot of, you know, Mexicans and a lot of South Americans and Central Americans that I have talked to, who have gone through similar situations in their countries. And we can relate. And because we can relate, what I teach makes sense to them and what I teach can bring them a sense of comfort and assurance that there is a way that we can do things and not feel less than anybody else because that is the feeling that a lot of people have for the Mexicans or from Central or South America, which is a sense of degradation that they feel or people make them feel like they are less than whatever it is, United States or, and that somebody can come along and let them know that, you know, we are as worthy as the next person, gives them a sense of assurance of, you know, of value. They feel like they are somebody again. Instead of feeling lost in this old big United States. Now they find a place where they can</p>

	<p>feel at home.  <a href="#">C1 157-173</a></p> <p>...we were with 11 dance groups and everybody had the same disparities, the same questions of themselves and of their communities, and frustrations, and they went, “Oh, my God. We’re all the same, really.” The values are all the same. We hold onto these and we’re just... it’s like having this treasure chest but not really knowing how to share it.  <a href="#">FG2 349-355</a></p> <p>So there are many examples where the people here are detached from their roots over there. And even me, without knowing it, I was being like a link between these two worlds because I have a little bit of knowledge of my roots, and people here have less knowledge of what I knew. So even without noticing, without knowing it, I was linking these two worlds. And by doing this, I was helping them to feel better about themselves. I was having students who didn’t have Latino roots, they were from another culture, but they were interested in our culture, so they came to my class and they started learning and appreciating more and respecting more and celebrating more. So after some years of practicing these classes, these meetings, these community celebrations, I’ve been noticing that there is more sense of what is a community. We come together in different ways just to be together.  <a href="#">FG2 801-815</a></p> <p>And then, also, to weave in the very, in many ways, tragic history of the Mien through time as part of this community recipe book, to have it woven in, every person epitomizes their history in some way. And then it was also to represent the community recipe book and the project, the ACTA project...was to bring into more positive communication the young African American kids who hang around the park a lot, because they did not treat the Mien, nor did the Mien treat the kids, really as fellow human beings but as definitely other, almost like Martians. So...now it’s great...I see it in these small steps, but there they are side by side in the community recipe book cooking the same kinds of greens. They’ve participated in these community banquets together. Like if one of the kids’ very ambitious project of pan-fried peach cobbler, is coming to grief and a Mien woman there immediately rushes in and helps him, rescue this, oozing a little more oil under there and jiggling the pan, and he’s so happy, and then they exchange stories, and it’s just fantastic.  <a href="#">FG2 918-936</a></p>
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**Other themes**

Art of story-telling –	I think birth is another one where women tend to naturally connect with one another during the major life transition
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importance of sharing one's experiences with others as itself a healing experience	points and I think that one of the things that we are looking at next is how we re-create that for young men. You know, we traditionally had, like she said her son is 9...about this age traditionally he moved out of the house and into a sweathouse for men. You know, and that is where their type of teasing and teaching lessons and telling stories and teaching by example, mentoring happened. So, some of the things that we are doing in community like with the carving projects, you know, with canoe making and we really need to look at how we create more opportunities like that at that age for young people. <a href="#">A1 196-208</a>
Ways to recruit youth (including kids dropping out of school)	There are things we can do when they are babies, with loving them and holding them. I mean that is what baby baskets are about, you know. But what about that 7 to 10, 11, really formative time when they really can become a part of something. So, that is where these kind of utilitarian projects, because they can't help with highly, highly religious items because there is so much "prayer" that goes into them. So these kinds of projects allow for the bringing of that age group and where they can really become a part of it and see the results of their efforts and have a chance to chat or listen to people chatting, or stories are told, lessons are taught, and they really are. <a href="#">A1 210-221</a>
Challenges of time and money	This space left blank intentionally.
Shared language	His grandma and his mom talking at church services ..., and she recognized the language. She got all excited because she was the one of the people that went on that year long march and was removed [at 12 years of age]. And she was so tired. Because..... she thought everybody was gone. She, right then, ran home, packed her suitcase, came home with them and never went back. She lived the last 13 years of her life at home. She is buried in our cemetery. <a href="#">A2 666-676</a>
"Art is a medicine that someone can benefit from"	This space left blank intentionally.
Pathways to healing; traditional healing powers	This space left blank intentionally.
Grief, loss of one's culture, traditions, histories, skills, beliefs	This space left blank intentionally.
Education	It is like kinetic learning versus like book learning. <a href="#">A1 997-998</a>

	<p>There is a big difference. Perhaps because kids in Brazil, they grow up more with their family rather than with baby-sitters and daycare and stuff like that. So the families are right there, training them, telling them how to behave and you know, all the time, here it is more...it is different.</p> <p><a href="#">E1 198-202</a></p>
Pride/Roots	<p>So I think the community gets a sense of pride in it. And like I said earlier, like somebody has pride and they use it in a positive way, they can do big things. There's support and they're just happy to know that we're representing our culture out here.</p> <p><a href="#">C2 622-627</a></p>
Diasporic	<p>So I was with the elders and...they showed me so much...about how you approach the music, the history of it and listening to songs... that are in Creole, and you're like, where's that come from? So you start connecting stuff to Haiti and then, you're like, whoa, where's that come from? And then it goes back to Africa and then it's like, wow, you know, really... Santo Domingo they have rhythms that are the same as rhythms in Puerto Rico. So there's a big connection.</p> <p><a href="#">C2 135-144</a></p>
Miscellaneous	
	<p>Sure enough, you get stronger but then you also get smarter and you learn that there are many other ways out of a conflict rather than fighting physically, you know. And basically, you know, after training for a few years, you know, that is what happened. Besides the fact that you are already busy doing the art, you know, practicing it. You are not out there doing nothing.</p> <p><a href="#">E1 38-44</a></p>
	<p>What 500 years of genocide hasn't done, the casinos are going to finish off. It's just a real tragedy and it's something that we're dealing with all the time because unfortunately, it has nothing to do with your blood quantum, or your tribal connection, but just politics and money. It's greed and stupidity all over again, learning from the white man. So challenges, they never stop. If it isn't oppression from one side, it's oppression from another. If it isn't stupidity from one side, it's stupidity from another. But you just keep your eye on the prize, you know, you have to have your own identity. You have to have your own culture. You have to know what's real and what's true and what's meaningful, and stay there.</p> <p><a href="#">FG2 1078-1090</a></p>
	<p>For the health of the children, good health, mental, physical, health of the children. To bring spirituality, to bring structure, to bring discipline, to bring ethnicity, to feel good about the ethnicity. To feel that, to be proud of who they are. To really</p>

	<p>bring a kind of their own roots. To be happy, to not to feel ashamed of who they are. To have a cultural identity, to feel this is me. I was born with this, I was born in this community, I am happy to be who I am. And to bring that, today is great.</p> <p><a href="#">B1 819-827</a></p>
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