

CURATION

HUMAN RESTORATION PROJECT



MAY, 2019

#1

**CELEBRATING THE
WORK OF STUDENTS.**



Often, the priorities of a school are representative of what they choose to display. Many feature commonalities in their hallways:

- A prominent trophy case for athletics
- Framed pictures of athletes and record-holders from over the years
- Required / expected "public service announcements" on everything from suicide awareness to ACT/SAT preparedness
- Instances of the student handbook and/or rules displayed (sometimes with highlights to common infractions)
- A treasure trove of inspirational word posters featuring stock imagery
- Bulletin boards and cork boards with a plethora of randomly placed student events and announcements
- A banner featuring a school's standardized test score ranking or certification (if it's decent)

Notably, this doesn't reflect the overall outcome that educators care about according to their mission. What about academics, creativity, "the whole student", emotion, leadership, drive, determination, and more? In fact, combined together these are arguably soul draining. What message does this communicate to students? "Our school cares about great athletes, our test scores, and you obeying us." This is not to state that athletics shouldn't matter to your school, but there's so much more!

We're going to walk through how to make a welcoming, student-centered environment that values academics and creativity, which engages students in wanting to join the school's community.

OUR SCHOOL FEATURES...

Large, interactive displays of student work

Art that changes a school from a prison to one of culture and acceptance

Classrooms which reflect both the students of the class and the teacher

Places for student clubs and activities to spread their message in a unique way

A "living museum" of past projects and their objectives

Works from all members of the student body, not just "traditional achievers"

With proper curation, a student will have more buy-in to the community - feeling more welcomed and accepted. There's more opportunities to see what others have done (and value it), not to mention more buy-in inherently as students cooperate to build the school's environment. Just like a well-built workplace, schools that house strong positive messages, creative displays, and an inclusive environment are more accommodating and less stressful.

It becomes easier to attract well-trained staff ("look how impressive this is!") and current members are more energized to outdo each other's projects. In fact, this type of school encourages project-based learning, the embracing of art, school clubs, and having an authentic audience. You'll attract outside interest: potential partners, community members, and tour groups. If you build it, they will come.

Check out these pictures (intentionally anonymous) alongside schools focused on curation. It's easier to show than tell:

*Bleak
Monotone
Standardized
Sterile
Prison-like
Cold
Traditional*



*Lively
Colorful
Creative
Expressive
Educative
Welcoming
Innovative*

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Curation can play a key role in helping develop these projects, and these questions would be fantastic to include (*note: they also help you build a more authentic project!*):

- What are students doing to build this project? How is the quality of the work? Will it hold up over time?
- What tools or resources are you using to display this work? Is it any different than what already is being used throughout the building?
- Where is this project being displayed? Is it mobile enough to be placed in the community first (e.g. a museum)? Why are you displaying it here?
- How will viewers know what the project is? How will you inform them?
- What does this project bring to your school? How does it improve the community?
- Does your project showcase everyone or only the same select few?

The following are a collection of images of displayed student work. Pay close attention to how the work is staged and maintained. Some work is from local museums or science centers - which are great places to visit for inspiration (*also, they're great places to connect and display work at!*)

Key to displaying work are **symmetry** and **repetition**. When developing a project, having some restrictions (such as equal sizing, same color themes, and more) will lead to greater creative outcomes. Sometimes working with barriers in an assignment allows for more creative solutions. In addition, having a **unique element** will add vibrancy to your design.



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High Tech High



San Diego Museum of Art



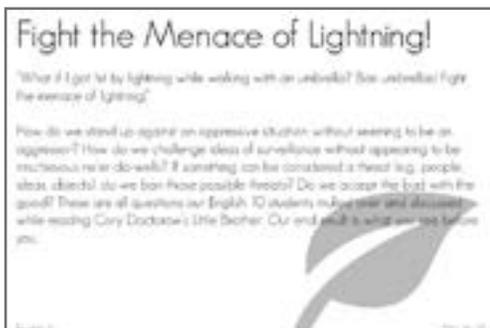
High Tech High



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High Tech High



John Grant High School



High Tech High



Columbus Museum of Art

*Many of our examples feature HTH, as they are the premier institution for recognizing and promoting student curation.

Take the first step! Curating a project does not mean you must start from the ground up, nor does it have to be the focal point of the entire project. Sometimes the curated piece is just an artifact representing what you did. For example, perhaps you had a project surrounding a theatrical performance. At some point, take pictures of your students in wardrobe and make a Playbill poster, frame it, and display it near a placard. Now you have a "talking piece" ready to go!

Try taking these steps:

1. Take a tour of your local art or history museum to see how work is displayed. Take a lot of pictures! Analyze your own school, take pictures as well. Compare.
2. Present this information to fellow staff and administrators. Propose solutions to bring curation to your school.

3. Start adapting any existing projects to feature an element of curation. Put students in charge of brainstorming, developing, and maintaining the display.
4. Consider hosting a formal meeting as an entire staff (or department) to demonstrate your findings.
5. Become a beacon for your community to embrace student work through curation!

In the long run, these goals are only realized if your school puts experiential learning at its core. Curation is simply managing the artifacts of the amazing work you already are doing. Utilize our **Project Based Learning Guide** for more information!

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