

Telling Tales: Mutual Learning and Empowerment

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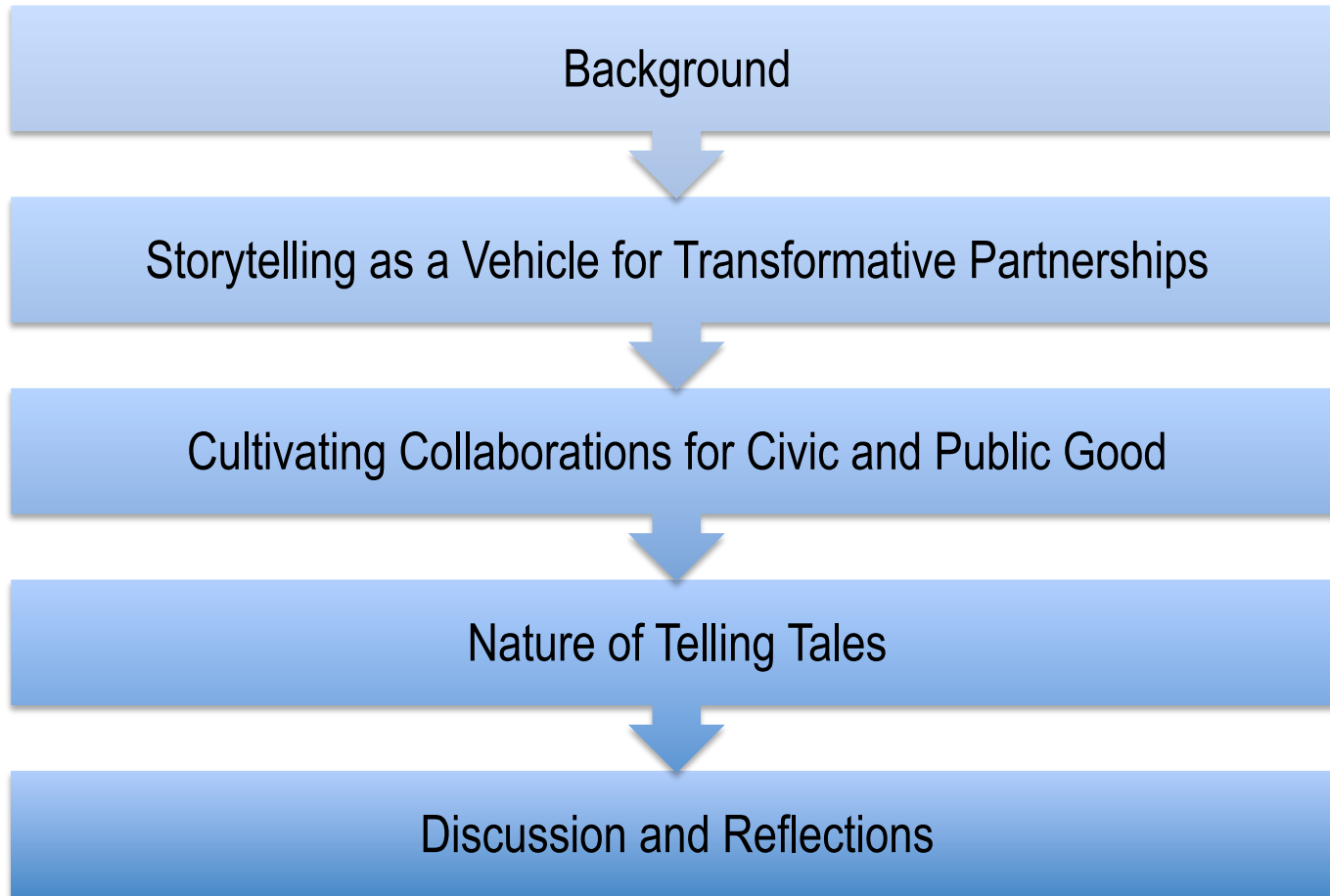
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UNIVERSITY *of*
NORTHERN COLORADO

Community and Civic Engagement

Overview



Background

- Early relationship through ESL and Preservice teacher practicum experience
 - Engaged learning (Freire, 1970 & Dewey, 1942)
 - Meeting needs of institution and those of our community partners
- El Teatro troupe
 - Initially no resources, funded through donations, extra curricular
 - Now funded with donations and small local grant
 - Year one: bilingual stage presentation & some story telling and theater
 - Year two more languages
 - Oral histories
 - Using students' own stories and those of family members
 - Family Literacy: gathering students stories in school and out of school
- Idea for book!

Stories & transformative partnerships

When we narrate, we place lives in the balance in that our renderings of experience shape actions, beliefs and emotions.

(Ochs & Capps, 1999, p.1)



- Meaningful pedagogies of engagement
 - Transformative not transactional (Enos & Marton, 2003)
- Stories as acts of meaning making and sites for learning
 - For authors and audiences
- Cathartic process of telling and (re)producing personal narratives (Herman, 1997)
- Empowering experience through publication and dissemination

Cultivating Collaborations

- University-School
 - Faculty-students-teachers
 - Focus on reciprocal benefits and learning
- Community changes
 - 47% increase Latinos
 - 129% East African refugees
 - Linguistic & sociocultural changes
- Family Literacy Events
 - Educational support activities
 - Schools, community centers, homes
 - Story telling and writing



Planning the Book

- Gathering stories, poems and art work
 - Permissions, scheduling
 - Scanning and photographing
- Reviewing texts and images
 - Individually and in teams
 - Inclusiveness and representativeness
- Copy editing into electronic format
 - UNC undergraduates
 - Editing decisions, student voice & authenticity
- First cut, second cut, sort by themes



Building the Book



- Design layout using Adobe InDesign®
- Attention to visuals and text
- Mock-up of texts and illustrations
- Explore publishing options
- Blurb® allows multiple images and high quality printing
- Formatting and upload files
- Test print and proof read

About the book

Telling

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Student Voices



“I can actually write more by myself or in my future I can be a writer,” Faisal, HS student.

“I now have a heart for people I knew very little about. I learned more about their lives from being welcomed into their homes.” Jenny, undergrad, preservice teacher.

“Telling someone our stories kind of helps you. When walking around, I don’t feel different any more, they know who I am now.” Amina, HS student.

“It was awesome being in a book because I have never been in a book before. Seeing people tell others about our stories and how the book talks about who we really are and where we came from and what we have been through...” Asha, HS student.

Transformative Relationships



- Tangible product; “material symbol for new relationships” (Crabtree, 2008)
- Book reading event on campus at UNC
- Presentation at District Board of Education
- University news story and local press report
- Book sales at El Teatro event
- Available online through the Blurb.com

University of Northern Colorado Home Page

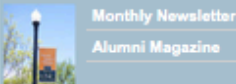
NEWS CENTRAL

For:

- Journalists
- Faculty/Staff
- Students
- Alumni/Friends



PUBLICATIONS:



Telling Tales



Students and teachers from UNC and Weld County School District 6 who collaborated to publish a book about immigrant and refugee families' stories pose for a group photo in celebration of the book's release.

Photo courtesy of Sam Dong Saul

With the help of a group of UNC students, a local public school district program for immigrant and refugee students and their families has published a book that's bridging gaps in the families - and in the community.

Telling Tales: Immigrants' and Refugees' Stories of Transition, Resilience and Hope is a compilation of 40 stories and photographs of 30 families that immigrated to the Greeley area from Guatemala, Mexico, El Salvador, Somalia, Kenya, East Africa, Burma and Thailand.

The genesis of the book was El Teatro, a theater program that's part of Weld County School District 6's Newcomers program. El Teatro offers students of refugee and immigrant families a chance to share their life stories - and improve understanding of their native cultures and the challenges they face living in a new one.

Those stories, often handwritten by students and parents as part of a family literacy project incorporated into the El Teatro program, prompted Greeley West High School teacher and Newcomers facilitator Jessica Cooney to propose that each family's story be photocopied into a book.

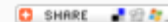
When UNC Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies Deborah Romero heard the idea, she proposed taking things one step further with the creation of a professionally published book.

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Keywords:

College of Humanities
and Social Sciences
Community
Volunteer/Service
Learning/Internships

Feature Stories
News Releases
All University News
Calendar
Experts List
Facts/Figures



Additional Benefits



- Meaningful language and literacies
 - Values multilingualism
- Promotes student pride and self confidence
 - Family pride and engagement
- Student visibility and empowerment
- Educational
 - On campus and in the community
- School principal buy-in, school in spotlight
- Community involvement

Recommendations

- Connect to schools and colleges
 - Volunteer, read, listen, engage
- Start with the familiar & what's known
- Build trust and respect
- Ask questions, seek mutual understanding
- Identify strengths and potential challenges; develop a plan
- Connect to existing initiatives



Thank you!

Special thanks to Ms. Jessica Cooney JCOONEY1@greeleyschools.org

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