Think about your brain. Think about how the messages from your fingers travel through your neurons to your brain. There are no wires or batteries. Your body is full of “squishy circuits.”

Mac Baker (’18), science outreach intern, researched, designed and developed a new set of lessons this year around understanding squishy circuits. Using conductive and insulating dough he built a set of activities showcasing that electricity moves not just through wires but through any conductive material. His activity successfully visited 9 schools at the family science nights with over 2000 people attending these events.

Additionally, a classroom program was piloted and has launched into the 4th grade classrooms of the Walla Walla Valley public schools, complimenting their electric circuits unit.
Putting the Pieces Together: Developing a Social Justice Lesson for Kindergartners
Kimberly Taylor ('20), Psychology

This fall, inspired by my time working in two kindergarten classrooms at Sharpstein Elementary with America Reads/America Counts, I jumped at the opportunity to design a new kindergarten curriculum for Whitman Teaches the Movement (WTTM). WTTM is a program that trains Whitman students to teach age appropriate lessons in WWPS about the Civil Rights Movement and social justice.

In choosing the theme for this lesson, I was particularly inspired by Ms. Darby, a kindergarten teacher that I currently work with, who focuses on developing the character of her students by giving them opportunities to develop their interpersonal skills. This focus on classroom community led to my decision to highlight themes of identity and inclusion.

To keep students engaged, I divided the hour-long lesson into small chunks and focused on engaging all types of learners. First, a read-aloud of the book Skin Again, by bell hooks. I chose this book because it introduced one aspect of identity, skin color, in a way that kindergarteners could understand. The illustrations in the book were also spectacular.

After reading the book, volunteers led a series of turn and talks where students could discuss what makes up their identity and share times where they either felt left out of a community or included by someone else.

Then, the class broke up into small groups and each student decorated a puzzle piece to illustrate different aspects of their identity.

Finally, each group glued all their puzzle pieces together to show how including each of their distinct identities helps to make their classroom community stronger.

Overall, I hope this lesson serves as an introduction for WWPS students to other WTTM lessons they will experience in future grade levels, contributing to their development as inclusionary and open minded community members.

Connection
The addition of a kindergarten lesson to the WTTM program was an amazing opportunity to provide some of our youngest students the chance to discuss identity and inclusion in an engaging and meaningful way. The quality of the lesson allowed the kindergarten students to successfully learn the terms, identity and inclusion, and connect this to their own lives.

- Christy Kurtulis ('92), Executive Director of Teaching and Learning for Walla Walla Public Schools
With the start of the new year, Bilingual United took on an exciting new partnership with the Walla Walla Public School District, sending Whitman students into after-school programs as tutors for English Language Learners. As the result of an idea sparked by Dr. Victor Vergara, Director of Bilingual Programs and Latino Outreach for the District, six Whitman students from the Bilingual United volunteer program are currently employed to work with students from primarily Spanish-speaking backgrounds.

These conversation groups meet at Pioneer and Garrison Middle schools, as well as at Wa-Hi. The mission of their work is to help the ELL students develop their English skills in a relaxed, fun and supportive environment. Learning to become more comfortable and confident in their second language is the biggest benefit for the English learners, who have the unique opportunity to practice talking with Whitman students in an informal manner such as the sort of conversations one has with friends: discussing favorite TV shows, sending texts, or playing games.

It’s unclear though who is learning more: the ELL students or the Whitman students. In a meeting, the Whitman students reflected on the ways that the ELL students have taught them the importance of slowing down the pace of communication, an appreciation for hard work, a passion for teaching, and the courage to try new and difficult things.

“Most of our students participating in the conversation groups have recently arrived from Latin America with very limited English skills. As a department, we are very grateful for the Whitman students and Bilingual United for taking time out of their week to be a mentors and role models to our students. We have witnessed amazing growth!

At the beginning of the year, we had a couple of students who were very timid and afraid to express how they were feeling. We now have students glowing with confidence and self-esteem because they are learning new ways to communicate how they are feeling and how they are doing.”

-Marilyn Melgoza Ochoa, Latino Outreach Coordinator/Intervention Specialist for Walla Walla Public Schools
Sharing Books, Talking Science
Heidi Chapin, Science Outreach Coordinator

In every children's book, you can find the main concepts of science. Just open a book and explore the page.
- Patterns
- Cause and Effect
- Structure and Function
- Scale
- Proportion and Quantity
- Systems and System Models
- Energy and Matter
- Stability and Change
They are all there just waiting to be discovered.

This workshop unpacked the 7 Crosscutting Concepts outlined in the Next Generation Science Standards for local teachers and Story Time volunteers encouraging them to discuss science during their classroom read aloud time. One teacher exclaimed at the end of the day, "I will never be able to look at a book without thinking about these concepts."

With our ever changing world full of scientific discovery, everyone needs to understand the basic concepts of science. Each year, Whitman hosts professional development for teachers. This year we partnered with Story Time to share that opportunity with Whitman students who visit classrooms each week, reading to students.

Inspiration:
"It is inspiring to see children approach science undaunted, with lots of support and care, and it is inspiring to be part of an outreach program whose goals are to foster curiosity and love of learning." -Rachel Neeham (’18)

School Outreach Programs
- Advanced Studies Enrichment
- America Reads/America Counts
- Bilingual United
- Classroom Connections
- Classroom Science Programs
- Cool the Schools
- Family Science Night
- Great Explorations
- Planetarium
- Science Summer Institute
- Storytime Project
- Whitman Institute for Scholastic Enrichment
- Whitman Mentor
- Whitman Teaches the Movement

Our Partners
- Assumption Elementary-Middle School
- Berney Elementary
- Blue Ridge Elementary
- Carrie Welch Trust
- Clara and Art Bald Trust
- College Place Public Schools
- DeSales High School
- Edison Elementary
- Garrison Middle School
- George Welch Trust
- Great Explorations in Education (AAUW)
- Green Park Elementary
- Joseph L. Stubblefield Trust
- Lincoln High School
- Pacific Power Foundation
- Pioneer Middle School
- Prospect Point Elementary
- Sharpstein Elementary
- Teaching Tolerance
- The Mary Garner Esary Trust
- Walla Walla High School
- Walla Walla Public School District Office

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