

Morven Park Center for Civic Impact: School Year Reflection

By Alecia Bryner: Education Program Coordinator



Last summer, the Morven Park Center for Civic Impact (MPCCI) team was hard at work planning for a school year that held many unknowns. As a partner with Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS), our mission is to provide students with authentic, real-world experiences that help them develop the skills needed to become active and engaged community members. These experiences, which typically take place in the classroom or during field trips to Morven Park, require a great deal of planning, collaboration, and communication.

As we tried to determine how we could best help during extraordinary circumstances, our thought processes began with a lot of questions:

- Will the students be back in the classroom at all this school year? If so, will we be invited?
- Will teachers still be following the same curriculum pacing?
- Will teachers want, or even have time to provide, an adapted MPCCI lesson for their students?

So, following the sage advice to “hope for the best and plan for the worst,” we started planning for the most drastic measures. We assumed that all LCPS students would be virtual learners for the entire school year and that Morven Park Educators would not have any direct interactions.

Next, we took all our K–12 lessons, including the emergency remote lessons we developed during the spring semester, and updated them to be more engaging and useful within the virtual classroom. Extensive research was required to learn about different applications and resources that teachers find most useful for sharing content and encouraging collaboration online. Most of our lessons took the form of interactive Google slides that could double as presentations and collaborative workbooks. The goal was to make each lesson easy to navigate and adaptable to the tools already in use in the classroom.

With all the lessons reimagined, the next step was to promote the materials to partner teachers as a complimentary resource to their curriculum. We must have done something right, because we had 2,522 LCPS student participants, 7,246 total interactions with our lessons and extension materials, and 684 students who took part in virtual Q&A sessions hosted by MPCCI Educators. While we didn’t reach our usual 8,000+ in-person participant goal, we were thrilled to be able to interact with the students and we consider it a huge success!

When asked what they liked most about the digital material, and whether they made any changes to help students better understand the material, participating teachers provided the following feedback regarding the MPCCI lessons they used this school year:

Woodland Explorers



"We appreciated the ability to provide an educational opportunity for both Distance Learning and Hybrid students, that combined Project Based Learning with the Morven Park educator team. The live follow up session with a Morven Park educator to answer student questions was a fantastic idea! Our first-grade students loved the opportunity to interact with a Park educator...." –**First Grade Teacher, Catoclin Elementary School**

Soil Stewards

"I loved that all the material was ready to teach and easily accessible. The lesson plans were very straight forward and easy to follow... [We] made the curriculum more interactive for the students by converting it to NearPod.... The digital lessons brought the fun of Morven Park right into my classroom and the kids loved it!" –**Third Grade Teacher, Rolling Ridge Elementary School**

The Kitchen Table

Stars & Stripes

"We enjoyed having materials that were used in person turned into digital content. Since we were familiar with the content that was delivered to our classes in previous years...we [were] able to modify them to meet the needs [of] our unique school year.... We modified them into google forms to allow students to check for understanding and put them into slideshows to allow for collaboration.... We appreciate the efforts that your organization does to support education in LCPS." –**Seventh Grade Teacher, J.L. Simpson Middle School**

The feedback suggests that the materials were helpful for teachers in the classroom, and were flexible enough to fit the applications familiar to students. Even though it was a year of unknowns for everyone, planning ahead and maintaining partnerships with teachers allowed MPCCI to meet our goal of helping local students build their civic skills. But the work doesn't stop there! In a post-

COVID world, we anticipate that public education may look very different in the years to come and we are already hard at work planning for the next big chapter.

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