The Magic in Me

Project Overview

"Why are you wearing boy clothes?" As though the student committed some horrible mistake by wearing a pair of pants and a button down shirt. "Boys are so loud and rough." As though not one boy could be quiet and sensitive, or as though no girl could also be loud and aggressive on the playground.

These comments are actual words spoken by our third graders this year, and tell a story about social norms and stereotypes that exist within our school community and are reflected from the larger community around us. This project has been designed to confront these social norms and stereotypes, and empower students to define who they want to be.Major department stores have girls and boys sections for clothes and toys. What messages are being sent to those that may want to play with a toy or wear clothes not in "their" particular department. We will define gender stereotypes, and discuss the consequences of stereotypes in our lives through literature, digital media and class discussions.

One vehicle for studying gender stereotypes will be through fairy tales. Students will study many fairy tales and then write a new fairy tale that confronts gender stereotypes (e.g., The Paper Bag Princess). Another vehicle will be through art. Students will create masks that reveal both the person they show the world every day and the hidden self (or who they wish to be).

Our exhibition is scheduled for December 18th. It will feature an art gallery displaying student masks, followed by a time to meet the artists: hear their fairytales, reflections, and other portfolio work.

> "Learning is not just about accumulating knowledge; it is a process of identity development, as students decide who they are and want to be. (Wenger 1998)"   - as quoted by Jo Boaler in *Mathematical Mindsets*

| ESSENTIAL QUESTION	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	ESSENTIAL QUESTION	DRIVING QUESTION
What social norms and stereotypes exist in our community?	Who am I?	How can literature contribute to and challenge stereotypes?	As advocates, how can we create a more inclusive community?

Student Products

- Masks with the exterior reflecting the person they present or show to the world, and the interior reflecting their dream Me! (who they want to be).
- Fairytales with a main character that has depth and challenges social norms (instead of conforms).
- Spoken word: 6-word memoirs, poems, reflections about who they are and how their masks represent them.
- Portfolios: collections of process work.
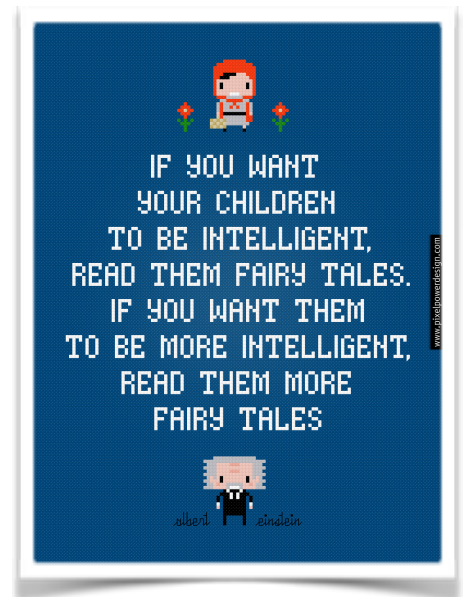
Student Learning Goals

CCS Reading Literature Standards

3.1 Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

3.3 Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

3.7 Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).

CCS Writing Standards

3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

3.3 Write narrative to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCS Mathematics Standards

Survey, gather, represent, and interpret data.

Social Justice Standards (courtesy of Teaching Tolerance)

Diversity 7. Students will develop language and knowledge to accurately and respectfully describe how people (including themselves) are both similar to and different from each other and others in their identity groups.

Diversity 9. Students will respond to diversity by building empathy, respect, understanding and connection.

Justice 11. Students will recognize stereotypes and relate to people as individuals rather than representatives of groups.

Action 16. Students will express empathy when people are excluded or mistreated because of their identities and concern when they themselves experience bias.