

LANGUAGE ARTS

We combine several classes in language arts so that we can group students together to access their relevant learning goals. In addition, this gives the students more book options when it is time to choose novels. In the Fall trimester, we keep our fourth graders self-contained as we get to know them as readers and writers. During this term, the 5/6 graders are combined and the 7/8th graders are combined for literature. During the Winter Trimester, the 4/5 is combined and the 6/7/8 is combined for their novel groups. In the final trimester, the 4/5 is combined and the 6/7 is combined while the 8th grade is in a group of their own. During this term, the 8th grade combines literature with humanities as they look back across their years at TRCS and how they have grown and changed.

Reading

Each trimester is focused upon a different genre of literature (i.e. Science fiction, drama, mysteries, poetry, historical fiction, etc.) Through short stories, novelettes, articles, and/or short selections, students participate in whole group experiences to develop a working definition of the focus genre for that term. Once the class has established the language necessary to explore a genre, students are given several book options where they choose the one that intrigues them the most. Groups of eight-twelve students form around the novel that they chose to create small discussion groups. These groups each have a teacher who acts as a facilitator for these discussions. The older the students involved, the more self-directed these groups become. Through their work with teachers, students learn to create generalizations/opinions from the text and also to support them through direct citations.

Writing

Again, we find it best to focus on a particular genre of writing each trimester (Personal Narrative, Essays, Imaginative, Persuasion, Poetry, etc.). In general, we use a Writer's Workshop model, where students set goals, create writing, conference with teachers, revise and edit and eventually, publish their work. We integrate grammar and mechanics lessons throughout the experience where students learn the intricacies of proper form.

MATH

We use Singapore Math for our 4th grade learners and The Connected Math Program for grades 5-8. While the Connected Math Program is typically taught in 3 years (8 concept books per year), we found it better to slow the process down, begin in 5th grade and complete 6 books per year. These books are on a grade specific rotational cycle so that all students complete all books. Students who prove mastery are offered the option to complete essential pieces of the books they would miss and advance a year in instruction. In 8th grade, these students complete the High School Geometry textbook adopted by our district.

Connected Math Grades 5 - 8

This NTME approved program does a phenomenal job of blending exploration with direct application to the real world. A strength of this program lies in its emphasis on students explaining the logic of their approach and detailing their pathway in solving problems.

This program consists of 24 books, each of which focuses on a genre of math (i.e. algebra,

geometry, statistics, probability, etc.) We have found that these books do a beautiful job of both building upon one another and providing higher level thinking skills through direct application to real world problems.

Geometry

Students advanced in mathematics have the opportunity to complete their freshman year Geometry course during their eighth grade year at TRCS using the District adopted materials.

This group tends to be smaller (6-10 students). As a result, students are able to get ample one-on-one assistance as they explore the various forms of proofs and constructions found in Euclidean Geometry.

SCIENCE & SOCIAL STUDIES

To simplify instruction, we combine benchmarks for the 4/5 graders together and the benchmarks for the 6/7/8 graders together. We then create a two year cycle for our lower grades and a three year cycle for our middle school students where all required content is covered within the cycle. This allows for cross grade sharing of information, as well as, combined celebrations at the unit culmination.

The structure for these units is provided for teachers. We have found it most effective to create several smaller “modules” within each term. Each module provides teachers with the benchmarks to be covered, the background information required and a map of assessment strategies. Teachers are then responsible for creating the daily activities within this work.

Again, as in all of our curricular areas, an emphasis is placed on application through real world issues. When students explore historical events, our instructors push to understand the ramifications of these occurrences on our present day. There is an emphasis on community and service to the local areas. It is our priority to utilize local resources and experts to help our students explore the world around them.

ART

The arts provide an excellent avenue for exploring human expression in all subject areas. They provide an opportunity for students to understand a way in which math, science, and history combine to create beauty. For this reason, the arts are embedded within all of our learning. In addition, we offer the following classes where the arts are offered as a separate discipline.

Disciplined Based Art Education (D.B.A.E.) provides the framework for our Art lesson. Students learn the historical context of a piece, or movement - what led up to three pieces and what changes stemmed from it. Students are instructed in the basic elements of art (line, form, shape, etc.), and taught to use them as a basis for aesthetically scanning works. Each lesson involves viewing masters' works understanding its context and then using this learning to produce their own work.

P.E.

Physical Education is largely an off site experience for us. We travel to the local parks to complete outside units and rent space from a local soccer arena. Each year our students complete a swimming unit at the Oregon City Pool. In addition, we have completed classes off site in gymnastics, basketball and Tae Kwon Do. Our Spring elective courses are entirely PE

oriented and have included topics such as Yoga, football, basketball, Running, Cheerleading, Aerobics, etc..

TECHNOLOGY

Our building is now fully wireless; allowing our laptop computers and Chromebooks full internet access. All of our computers have Windows 8 and students are each assigned a Google Account for Education. We also have iPads available for student use in the classrooms. Teachers use a wide variety of e-learning resources to enhance the curriculum, as well.