



keep dreaming

EDUCATOR TOOLKIT



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thank you

To our fearless and creative parent and teacher design team,



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The Keep Dreaming Toolkit is the product of your collective wisdom and commitment. You dedicated your time and genius to bringing forth a vision of what was possible for Black children. What you have envisioned is a continuation of the work of those who have come before us; you have decided to create spaces where our children's Black Genius can thrive. Lastly, the Keep Dreaming Toolkit would not be possible without the design brilliance and effort of Dr. Aeran Baskin and Janeen Bryant. Continue to live in your Black Genius!

Thank you,



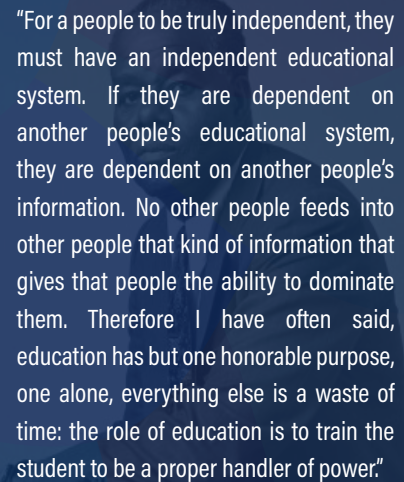
The Keep Dreaming Toolkit stems from a partnership between Village of Wisdom (VOW) and the Center for Racial Equity in Education (CREED).

a message for our readers

Daily, Black children and families navigate the harsh and oppressive realities of systems that were not designed by them or for them. The physical, emotional, and psychic costs of supremacist ideologies impact the identity and self-worth of Black children as learners. As this country comes to a racial reckoning unlike any other in history, Black parents and families strive to create spaces and messages that affirm the racial identity and self-worth of our children.

The goal is simple: create a space to mine and elevate the collective wisdom and expertise of Black parents as creators of culturally and racially affirming environments for our children. Leveraging the cultural wisdom of Black parents as a means to affirm our children's Blackness is an antidote to a world that actively depletes our children's self-worth through systemic racism and interpersonal racial discrimination.

Black parents have a lot of wisdom to share! To our school leaders, we encourage you to create spaces for parents to share insights and expertise. To our educators, we hope that this resource becomes a springboard to affirm the identity and racial pride of your students and to start a conversation with them and their families.



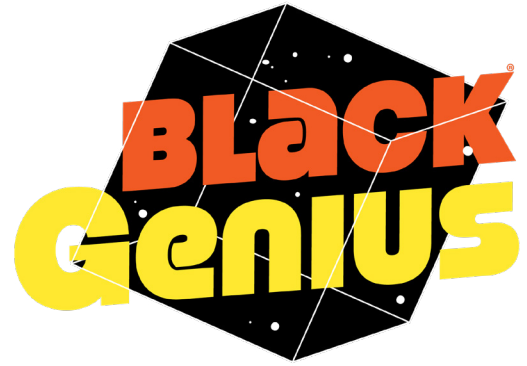
"For a people to be truly independent, they must have an independent educational system. If they are dependent on another people's educational system, they are dependent on another people's information. No other people feeds into other people that kind of information that gives that people the ability to dominate them. Therefore I have often said, education has but one honorable purpose, one alone, everything else is a waste of time: the role of education is to train the student to be a proper handler of power."

Dr. John Henrik Clarke

The time is now.

the black genius framework

The Black Genius Framework is a liberatory approach to whole learner development. The practices in the Keep Dreaming Toolkit align with the framework and aim to allow young people to explore, thrive, and self-actualize. Village of Wisdom developed the Black Genius Framework in partnership with Black parents. The six elements include:



Interest Awareness involves using a child's interests to engage them in learning and includes encouraging them to embrace significant challenges and persist in learning for long periods of time.

Can-Do Attitude is the practice of creating learning environments that reward children who extend themselves beyond what they know, e.g., providing feedback and creating spaces for children to learn from challenges and mistakes.

Multicultural Navigation involves creating a learning environment that explores various cultures in meaningful ways, where the learner discovers new ideas. This includes preparing learners for an increasingly globalized world.

Racial Identity/Pride is the practice of using a Black child's connection to their race and culture to increase the relevance of a learning task. The purpose of this practice is to counteract the negative impact of white supremacist and dominant thinking on the academic self-concept of Black children.

Selective Trust increases child safety and desire to participate in learning by identifying and using actions that build a child's trust in the instructor. This practice especially helps to increase learning participation in activities that require and would benefit from love and creativity.

Social Justice is the practice of creating learning environments that challenge children to analyze social injustices, especially those that are relevant to their communities. The purpose of this practice is to encourage children to devise strategies that create a world of their choosing.

how to use the toolkit

How do I use the Keep Dreaming Toolkit?

The Keep Dreaming Toolkit includes five practices Black parents developed and tried out and then our Educators created lesson plans to match. These lesson plans and practices can help you create a culturally affirming and learning-rich environment for your students. Each lesson plan includes a practice, an explanation, a Black Genius element, as well as the NC Essential Standard and student objective.



In the Keep Dreaming Toolkit you will see, **Try This Out**, where we provide a tip on how to approach the lesson before we detail a lesson plan that incorporates one of five practices. **Level Up** is for students who need differentiation to personalize the lesson at their level. Each lesson plan also includes a suggestion for the grade level it may work best with; however, the practices can be tried across all age groups.

Feedback from parent users told us that each practice can build on the other. While each Lesson Plan in this Toolkit focuses on a different subject, you may be able to incorporate the practices in multiple courses. Try beginning with **Lesson 1, Woosah, Chile**. Helping your students relax first, practice deep breathing, then inviting them to move and connect their body and senses to a task or learning could be a dope daily practice.

We also offer a **Reflection** after each lesson plan to invite you to think about what is working for you and what may need more effort.

Feel free to share your learning with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

#TeachinginColor

the keep dreaming practices

We invite you to review each of the five practices in the Keep Dreaming Toolkit. Each practice will support you in creating a learning environment that affirms your students.



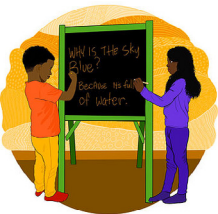
Woosah, Chile

Woosah, Chile invites the learner to release stress, to declutter the mind to increase self-awareness.



Break Free

Break Free invites the learner to connect their body and senses to their surroundings, learning and their identity.



Let's Talk

Let's Talk invites the learner to tap into their curiosity, their questions, and embrace mistakes through authentic self-expression.



Our Story

Our Story invites the learner to define and express themselves creatively without references to stereotypes and systems of oppression.



You Matter

You Matter affirms the learner and invites them to be experts of their own learning, their experiences.

LESSON 1

woosah, chile

BREATHE. THEN BREATHE AGAIN.

Woosah, Chile is the practice of mindfulness. This practice encourages your students to build self-awareness and declutter their minds from stress.



TRY THIS OUT

Lo-Fi Music - Create a playlist of inspirational and/or soothing Lo-Fi music for your students' next learning sessions. Music can create a calm environment for your students. You can play these playlists at the beginning of the day or during study sessions or downtimes

Suggested grade levels: 5-12

LESSON 1

woosah, chile

STRATEGY Mindfulness

**RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR INTEGRATION
(HOW CAN THIS SHOW UP IN A CLASSROOM LESSON OR PRACTICE?):**

Use as a transition or a way for students to reflect on what might be a particularly challenging learning activity.

GRADE RANGE Sixth Grade

SUGGESTED SUBJECT AREA(S) Math

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY ESSENTIAL STANDARD:

Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, surface area, and volume.

NC.6.G.2

Apply and extend previous understandings of the volume of the right rectangular prism to find the volume of right rectangular prism with fractional edge length. Apply this understanding to the context of solving real-world mathematical problems

IDENTIFY ASSETS (CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, PERSONAL)

Cultural (music)

Personal (problem-solving approaches and self-awareness)

LESSON 1

woosah, chile

student objective: I can solve word problems and not get frustrated by using mindfulness.

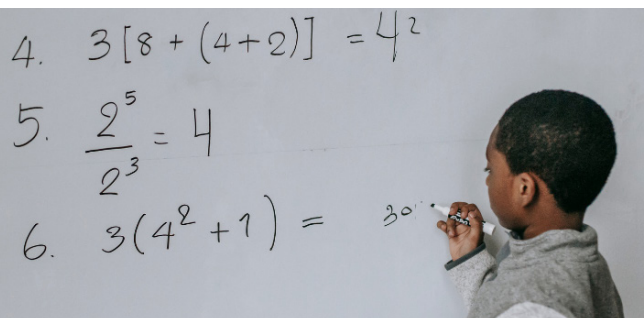
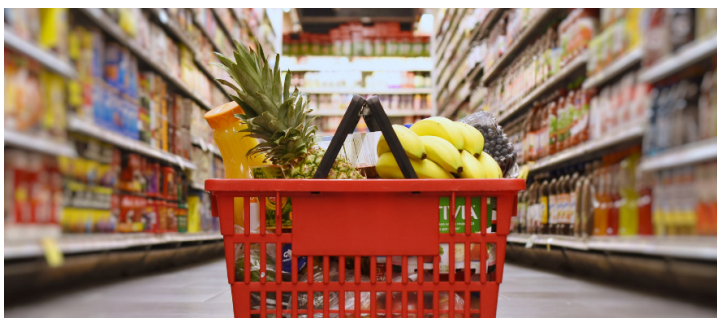
LEARNING EXPERIENCES

THE TEACHER ROLE

- Before beginning volume word problems, have students take a moment and pick a lo-fi song that encourages mindfulness from their playlist or the class playlist.
- At the end of the song, have them visualize what success in their math work will look like and feel like before expressing their gratitude at the chance to try to use what they've learned.
- Remind students of the formulas for calculating volume and demonstrate steps to a sample word problem that uses real-world references.
- If possible, give students a chance to calculate volume using word problems that let them use moving boxes or items from the grocery store that they can manipulate, measure and calculate using proper mathematical concepts.

THE STUDENT ROLE

- After completing the word problems, students journal to a chosen lo-fi song about how doing the problems, measurements and calculations made them feel.
- Encourage students to end class/the session by practicing calming breaths to recenter themselves before moving to the next activity.



LESSON 1

woosah, chile

LEVEL UP

For those who might not have mastered the basics just yet, allow them to pair with another student and verbally explain the start of the word problem task. For example identify that the task is to, "measure the volume of several household items" in a word problem that asks students to choose at least 3 items and practice measuring them.

For those who need it: give a hint where they can find volume on the labels.

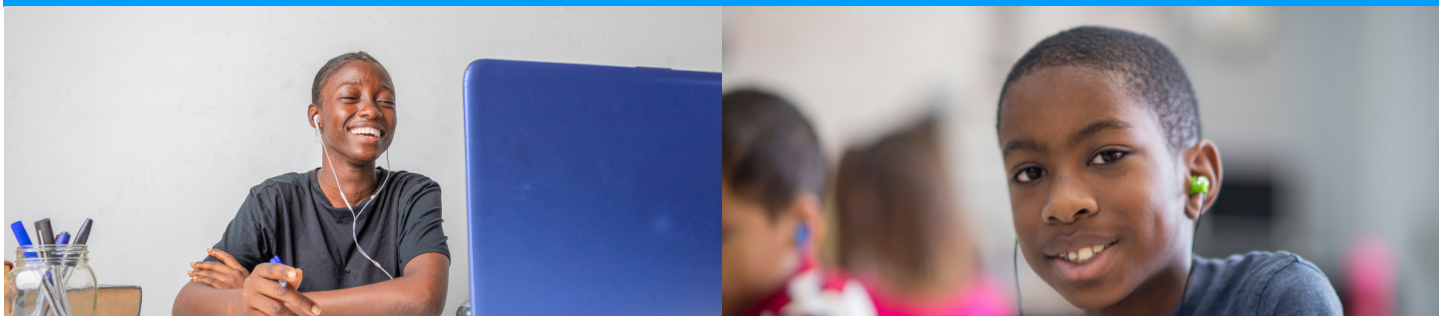
For those who have mastered word problems and solving for volume, allow them to take their learning one step further
Ask: *"Based on your measurements, would you have enough space in the cart for each item? How do you know?"*

Additional Feedback/Comments:

Students may choose to use their headphones to listen to their lo-fi song, or the teacher can play it after the math lesson.

black genius element: **Can-Do Attitude** | the practice of creating a learning environment that rewards children who extend themselves beyond what they know

Many lessons, like solving word problems in math, may cause stress and frustration in learners. A Can-Do Attitude can be reinforced when students have ways to check in with their feelings and manage those feelings (in this case through breathing techniques or relaxing music) as they complete challenging activities.



LESSON 1

teacher reflection

Take a pause and think about how this practice and lesson plan work for you and your students. Taking a minute or two out of your day to reflect can support your growth as an educator.

HOW WOULD I RATE THIS LESSON?

- 1 Not working for me and my students
- 2 Working a little bit for me and my students
- 3 Not sure if it is working
- 4 It is working for me and my students
- 5 It is really working for me and my students

HOW OFTEN WAS I ABLE TO PRACTICE THIS IN A WEEK?

- 1 Only once
- 2 Maybe two times
- 3 About three times
- 4 More than three times

WHAT DID I LIKE ABOUT THIS LESSON?

WHAT DID I STRUGGLE WITH? How can those around me support me in working through this struggle?

HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE OR CHANGE THIS LESSON?

LESSON 2 break free

EVERYTHING YOU NEED IS INSIDE YOU AND AROUND YOU. YOU ARE A CANVAS. BREAK FREE.

Break Free recognizes that students learn and engage the world in multiple ways, e.g. touch, sight, smell, movement. Through this practice, you will encourage your students to explore autonomy and a full sensory experience through the use of their bodies and nature.



TRY THIS OUT

Mix It Up - Invite your students to engage in a topic through multiple senses (taste, touch, sight, hearing, knowing) or “non-traditional ways.”

Invite your students to:

- ◇ Express a poem through sound and color.
- ◇ Observe math in nature.
- ◇ Express their feelings through a dance.

Suggested grade levels: 5-7

LESSON 2

break free

STRATEGY Somatic Learning

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR INTEGRATION (HOW CAN THIS SHOW UP IN A CLASSROOM LESSON OR PRACTICE?):

Movement can help students engage more when they are losing interest or have a lot of information to process. Additionally, as this is a learning standard about movement, it may lend itself to physical demonstrations/depictions of weather systems.

GRADE RANGE Seventh Grade

SUGGESTED SUBJECT AREA(S) Science

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY ESSENTIAL STANDARD:

Understand how the cycling of matter (water and gases) in and out of the atmosphere relates to Earth's atmosphere, weather, and climate and the effects of the atmosphere on humans

7.E.1.3

Explain the relationship between the movement of air masses, and low-pressure systems, and frontal boundaries to storms (including thunderstorms, hurricanes, and tornadoes) and weather conditions that may result.

IDENTIFY ASSETS (CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, PERSONAL)

Personal (imagination, critical thinking, collaboration)

LESSON 2

break free

student objective: I can demonstrate air and gas cycles through movement and show what I know through collaboration.

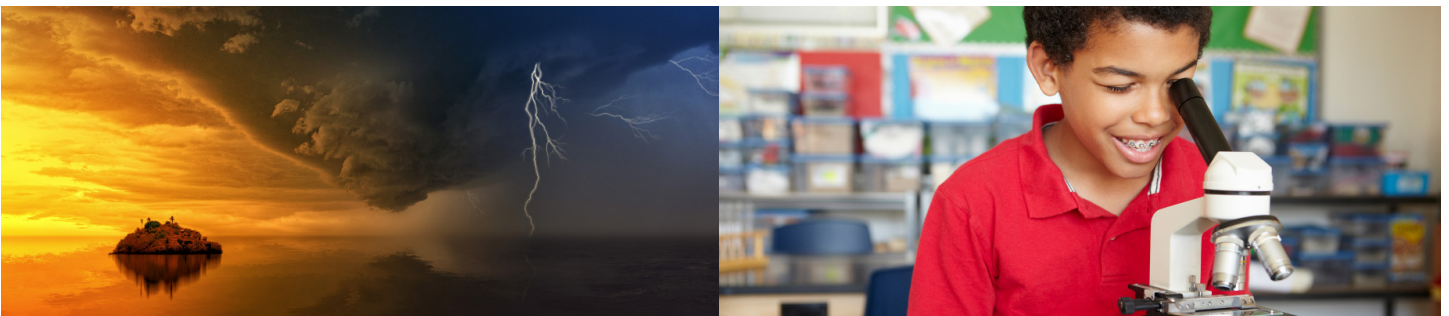
LEARNING EXPERIENCES

THE TEACHER ROLE

- Teacher fills the surface of a soccer ball with questions, descriptions and vocabulary related to weather, the movement of air masses, and low pressure systems. Some questions could include activities where students have to “act out” or demonstrate a related concept.
- Have students stand in a circle. If possible, during a lesson recap, give students the ball to toss round. They have to choose the first question they read on the ball as they pass it.
- Encourage critical thinking and collaboration (i.e. a student can pass the ball to a friend if they need help with a question, but it must get passed back to them to see if they can answer the next question).
- After each round (a right or wrong answer), students move within the circle to change positions.

THE STUDENT ROLE

- Students stand in a circle and pass the soccer ball with written questions on it about air masses and related weather systems or vocabulary.
- As students respond to questions, they should answer with as much detail as possible. If they need help, they can pass the ball to a partner, who must pass it back for the student to try to answer another question. Students rotate in the circle after each round of questions to keep them active and to make sure they can see who is available to pass to.



LESSON 2 break free

LEVEL UP

For students who may not have answers, encourage them to pass the ball to a classmate. If students are shy or have conditions that keep them from standing in the circle, allow them to sit in the circle. Students may also act as score keeper and answer-checker. These roles can add questions on the ball that go directly to the class to encourage their learning/critical thinking.

For students who are excelling, call an audible. This is where they can switch a question on the ball and ask their own.

Additional Feedback/Comments:

Students may also create and submit questions in advance for the ball to increase participation and have more ownership of the game.

black genius element: **Interest Awareness** | the practice of leveraging your student's interest to engage learning

The chances to move and choose the questions, their order, and the recipient adds interest to this science review. Instead of having the teacher direct every question, students can incorporate their own interests and be more fully engaged.



LESSON 2

teacher reflection

Take a pause and think about how this practice and lesson plan work for you and your students. Taking a minute or two out of your day to reflect can support your growth as an educator.

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WHAT DID I LIKE ABOUT THIS LESSON?

WHAT DID I STRUGGLE WITH? How can those around me support me in working through this struggle?

HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE OR CHANGE THIS LESSON?

LESSON 3 let's talk

ENGAGE MY HEART. ENGAGE MY MIND. TALK TO ME.

Let's Talk can create space for your students to define themselves through the use of questions and thoughtful conversation with peers and other adults.



TRY THIS OUT

Sacred Circles - Create spaces for you and your students to share their thoughts through:

- ◇ Free expression
- ◇ Conflict resolution
- ◇ Check-ins and milestones
- ◇ Celebration
- ◇ Feedback



Suggested grade levels: 5-12

LESSON 3 let's talk

STRATEGY Dialogic Interrogation

**RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR INTEGRATION
(HOW CAN THIS SHOW UP IN A CLASSROOM LESSON OR PRACTICE?):**

Encourage students to talk and ask questions about what they are learning and reading.

GRADE RANGE Seventh Grade

SUGGESTED SUBJECT AREA(S) English/Language Arts

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY ESSENTIAL STANDARD:

SL.7.1.c

Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.

IDENTIFY ASSETS (CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, PERSONAL)

Cultural (connect to texts that represent student cultures)

Personal (build on conversations and discussion skills)

LESSON 3 let's talk

student objective: I can discuss how I related to a text or I can express how a literature-based activity made me think and feel.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

THE TEACHER ROLE

After reading a class text, the teacher shares dialogic question stems for students (place on the board or chart paper).

- "I agree/disagree with ____ because..."
- "I have a different opinion..."
- "I have something to add..."
- "Can you explain your answer?"

Once students show they comprehend the plot and/or theme, the teacher invites them to join the class in a discussion about how the text made them feel. What part of the text did they most relate to personally (text-to-self)? What part did they connect to larger world issues (text-to-world)? Did the text remind them of anything else they have read or seen or heard (text-to-text)? Once students have put their ideas in the space, encourage a dialogue with each other and the teacher using the question stems noted above.

Once the discussion is over, the teacher can invite students to talk about what they enjoyed (or did not enjoy) about the text or the lessons/activities associated with it.

THE STUDENT ROLE

Students read and then prepare for discussion. Particularly, they know the questions will be:

- What part of the text did you most relate to personally (text-to-self)?
- What part did you connect to larger world issues (text-to-world)?
- Did the text remind you of anything else you have read or seen or heard (text-to-text)?

Students then move into using the dialogic stems as they listen to their classmates' responses.

LESSON 3 let's talk

LEVEL UP

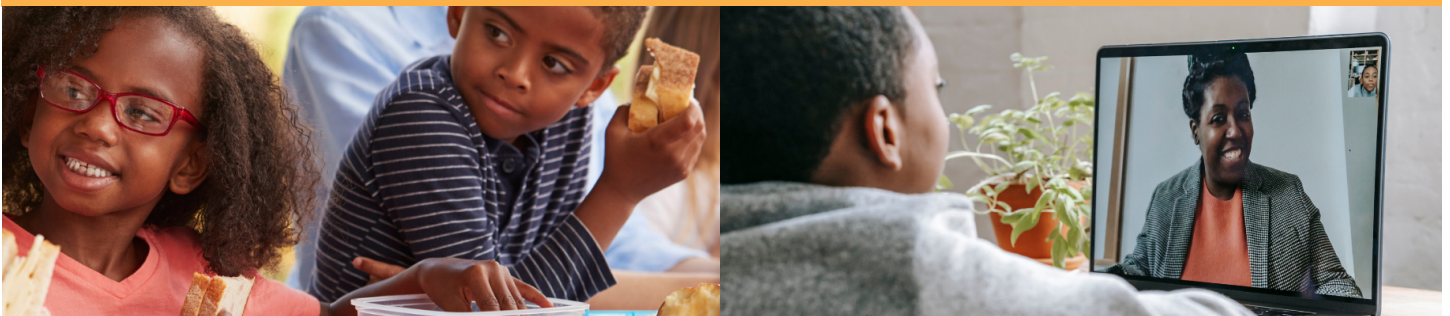
Students may write out their responses and read them if it is easier for them to think and process. This might be necessary as the class learns how to participate and lead in this type of discussion.

Additional Feedback/Comments:

This discussion framework can grow as students build their ability to enter into dialogic interrogation. Students can ask the starter questions about the text based on what they are curious about. They may even discuss why they think the text was chosen for the class.

black genius element: **Selective Trust** | the practice of increasing your student's safety and desire to participate in learning by using actions that build a student's trust.

Creating trust with students means exhibiting a willingness to let them take the lead in their learning and giving them space to share their thoughts and insights. The dialogic stems in this lesson provide students a framework for how to talk with one another while engaging the ideas the entire class has encountered. The more students see you will listen to them and their classmates, the sooner academic trust can be established.



LESSON 3

teacher reflection

Take a pause and think about how this practice and lesson plan work for you and your students. Taking a minute or two out of your day to reflect can support your growth as an educator.

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WHAT DID I LIKE ABOUT THIS LESSON?

WHAT DID I STRUGGLE WITH? How can those around me support me in working through this struggle?

HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE OR CHANGE THIS LESSON?

LESSON 4

our story

**AND NOTHING, NO CHALLENGE, NO DISTANCE,
NO SINGLE MOMENT, CAN HOLD YOU BACK.**

Our Story comes from creative expression and creates opportunities for your students to experience the full and dynamic experience of Black people. This allows your students to resist stereotypical definitions of Blackness and understand that Black stories include triumph, victory, and hope.



TRY THIS OUT

Taking history off the page and ensuring that students are able to see the intersections between events and people help to broaden the narrative they get about American history and the impact of Black Americans.

Suggested grade levels: 5-12

LESSON 4

our story

STRATEGY

Exploding Boundaries

RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR INTEGRATION (HOW CAN THIS SHOW UP IN A CLASSROOM LESSON OR PRACTICE?):

Expanding the individuals, events, and experiences commonly covered opens up entirely new narratives and connections for students who are looking for cultural relevance in class materials.

GRADE RANGE

Eighth Grade

SUGGESTED SUBJECT AREA(S)

Social Studies

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY ESSENTIAL STANDARD:

Change, Citizenship, Rights, Political Action: Understand the role that citizen participation plays in societal change

8.C&G.2.1

Evaluate the effectiveness of various approaches used to effect change in North Carolina and the United States (e.g. picketing, boycotts, sit-ins, voting, marches, holding elected office and lobbying).

IDENTIFY ASSETS (CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, PERSONAL)

Community (oral histories and collective memory)

Personal expression (art, music, etc.)

LESSON 4

our story

student objective: I can connect history to the present, the future, or to myself.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

THE TEACHER ROLE

- Compile a list of “citizen participants” including some that students choose from in the textbook or that they are familiar with from their family/community.
- Once the list is made, allow students to pick one and give them the option to creatively express how they understand the individual chosen and their actions. This could be a song, an illustration, podcast, comic, etc. Let the students be creative in picking the medium as this is a creativity-based project.
- Encourage critical thinking and creativity: what is the best way to represent this individual and their interactions? Students must provide a caption (think museum or gallery) that explains why they chose the person, why they chose the medium, how this person affected history, and how they see this person’s impact today and within the next 20 years.

THE STUDENT ROLE

- Students submit citizen participants to teacher. They then choose which person they would like to capture and explain creatively.
- Using their imagination/creativity, students craft a project that helps the class understand the actions and impact of the chosen citizen participant and how their actions changed society.
- Students must provide a caption (think museum or gallery) that explains why they chose the person, why they chose the medium, how this person affected history, and how they see this person’s impact today and within the next 20 years.



LESSON 4

our story

LEVEL UP

Students may need to collaborate to satisfy all components of the project. Allow them to do so if it appeals to their learning styles and needs.

For students needing an additional challenge, encourage them to create a project about how they might personally use citizen participation to cause societal change today or in the near future. What is the issue? What might be their stance? Have them connect their future self to a citizen participant in the past or present.

black genius element: **Social Justice** | the practice of encouraging children to devise strategies that create a world of their choosing.

Events in history and social studies can seem so long ago or so disconnected to everyday realities. When students are encouraged to connect back then to now, or to select the changemakers they get to learn more about, possibilities are widened. New stories--our stories--get told and new futures can be imagined.



LESSON 4

teacher reflection

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HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE OR CHANGE THIS LESSON?

LESSON 5

you matter

AND IF YOU EVER FORGET, WE WILL BE RIGHT HERE TO REMIND YOU.

You Matter is a practice that recognizes your students as the experts of their own experiences and affirms them as individuals.



TRY THIS OUT

Subject Matter Expert - Ask your students to choose a subject that they would like to learn more about and/or help teach (e.g., use questions like, What are you the expert of? Can you teach me?). Let them dive into the subject through research, activities, and/or story-making. Encourage your students to share through a presentation or by teaching others.

Suggested grade levels: 5-12

LESSON 5

you matter

STRATEGY Affirming Identities

**RECOMMENDED PRACTICE FOR INTEGRATION
(HOW CAN THIS SHOW UP IN A CLASSROOM LESSON OR PRACTICE?):**

Embedding choice gives students a chance to connect what they like and know with new skills. Affirming a student's choice and individual preferences engages them in the classroom and makes it possible for them to connect more deeply to a concept.

GRADE RANGE Eighth Grade

SUGGESTED SUBJECT AREA(S) English/Language Arts

NC STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY ESSENTIAL STANDARD:

Range of Reading and Level of Complexity

RL.8.10

Actively engage in reading for the purpose of connecting prior knowledge and experiences to text for sustained periods of time.

IDENTIFY ASSETS (CULTURAL, COMMUNITY, PERSONAL)

Personal (individual interests and talents)

Cultural (ideas and themes that resonate within a student's home culture)

LESSON 5

you matter

student objective: I can connect my prior knowledge to what I have read and express it through my own talents.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

THE TEACHER ROLE

- Teacher allows students to pick a book/text they would like to read, and the students design how they would teach the theme, literary devices, characters, etc. to the class as the entire class embarks on a crowdsourced Book Talk/tour.
- Teacher may help by providing a list of books by genre or topic sourced from school library or other book list.

THE STUDENT ROLE

Students choose a book based on the topic of their interest or from a broad list that speaks to them. After being given class time to read and plan their Book Talk, (short lesson on the book/text), students deliver their lesson during a presentation day.

Possible portions of Book Talk:

- Title
- Author
- Publisher and Publication Year
- Plot (*be brief but specific; try to avoid spoilers*)
- Theme and how it connects to the student-teacher
- Key passage/quote
- Interactive activity to help class connect with some portion of the book (*its characters, conflicts, plot elements, literary devices, etc.*)
- Recommendation of who should read it



Students will be able to personalize their presentation for what they think matters most and best reflects how they are subject matter experts on this book/text.

LESSON 5

you matter

LEVEL UP

Students who are not strong readers can be given the opportunity to pick a shorter text or read the text of a song/movie of their choosing before teaching it to the class.

Students who are more proficient can be encouraged to not only talk about the elements of the text but can bring up additional context or items as part of their Book Talk.

Additional Feedback/Comments:

For added interest and to spur creativity, give students access to sample Book Talks from authors such as Jason Reynolds or Angie Thomas. Students may also look at book reviews from TikTok or YouTube that the instructor deems subject-matter appropriate as well as age appropriate, or classic episodes of *Reading Rainbow*.

black genius element: Interest Awareness | the practice of leveraging a student's interest to engage learning.

Students' interest in an activity, book, or concept can magnify their ability to complete a task and make it their own. A Book Talk combines choice, student expertise and the chance to have ideas and talents affirmed by the larger group.



LESSON 5

teacher reflection

Take a pause and think about how this practice and lesson plan work for you and your students. Taking a minute or two out of your day to reflect can support your growth as an educator.

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- 3 About three times
- 4 More than three times

WHAT DID I LIKE ABOUT THIS LESSON?

WHAT DID I STRUGGLE WITH? How can those around me support me in working through this struggle?

HOW MIGHT I IMPROVE OR CHANGE THIS LESSON?

about us



Ensuring equitable education opportunities means shifting the policy atmosphere and advocating for changes that are generational in their impact. CREED prioritizes expert, race-conscious research on North Carolina-specific education issues. It raises the collective

awareness of the general public while inspiring and elevating the work of educators who are ready to alter practices and protocols to become more equitable.

CREED executes a rigorous research agenda that informs the call for transformation at the structural level for students in Pre-K, K-12, and post-secondary.

To learn more, visit www.creed-nc.org

The Black Genius Framework, developed by Village of Wisdom, is a liberatory approach to whole learner development.

Learn more about our partner organization, Village of Wisdom, here: www.villageofwisdom.org

The quotes in the Keep Dreaming Toolkit were gathered from the Black Genius Breathe Workbook and Video.



keep dreaming