

YOUTH REVIVE



JUDITH ORTEGA Program Director



Participating in the Civic Spirit Cohort was an enlightening and thought-provoking experience. Through this program, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of my teaching style and the type of educator I aspire to be. My primary objective for attending the summer institute was to find ways to make civics a more accessible subject for my high school freshmen. I aimed to inspire my students to identify with activists who have made a significant impact on society and to recognize that these

individuals were not any different from themselves.

To achieve this goal, I incorporated rap songs into my lesson plans, pairing them with relevant topics to facilitate the breakdown and analysis of the artist's intended message. This approach proved to be highly effective in fostering engagement and critical thinking among my students. Within our curriculum, some of the standout artists were Lil Baby and Kendrick Lamar. Lil Baby's song, "The Bigger Picture," had a particularly powerful impact on my students. The music video begins with scenes of people protesting in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and against police brutality. The lyrics of the song encourage listeners to vote and fight for representation, reminding us that our ancestors fought tirelessly for equality, and we cannot afford to let their work go to waste. Many of my students related strongly to this message, and several even made pledges to vote when they come of age.

To deepen their understanding of the topic, I paired the music video with two articles. The first was an NPR piece titled "Derek Chauvin Sentenced to 22 Years in Prison for George Floyd's Murder." The second article was from The Guardian, titled "The George Floyd Verdict Wouldn't Have Happened Without Months of Protest." By drawing direct connections between actions,



YOUTH REVIVE

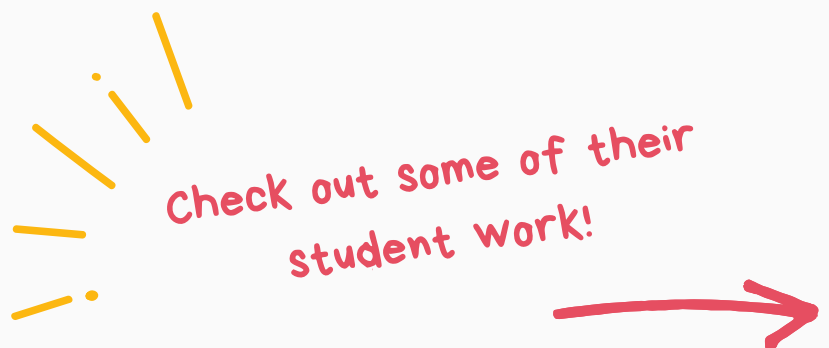


protests, demands, and the verdict, I aimed to help my students understand the importance of measuring impact and advocating for change.

Through this approach, I was able to provide my students with a well-rounded education on the topic of social justice and activism. By incorporating music and current events, I helped them see that the issues we face are not isolated incidents, but rather part of a larger movement for change. My hope is that these lessons will empower my students to become active participants in their communities and advocates for the causes they believe in.

However, the most valuable aspect of the Civic Spirit Cohort was the sense of acceptance and community that I felt. Despite having less experience than many of my peers, I never felt belittled or inadequate. On the contrary, I was received with utmost respect and appreciation for my unique perspective. Collaborating with other educators and learning from their wealth of experience was an enriching experience that allowed me to grow both professionally and personally.

Overall, the Civic Spirit Cohort has had a significant impact on my teaching career. It has equipped me with the tools and confidence to create a more inclusive and engaging learning environment for my students. Furthermore, it has instilled in me a greater sense of purpose and passion for teaching, as I strive to inspire and empower the next generation of civic leaders.



YOUTH REVIVE



Photos taken during Youth Revive's CAPstone event.

