

REAL WORLD LEARNING: CONNECTING THE CLASSROOM TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE

CROSSROADS PREP ACADEMY



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Project Brief

Real-world learning gives students the ability to explore their interests in a hands-on way. Students learn without the traditional classroom setting and can explore many pathways of life before adulthood and before they go on to higher learning. Real-world learning provides a practical way for students to learn the skills they'll need throughout their lifetime and to put those skills to work. Students will explore what real-world learning is and discuss the benefits of implementing it in schools. This will include the effect it has on critical thinking, decision making, and life skills. Exploring these skills early on will give students an experience that applies to more opportunities. Schools need to better prepare students for the outside world, and help students find their place in the world beyond school.

We the Crossroads ReThink team do not intend to build an entirely new class structure, but to develop the successful styles we have seen before into a more project, or real-life-based, school structure. We will use pre-existing project-based learning strategies and adapt them for a more inclusive world, in which previously inaccessible or inequitable styles of learning will become available for everyone, no matter their socioeconomic status, race, gender, age, etc. Partnering with the school board, educators, and the community alike, we intend to help students take ownership of their learning and become better prepared for becoming the next generation of adults.

We want to give students a voice through this project as well as bring awareness to different styles of learning. A traditional learning environment is not always effective for all students, and after high school, some students are left with no experience of how to handle the real world and desire to have a more practical education. To have a sustainable opportunity-based learning environment, we need to be committed. We need to let students lead themselves to their interests and explore how to solve problems. We can't half-heart this style of learning, what we put into this project we will get out.

Of course, as high schoolers, we are as close to this topic as we can be. High school doesn't feel as productive as it should be. It is supposed to prepare students for the next steps of their lives but how exactly? Surely most students aren't going to spend the rest of their lives listening to lectures for a living. So, we want to find how high schools can do more to prepare their students for the real world. Our goal for this project is to create a new and more productive high

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school experience. It serves to answer the question of how can high school better prepare students for the real world. Through this project, we would like to open the eyes of teachers, administrators, and the community to a new way of learning that may be more beneficial to their students.

Through internships and client-connected projects with Hire KC and symbiotic relationships with different community organizations like Turner Construction, we have found that most community members and businesses are more than willing to partner with our school.

While this does not mean that schools get everything they need for free, many community members are willing to donate, volunteer, and even just spread the word of specific opportunities. Partnering with businesses and the community will help students to learn how to network and strengthen their people skills, and may present strong opportunities for school and businesses.

Student and teacher voices are crucial to our project. The more opinions we can gather from current students and teachers the better. It will make our project more poignant to get real students and teachers to share their opinions on the logistics of real-world learning. On the other hand, team members will be responsible for doing research, putting together a presentation, and finding/supporting our research. We have put together google forms and sent them to teachers and students of Crossroads Preparatory Academy to gain information from fellow students and their teachers.

None of our tasks will require direct supervision. We will need teacher approval to send out the forms and if we were to further implement real-world learning we would need board approval. However, we have not made it that far. Though, we do certainly have support. Crossroads Prep Academy is projected to implement real-world/project-based learning in the fall of 2021. There is no specific end date because should all go to plan this will be the way the school runs from then on. Our project, for the beginning, will be executed in schools around the Kansas City area. We plan to build a real-world-based curriculum in schools through internships and projects. The CrossRoads ReThink team plans to use a similar structure as The Ohio Department of Education.

The performance indicators that can show us who has succeeded and what we have for the results of our project are where students go in the future. Who successfully gains work experience and internships while they are under opportunity-based learning. Because this learning style does not only teach to

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the test or force students to condense their learning, the success of the project can be measured by the success of the students, and especially how they develop. Students, teachers, and the Rethink team will analyze these results and develop our strategies further to ensure the continued success of all students.

The ReThink Youth conference is partnering with CrossRoads Prep Academy to bring real-world learning to the Kansas City school district. CrossRoads Prep is already working to bring Real-World learning inside its walls. CrossRoads Prep Principle, Ms. Brown-Persley, said, “Real-world learning has always been a desire for our school.” “CrossRoads is actively planning to change our schedule structure, system, and supports so we can implement real-world learning.” Audri Sander, a member of the CrossRoads ReThink Youth team, found that “Crossroads Preparatory Academy has a wonderfully diverse student body with 26% of students being Hispanic 47% being Black 6% being Multi-racial and 19% being White. As a school body, we thrive by learning from each other and growing our understanding of the world through our peers’ experiences. Crossroads is very unique because of its access to downtown and the community that comes with it. Because of our location, we can partner with local communities for real-world learning opportunities.” CrossRoads Preparatory Academy “...Graduates will be culturally literate, creative, and innovative leaders who pursue ambitious goals. Through authentic student-driven opportunities such as project-based learning, internships, and service-learning, students will pull from diverse experiences to drive their vision forward with empathy and critical thought. Crossroads Preparatory Academy will be a model school that empowers students and staff members to engage deeply with the community to foster the global leaders of tomorrow.”

Through our project, we intend to reach students, teachers, and school administrators alike. It is important that the project reaches students -- grades 9-12 -- because they are the ones who will be directly impacted. High school students need a way to express themselves and their creative thinking and through our project that is possible. And, it’s important to reach teachers and administrators because they are the ones who would be able to implement the project. They will be the backbone of our project if it is to succeed.

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References

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