

Ting-Yi Oei:

So, I'm Ting-Yi Oei. Katie gave you some of my background before. One of the things in terms of identity, I've recently come out with my own moniker of ABC, American Born Chinese, but I'm ABCD, American Born Chinese Dutch, because my father was Dutch. So I think now that kind of covers it. My father was actually the seized Chinese from the Dutch East Indies, but that's my Asian American connection. There's a way of what we are going to be talking about here today that I think about trying to change affect change in the curriculum that I look at four different perspectives. How do we affect teachers? How do we affect students? How do we impact public institutions, I'm talking about schools, school divisions, politics, other institutions like libraries and museums, and get them to look at things differently? And also the community.

So here we got a grant, 1882 Foundation, last year and a little bit of the year before from Virginia Maddie's [sp?]. And that was to do a series of five traveling seminars, where we featured one or two short films, including a short version of the Chinese Exclusion Act, other things like Through Chinatown's Eyes, which some of you saw before at another symposium we had shown Finding Samuel Low and Finding Cleveland. All little bits and pieces of the Chinese American experience. And this is one that we did for Arlington teachers. And that's where I think the multiplier effect really comes again. You're trying to get teachers to embed materials that they may not be familiar with at all, and try to get it into the curriculum. Forgetting about standard and all those things for the moment, if you can convince teachers, they've got content that's worth embedding into their curriculum and then leave it up to them to try to bring it there, that's really important.

So this was another, the person in the previous slide who was teaching was Jenelle Wong who's from the University of Maryland and their Asian American department. This is Larissa Lamb who's speaking about the film that she and her husband helped make Finding Cleveland. Cleveland, Mississippi a reference to the Chinese in Mississippi Delta community of which Stan Liu is a perfect representative and speak to him more about some of that but there's some very interesting stories about that. And again a piece of American history that's very well known. I'll refer to that back in a little bit because it is something that really could be taught as part of every standard. A lot of what standards are, and I will talk about that again in a minute too, is how can teachers take information that's good and solid and important and put it into the standards in a way that's meaningful for students. It's not like having to stand and digging and find and other things. How can you make

the content that we have from the Chinese and Asian American Experience really relevant to people who are students but also for the teachers?

But we did do the struggle to try to implement things that are part of the part and parcel of state standards and how you get things through. It's a little bit difficult to read some of these things here so if I could get a couple of our volunteers to just pass these out here, if you could just do that. Thank you. But just in passing there are some things that we suggested as an organization. There were two organizations, 1882 and at the time the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans of Virginia that I'm still a part of and involved with. They're a public policy group in Virginia who tries to get and advocate for Asian American interest in the Commonwealth. So as most states do, they go through a review of their standards and also the content section, I believe is called curriculum framework. And try to see if they can embed some of that kind of information in there.

So we made an effort and proposed suggestions, they didn't get adopted and in fact the curriculum framework that you see described here didn't get anything right in play here. In fact, they kind of reduced the language of the curriculum framework and the model that came out just in 2017. It plays kind of lip service to some of the themes that we wanted to hit but didn't actually have much of the content. But it is the effort we try to make there. So you can look at those and see things like the case of [indistinguishable] is mentioned there. Or the Japanese American internment case, Fred Korematsu. I'm trying to make sure that those things get truly embedded in there. I love what RJ had to say about trying to make things that are difficult to talk about a little bit easier to try to get discussed. And that's what you face when you're speaking especially with state education departments or state legislatures even more so. In Virginia, our experience is working with the state board of education or the secretary executive office of the Commonwealth. It's not that bad, but it's state legislators themselves that prove to be the stumbling block. I'm sure some of you have done this kind of work have discovered that.

There's an excellent article that's bookmarked down here, and we'll link this slide to available through the 1882 Foundation website, but just try to quickly flash there, I think I can link it up to it. This was in Education Week, this whole article and describes a lot of different problems and folks there's a lot on Texas and the school board controversies there where anything that's the least bit controversial gets shot down, can't really be put therefore in the curriculum or in the textbooks that are mentioned there.

And back to this. And here's another example. I just happened to see in the newspaper, but teachers are in a tough spot. You want to try to deal with the tough stuff and at the same time you have to deal with it sensitively so that you don't offend people. And this was an article also in Education Week cited this, but you may have heard in the news just recently about some teacher going through a mock auction of slaves and trying to do a simulation about that. Well, from an empathy point of view that's great except there are pitfalls as you can imagine, I don't have to go into any details about that, how you treat that kind of subject sensitively. So that's just an area to be very careful of and I think that's what RJ, you know you're probably going to discover that as you go along too as people try out different things, we like the thought process maybe behind it but we really have to be very careful. Even our governor's wife in Virginia came up with something. And if you Governor Northum [sp?] if you're aware of Virginia politics is based all sorts of questions about blackface and other things. But his wife also was presenting something to some primary grade students a few weeks back and gave out little balls of cotton to try to do some kind of simulation in this. She is a teacher herself, but that got her into a fair amount of trouble as well.

But we have had success on this institutional level at the legislative thing, for example general assembly in 2016 passed a resolution on integrating Fred Korematsu and Japanese American internment and establishing it January 31st of every year as Fred Korematsu Day. Virginia was the first state east of the Mississippi to that, I think it was the only the third or fourth state at that time. Others have followed suit. And this year we got passed a resolution commemorating the anniversary of the conclusion of the Transcontinental Railroad. That was delegate Mark King though Eric with 1882 lobbying him to be able to put that forward and that is now part of Virginia legislative history. So these are things that, not just the resolution recognizing it but there is language among those "whereas"s that resolutions have that it must be taught. It has to be included somehow in the curriculum and the key thing is, that's what it says, how do you get teachers to then actually do that?

Speaking back to students part of it, these are two of our interns from last summer. I don't think Beth is here today with us but that's our Secretary of State, I mean secretary of education for the state of Virginia Atif Qarni who is Pakistani American so that's kind of an interesting thing here. They met with him, so it's an opportunity for students, in this case university level, to meet with somebody but also here we have a sympathetic ear who might be able to something in that. On the institution level, and is Emma Ido [sp?] here? Yes! From the Library of Virginia, we partner with her as part of the Virginia Humanities grant that we talked about a little bit earlier.

So we were a part of the Brown Teachers Institute back in early August of this past year where we had fifty teachers coming in and who got trained and a lot of this kind of thing, multiplier effect. But being able to work with an institution like Library of Virginia. And what's interesting is this theme is prominent here of new Virginians. That is I think a really kind of interesting twist in the way the state of Virginia sees itself through institutions like the Library of Virginia. Museum of History and Culture used to be known as the Virginia Historical Society but it had a very very strong history of Confederate themes that ran through that. They changed the name on purpose to draw to an audience. They adopted, they have the same theme of new Virginians and what they're talking about really is from 1619-2019. 1619 was the arrival of the first African Americans as slaves, or Africans in that case who became slaves, enslaved people. And that's a recognition gap to the present and beyond because Virginia is a rapidly changing state. Asian Americans are the fastest growing minority in the state, which is true in a number of different places. So this is the kind of recognition by the state that things are not the same as they were.

The Virginia Maddie's [sp?], they gave us the grant. They are part of that same kind of thing, they're affiliated with the University of Virginia. This is one of their board members, again when you have the chance you can listen to her story because she's Mexican American and now serves on the school board of Arlington County. And then this one here, there's a link too that you could look at too that talks more about the New Virginians. Let's see. There's one thing here that, let me get this. I don't want to play it, but I just kind of want to show you. This is at a gathering where they were actually opening the new exhibition of the New Virginians.

Then another thing that really impacts with the students that I was talking about before is Loudoun County which is now the fastest growing, or has been the fastest growing county east of the Mississippi for a number of years. Was the fastest growing county in the country for a long time. But in any case, their demographics are changing rapidly and they've been hosting an international youth summit every year. And they bring students from 25 different countries, four students plus sponsors so over a hundred kids and adults, teachers who come and visit the United States and stay with host families in the school division. And so we have a chance here to talk with them, do that part of that film presentation we were talking about before. Paula Madison was the keynote speaker for that event. She's Jamaican African American raised in the Bronx but also half Chinese, or a quarter Chinese at least. And identifies mainly as black but she spoke here in the

symposium a couple of years ago about her experiences. So this is another way of reaching those students and the faculty. These were the ways too in which we trained these international teachers on some of the things that we were doing in curriculum and about the Asian American experience. And so they got to be involved with that. And they were from Ireland, South Korea, Australia, South Africa, Bosnia, 25 countries like I say.

Other events too where I think we focus on see these are actually Indonesian American students down in the Richmond area. And the last thing here really I want to show in terms of really expanding out in the community. Originally when the documentary The Chinese Exclusion Act was shown nationwide on PBS stations last May as part of Asian American Heritage Month. Richmond, Virginia decided to schedule their showing at three o'clock in the morning [laughter]. So we were a little upset because it is really hard to schedule a watch party for communities around 3 o'clock in the morning. Where do you go? Whose house is it on?

So we kind of came down hard on them and said, "you need to do something to make up for this faux pas." So they created a special screening for us at WCBE Studios, state of the art studio, had close to 200 people from the community attend. We had Atif Qarni, the secretary of education, give just a few brief remarks before the film started. And we also had Scott Tom who you may know as they reported on NPR Marketplace. He hosts a panel discussion with this is Gene Feltcher [sp?] who has written that book Drive Out. She has also been a part of our symposiums in the past. So this kind of gives you a broad sweep of the kind of things we feel we've done in Virginia to make that outreach but affect the kind of thinking and change in the community that will bring about the kind of things we want to see in our classrooms ultimately. Thank you very much.

[applause]