



REPORT

Tang Academy for American Democracy Program Evaluation

PREPARED BY

Kera Collective

FOR

New-York Historical Society

DATE

August 2023



Tang Academy for American Democracy Program Evaluation

NEW-YORK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
MUSEUM & LIBRARY

kera
COLLECTIVE

PREPARED FOR

New-York Historical Society
<https://www.nyhistory.org/>
New York, NY

Main Contact:

Jenni Rein-Sharpe, *Manager of the Tang Academy for
American Democracy*

PREPARED BY

Kera Collective
www.keracollective.com

Kera Collective team members involved in this study:
Stephanie Downey, *Owner + Director*
Hannah Heller, *Researcher*
Filippa Christofalou, *Contractor*

FUNDED BY

This program evaluation was funded through a grant
from the Institute of Museum and Library Services
(IMLS) (<https://www.ims.gov/>).

IMAGE CREDITS

Images in this report were taken by Kera evaluators
during program observations.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Kera Collective, 2023. *Tang Academy for American
Democracy Program Evaluation*. Unpublished report
written for *New-York Historical Society*.

Table of Contents

- Table of Contents* 3
- 01 Summary and Key Takeaways**..... 4
 - Executive Summary* 5
 - Key Takeaways* 6
- 02 Study Background**..... 12
 - About the Study*..... 13
 - About the Tang Academy for American Democracy* 16
- 03 Findings: Standardized Student Assessments** 18
 - Overview* 19
 - Content Knowledge* 21
 - Skillsets*..... 27
 - Social-Emotional and Civic Engagement* 28
- 04 Findings: Standardized Program Observations**..... 30
 - Overview* 31
 - Content Knowledge* 32
 - Skillsets*..... 33
 - Social-Emotional and Civic Engagement* 34
- 09 Appendix** 35
 - Appendix A: TAAD Program Logic Model* 36
 - Appendix B: Open-Ended Embedded Student Assessment* 37
 - Appendix C: Pre-Post Standardized Embedded Student Assessment* 40

01 Summary and Key Takeaways



Executive Summary

This evaluation of the Tang Academy for American Democracy (TAAD) at New-York Historical Society (NYHS) revealed significant areas where students are showing growth in the program's intended outcomes, as well as opportunities to better align aspects of the program with those outcomes.

In order to assess student growth in TAAD, we first worked with NYHS staff to develop a Logic Model (see Appendix A) to specify the program's assets, the intended audience, and short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes for the program. These outcomes became our guideposts for developing the instruments with which we would ultimately measure student growth.

The purpose of the study was to quantify student growth as much as possible, so we designed a standardized pre- and post-assessment that students (n=199) took at the beginning and end of the program. This assessment measured growth in key outcome areas, particularly content knowledge, skill acquisition, and social-emotional learning and civic engagement. In total we collected 385 assessments (188 pre-assessments and 197 post-assessments).

We also conducted standardized observations that offered quantitative and qualitative data to address objectives about contextual factors of the program that might impact student outcomes and aspects of the program that best support student growth. We observed seven classrooms representing each of the four participating schools.

Analysis of the assessment and observation data revealed several key takeaways:

- Students displayed strong growth in content acquisition about democratic models, particularly content related to their limitations and ways they might be fair or unfair.
- Students also showed growth in skills and social-emotional growth and civic engagement, even if this growth wasn't self-reported in the assessments.
- Contextual factors that most impact student outcomes relate to educators' ability to adapt to varying needs in the different classrooms and their ability to make quick decisions about what to cut if students arrive late to the museum.
- Students are most engaged when they are given the opportunity to connect TAAD content with their own lived experiences, such as during open-ended inquiry and debates.
- One unintended outcome of the program that is worth articulating and perhaps implementing as part of the Logic Model is the program's emphasis on object inquiry and the critical thinking skills developed as a result.

The following key takeaways discuss each of these further and offers recommendations to address areas of the program where there may be greater alignment between program inputs and student outcomes.

Key Takeaways

This section presents key takeaways from the Tang Academy for American Democracy (TAAD) program evaluation for the New-York Historical Society (NYHS) based on observation data and pre/post-student assessments collected between March and May 2023. Key takeaways from the study are informed by the data in this report and our years of experience working with museums.

01

Student growth in outcomes related to content acquisition was especially strong, particularly with regards to content that exposed limitations in the different democratic models, and which appealed to student ideas about fairness.

Students' ability to recall information, observed in morning reviews from day to day and in the pre- and post-assessments, demonstrated they are retaining a significant amount of content about the different democratic models, especially their limitations. We noticed this particularly in the following areas:

- **Power in America:** The question "Who hasn't always had power in an American democracy?" showed the largest percentage increase in correct answers from pre- to post-, indicating that certain groups' historical disenfranchisement (particularly that of white, non-land-owning men) might have been new information for many students.
- **Description of Democracy:** Another significant increase in correct responses was to the question, "Which one of these does not describe democracy?" indicating that the correct response (*A system of government in which decisions about who has power in a democracy get made once, and then never change*) was internalized by more students by the end of the week.
- **Ah-ha moments around Exclusion:** Observations during "Complication" moments and historical inquiry about objects focusing on exclusion indicated that students seemed to "grab" onto content introduced when the educator revealed important limitations in each model, as well as during historical inquiry about objects that pointed to specific exclusions and/or limitations (e.g., Tontine Coffee House, and the map of 13 colonies demonstrating the large size of the country).

Recommendation:

Students this age are developmentally attracted to ideas about fairness, which may explain their interest in and ability to recall information, particularly how each democratic model may be exclusive or limited. This is an important element of TAAD and worth emphasizing in educator trainings. The "Complication" moments preceding discussion of the benefits of each model varied in how much they were emphasized from class to class, and educators should be sure that the limitations are made clear as much as the benefits.

02

Students also demonstrated growth in skills, particularly historical inquiry, collaboration, and public speaking.

While self-reported data to the close-ended ratings questions in the assessments did not reveal statistically significant growth in skills, social-emotional growth, or civic engagement, observations did show significant growth in the following outcomes:

- **Historical inquiry:** This was the skill area we observed students demonstrating the most, both in our observations (particularly when discussing maps) as well as in student answers to questions in the assessment that asked them to make observations about an image (e.g., Questions 3 [*Pericles*] and 6 [*Tontine Coffee House*]).
- **Learn to work together through working in small groups:** Students demonstrated their ability to work in groups throughout the program, even if it wasn't self-reported by students. We saw this particularly during the rock-paper-scissor warm-up's at the beginning of the day, and when creating their final exhibitions on Day 4.
- **Comfort levels around public speaking and oration:** Students also demonstrated a capacity for public speaking; we observed this in activities about the Greek chorus, the debates, and during presentations on the last day.

We observed less achievement in outcomes related to making connections between what they see in the galleries and their own artworks, learning to curate and edit, and appreciating collaboration as a life skill.

Recommendation:

Supporting student growth in their ability and interest to engage with historical inquiry, group work, and public speaking are clearly strengths of TAAD. The skills we observed less frequently may be a function of the program's ambition; for example, fostering an appreciation for collaboration (a mid-term outcome) may be a tall order to achieve in a four-day experience, but may be observed in students afterwards.

That said, we think there is an opportunity to look at the various artmaking options (printmaking and final projects) to make them more student-centered and open-ended to allow for more personal self-expression. We have more specific recommendations for each under Takeaways 3 and 5.

03

Students also demonstrated growth in outcomes related to social-emotional learning, and civic engagement, particularly understanding that their voices matter, excitement about learning history, and appreciation for democracy.

Similar to the takeaway above about skills, while the self-reported data to close-ended ratings questions in these areas did not reveal statistically significant growth, answers to the open-ended question, as well as observations, did show achievement in the following outcomes:

- **Become excited about learning history:** Students demonstrated an increasing amount of excitement about learning history as the week progressed, especially as they got more practice doing historical inquiry. They were also especially engaged and active during the debates and warm-up activities.
- **Understand that their voices and opinions matter:** We asked students to answer the open-ended question, “What is one way you, as a kid, can make a positive difference in the US?” This answer had a statistically significant increase in answers referring to a specific type of activism (increasing from 28% to 55%), as well as a *decrease* in not sure answers (20% to 10%) and blank answers (36% to 14%). This indicates students have a growing awareness of their ability (and perhaps responsibility) to make change and let their voices be heard as a result of participating in the program.
- **Increase their appreciation of democracy and voting:** By the end of the program, we observed students being able to articulate different ways to participate in democracy, including voting, and why they are important.

We observed less growth in students feeling that the museum belongs to them and seeing themselves represented in the museum and the stories it tells. This may be a function of the limited time students are actually at the museum over the four days, and the limited ability to spend lots of time in the galleries when there is so much to cover in the classroom.

Recommendation:

Again, it may be ambitious to instill a sense of belonging over such a short period, but there might be a way to repurpose the gallery walks to reflect this goal if they do not need to satisfy an outcome around curating/exhibitions.

There may also be an opportunity to make closer connections between the *ideas* they discuss in the galleries/classroom and their own artworks; for example, printmaking activities often utilized pre-printed symbols or slogans for students to work from. Instead, students could spend a few minutes brainstorming before viewing the visual aids to see what they come up with on their own. This might help concretize those connections between their personal experiences and their artworks and foster a greater sense of connection and belonging at the museum as a result of participating in TAAD.

04

Contextual factors strongly impact student outcomes, particularly educator ability to adapt to varying needs of the class, school lateness, and busy-ness of the galleries.

Several contextual factors impact student outcomes, with three rising to the top:

- **Educator adaptability to different class needs:** Classes coming to TAAD are diverse - including students with different levels of prior knowledge, ELL students, and students with varying behavioral needs. Educators had varying levels of ability to adapt to these differences, which impacted students' ability to achieve in certain areas. For example, School 2 students came to the program with a relatively higher degree of prior knowledge, but also had several students who had trouble focusing. This meant they needed higher-level content delivered in a way that would hold their attention (e.g., perhaps fewer large group discussions and more turn-and-talks).
- **School lateness:** Museum programs are often at the mercy of morning traffic, and TAAD is no exception; several classes arrived late (several significantly so) to the museum, resulting in educators needing to make quick, last-minute adjustments to their plans for the day. With a program as jam-packed as TAAD, this often necessarily means cutting important elements.
- **Busy galleries:** There were times when there were too many other groups or tours in the galleries, which made it difficult for the educator to facilitate meaningful dialogue because of background noise and challenges maintaining students' focus.

Recommendation:

It is clear that TAAD educators care very much about the program and want to put their best foot forward for their students. If there is a throughline connecting these three contextual factors, it is likely around exploring ways TAAD staff might take some of the burden off the educators to make accommodations for each class. Some ideas include:

- Tailored lesson plans that accommodate students coming in with more and less prior knowledge and varying instructional needs (this might be assessed in a pre-visit assessment or during planning meetings with the teacher), as well as instructions around what to keep and/or cut if a school arrives late.
- Busy galleries may be a difficult factor to control. Still, communication amongst the educators (and perhaps facilitated by staff) to ensure groups are spread out accordingly could help reduce crowding.

05

Program elements that best support student outcomes are those that allow for students to make connections between the ideas they discuss about democracy in class to their own lived experiences.

These elements include open-ended inquiry and other opportunities to apply content to their own experiences and express their opinions about those experiences (e.g., debates). These opportunities for self-expression are exciting for students and help them associate what they are learning with their personal experiences and their time at the museum.

Given this we think there is room in the final projects to be more student-centered, and enable those same connections to students' lived experiences, as well as their ideas for ways they might engage with activism and the democratic process after the program is over.

Recommendation:

Releasing the final projects from outcomes related to curating and editing may allow the projects to better serve the outcomes they are already supporting, such as collaboration and content acquisition from reviewing the materials from previous days. And, if the final projects are redirected towards emphasizing students' ideas about how they might make changes in their communities (thereby targeting the program's long-term impact statement), the final project would likely also better support other outcomes, such as excitement about learning, feeling like their voices matter, and appreciation for democracy.

We recommend connecting the review of materials from Days 1-3 to ways those materials can inspire students to think about their own civic projects. Perhaps they could work in small groups about issues they care about to generate ideas to create awareness and change around that issue. There might even be a post-visit guide to support teachers in helping their students enact these projects.

06

One unintended outcome was increased comfort with open-ended inquiry about objects.

While we looked closely at indicators for historical inquiry, we also observed students becoming increasingly comfortable with object inquiry in general as the week progressed. While not necessarily an indicator of an increased sense of belonging (though it might be!), it may indicate comfort with the type of open-ended dialogue that art supports. As we know, this type of dialogue also supports important critical thinking skills, like building on other's ideas, agreeing/disagreeing respectfully, and comfort with ambiguity and multiple ideas being true at the same time.

Recommendation:

This is already occurring naturally as a part of historical inquiry and in discussions of artworks that serve as examples of activism. We recommend emphasizing in educator trainings the value of genuine open-ended inquiry (e.g., asking questions we are curious to hear the answers to, rather than ones where we already know the answer). With the constraints of time, it can be appealing for educators to jump to the "point" of the object, but if there is any additional space to let students respond to artworks with a true sense of "no rights or wrongs," this would complement other intended outcomes of the program and likely serve as an important contrast to their classroom experience.

02 Study Background



About the Study

The goal of the New-York Historical Society (NYHS) Tang Academy for American Democracy (TAAD) program evaluation was to assess the program's efficacy and identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement, focusing on measuring student growth against the program's learning objectives. The study involved three phases: a planning phase, pilot evaluation, and full-scale evaluation. Each phase and its methodologies are described below.

Planning Phase

During the planning phase, Kera evaluators met onsite at NYHS with the TAAD program staff to discuss the purpose of the evaluation, what NYHS wants to learn, how they will use the results, and logistics for data collection. Kera then facilitated a Logic Model workshop to articulate the problem or need that the TAAD program is meant to address, define the target audience, and identify the program's intended outcomes and long-term impact. We also added indicators for each outcome to help measure student growth in each area. See Appendix A for the TAAD Logic Model.

Pilot Evaluation

The Logic Model's outcomes and indicators provided guideposts to assess student growth in the pilot evaluation. During the pilot phase, Kera collected data about the program through two exploratory methods: **naturalistic program observations** and **open-ended embedded student assessments**. Both methods are qualitative, allowing Kera to see the full range of student experiences and responses (what they say and do in, and as a result of, the program) prior to developing the standardized instruments for the next evaluation phase.

Naturalistic Program Observations

Naturalistic observations are open-ended and allow an authentic range of behaviors and conversations to emerge. While open-ended, we used the objectives outlined in the Logic Model to focus the observations (i.e., what participant behaviors are indicative of the program's desired impact?). We conducted 12 hours of observations in two classrooms over a one-week period. In analyzing observation data, we studied behaviors and conversations for meaningful patterns. The patterns that emerged across observations allowed us to understand larger trends, which we then used to develop a standardized observation instrument for the full evaluation.

Open-Ended Embedded Student Assessments

We conducted an embedded assessment using student worksheets integrated as part of normal program activities in the museum. Students in the three pilot classrooms were asked to complete a worksheet at the end of the four-day program. The worksheet posed six open-ended questions for students to write in a response (See Appendix B), and the questions were designed to assess student outcomes from the Logic Model developed in the planning phase. We presented the results of the pilot findings to NYHS staff and used the data from the pilot evaluation's observations and embedded assessments to develop a standardized embedded assessment for the Full-Scale Evaluation.

Full-Scale Evaluation

During the Full-Scale Evaluation, we collected data to assess student outcomes through two standardized methods: **standardized program observations** and **pre-post standardized embedded student assessments**. Both methods are quantitative, allowing us to measure student outcomes along pre-defined metrics determined in the Logic Model and refined during the Pilot Evaluation.

Standardized Program Observations

The standardized observations were designed to capture and quantify specific student behaviors, actions, and verbalizations that are concrete, measurable indicators of the student outcomes (from the Logic Model). The observations also recorded important contextual factors influencing student outcomes (for example, were students distracted or focused and why? Were students given adequate instruction and tools to do an activity?). We conducted 30 hours of observations across a sample of seven classrooms. The observations produced numerical data, which we analyzed statistically. Some contextual factors written in the observation notes were coded and grouped into categories to identify trends.

Pre-Post Standardized Embedded Student Assessments

As in the pilot, the embedded assessment was a student worksheet integrated as part of normal program activities (See Appendix C). Unlike the open-ended questions from the Pilot Evaluation assessment, this assessment was standardized and used select-response questions, like multiple choice and rating scales (versus open-ended). It was administered as a pre-post measure, with students completing the pre-test on their first day in the program and the post-test on the last day of the program.

The assessment was designed to measure student outcomes and contains the same questions in the pre-test as in the post-test. The assessment had a maximum time limit of ten minutes and was designed to be as playful as possible in order to engage students and avoid a test-like feeling. Students from all nine study classrooms across four different schools completed the pre-test (n = 188) and post-test (n = 197), for a total of 385 responses.

The embedded assessment produced numerical data, which we analyzed statistically. Open-ended responses were coded into categories by theme to allow for statistical analysis. The survey results were analyzed statistically using SPSS 20 for Windows. Analyses include:

- Frequency distributions (e.g., percent of respondents by school).
- Summary statistics (e.g., mean ratings).
- Inferential statistics to examine the relationship among variables, including:
 - Cross-tabulations showing the frequency of response options by group. We conducted chi-square tests to examine whether the associations between variables are statistically significant.
 - Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed, and the F-statistic was used to test the significance of the difference between groups on continuous measures.

We have reported only statistically significant results of inferential statistics using $p < .01$.

Study Objectives

This program evaluation explored:

- To what extent are students learning the intended **content knowledge** for the TAAD program, specifically:
 - How well do they understand the importance of public spaces, the role of ordinary people, and activism in both ancient Greece and the United States over time?
 - How well are they able to think critically about the benefits and limitations of both democratic models?
 - How well do they understand the power of ordinary people, as well as their own agency, to enact change in a democracy?
 - Do they have ideas for tangible actions they can take if they want to make a change?
- To what extent are students developing the intended **skills** for the TAAD program, specifically:
 - How well do they collaborate with other students?
 - Are they able to make connections between what they see and learn in the galleries to their own artworks?
 - Can they conduct historical inquiry with primary sources?
 - Are they more comfortable presenting and speaking publicly?
- To what extent are students meeting the **social-emotional and civic engagement** goals of the TAAD program, specifically:
 - Are they becoming more excited about studying history and civics?
 - Do they see themselves as historians?
 - Do they feel more comfortable in and see themselves represented at N-YHS?
 - Do they feel more confident expressing their opinions?
- What **contextual factors** influence student outcomes?
- What **elements of the program** best support (or don't support) the achievement of these outcomes?
- Where are there possible **areas for increased alignment** between actual and intended student outcomes?

About the Tang Academy for American Democracy

The Tang Academy for American Democracy (TAAD) is a New-York Historical Society's educational initiative focusing on history and civics education for 6th graders. Students explore the history of democracy through two case studies: ancient Athens and the United States. Students study the implementation of Athenian democracy and compare it to the evolution of American democracy from the drafting of the Constitution to the present day.

Through experiential learning, artmaking, writing, and theater activities, students are immersed in a process of creative discovery to consider how and why democracy has changed over time and the value of active civic participation. Students engage in close examination of artifacts, art, and documents to critically examine democracy as it was practiced in ancient Athens, adapted at the United States' founding, and as generations of people have reshaped it in the centuries since.

Students participating in the Tang Academy for American Democracy seek the answers to three Essential Questions:

- What is a democracy?
- How does a democracy work?
- How do people make change in a democracy?

Students are empowered to ask big questions, think critically, and explore their own roles as civic actors. At the end of the residency, participating students create a final project that creatively synthesizes what they have learned.

While the program is offered as an in-school version as well as remotely, we decided to focus this study on the four-day intensive program offered at the museum. The program takes place over four full days (Monday-Thursday), from 9:30am-1:30pm.



03 Findings: Standardized Student Assessments



Overview

Kera Collective collected 385 pre- and post-embedded student assessments from March to May 2023. Standardized assessments provide quantifiable data with which to statistically measure student growth in specific areas.

Participant and School Characteristics

Participants in this study are all in 6th grade and come from a diverse range of schools. The schools' characteristics as well as how many participating students from each school are listed below:

School	Description	# of participating classes	Total # of students in the study
School 1	Public middle school located in Kingsbridge Heights in the Bronx. Total enrollment is 642, with 29% ELL students and 27% ICT students. ¹	3	70
School 2	Private Jewish PK-8 school located in Prospect Heights, Brooklyn. Total enrollment is 327. ELL and ICT information are not available.	1	15
School 3	Public middle school located in Larchmont, NY. Total enrollment is 1,250, with 2% ELL students. (ICT info unavailable.)	2	34
School 4	Public middle school located in Tribeca, Manhattan. Total enrollment is 236, with 4% ELL students and 23% ICT students.	3	80
		Total: 9	Total: 199

¹ All NYCDOE information comes from the most recent reports downloaded from InfoHub: <https://infohub.nyced.org/reports/students-and-schools/school-quality/school-quality-reports-and-resources>.

Number of Pre- and Post- Assessments by School

School	Pre-Assessments	Post-Assessments	Total
School 1	69	70	139
School 2	14	15	29
School 3	34	32	66
School 4	71	80	151
	Total: 188	Total: 197	Total: 385

The following section presents findings from the 188 pre- and 197 post-tests completed by the students participating in the TAAD program. Findings are organized by the program’s intended outcomes: growth in **content knowledge, skillsets**, and **social-emotional learning and civic engagement**. Findings for growth in each area will be presented first, followed by statistically significant relationships between the different schools.

Content Knowledge

The standardized assessment included six close-ended questions and one open-ended question designed to gauge student growth in content knowledge about different democratic models; their benefits and limitations; the significance of public spaces in a democracy; and different types of activism.

Overall, students demonstrated growth in content knowledge, with most questions showing a statistically significant increase in correct answers between the pre- and the post-assessment. The percentage of correct answers to each question in the pre- and post-assessments are reported below with any exceptions noted in orange.

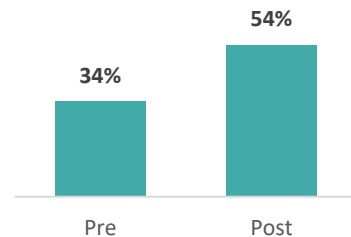
20% More Students Responded Correctly to Q1 After TAAD

Q1: Which one of these DOES NOT describe democracy?

Circle **ONE** choice.

- A system of government where people have power.
- A system of government in which decisions about who has power in a democracy get made once, and then never change.
- A system of government that puts power in the hands of many people, rather than just a few.
- A system of government that sometimes gives more power to some people than others.

% Answered Correctly

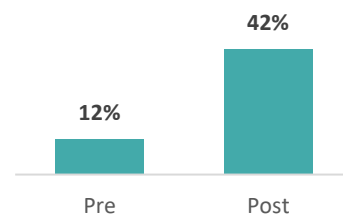


30% More Students Responded Correctly to Q2 After TAAD

Q2: Who hasn't always had power in an American democracy? Check all that apply.

- Non-citizens
- Kids (people under 18)
- White men who do not own land
- Women
- White men who own land
- Enslaved people

% Answered Correctly



20% More Students Responded Correctly to Q3 After TAAD

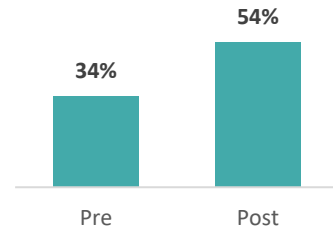
Q3: What is NOT shown in this picture?

Circle ONE choice.

- A public space
- An orator
- One way to express ideas in a democracy
- **Early United States**
- People with differing opinions



% Answered Correctly

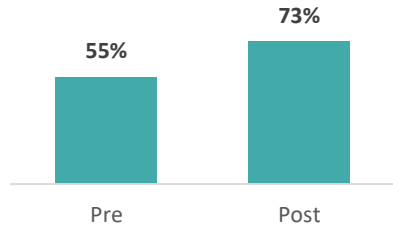
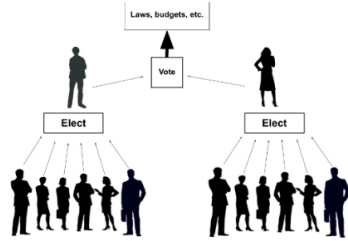


18-34% More Students Responded Correctly to Each Match Item in Q4 After TAAD

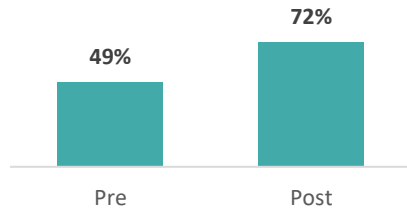
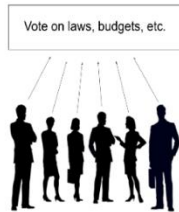
Q4: Draw a line between the word or phrase and the picture that matches it

% Answered Correctly

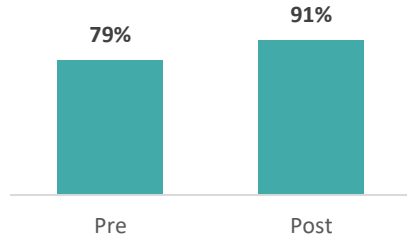
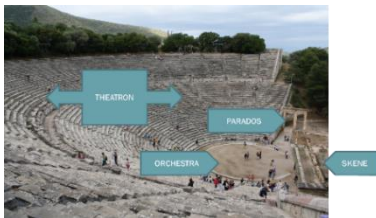
Representative democracy



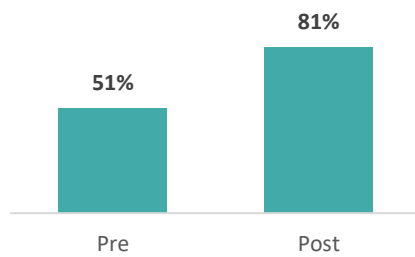
Direct democracy



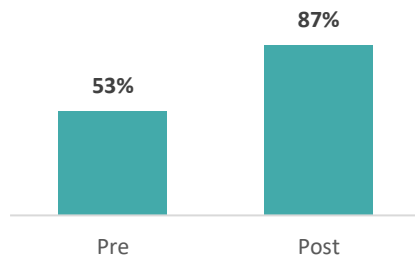
Theater



Agora



Activism through Art

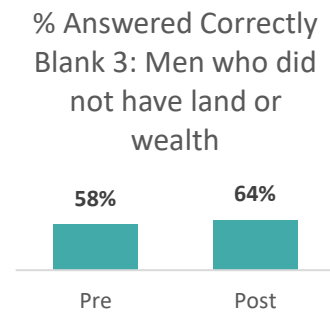
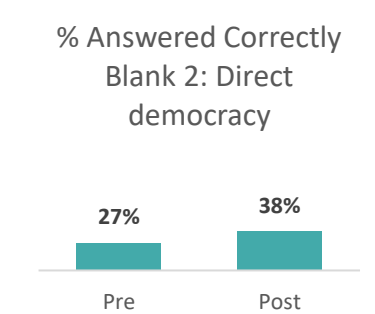
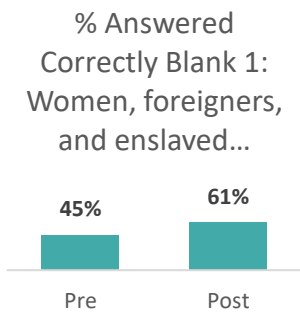


15-16% More Students Responded Correctly to Blank 1 and Blank 5 After TAAD

Q5: Fill in the blanks with phrases from the phrase bank:

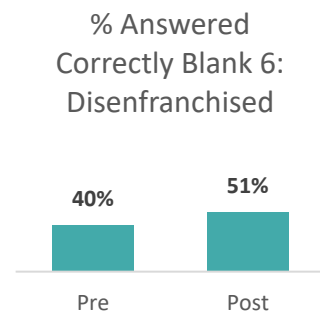
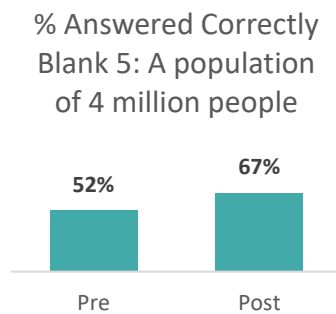
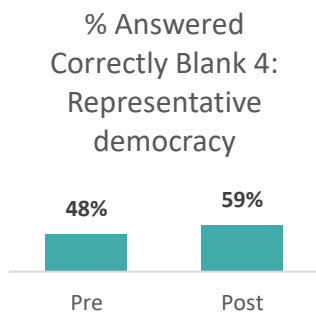
Even though it could be somewhat disorganized, and excluded [1] women, foreigners, and enslaved people, one advantage of the Athenian form of [2] direct democracy is that it allowed [3] men who did not have land or wealth to participate.

On the other hand, the American model of [4] representative democracy was designed to be a more organized form of government, allowing for a [5] population of 4 million people to weigh in on political issues. However, the vast majority of people were [6] disenfranchised, and [7] only 6% of the population was able to vote in early America.



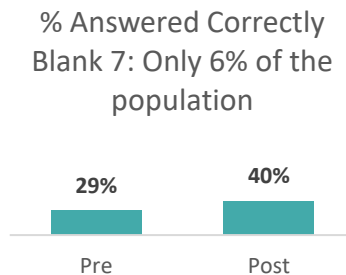
No statistically significant growth.

No statistically significant growth.



No statistically significant growth.

No statistically significant growth.



No statistically significant growth.

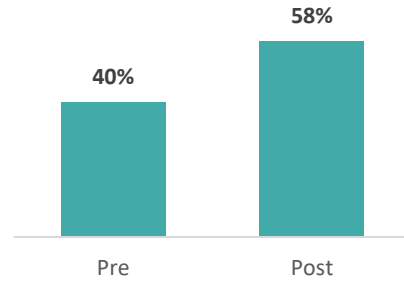
18% More Students Responded Correctly to Q6 After TAAD

Q6: What IS shown in this picture? Circle ONE choice.

- A public gathering space in a city far from water
- A public gathering space in a Greek city-state
- A public gathering space where everyone has equal access
- A public gathering space where people can exchange and debate ideas



% Answered Correctly

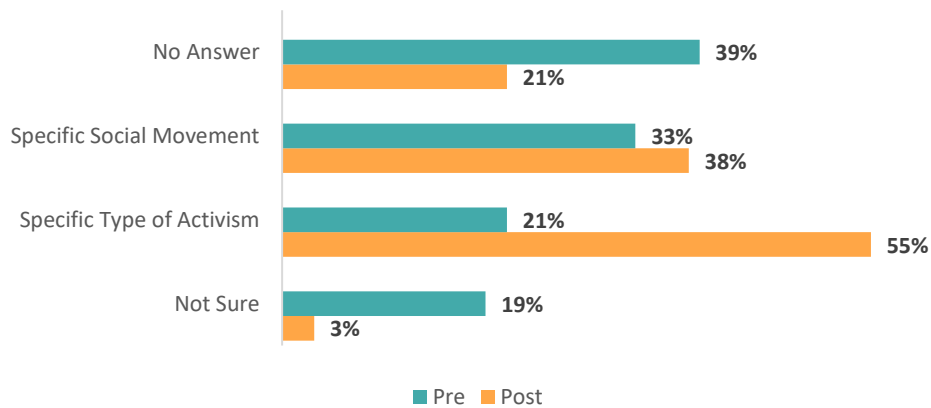


Q8: Can you provide one example of activism that has made a positive difference in the United States today?

Students also answered the open-ended question “Can you provide one example of activism that has made a positive difference in the United States today?” We coded these responses into the following broad categories: specific social movements and/or individuals active within social movements (e.g., #BlackLivesMatter, Martin Luther King Jr., women’s rights); specific types of activism and/or protest (e.g., voting, legislation, marching, petition); not sure (e.g., the student wrote an answer indicating they weren’t sure or didn’t know); and no answer (e.g., the student left it blank).²

² Total will add up to more than 100% if a student indicated both a social movement and type of activism in their response (e.g., petitioning about gun control).

Can you provide one example of activism that has made a positive difference in the US today?



There are three statistically significant differences that emerged comparing the pre-test and post-test responses. In the post-test, students were:

- More likely to identify a specific type of activism
- Less likely to answer “not sure”
- Less likely to leave the question blank

Some examples of student answers to this open-ended question in the post-tests indicate a strong recall of the specific types of activism discussed over the week (particularly on Day 3):

“I think art that I have seen in this museum has been a great example of activism.”

“Petitions made a huge impact because you get a large impact because if you get enough people that puts pressure on the government.”

“One example of activism in this country that has made a positive difference might be public speaking because everyone can speak if they want to and they can voice their opinions.”

“One example of activism that made a positive difference in the United States is the Black Lives Matter protest, LGBTQ+ protest, Frederick Douglas' speech.”

“Voting because it provides people power.”

Skillsets

Students were asked to answer on a scale of 1 through 7 how much they agree with statements gauging growth in different skills aligned with the intended outcomes of the program, particularly their comfort level with public speaking and ideas about collaboration. While there was a small increase in both areas from the pre- to the post-, the difference was not statistically significant.

Growth in Skills: Collaboration and Public Speaking

I feel comfortable public speaking.



I think it's important to be able to collaborate with others on a project.



Strongly Disagree

Strongly Agree

1

2

3

4

5

6

7



Pre



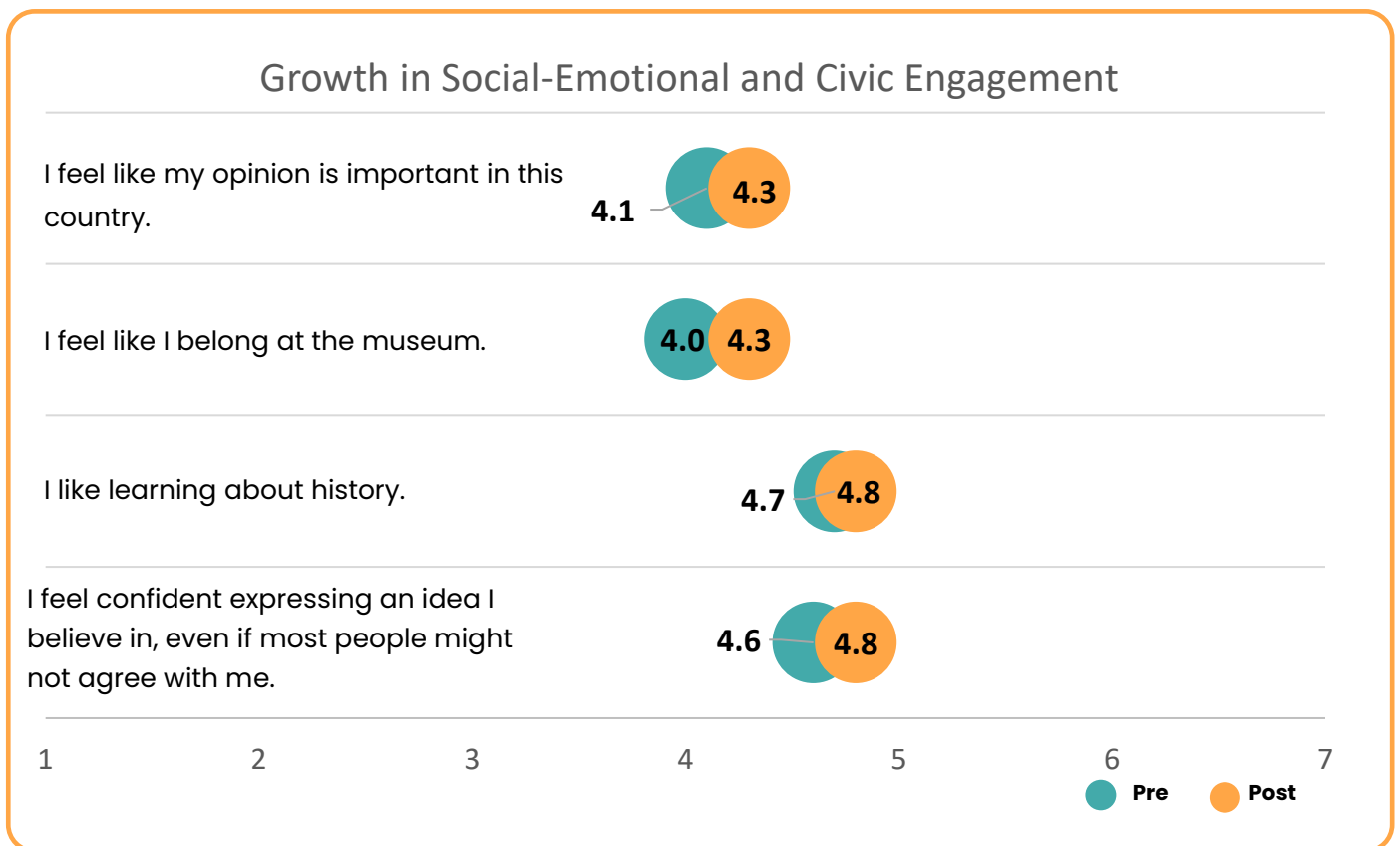
Post

Social-Emotional and Civic Engagement

While students did not self-report a statistically significant increase in growth for the social-emotional and civic engagement questions in the pre- and post-assessments, their answers to the open-ended question asking about their ideas about how to make a positive change indicate growth in this area. The following shows what growth there was for each question.

Question 7 Ratings Responses:

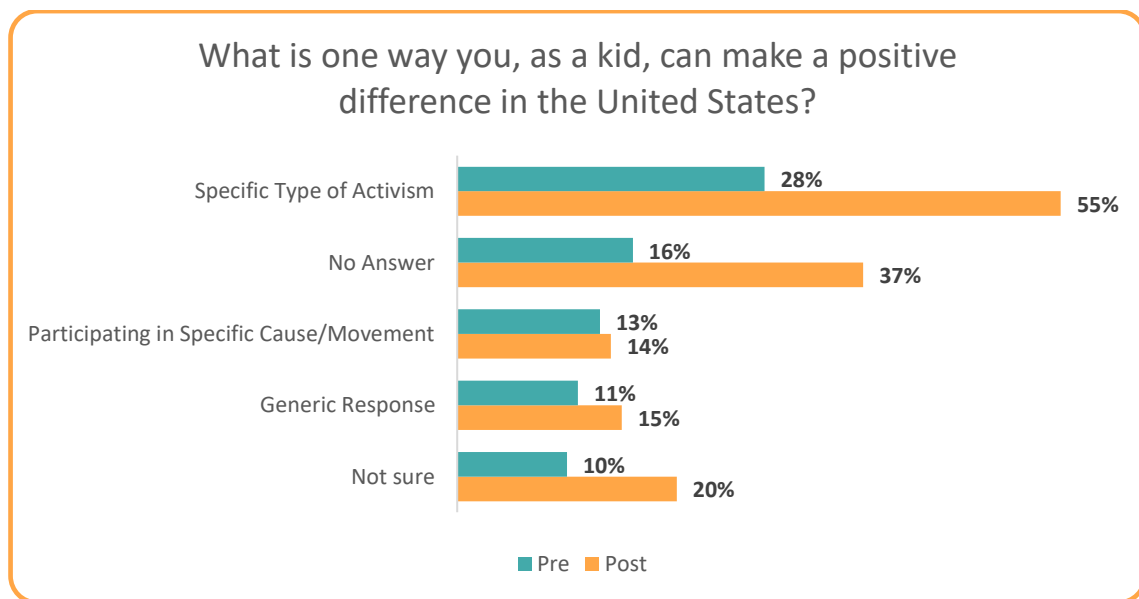
Students were asked to answer on a scale of 1 through 7 how much they agree with statements gauging growth in different social-emotional skills, belonging, and ideas about civic engagement. While again there was a small increase in these areas from the pre- to the post-assessments, the difference was not statistically significant.



Question 9: What is one way you, as a kid, can make a positive difference in the US?

We also asked students the open-ended question, “What is one way you, as a kid, can make a positive difference in the United States?” Responses were coded for generic examples of activism or positive change (e.g., treat people with respect), specific types of activism or protest (e.g., helping people in homeless shelters, making art, post on social media, go to a protest), and/or participation in specific causes or movements (e.g., write a letter to people in power about abortion, pick up litter to help the environment), answers that indicated the student wasn’t sure about the answer, and blank responses. There was often crossover between the first two categories, when a student specified a specific action related to a specific cause.

Students showed a statistically significant increase in answers with specific types of activism from the pre- to the post- (increasing from 28% to 55%). While there wasn’t a significant increase in mentions of specific causes from the pre- to the post-, there was a statistically significant *decrease* in not sure answers (20% to 10%) and blank answers (36% to 14%).



Student responses show a strong grasp of their ability and interest to enact some of the types of activism discussed during the program:

“I can go to protests or hold posters or walk at protests for making things right.”

“As kids we can write letters and emails to people in power who can make changes (for example, abortion in the Supreme Court.”

“I can make a difference by making petitions and collecting signatures.”

“I can stand up for women's rights and hand out flyers for elections.”

“Make a PSA about what I believe.”

04 Findings: Standardized Program Observations



Overview

Kera Collective spent 30 hours observing seven classrooms across four different schools from March to May 2023. Observations were designed to capture and quantify specific student behaviors, actions, and verbalizations that are concrete, measurable indicators of the student outcomes dictated by the Logic Model. Observations also document contextual factors that influence student outcomes.

Observations were documented using an observation guide organized by each day's activity. Each activity was assigned outcomes that corresponded with the activity's goals. The evaluator assigned a score from 1-7 to indicate success in each outcome. In the following section, we share findings that demonstrate which outcomes were observed to be most and least successful (taking into account both their average rating over the course of the program as well as the frequency of occurrence), as well as indicators illustrating each. Observation findings are also organized by the program's intended outcomes: achievement in **content knowledge**, **skillsets**, and **social-emotional learning and civic engagement**. These will be followed by findings about contextual factors that impacted student outcomes.



Content Knowledge

Outcomes are presented below in order from ones where students demonstrated the most achievement to the least. In terms of content knowledge, students demonstrated the most growth in areas related to the limitations of each democratic model, and the least about abstract relationships between Ancient Athens and the US and connecting historical events to our present.

HIGH – Understand the benefits and limitations of democracies.

We observed this outcome most during inquiry about objects that represented limitations (e.g., Tontine Coffee House, map of 13 colonies demonstrating size of the country), as well as during “Complication” moments

Students said:

- “The coffee house was open to the rich and citizens.”
- “Democracy was not for everyone, only for those [with] power.”
- “People who didn’t vote felt uninvited.”

HIGH – Understand who gets left out of democracy, and the significance of that exclusion.

This outcome was most frequently observed during inquiry about objects that showcased exclusion (e.g., *Signing of the Constitution of the United States*).

Students said:

- When asked who is not shown in the painting, students respond: “young people,” “people of color.”
- When asked who is still unable to vote, students respond: “people under 18,” “people who have to take the day off to vote.”

MODERATE – Increase knowledge of how democracies work and how individuals can participate.

This outcome was most frequently observed when discussing the role of theater in Ancient Athens, and when discussing objects that feature different types of activism in the US (e.g., *Vote mural*, Douglass’ July 4th speech).

Students said:

- “More plays meant more ideas to share.”
- When asked about forms of activism, students suggest “travel to give speeches,” “give talks,” “sign a paper” (i.e., a petition).

MODERATE – Understand the importance of public spaces, role of ordinary people, and activism in both models.

This outcome was most observed when discussing public spaces in Ancient Athens, particularly the agora and theater.

Students said:

- “The seats [in the theater] are pointing directly to the stage.”
- “A theater looks like an agora.”
- “A space where everyone can voice their opinion.”

LOW – Develop a less homogenized view of the Ancient world.

This outcome was only observed when discussing who in Ancient Athens could and could not vote.

Students said:

- “It is unfair when not allowed to voice your vote.”

LOW – Understand how historical events impact our present.

This outcome was only observed when discussing Frederick Douglass’s July 4th speech.

Students said:

- “Today [slavery] is not okay, and the law was never okay.”

LOW – Understand the connections between ancient Athenian democracy and democracy in the United States.

This outcome was observed when discussing the differences between a direct and representative democracy; however, students occasionally had flawed understandings of each.

Students said:

- “We actually have to vote but in their [Ancient Athenian] democracy fewer people could vote and we have more freedom.”
- “We only vote today for important stuff like who is going to be the president.”

Skillsets

Students demonstrated significant growth in several skillsets we observed, particularly in conducting historical inquiry, working in groups, and public speaking. While students showed some growth in making connections between what they saw in the galleries and their own artworks, indicators for curating and editing and appreciation for collaboration were observed less frequently.

HIGH – Learn how to conduct historical inquiry with primary sources.

This outcome was observed in each class during most activities, and demonstrably improved in most classes as the week progressed. Students were **most excited to unpack the maps** of the Ancient world, 13 colonies, and the Jeffrey’s 1760 map of the world.

Students said:

- “The Herodotus map is based on opinions.”
- When asked why Jeffrey’s might have created his map the way he did, students responded: “He may have wanted to show the US is bigger because he’s from there,” “The US is red to show power,” “he is biased towards the US.”

HIGH – Learn to work together through working in small groups.

This outcome was best observed during the **debates** (e.g., eliminate homework or tests), rock/paper/scissor **warm-up’s**, and in the **final project** on the 4th day.

Students said:

- As the week progressed, there were most instances of students listening to each other speak and waiting their turn to respond (particularly in the galleries when discussing artworks in a large group).
- Students helped each other and collaborated on their final projects: “You did the agora so I will do Frederick Douglass.”

MODERATE – Increase comfort levels around public speaking and oration.

This outcome was observed particularly during **the debates and during the chorus activity** on Day 3.

Students said:

- Students actively engaged and sharing ideas (even when others might disagree) during homework vs. tests debate (though it consistently seemed harder to argue for arts over sports).
- Active participation in the chorus activity across the three schools observed during this activity.

MODERATE – Make connections between what they see in the galleries and their own artworks.

This outcome was observed most during **artmaking**, when the educator was able to make the connection between the values of democracy and printmaking as a medium. That said, it’s not clear whether students were making connections between the art making and inquiry they did in the galleries.

Students said:

- Students created artworks with slogans meaningful to them that made connections to what they value about democracy: “We control our country,” and “We matter.”

LOW – Learn how to curate and edit.

This outcome was observed during **art making, gallery walks, and when students worked on their final projects**. While generally students seemed to understand the definition of an exhibition, the function of a label, and were able to select their favorite objects during the gallery walks, it was harder for them to apply these ideas to the final project.

Students said:

- Once students choose their artifact for the final project the label writing for it came generally easily. But the initial choosing/editing process was confusing for most classes.

LOW – Appreciate the importance of collaboration as a life skill that benefits all participants.

We observed no concrete indicators of this outcome.

Social-Emotional and Civic Engagement

Students demonstrated excitement about learning history throughout the program, and as the days progressed were increasingly able to speak to the importance of activism and expressing their own voices. We noticed less achievement in feeling like they belong at the museum and seeing themselves in the stories it tells.

HIGH – Become excited about learning history.

We observed students' excitement about learning history most in **historical inquiry activities** once they developed a comfort level with answering open-ended questions, during the **debates**, and **warm-up activities**. This may also be observed in students from each school's ability to recall content learned on previous days.

Students said:

- When asked on Day 3 what students would like to learn more about, they demonstrated curiosity by asking questions like "Are there other types of democracies?" "If you have more than 1,000 people which type of democracy should you use?" "Why did they wear togas?"
- Most students from each class actively participate in the debates, including quieter students.

HIGH – Understand that their voices and opinions matter.

We observed this outcome in student answers to **Question 9** in the assessment, as well as during **discussions of the importance of activism**.

Students said:

- About the importance of activism: "So when you care about something you can say it," and "People march and say what is unfair."
- When asked how you can make change if you are disenfranchised, students answer: "You can protest," "talk to friends," "theater."
- When asked what they would add to the Constitution, students suggested happiness, family, more jobs, being fed.

MODERATE – Increase their appreciation of democracy and voting in particular.

Although different classes started the program with varying previous knowledge about democracy, by the end of the week (and particularly during Day 3 and discussions about activism) students in all classes could articulate **different ways to participate in democracy**, including voting, and why they are important.

Students said:

- Students actively engaged and shared ideas (even when others might disagree) during the homework vs. tests debate (though it consistently seemed harder to argue for arts over sports).
- Active participation in the chorus activity across the three schools observed during this activity.

LOW – See themselves represented in the museum and the stories it tells.

As the program progressed students demonstrated an **increased comfort level in the galleries**, with more students participating in inquiry about the artworks. This may be related to feeling more comfortable in the space, as well as to growing more comfortable with inquiry in general.

Students said:

- Vocally excited to hear that Lady Pink is from Ecuador.

LOW – Feel that the museum belongs to them.

This outcome was observed during **artmaking, gallery walks, and when students worked on their final projects**. While generally students seemed to understand the definition of an exhibition, the function of a label, and were able to select their favorite objects during the gallery walks, it was harder for them to apply these ideas to the final project.

Students said:

- Once students choose their artifact for the final project, the label writing for it came generally easily. However, the initial choosing/editing process was confusing for most classes.

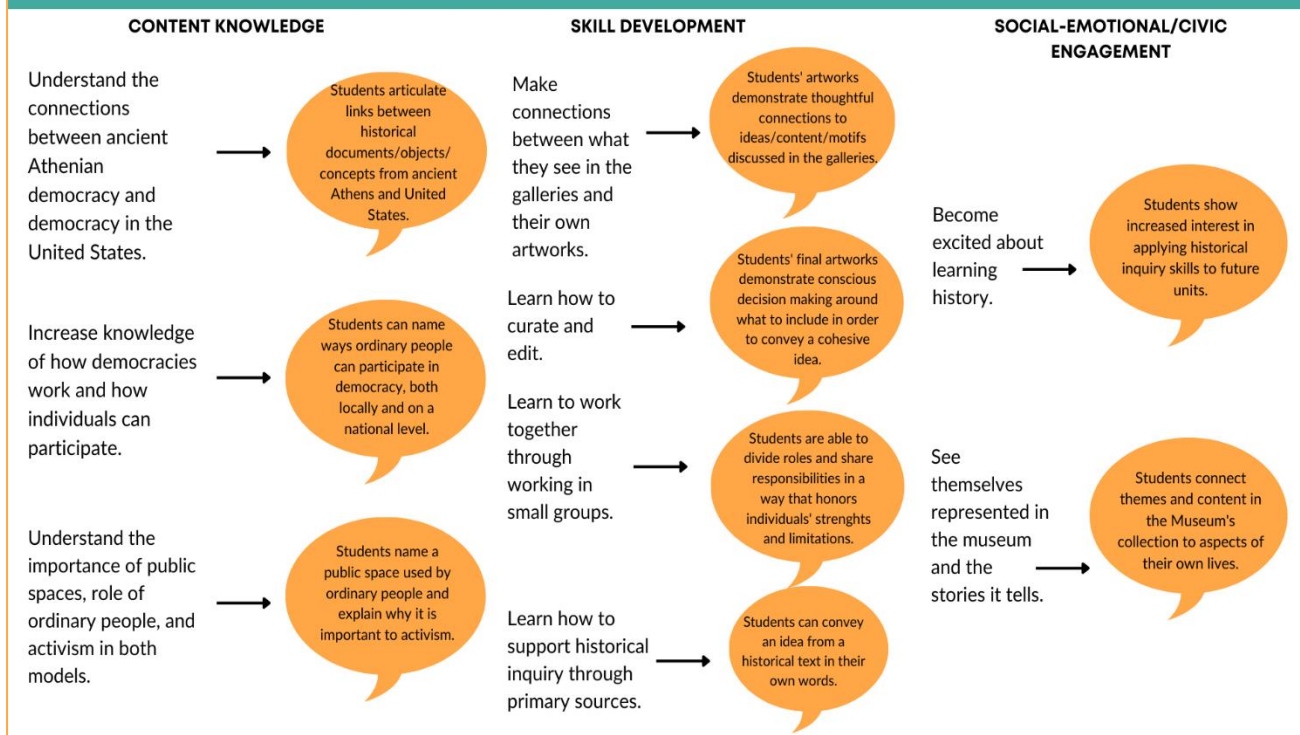
09 Appendix



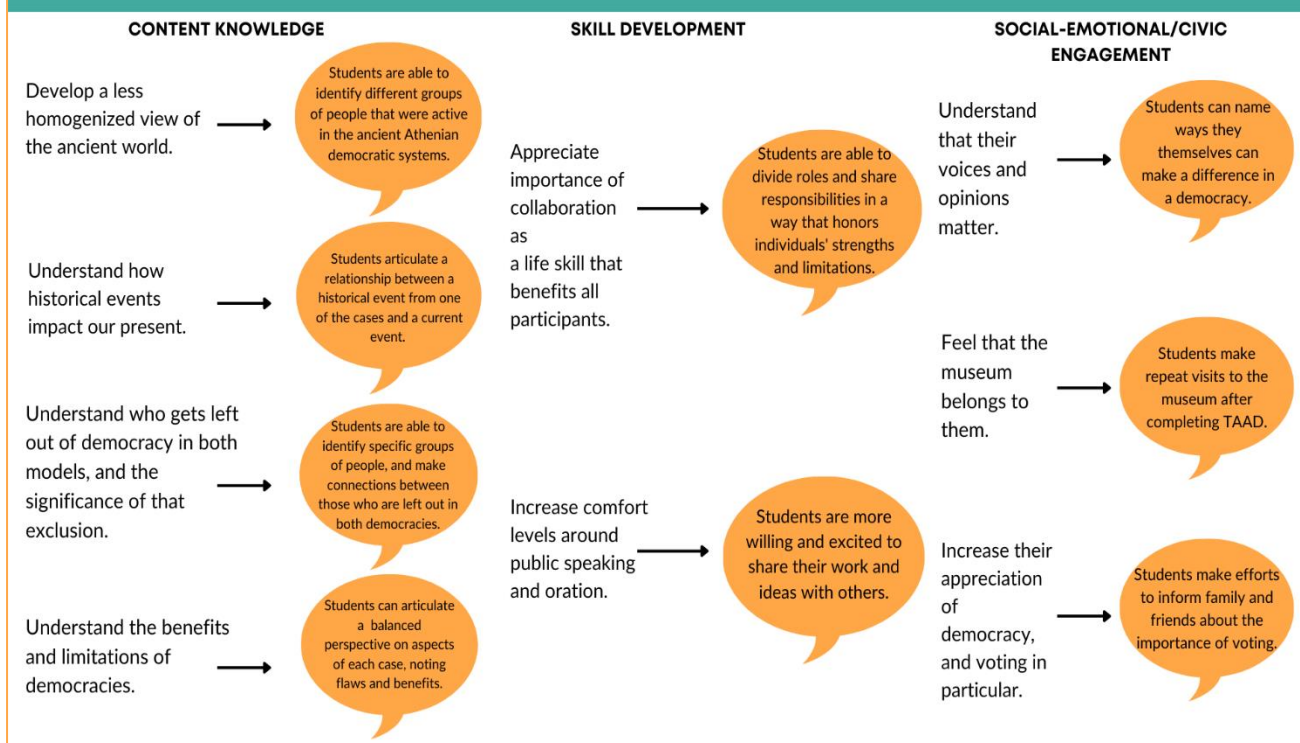
Appendix A: TAAD Program Logic Model



INDICATORS FOR SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES



INDICATORS FOR MID-TERM OUTCOMES



Appendix B: Open-Ended Embedded Student Assessment

Date:

School:

Thank you for your ideas about TAAD! There are no right or wrong answers, we're just curious to hear your ideas.

What is something you learned from TAAD this week that you didn't know before?

Who has power in a democracy?

Who might be left out in a democracy?

(flip to the next page)

What is one way an ordinary person can make change in a democracy?

Please choose one from this list and share why it is important in a democracy:

- a. Public spaces
- b. Activism
- c. Voting

What is one artwork, object, or text that you learned something from? What did you learn from it?

Appendix C: Pre-Post Standardized Embedded Student Assessment

Date:

School:

Class Number:

- a) Which one of these DOES NOT describe democracy? *Circle ONE choice.*
- a. A system of government where people have power.
 2. A system of government in which decisions about who has power in a democracy get made once, and then never change.
 3. A system of government that puts power in the hands of many people, rather than just a few.
 4. A system of government that sometimes gives more power to some people than others.
2. Who hasn't always had power in an American democracy? *Check all that apply.*
- Non-citizens
 - Kids (people under 18)
 - White men who do not own land
 - Women
 - White men who own land
 - Enslaved people

3. What is NOT shown in this picture?

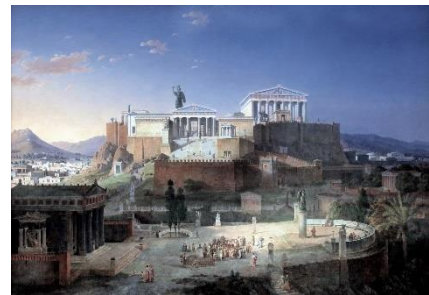
Circle ONE choice.

1. A public space
2. An orator
3. One way to express ideas in a democracy
4. Early United States
5. People with differing opinions

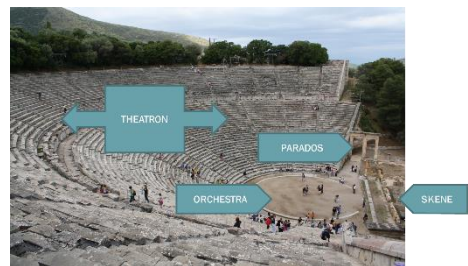


4. Draw a line between the word or phrase and the picture that matches it.

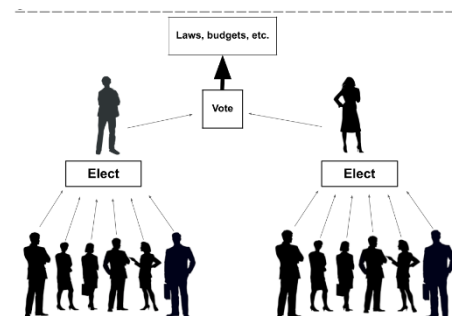
Representative democracy



Direct democracy



Theater



Agora



Vote on laws, budgets, etc.



Activism through petition

5. Fill in the blanks with phrases from the phrase bank:

Even though it could be somewhat disorganized, and excluded _____, one advantage of the Athenian form of _____ is that it allowed _____ to participate.

On the other hand, the American model of _____ was designed to be a more organized form of government, allowing for _____ to weigh in on political issues. However, in fact the vast majority of people were _____, and _____ was able to vote in early America.

Word bank:

1. Men who did not have land or wealth
2. A population of 4 million people
3. Direct democracy
4. Women, foreigners, and enslaved people
5. Only 6% of the population
6. Representative democracy
7. Disenfranchised

6. What IS shown in this picture? *Circle ONE choice.*
1. A public gathering space in a city far from water
 2. A public gathering space in a Greek city-state
 3. A public gathering space where everyone has equal access
 4. A public gathering space where people can exchange and debate ideas



7. Please circle the number that best describes how much you agree or disagree with the following statements, with 1 meaning you don't agree at all, and 7 meaning you agree completely:

a. *I feel comfortable public speaking:*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Don't agree at all Agree completely

b. *I feel confident expressing an idea I believe in, even if most people might not agree with me:*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Don't agree at all Agree completely

With gratitude, Kera Collective thanks the TAAD team at New-York Historical Society for being incredible evaluation partners!

Our doors are always open—don't hesitate to reach out with anything that's on your mind!

kera
COLLECTIVE

Kera Collective explores, measures, and furthers the meaning-making that occurs between museums and people.

WWW.KERACOLLECTIVE.COM

HELLO@KERACOLLECTIVE.COM



