Gottesman RTW Academy

COHORT 5

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My goals were to incorporate civics literacy and understanding on a more consistent basis in my classroom, with the students having different opportunities to understand civics and their role within our society through various means.

The project fit within my school's mission through inspiring intellectual curiosity by having them think deeper and from other perspectives of various topics, and through critical thinking as it had them consider how what they were researching/reporting could impact them in various ways, including through a civics lens.

Students engaged in the following projects with a focus on civic understanding:

- Current Event Reports and On This Day in History Reports
  - Students would research news reports of major events from before they were alive, answering who, what, when, where, and why the event occurred, why these events are important, and how we could verify its authenticity using both primary and credible sources.
  - Civics consideration:
    - What aspects of our society are reflected?
    - Impact on "you" as a global citizen.

- Centropa Biography and Documentary Reflections
  - Students would watch a documentary and read a biography each term from the Centropa database of European Jews impacted by the Holocaust and various pogroms. They would provide basic details, key facts, and their personal reflection.
  - Civics consideration:
    - What was the theme of their experience?
    - What aspects of their "citizenship" were surprisingly missing or present?
    - What groups in the U.S. might be also treated as less than their understanding of citizenship?
    - Should non-citizen residents or any specific groups be treated differently?

- Civics Reflections on Lessons from Time Periods and Cultures Covered
  - Students would focus on time periods or cultures that we covered during the term, discussing specific civics related information and what their feelings/impressions were from this covered culture/time period.
  - Civics consideration:
    - What changes in the governments of this civilization or time period developed towards what we have today?
    - What were the key differences between then and now for different classes?
    - How would you be treated as a citizen?

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Additionally, civics was also discussed throughout the covered material of the social studies curriculum. In World History (6th and 7th grade), there were many opportunities to discuss the development of laws, rights, and citizenship throughout various cultures from the dawn of civilization through the American and French Revolutions. For U.S. History in 8th grade, we cover the evolution of the U.S. from the Antebellum South through the Cold War, and how the ideas of citizenship, the purpose of laws and regulations, the ideas of protections vs. freedoms and how to balance them evolved throughout the key periods of U.S. History. We focused on all 3 pillars of Civic Belonging, particularly through developing a sense of civic responsibility, Democratic Fluency via understanding U.S. History and where the ideas for the U.S. came from, and Civic Skills in not being able to express and discuss their understanding with others in a fair and respectful manner in order to grow.

The most meaningful aspect for me was how they connected the Centropa biographies and documentaries to their civic understanding, allowing them to make real connections of the disparity in what we have here in the U.S. as affluent day school students compared to individuals and groups of Jews in Europe who were not blessed with the same rights, opportunities, and privileges. I feel this will expand their compassion and understanding toward minority groups around the world who may be oppressed, and what that could mean for them if history were ever to repeat itself.

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Classroom > Social Studies 8

Instructions | Student work

Extra credit: Civics reflection MP2

Andrew Eitel • Mar 13 (Edited Apr 1)

MP2 — Due Mar 18, 8:00 AM

Think of the growth stages we went over this marking period:

- Westward Expansion and Progressivism in the U.S.
- Gilded Age in the U.S.
- U.S. Imperialism and Spanish American War
- U.S. in WWI

Choose 1 period of time from above and write a **reflection** (as a private comment) about how the history of this civilization during the time period we covered has impacted you as a citizen by describing:

- What changes in the governments of this civilization developed towards what we have today?
- What were the key differences between then and now for different classes (consider differences for women, slaves, rich, poor, working class, nobility, politicians, minorities, etc.)
- How would you be treated as a citizen (consider your age, gender, religion, education, parents "class", etc.)
- What are your personal impressions/feelings of this?

***Each reflection is worth 5 points.**
****You may do up to 2 reflections**

***Keep in mind you have other opportunities to earn additional credit*

- **complete any incomplete work we've discussed in class- *must be done before any other extra credit can be accepted***
- extra Current Event report
- extra On this day in History report
- extra Centropa reflection