



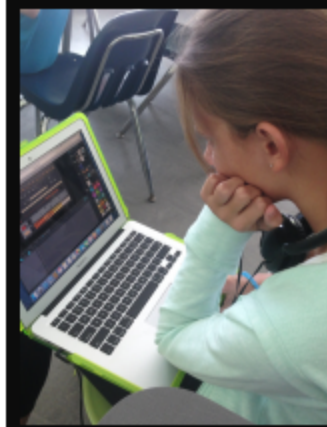
The Conservatory
School

Democracy
is a
Verb

Empowering
Students
into
Action

Project-Based Learning
in the Middle Grades

Fall 2016



The Conservatory School

Mission Statement



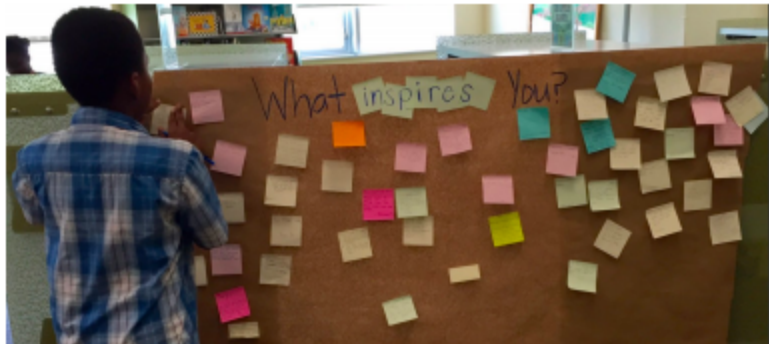
We inspire our school community through continuous inquiry, empowering all who join us with the skills, courage, optimism, and integrity to pursue their dreams. We see to empower a diverse range of scholars, artists, and leaders through a unique and rigorous academic and music education. This is a place where the arts are valued and pursued, where children learn to draw, dance, and create music; where ideas are sought and explored. **We gather here for the purpose of expanding our young people's notions of justice,** broadening their visions of the possible, and creating a culture and habit of perseverance.

Ours is a place of
play, passion, and purpose.

Overview

"We gather here for the purpose of expanding our young people's notions of justice..."

Inspired by the events of the summer, we at The Conservatory School wanted to engage our middle grades students in a conversation about **democracy**--what it is, what it currently looks like, and what it should be. Through this conversation, they realized that democracy is not a static institution, but rather an action, something that you fight for, ultimately, **it is a verb**.



Through this project, students will connect the ideas of today's social issues to ways that they, as citizens, can educate their communities about the injustices of others and inspire them into action. There are two strands of action with specific Driving Questions:

TCS Cultivates: Food, Health + Community (Science, Technology, and Design)
How can we, as student citizens,
educate our community about food-related issues?

.....

Democracy: Remixed (Performing Arts and Design)
How can we, as student citizens, use our creative voice to produce a
collaborative work that is inspired by and inspires democracy?

Working in design teams, students learn about various social issues and research to learn about its origins and its impact on democracy. They learn about the multi-faceted nature of issues that affect our world and study how people's lives are changed because of them. From there, students will design products or performances that will serve to educate the wider community.

Florida Standards at Work in Democracy is a Verb

The Florida Standards are an integral component of planning and executing a PBL Unit. As teachers plan for the opportunities for their students, the standards are right by their side. This helps support in the development of the intentional, interdisciplinary nature of the project, as well as, ensure that many of the experiences reinforce the lessons students are learning during the core academic component of their day. Through the project, students learn about:

TCS Cultivates: Food, Health + Community

Science: SC.6.N.1.1; SC.6.N.1.4; SC.N.2.3; HE.6.C.1.3; SC.6.L.14.5; SC.7.N.1.1; Sc.7.N.1.5; HE.7.C.1.3; SC.7.L.17.1; Sc.8.N.1.1Sc.8.N.1.5; SC.8.N.4.1; SC.N8.N.4.2; SC.g12.P.8.11

English Language Arts: LAFS.6.W.2.6; LAFS.6.W.3.7; LAFS.6.W.3.8; LAFS.7.W.2.6; LAFS.7.W.3.7; LAFS.7.W.3.8; LAFS.8.W.2.6; LAFS.8.W.3.7; LAFS.8.W.3.8

Civics and American History:

SS.8.G.2.1; SS.8.G.3.2; SS.8.G.5.1; SS.8.G.5.2

Democracy: Remixed

English Language Arts: LAFS.6.RL.1.1; SC.6.RL.2.5; LAFS.6.RI.1.1 - LAFS.6.RI.1.3; LAFS.6.RI.2.4 - LAFS.6.RI.2.6; LAFS.6.W.6.3; LAFS.6.SL.2.4; LAFS.6.SL.2.5; LAFS.7.RL.1.1; LAFS.7.RI.1.1 - LAFS.7.RI.1.3; LAFS.7.RI.2.4 - LAFS.7.RI.2.6; LAFS.7.W.1.3; LAFS.7.SL.2.4; LAFS.7.SL.2.5; LAFS.8.RL.1.1; LAFS.8.RI.1.1 - LAFS.8.RI.1.3; LAFS.8.RI.2.4 - LAFS.8.RI.2.6; LAFS.8.W.1.3; LAFS.8.SL.2.4; LAFS.8.SL.2.5

Civics and American History:

SS.7.C.2.2; SC.7.C.2.14; SS.8.A.1.3SS.8.A.1.6; SS.A.1.7

Visual Arts:

VA.68.C.1.1; VA.68.C.1.2; VA.68.H.3.2VA.68.O.2.4| VA.68.S.1.1; VA.68.S.1.5VA.68.S.2.3

Dance:

DA.68.F.1.2; DA.68.F.1.3; DA.68.F.3.1; DA.68.H.2.1; DA.68.C.1.3; DA.68.O.3.1; DA.68.O.3.2

Students are immersed in rigorous tasks encompassing the full intent of the standards.

Democracy is a Verb – Supporting the PBCSD Mission and Pillars

The work within our Democracy is a Verb project exemplifies the work the District seeks to provide children in Palm Beach County. To reiterate the District's mission statement, our work within the Democracy is a Verb project empowers students to reach their highest potential by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and ethics to be responsible citizens.

Furthermore, our PBL unit of study demonstrates the elements of the Pillars of Effective Instruction, where our students are:

- Immersed in **rigorous** tasks encompassing the full intent of the **standards**.
- **Actively engaged** in building, connecting, and applying knowledge.
- **Collaborating** in a **student-centered, personalized** environment.
- **Empowered** and **supported** through **high expectations** to be college and career ready.



An educated, enlightened & informed population is one of the surest ways of promoting the health of a democracy. –Nelson Mandela

Project Narratives

TCS Cultivates: Food, Health + Community

TCS Cultivates is our science and tech start-up! 38 students have been divided into 3 departments, focusing on different subjects within their area of food-related issues.

Our 3 departments:

Chem Lab

Chem Lab students are studying the science of food! Students initially began researching how the acidity or alkalinity of foods affect our health. Through their investigation, students gained a particular interest in sugar and how it affects our health. Students are currently researching this issue more deeply, learning more about how state governments are trying to support their citizens to improving their sugar intake and overall health habits. They will develop surveys and ultimately produce a report that describes the food habits of students in our school community.



Web Tech

In Web Tech, students are delving deep into public relations. Students have learned how technology can be used to get messages out into the community. Students are developing a website that will contain information from the other departments to provide to the greater community. In addition to their website, students are planning to produce public service announcements for our school community to teach them about the benefits of incorporating more fresh produce into their diets.

Garden Lab

Garden Lab students are getting their hands dirty, using our hydroponic gardens and garden beds as their learning lab. Students are learning about where their food comes from, how to grow their own food, and how to live sustainably. They are growing fruits and vegetables in the hydroponic garden and are designing an herb garden to plant in the garden beds. From their knowledge and experiences, they are going to produce Garden Starter Kits for our school community and beyond. They will provide seeds, growing directions, nutrition information, and recipes for the Starter Kits to educate the community on the benefits of eating fresh produce.



Project Narratives

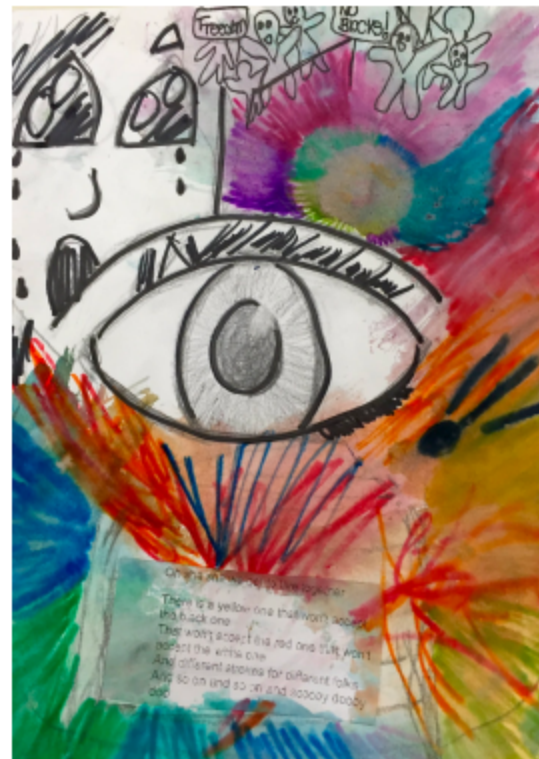
Democracy: Remixed

Democracy: Remixed is in inquiry into the timelessness of these social issues. Why are some of the issues people experienced in the past resurfacing so strongly now? What can we do to prevent today's social issues from becoming future generations' remix?

Artists Have a Voice

Performing arts and design students started their learning experience through the use of music. Using our school's Listening Project resources, students studied the song, 'Everyday People' by Sly and the Family Stone. Repeated listening of the song, analysis of the lyrics and time period of the piece, and a close discussion prompted students to connect the plea for equality of the 1960s to the headlines of today's news. Recognizing that artists have a voice and choose to share their feelings through their art form, students then designed reflective artworks based off of 'Everyday People'.

Students continue further into this work through another art form with photography. Through such a vivid medium, students could really see the impact of social issues on humanity. Interestingly and unfortunately, a theme that emerged was the seeming timelessness of particular injustices in our society. Teachers then developed arts immersion experience to more deeply explore this theme...



Life is too complex
to cover with one song.

But maybe one song can get us
started on the conversations we
need to have, to make decisions
we need to make.

After all,
we are everyday people.

-Chris Shields

Project Narratives

Democracy: Remixed

Visual Arts

In the Art Lab, students reflected on the Gandhi quote, "I understand democracy as something that gives the weak the same chance as the strong." After breaking down the quote and parsing out key vocabulary, students participated in The Hexagon Project, designing a hexagonal piece within a larger mural, representing key vocabulary and ideas that stemmed from the quote.

Dance and Movement

In the Dance Studio, students explored storytelling through the world of tableaux. Tableaux, is drama, are frozen pictures, where artists use their bodies to represent a moment in time. Students used photographs and key vocabulary from their conversations as inspiration for their tableaux. In this art experience, students practiced important skills and mindsets of learning, such as collaboration, empathy, and flexibility as they planned for and performed their tableau to their arts group.



Literacy

Literacy is woven and embedded into numerous elements of the Democracy: Remixed project. Music lyrics are not just lyrics, but rather poetry that students analyze together as a shared experience. Photographs are not just works of art, but also graphic texts to be studied and analyzed through arts talks with partners. Texts or videos are reflected upon in grand conversations--allowing for diverse voices, perspectives, and ideas to be shared in a safe space...immersing students in an experience that exemplifies democratic ideals.



The Exhibition

Educating and Inspiring Our Community Into Action

Throughout this project, teachers are assessing students for their understanding of content, as they complete smaller activities throughout trimester. The culminating event where students demonstrate their complete understanding and their final answers to their guiding questions is our **Exhibition**.

There, our school community, family members, community members, and working professionals who supported our students' educational journeys, will have the chance to observe, ask questions, critique, and assess our students on their expertise in their particular area and how, to them:

democracy is a verb.



Thursday, January 26, 2017