Virtual Orientation Programs

Sample Overview

Close Up’s virtual orientation programs help students build community with their classmates, develop empathy, explore multiple perspectives, discuss current issues, and gain the skills needed to take action on important local or national issues. Over the course of three days, Close Up Instructors will engage students in team-building exercises, facilitate small group discussions, and provide guidance on establishing an online learning community.

Program Session Details

Day 1: Creating Community and Establishing Purpose (3 hours)
- **Orientation**: Get ready for the sessions ahead and meet your program instructors!
- **Building a Virtual Community**: Students will consider how they will work together during the program by creating their own rules and norms for engagement and participating in team building exercises.
- **Understanding Why We Don’t Always Agree**: Students will investigate and discuss a set of political values that includes liberty, equality, private interests, and the common good to see how different people apply those values in different situations.

Day 2: Understanding Diverse Perspectives (3 hours)
- **Opening Team-Building Activity**
- **Exploring Key Election Issues**: Students will discuss what they believe are the critical policy issues shaping the 2020 election.
- **Issue Deliberation**: Students will join a breakout session of their choice to engage and deliberate on one key election issue (examples include: COVID-19, Economy, Criminal Justice, Environment, etc.), encouraging them to consider multiple perspectives and deepen their understanding of current policies.

Day 3: A Local Community Approach (3 hours)
- **Opening Team-Building Activity**
- **Taking Action**: Students will consider how the national issues discussed in the presidential race affect their local hometown and school community. Students will work in small groups to develop action plans for bringing about change in their community on the issues that matter most to them, and brainstorm ways to implement their action plan during the school year.
- **Closing Reflection**: Students will reflect on the program and commit to future civic action and engagement in their school community.

Student Outcomes

By participating in this orientation program, students will:
- Build an engaged and respectful learning community among classmates
- Develop a better understanding of why people disagree
- Increase their willingness and ability to engage with differing views and backgrounds
- Understand how the current pandemic influences young people’s perspectives on pressing national issues
- Design an action plan to bring about change in your local community

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CONNECT: