

Turtle Talk

November/December 2020

When am I EVER going to use this?"

December Dates & a Peak into January Dates to Remember

Fri., Dec. 18th
West Campus (1st - 8th grade & Pine)
Holiday Party
(Time TBA)

Mon., Dec. 21st - Mon., Jan. 4
Winter Holiday Break
(School Closed)

Mon., Jan. 4th
Professional Development Day
(School Closed)

Mon., Jan. 18th
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
(School Closed)

Tue., Jan. 19th - Fri., Jan. 29
Re-Registration Period

Academic Rigor and Relevance

Today's students turn to Google for answers to everything they need to know. "More emphasis on applying 'Googleable' information—across disciplines, to real-world predictable situations and real-world unpredictable situations—is a fundamental shift we need to make to properly prepare learners to be successful in the 21st century."

"Academic rigor refers to learning in which students demonstrate a thorough in-depth mastery of challenging tasks to develop cognitive skills through reflective thought, analysis, problem solving, evaluation or creativity," according to Dr. Bill Daggett President of the International Center for Leadership in Education.

Relevance refers to the type of learning where students apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems. According to Dr. Bill Daggett, President of the International Center for Leadership in Education, Without relevance, students can become successful academically, but lack the experience and guidance to apply their knowledge to challenging unknowns in order to create meaningful solutions to real-world problems.

Academic Rigor and Relevance in TRM Curriculum

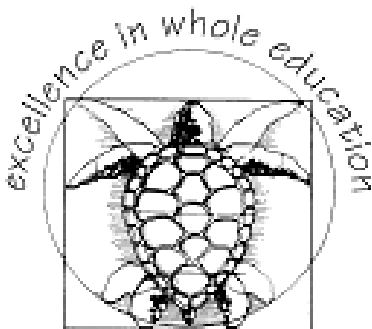
Middle School Math Using Civics

Our middle school science and math teacher, Miss Emily, has created an interesting and meaningful way to teach math, one that doesn't beg the age-old question: "when am I EVER going to use THIS?!" Teaching math through rigor and relevance and not through siloed topics or completely through textbooks is what encourages creative and critical thinking. Math should take place THROUGH problem-solving rather than FOR problem-solving.

"Let's stretch their thinking. Let's unleash their sophistication. And let's foster a love of deep knowledge."

How do you teach math/science differently than other math/science teachers? Why do you choose to do it that way?

"Our curriculum heavily focuses on connecting the mathematical and scientific concepts and standards with real-life applications and current global issues. This focus allows students to relate math and science to their own lives and see how they can use their skills in their own futures. The connection to global issues reveals the power that numbers and scientific knowledge can have to change the world. At the end of year, we will hold a Social Justice Data Fair. Students will choose local or global issues they are passionate about, research and analyze the data regarding the issue and propose a solution using mathematics." *Ms. Emily*



8th Grade Math

“For each unit of study, I relate the material to a social and/or cultural context. For example, in Pre-Algebra we are studying demographics and representation. For the final demonstration of understanding project, we started out using Census data to analyze demographic data for students’ specific areas of interest. Some projects include: gender representation of NASA astronauts over time, racial diversity among Disney princesses over time, and racial diversity in the NBA over time. Giving the students choice in their learning makes them excited to work and learn.” *Ms. Emily*

7th Grade Math

“The social context for 7th Grade math is world population and hunger. For the final demonstration of understanding project, students will research a country and analyze its population and food resources using mathematics.” *Ms. Emily*



Seventh Graders were taken outside for math class to learn how to calculate ratios using nature.

Poinciana Model UN Simulation

The middle school students were studying Westward Expansion during the 1800s through the lens of the following driving question, “What treaties, Supreme Court decisions, belief systems and technologies contributed to the disenfranchisement of minority cultural groups in our society?”

The final demonstration of understanding was an imaginary Model UN Assembly that would have been held during the 1860s. Students represented different countries that were competing to claim land in the New World, whether it was the Louisiana Territory, California, the Caribbean Islands or even the thirteen colonies. Students had to apply the knowledge gained from their research of the period to be able to successfully represent their assigned country in the MUN Congress and lobby for the land in the US.



The MUN delegates voting for each resolution, supporting or opposing each proposal.



Taj Amato-Heape representing the Native Nations.

Upper Elementary Debate

Our 4th-6th grade class is studying the moral implications of colonization during 1600-1800, exploring Native Americans, slavery, witchcraft, land ownership, and religion. For their final demonstration of understanding the project, students have to apply their knowledge and research of the period to understand both sides of debate topics and move into unfamiliar territory of identifying opposing positions and defending positions they don’t support.

They practiced their debate skills through two other more relevant topics, including one topic provided by 12th grade congressional debater, Arthur Frigo: "Should students have Fridays off?" This was the topic for their first practice debate. You can watch the informational debate video Arthur created for the Cedar students here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QOtRCyDwJDw&feature=emb_logo

The second practice debate topic was, "Will Technology Be the End of Mankind?" To prepare, the students listened to the riveting short story by Ray Bradbury, *The Veldt*. They researched their positions and broached topics of artificial intelligence, the ethics of robots and modern warfare.

Debates are a regular part of TRM's Integrated Studies Curriculum. Debating is rigorous and relevant because it encourages high-level, creative, critical thinking skills. According to Arne Duncan, former Secretary of Education, debate is "uniquely suited" to build skills required of modern citizens, including creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and communication.

By incorporating rigor and relevance into our curriculum, not only are our students raising their level of mastery in the acquisition and application of knowledge, but we will never have to hear them ask, "When am I ever going to use this?!"



Patrick Tierney giving his persuasive argument



Upper Elementary Debate



Trevor Metzler debates the affirmative position of the question, "To whom does the land belong?"



Debate Judges