



Port-Visory:

Integrating Advisory, Reflections and Portfolios into a Middle School



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Agenda

- Introduction to the “Port-visory” Program
- **Why reflections matter**
- **Why pairing reflections with advisory works**
- **What it means to be “Teacher Driven”**
- Soliciting feedback
- Universal takeaways

Goals

- To consider adding academic reflections to your existing advisory programs
- To inspire the creation of a similar program for your students
- To encourage the use of staff feedback and teacher leadership

Introduction to the School

The Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School is a 6-8 charter school in Harwich.

Created in 1995, serves 243 students from Cape Cod

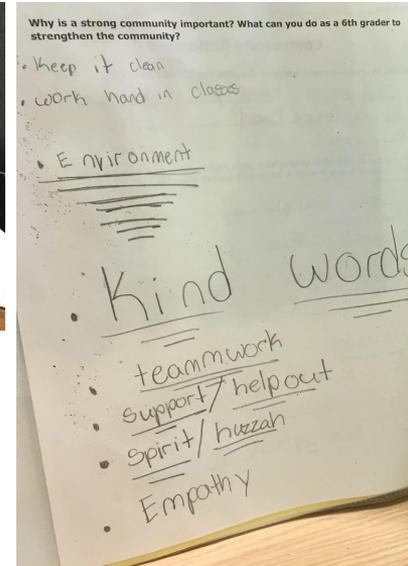
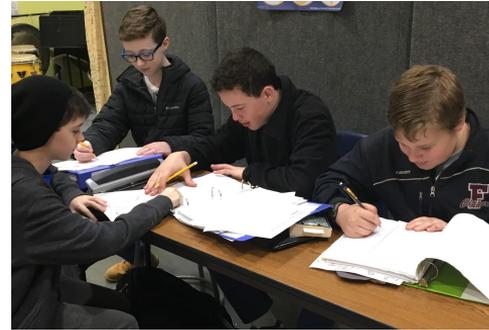
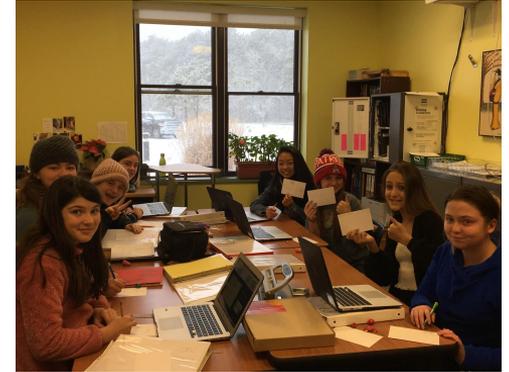
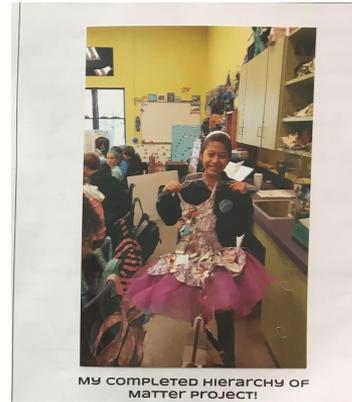
Mission Elements

- Project Based Learning
- Diverse Performance Assessments
- Teaching to the Whole Child
- Teacher Led School
- Use of Community Partners



Birth of “Port-Visory”

- ELA department suggested a portfolio program when returning from a PD that showed student writing portfolios
- How do we document what we do? How do kids show growth?
- How do we integrate an advisory program without overhauling our schedule and program?
- Teacher committee created to develop a program in 2013.
- Committee chair selected, stipend offered



Early Steps

- Create mission statement anchored in school mission statement
- Decide on structures
 - Single gender?
 - Cross graded or single grade?
 - New teacher every year, or same group for three years?
- Create templates and examples
- Create catalogue of icebreakers, games, community builders
- Decide on meeting time and frequency
 - Created a “portvisory day” time schedule
- Train Staff, get staff input, process staff input, make changes, disseminate changes, get input, etc...

Introduction to PortVisory!

Meets once a month in single-gender, single-grade level groupings

Staff members keep the same group for all three years

Portfolio: To create a binder to encapsulate a student's three years at the school. Includes a yearly "About Me," goals for each term, example school work, and reflections on projects, assessments, field trips, events, etc.

Advisory: A monthly conversation or activity centered around a school wide advisory theme for the month.

Students display their portfolios with a 3 year reflection at end of 8th grade

Portfolio Meets Advisory

Only an
Emphasis on
Social-Emotional

Only an
Emphasis on
Academics

Continuum of what staff and students are comfortable with/ desired

Aim for the middle

- Allows for the most people to be comfortable
- Allows for groups to shift focus as needed meeting to meeting

Tie to the School Mission

Teaching to the whole child

CCLCS provides students with academic, social, and emotional experiences that teach to the whole child. The board of trustees, administrators, and teachers reported the importance of teaching to whole child and cited project based learning as one way to teach to the full spectrum of intelligences. Each term, CCLCS students participate in electives referred to as “seminars.” Seminars meet once weekly and allow students to gain in-depth knowledge in specific areas of interest. Teachers reported seminars provide additional opportunities to reach diverse learners and teach to the whole child. In addition to seminars, students reported the school’s implementation of “portvisories” as example of teaching to the whole child. Portvisories, single grade-single gender advisory groups, meet several times during the term and provide opportunities for students to develop goals, reflect on special events such as field trips, and discuss projects or assignments identified by students as challenging or engaging. Student also reported portvisories are taught by one teacher all three years. Finally, stakeholders reported the grade 6 nature’s classroom, a weeklong program implemented each fall designed to facilitate active student learning and relationship building and interscholastic sports programs as examples of CCLCS teaching to the whole child.

CCLCS provides a number of field trips for students and staff. CCLCS students and staff participate in overnight Sea Camps each October designed to foster strong and lasting relationships. Students also

Successful Schools for Young Adolescence

Association for Middle Level Education *"This We Believe"*

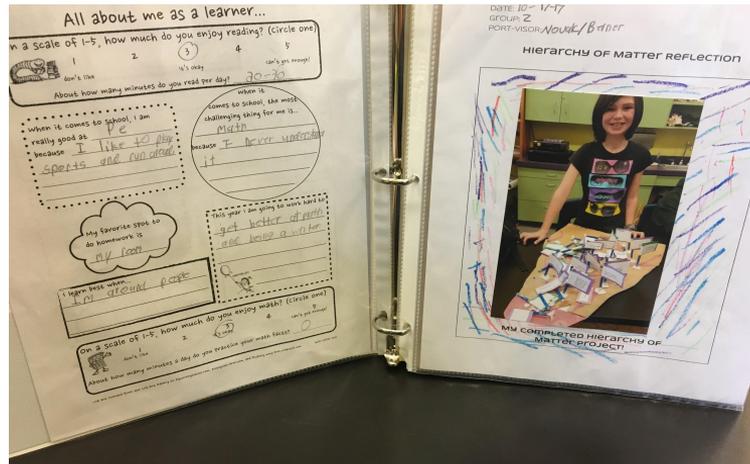
Essential Attributes. An education for young adolescents must be:

- **Developmentally Responsive** : using the nature of young adolescents as the foundation on which all decisions are made.
- **Challenging**: recognize that every student can learn and everyone is held to high expectations
- **Empowering**: providing all students with the knowledge and skills they need to take control of their lives
- **Equitable**: advocating for every student's right to learn and provide challenging and relevant learning opportunities.

Reflection Expectations

Students reflect :

- After major assignments
- After events/ field trips
- End of the Year



Let's Practice

5 min. Think of a session you have been to during this conference

1. Why did you pick that session? What did you expect?
2. Did the session meet your expectations? Why or why not?
3. What was your favorite part of the session? Describe one thing you are taking away from it (be specific!)
4. One word to describe this conference thus far

Why Reflection Matters



Based on Gibb's
Reflective Cycle

What can a student
learn from an
assignment above and
beyond the content ??

How can they improve in
the future?

Why Reflection Matters

Student
Perspective:



Reflection Examples

Name: _____ DATE: _____ PORT-VISOR: _____

CELL PROJECT(S) REFLECTION

1. WHAT WAS THE THEME OF YOUR CHILDREN'S CELL BOOK?

2. WHAT WAS THE EASIEST PART OF THIS PROJECT FOR YOU? WHAT DID YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING?

3. WHAT WAS YOUR ORGANELLE FOR ORGANELLE IDOL? DESCRIBE HOW YOU CAME UP WITH YOUR LYRICS!

4. SINGING IN FRONT OF YOUR CLASSMATES CAN BE NERVE-WRACKING! WHAT STRATEGIES DID YOU USE TO GET THROUGH IT?

5. WHY DO YOU THINK WE DO THESE PROJECTS?

Assignment Reflection

Name: _____ Portvisor _____ Date _____

Assignment Name: _____ Class/Unit: _____



Describe the assignment and what you learned by doing it.

How did the assignment connect to other things you were learning in this class?

Were any parts of the assignment hard? How did you deal with this?

What parts are you proudest of?

If you could change one part of this assignment, what would you change? Why?

Pick two learning goals, and say why the project involves them:

Reflection Examples

Name:
Portvisor:

Field Trip Reflection: Edward M Kennedy Institute for the US Senate



1. Please complete the following sentences:

I enjoyed...

I was surprised by...

I learned...

I already knew...

I wish we had...

2. Describe the bill that we discussed on the Senate floor. What was it about? What did the day show you about how a bill becomes a law?

3. What was your favorite exhibit or activity? Why?



4. Field trips are a way to get out into the world and utilize community resources. Do you think you took full advantage of this opportunity? Why or why not?

5. As you know you are the first group we have brought to the institute. Would you recommend we go back next year? Why or why not? Anything we should definitely ask to do again, or any suggestions for improvement?

Reflection Examples

Name:
Portvisor:

Sea Camps Reflection

7th graders have a unique Sea Camps experience. Many of you have experienced the craziness of Sea Camps before as 6th graders, and you all know that you'll have one more year. Please use your thoughts and experiences to answer the following questions.

1. Why do you think CCLCS brings the school community to Sea Camps every year? What is the point of this experience?

2. What was your favorite parts of Sea Camps this year? Why?

3. Many hours go into planning for Sea Camps every year. What realistic advice would you give to CCLCS staff to make next year even better? (Feel free to list as many suggestions as you'd like, big and small!)

Name:
Advisor:

White Mountains Reflection

The White Mountains trip has been an essential part of the 8th grade experience for 23 years. Please use the questions below to guide your reflection about your participation in the White Mountains.

The format of your reflection can be whatever works best for you. You can answer the questions (bold or italicize your answers), you can do a free-write in the box below, you can write a letter to your guide or anything else that touches on the questions below. Your reflection should be at least a page in length, 12 point font, 1.5 space.

- 1) What were your expectations going into the White Mountains?
- 2) What did you do during the trip? How would you describe this trip to another person?
- 3) What were some of the highlights for you? What images or experiences will stay with you long after this trip is over? Be as specific as possible!
- 4) In the CCLCS mission statement it says that "Our graduates take with them the values of personal responsibility, consideration for others, respect for the environment, academic integrity, creative expression, and perseverance"
 - a) How did this trip teach you about personal responsibility or consideration for others?
 - b) Did this trip influence your respect for the environment? If so, how so?
 - c) How did you use perseverance on this trip?
- 5) Why do you think the 8th grade teachers value this trip? Why have we run it for so many years?
- 6) What advice would you give to future students about this trip?

Goal Setting

Goal Prep

Rank the effort you put forward last term in...
(1: no effort, 10: LOTS of effort!)

1. Your homework

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2. Participating in Class

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

3. Preparing for projects, tests, etc

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4. Hobbies/ extra curriculars (art, music, sports, etc)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5. Being a good friend

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6. Being a helpful member of the community

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7. Being a helpful member of your family

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8. Making healthy choices

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Things you want to get better at:

Goal Setting

This term my goal is

I will accomplish this by

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

I will hold myself accountable by:

Students reflect each term

Process “did you meet your goals”
at the end of the term

Can be academic or personal

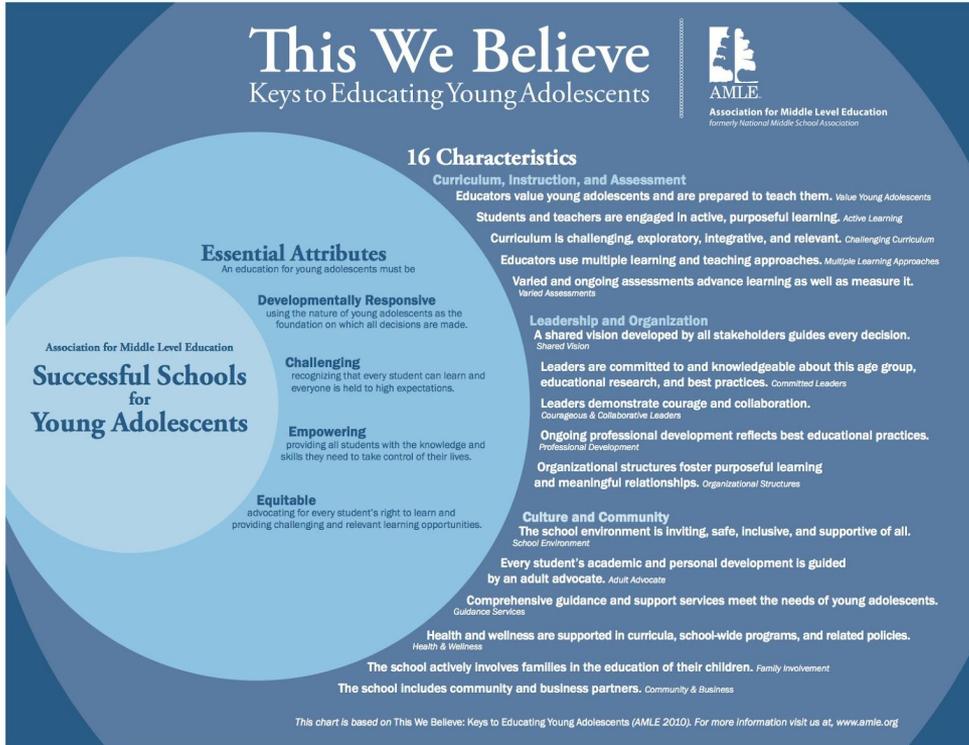
Final Product



Why Advisory Matters

“Advisory is an essential and integral part of a developmentally responsive middle school. One that fosters trust, communication, and a true sense of belonging for the students as the result of a positive relationships between students and teachers, and students and fellow students.”

Burns, Jenkins, Kane



Quality Control

Staff Google Classroom

Monthly theme

Distribution of agenda &
slides

January Portvisory: Goal Setting

The screenshot shows a Google Slides presentation titled "January Portvisory: Goal Setting". The interface includes a menu bar with options like File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Slide, Arrange, Tools, Add-ons, and Help. A toolbar below the menu contains various editing tools. On the left, a slide navigation pane shows five slides. The main slide area displays the current slide, which has a blue background. The slide content includes the title "Goal Setting" in large white text, the subtitle "January Portvisory" in yellow text, and a cartoon panel featuring Calvin the tiger and Hobbes the dog. Calvin is speaking to Hobbes, and the text in the panel reads: "RESOLUTIONS? ME?? JUST WHAT ARE YOU IMPLYING? THAT I NEED TO CHANGE?? WELL, BUDDY, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, I'M PERFECT THE WAY I AM!". At the bottom of the slide area, there is a text box that says "Click to add speaker notes".

Why Advisory Matters

Student Perspective:



Teacher Driven

Goal : To make this program our own/ driven by the needs of our students

To accomplish this:

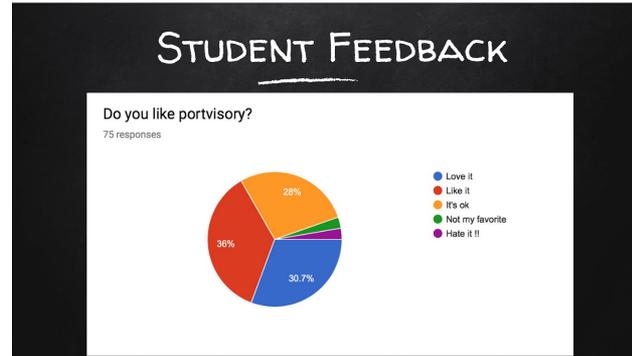
- Teacher committee meets regularly to reflect on previous sessions, brainstorm advisory themes, discuss how to support reflections, delegate pre-planning tasks for next session
- Feedback solicited after every meeting
- Drop in observations done regularly
- Formal feedback solicited from 8th graders and staff at end of year
- New committee members welcomed at any time

Soliciting Feedback

Google
Form

Easy Data

Decisions
for Next
Year Data
Driven



Cycle of Reflection / Room to Grow

Accept that it will always evolve, create the structures for that to happen, and acknowledge that it's a good thing

*Always be a
work in progress*

- Student needs will change
- Current issues will change
- Opportunities for service projects will arise
- A chance to models that teachers and administrators are student centered and open to feedback

Universal Takeaways

- Pairing academic reflections with advisory groups is effective
- Small changes to the program and schedule can yield big results
- New programs need to be anchored in the mission and values of the school
- Not everything has to be assessed
- Soft skills matter, and need space to be taught
- Teacher input increases buy in, even if it can mean the process is messy and slow to build
- Listen to the students, keep YOUR students at the center

“We know that young people- from the least to most advantaged- need opportunities to stand tall. We know teens thrive in settings, in and outside school, where they encounter:

1. Caring relationships that help them build an attachment to the learning environment and persist through obstacles.
2. Cognitive challenges that engage them intellectually, tap interests and hone essential skills.
3. A culture of peer support that pushes them to do their best work.
4. Community membership and voice in a group worth belonging to
5. Connections to an expanding network of adults to help them access additional learning and career opportunities.”

(W.K Kellogg Foundation, 2002)

Questions??

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Resources

Burns, James B., et al. *Advisory: Finding the Best Fit for Your School*. Association for Middle Level Education, 2012.

This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents. Association for Middle Level Education, 2010.

Striggins, Rick. "Assessment Through the Student's Eyes." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 64, no. 8, May 2007, pp. 22–28.

Rothstein, Richard, et al. "Balance in the Balance." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 64, no. 8, May 2007, pp. 8–11.

Poliner, Rachel A., and Jeffrey Benson. *Teaching the Whole Teen: Everyday Practices That Promote Success and Resilience in School and Life*. Corwin, a SAGE Company, 2017.