

GLL Pilot Results — Festivals Unit

2026 · Banyan Global Learning

The Setup

Three middle-school classrooms — two in the United States and one in Taiwan — completed the 4-week Festivals unit together. Each class met for 45 minutes weekly. Banyan facilitated all live sessions; local teachers supported in-room. Student work lived on shared Padlet boards visible across classrooms.

By the Numbers

25

student survey responses

3

teacher survey responses

212

student Padlet posts

100%

of sessions delivered as planned

Student Outcomes

- 92% said they learned about other cultures during the unit.
- 88% said they felt connected to their partner classroom.
- 84% rated the unit 4 or 5 out of 5; mean enjoyment 4.2/5.
- 68% said they would definitely do it again; additional 24% said probably.

Teacher Outcomes

- Average overall rating: 8.0/10. Average recommendation score: 8.7/10.
- 100% said they would participate in another GLL unit.
- 100% said they would be willing to provide a testimonial.
- 2 of 3 rated workload as "Very manageable"; the third rated it "Manageable."

Cross-Classroom Engagement

Every class produced work that partner classes could see, comment on, and respond to. Highlights from the cohort:

- Students submitted original festival concepts including "Big Red Heart Day" (a day for love), "Spam Topia," and "The Goat Came Down to Earth."
- US students asked Taiwan classrooms direct questions about Lunar New Year food traditions; Taiwan students asked US classrooms about Thanksgiving family dynamics.
- Week 3 AI visualizations of student festival concepts produced the strongest in-session engagement of the unit.
- Week 4 peer response videos — students speaking directly to partner-school peers — were identified by teachers as the emotional high point.

What Went Well

- The facilitator-led format removed planning burden from local teachers entirely.
- Cross-classroom visibility built week-over-week, hitting its peak exactly when designed to (Week 3).
- Student creative output was more original and more personally rooted than the design team expected.

What We Changed for Next Cohort

- Week 2 restructured as five rapid-fire “design rounds” to prevent default-to-food-and-games responses.
- Student-generated questions for partner schools now feed directly into Week 3 — creating real stakes for cross-classroom dialogue.
- AI visualization moved to Week 3 as the session’s emotional peak, with clearer facilitator framing.

Voices

“It made me feel like even though the world is a ginormous place there are still many similarities between many different types of people.”

— Student, March 2026 cohort

“My students were willing to share — even post videos — with the other schools. There was no awkwardness, which is not normal for middle schoolers.”

— Participating teacher, March 2026 cohort

What’s Next

Fall 2026 cohorts launch with the Festivals unit in August and September, followed by Murals (Oct–Nov), Local Legends (Feb–Mar), and Gathering Places (Apr–May). IB MYP schools can enter the sequence at any point or run a single unit as the core of their required interdisciplinary unit.

Contact: Travis Moyer · travis@banyangloballearning.com