

Linking art, literature, and mathematics to help solve transportation challenges

What do high school curricula in art, literature, and mathematics have to do with the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)'s transportation plans for our region? Everything, thanks to the MPO's conNECTIONS study launched in 1998. This project connected government officials, community leaders, private citizens, and students who now are deeply engaged in real-world issues.

The MPO partnered with the Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration (CILC) to create a prototype for utilizing the "community as a classroom" as demonstrated in their collaborative participation in the "Northeast Corridor" Vista. Teachers at seven schools designed innovative, interdisciplinary curricula that allowed students to study the congestion and lack of mobility that plagues the region's much-traveled corridor, stretching from downtown



Indianapolis to Noblesville. Examples of student-led investigations included traffic counts in mathematics, research surveys, and the incorporation of art into the design of structures and signage. Using videoconferencing, students at multiple sites collaborated as they researched and recommended potential solutions that ranged from improved bus routes to light rail to multi-occupant lanes.



"Something about this project fostered a level of collaboration I hadn't seen before." – Teacher

Impact on Learning

- n Helps students understand the environmental, political, and social implications of public issues.
- n Teaches communications skills as students pursue abilities to sense, listen, observe, read, and write.
- n Allows students to serve on citizen boards and committees in their community.
- n Creates a hands-on understanding of the steps of promoting policies, change, and community buy in within a governmental process.
- n Enhances students' abilities to think rationally and to make decisions based on appropriate knowledge.
- n Exposes students to new career and vocational opportunities.

Event Stats

Number of participating students 170
 Number of participating experts 30
 Number of participating schools 7
 Community partner:
 Indianapolis Metropolitan
 Planning Organization