

4th Grade Geography at the King Open

Two fourth grade teachers at the King Open have creatively integrated essential geographic understandings into community building. On the first day of school, **Amy Monkiewicz** and **Caleb Dubofsky** gave students maps and blank nametags in the shape of states. Students found the name of their state and wrote it clearly on the nametag, along with their own name. Students had conversations about maps as they got to know each other.

On the next day, the class saw a range of different maps on the wall. Students were asked to put a sticker on a map indicating a place visited in the summer. Before placing stickers, students discussed ways to determine which map was the logical one for their sticker, agreeing that it would not make sense to use a world map for a sticker indicating a visit to Jamaica Plain. As students placed their stickers and shared their summer experiences, they were demonstrating an important understanding: that maps serve different purposes. Later in the week, students collaborated to create a collage map of the United States, continuing to build group skills and familiarity with the nation's geography.

The following week, the teachers used morning meeting to reinforce geography lessons. Students used sticky notes to record what they noticed about a south-oriented world map projected on the screen. In Monkiewicz's class, observations included:

North is facing down.
South is north.
West is on the right.
Australia is facing up.
It's squished out of scale.
A lot of stuff is on the bottom.

The morning circle allowed an opportunity to explore those observations. Students in Dubofsky's class wrangled over what is really "up" on a globe, and if there is a "right way" to make a map. They discussed the difference between calling the south-oriented map "wrong" versus "not how it is usually written." They also learned to use geographic terms ("north" and "south" instead of "up" and "down"). Students waved their hands, eager to participate in the lively conversation, and sighed when it was time to move on to other lessons. As Monkiewicz, Dubofsky and their students showed, geographic understanding can be developed as teachers are building their classroom community and developing routines.

Did you know? The CPS history and social studies curriculum can be found here:
https://sites.google.com/a/cpsd.us/history_social_science/home?pli=1



Amy Monkiewicz with fourth grade students at the King Open. Photograph by Julie Craven.

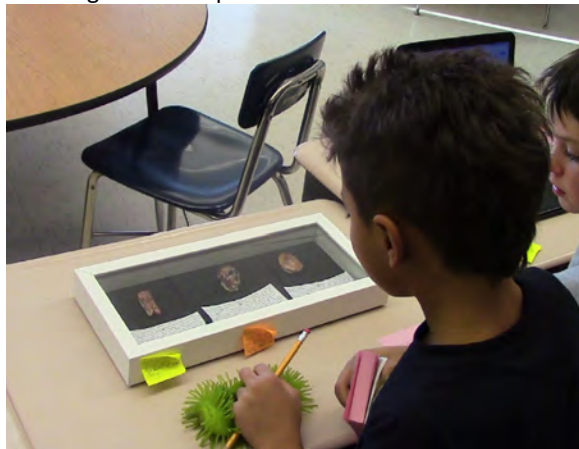
Collaborations Enhance 6th Grade History

The Innovation Agenda aims to build a rigorous, consistent curriculum for all students, thus strengthening educational equity. To support this goal, the History and Social Science Department continuously revises its upper school curriculum, using the principles of **Understanding by Design (UbD)**. One result has been two exciting new experiences for 6th grade students.

In the fall, all 6th graders completed a common performance assessment on world geography. Building off of a pilot project from last year, History Coach **Julie Craven** and Instructional Technology Specialist **Ingrid Gustafson** collaborated with teachers to develop a "**Virtual Travel Brochure**." Sixth grade students chose a country to research and then used googlemaps to create an online travel brochure that invited Cambridge residents to explore their country. Teachers and students collaborated with the Library Technology Specialists to create engaging projects in which they used the following skills:

- researching, including accessing data bases
- paraphrasing
- applying the five themes of geography
- navigating new technology
- writing persuasively
- using evidence effectively

Ola and Amigos students produced their brochures in Portuguese and Spanish.



The 6th grade teachers – **Michael Batt** (Amigos), **Leslie Kramer** (VLUS), **Vanusa Lima** (Ola), **Gisel Saillant** (PAUS), **Allison Scully** (CSUS), and **Carol Worsham** (PAUS) - took advantage of googledocs to

share supporting materials they developed, strengthening the project as they implemented it. The Science Department hopes to build on this collaboration with the technology department for a 6th grade project later this year.



The 6th grade team also collaborated with Harvard's **Peabody Museum of Natural History** to create "**From Foragers to Farmers**." **Leslie Kramer** worked with a team led by the Peabody's **Polly Hubbard** to develop pre and post field trip lessons to support a joint history and science fieldtrip to the Peabody and to Harvard's Museum of Natural History in early January. The history portion of the fieldtrip involved students working like archaeologists by examining artifacts to determine if they came from forager or farming communities. Students applied artifact and fossil examination skills that they had developed in their Early Humans unit. You can read more about the trip in Cambridge Wicked Local article, "Cambridge students visit prehistoric times through Foragers to Farmers program." (<http://cambridge.wickedlocal.com/article/20150121/NEWS/150129279/0/SEARCH>)



*Photos of 6th grade RAUC students working on their final projects for the Early Human Unit courtesy of **Gisel Saillant**.*

National History Day at CPS

For several years, history teacher **Dr. Barbara Weaver** has been guiding CRLS students as they create projects for **National History Day** (NHD). Her dedication to this endeavor continued this year, as she coached students writing essays exploring this year's theme, "Leadership and Legacy in History." On December 22nd, CRLS students participated in a school-based competition; judges included school committee members **Fran Cronin** and **Patty Nolan**. CRLS students **Ben Austin** and **Karolyn Lee** tied for first place, and several other CRLS students placed in the competition.

Paula Feynman, CPS Academic Challenge and Enrichment Manager, is teaching National History Day electives at the Putnam Avenue Upper School and the Cambridge Street Upper School. At PAUS, she is supported by Library Technology Specialist **Marianne Bees**. Eight students are participating in the NHD competition:

- **Simone Hickman** researched Ruby Bridges and the struggle for civil rights.
- **Camar Kinch** created an exhibit entitled "Robert Rogers: Revolutionizing War in North America," which examined the scouting unit Rogers established during the French and Indian War.
- **Matthew Bruce** created an exhibit that takes visitors on a personal March of Freedom, asking them to consider the teachings of Martin Luther King and to choose how they will respond to discrimination.
- **Alice Jacob** wrote a research paper on local feminist Margaret Fuller, which urges us to carry on her legacy of independence through education.
- **Owen Fowler** and **Wolide Yusef** researched Genghis Khan, discovering that, in addition to creating a vast military empire, he also reestablished cross-continental trade.
- **Sam Kravitz** and **Zev Dickstein** interviewed many journalists to create a documentary highlighting the work of Ben Bradlee, who, as Executive Editor of the *Washington Post*, struggled to maintain freedom of the press.

Our scholars' work will be judged in the regional National History Day competition in Stoneham on February 28th. We wish them luck!



Elementary Teachers Visit Moakley Courthouse for *Children Discovering Justice* Training

How do we support students in becoming engaged, empathetic citizens in a democracy? Cambridge elementary teachers utilize curriculum from **Children Discovering Justice** (CDJ). Using a literacy-based model, CDJ trains teachers to empower children "to stand up for their beliefs, resolve differences in constructive ways, and develop creative solutions to problems." (discoveringjustice.org)



Each fall, the History and Social Science Department sends teachers to a two-day CDJ training at the John Joseph Moakley U.S. Courthouse in Boston. Participating teachers receive curricular materials and engage in activities to deepen their understanding of the principles of our justice system and how to make them relevant to younger students. This October's participants included:

- Amigos teachers **Anna Dominesy** (3rd), **Kathy Conlon** (4th) and **Sarah Collazo** (5th)
- King School teachers **Erin Dickerson** (2nd), **Julie Schineller** (3rd) and **Szu-Ming Li** (3rd)
- King Open teachers **Luisa Raposa** (3rd/4th) and **Caleb Dubofsky** (4th)
- **Emily Kocandrlle** (2nd) and **Samantha Headley** (literacy coach) from the Morse
- **Karon Gibson-Mueller** (1st) from the Baldwin.



Karon Gibson-Mueller, right, discussing with a Boston colleague. Photograph courtesy of CDJ.

All Cambridge elementary schools have teachers who have been trained in CDJ. When the department begins its curriculum review cycle in the fall, we anticipate incorporating CDJ principles into improved **Understanding by Design** (UbD) units.

Local Partnership Enhances Civic Education

The Cambridge Public Schools has a long-standing partnership with **Facing History and Ourselves** (FHAO), a Brookline-based organization that provides professional development to teachers around the world. Their aim is to raise awareness about the important choices that citizens make as participants in the evolving human story. FHAO encourages educators to explore the Holocaust and other genocides, as well as struggles for civil rights, with a goal of enabling students to be well-informed “upstanders,” as opposed to passive bystanders.



Under the Innovation Agenda, all 8th grade students in CPS explore the FHAO “**Choices in Little Rock**” curriculum at the end of school year, as part of the “Civics and Power: The Individual and Society” unit.

Every year, the department sends teachers to professional development run by FHAO. Last summer 8th grade teacher **Jason Everhart** (RAUC) participated in an online course on Little Rock, and CRLS teachers **Maggie Dailey** and **Elisabeth Macias** participated in “Race and Membership” and “Holocaust and Human Behavior”.

This fall, Ms. Dailey piloted a “**Holocaust and Human Behavior**” elective at CRLS. **Stephanie Richardson**, a FHAO associate, supports her, the 8th grade team and other CPS teachers in implementing the FHAO approach and using specific curricula.

CPS Students View *Selma*

Several schools have organized fieldtrips to take students to see *Selma*, the epic film about Dr. Martin Luther King and the struggle for voting rights. On March 3rd, some CRLS students will see a special showing at the John F. Kennedy library in Boston.



CRLS teacher **Cecilia Hylton** (right) at a recent FHAO workshop on the Armenian Genocide. Photograph courtesy of Facing History and Ourselves.

Here is what CPS teachers have said about their work with FHAO:

“The FHAO work around Race and Membership provided the critical background information and materials - and FHAO staff support through Stephanie Richardson - to have students continue learning about Human Origins and related issues, including confusions, racism and downright falsehoods, all in the name of racial superiority, dehumanization and oppression. Using primary sources, students learned about and discussed Charles Darwin and Wallace’s ideas regarding evolution and evidence-based science, and resistance these ideas still encounter to this day.”

- **Leslie Kramer**, 6th grade, VLUS

“Through taking FHAO courses, I have gained better understanding of how to connect the eras and events we study to universal themes about human behavior. Students find the FHAO lessons and materials we do in class to be meaningful, ethically engaging, and rigorous. I love FHAO!”

- **Elisabeth Macias**, CRLS

“I believe awareness of social justice issues is essential to global citizenship, and as I’ve tried to incorporate them more into my classroom, I’ve found that FHAO provides a great framework, relevant resources, and support in order for me to help guide students as they navigate challenging topics.”

- **Jenny Chung**, 8th grade, PAUS