2015 Facilitator’s Guide for Teaching Techtivism

Introduction

Techtivism aims to utilize technology for activism. Using the Internet, social media, and digital tools to raise awareness about social justice issues, and advocate for solutions has the potential to create more impact for communities. The Techtivism program brings together activists, community leaders, technologists, and designers that are solving community problems.

The following curriculum is meant to be replicated, adapted, or remixed by groups who want to use tech or digital media learning for social good. The Techtivism program can be delivered as a whole in ten to twelve weeks during out of school time. The units or the workshops within each unit can be delivered as stand alone sessions. The proposed Techtivism sequence can be modified to fit the goals and priorities of each program site. For example at THE POINT, Techtivism has a heavy focus on environmental justice due to their location by a river and an industrial business zone. Depending on the location, other program sites may focus on specific issues or topics. The tech-entrepreneurial content can be delivered through various lenses including video gaming, Hip Hop culture, and music. The online resources and prompts for final projects can be modified depending on how the program is adapted or remixed. Content can also be adjusted to serve younger students.

The four units in Techtivism include entrepreneurship, digital media and design, product development, and marketing. Within these units, young people receive the tools to create a digital project that solves a real problem, can be monetized, and will reach users online. The outcomes are final digital projects that address community issues. The completion and quality of these projects is what determines the success of Techtivism, as it is centered on peer-led, project-based learning. The culminating event where final projects are presented is standard for any program, and when feasible should unite the various young people participating in Techtivism or other digital media programs.

The Knowledge House partnered with THE POINT CDC to pilot Techtivism. Inspired by THE POINT’s A.C.T.I.O.N. program, TKH emphasizes teaching tech and entrepreneurial skills through community leadership and advocacy. THE POINT implemented youth development, social emotional learning (SEL) and community activism best practices into the program. This facilitator’s guide includes the proposed program sequence, notes on implementing SEL, and outreach strategies for planning the final show case. Please refer to this, while using the PowerPoint.

Techtivism is a Hive funded project that follows the principles of connected learning. A special thanks goes to the Hive Digital Media Learning Fund in the New York Community Trust and the Hive NYC Network for their continued support.
About The Knowledge House

The Knowledge House builds an education to employment pipeline in underserved communities by equipping young people with 21st century skills. TKH invests in underutilized young adults, placing them at the center of leading innovation in their neighborhoods, so that they may develop professionally and launch careers or ventures to uplift their communities.

TKH’s three-pronged approach consists of:

1. Partnering with community based organizations, education providers, and tech businesses to form a local eco-system leading community-driven innovation and economic development
2. Mobilizing local professionals and entrepreneurs of color to raise digital awareness in their communities and lead our core programming at neighborhood sites
3. Developing young talent through our core programs

Outcomes include young adults that are more employable and entrepreneurial, with experience producing digital media and software, have college and career skills, and are leaders in their community.

About THE POINT Community Development Corporation

THE POINT Community Development Corporation is a non-profit 501 (c)(3) dedicated to youth development and the cultural and economic revitalization of the Hunts Point section of the South Bronx. THE POINT works with neighbors to celebrate the life and art of the community, an area traditionally defined solely in terms of its poverty, crime rate, poor schools and substandard housing. The residents of Hunts Point, their talents and aspirations, are THE POINT’s greatest assets. THE POINT offers a multi-faceted approach to asset-based community development. It’s programming falls within three main headings - Youth Development, Arts and Culture and Community Development - all aimed at the comprehensive revitalization of Hunts Point.

THE POINT uses the lens of environmental justice, youth development and arts and culture to engage individuals from Hunts Point in the effort to create a more livable community and generate economic opportunity. THE POINT is actively involved in attracting visitors and discretionary income to Hunts Point through its Community Development programs.

Each of THE POINT’s programs is based on the principles of asset-based community development. All programs and projects embrace the belief that the residents of the South Bronx, especially the young people, have the inherent vision and ability to transform their neighborhoods. For THE POINT, at-risk children and teens are not bundles of problems – they are wellsprings of solutions.
Proposed Techtivism Sequence

- Intro: (SEL Activities: ice breakers, passion survey, goal setting)
- Unit 1: Business/Lean Start-Up
  - L1: SEL Activity: Community Mapping
  - L2: “Numbers Behind Your Solution”
  - L3: Entrepreneurship 101
- Unit 2: Design and Digital Media
  - L4: Video storytelling/production
  - L5: SEL Activity: Documenting community needs/Video scavenger hunt
- Unit 3: Product Development
  - SEL activities (check-in/out): revisit goal setting activity - How much progress have we made? What is next for a successful outcome?)
  - L6: Web 1.0
  - L7: Web 2.0
  - L8: Wordpress Development
- Unit 4: Digital marketing (SEL activities: termination activity/referrals/program evaluation)
  - L9: Digital Marketing
  - L10: Web Presence 101
- Final Showcase
  - SEL: Planning a community event with most engagement; public speaking 101 use of Toastmasters http://www.toastmasters.org/Resources/Public-Speaking-Tips/Accepting-Awards (townhall planning process)

How SEL is Implemented in Techtivism and other Programming

The SEL components included in each lesson are: safe space, SEL check-in/out, group norms, personal and group goals, and passion. SEL is especially critical for introducing and closing out programs, lessons, units, etc.

Before Techtivism:

- Recruitment/Outreach/Interviewing/Selection Progress
  - Includes an interview skills, presentations, identifying an article pertinent to campaigning, creating interview questions rubric, final selection rubric, critical thinking skills - why are people signing up, how to be professional interview/interviewee, creating strong first impression
- Intro to Project and Facilitators, Golden Rules, Group Norms, Safe Space Check-in/out
  - IE - THE POINT CDC & The Knowledge House Missions/DEAC Mission
  - IE - 3 Golden Rules @ THE POINT: 1. no hurting with words or fists, 2. respect yourself, others and the space you are in, & if you feel unsafe, tell an adult
  - IE - Group norms: rules established by group together after brainstorm 1. one mic rule, 2. using “I” voice, 3. respect everyone’s opinion, 4. step-in/step-back, 5. active participation, etc.
On Day 1 of Techtivism:

- SEL team building, establishing group norms, resources, program integration, participation in other programs
- Introduction topic of social good from the local lens: what is already happening, intro to 6 steps; attending public hearings, in-house community service projects, youth led workshops, basics of current local campaigns/brainstorming issues and campaigns, defining community. SEL trainings with staff, peer groups made of returning alumni and new members; beginning of 1-on-1 check-ins with each student (grades, campaigns, other SE needs met)
- Passion Survey (30 mins)
  - What are you passionate about?
  - If you could change one thing about the world, NYC, your community, and your home what would it be? Why?
  - If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be and why?
  - 3 words to describe yourself.
  - 3 words others use to describe you.
  - 3 things you love to do and wake up in the morning excited about.
  - What are your best qualities?
  - What are 3 things you wish to improve upon in the 12 weeks? What challenges/barriers stand in the way of this improvement?

During Techtivism:

- Political Education 101
- Intro to foundational theory of community organizing
- Prep for first community engagement project & present to an audience; outcome public engagement, working knowledge of campaigns, start of final presentation conversations start
- IE - Safe space Check-ins: tie back to Group Norms, what does every student need in order to feel safe?
  - Every workshop starts and ends with a check-in from everyone in the room - “How do you feel right now on a scale of 1-10? (10 being the happiest/most content and 1 being the lousiest); make note of youth progress from initial and final check-in
- Conflict mediation, empathy
- Safe space check-ins

Conclusion of Techtivism:

- Taking campaigns and doing something that is interactive; contact lists for people who support, town hall outreach, updating of content boards, demo creation via technology, continue political education based on current affairs, outreach, info gathering; engaging other youth groups to build fellowship, working on similar campaigns; final outcome is current updates to campaigns, eliciting content/feedback for campaigns
- Assessing social skills and SEL growth
Event Planning Strategies for Coding Bootcamps, Hackathons, Startup Competitions, etc.

Week One/Five Weeks Before Event: Formalizing Event

Step 1: Finalize event and have everyone on the same page
- Each staff member should be aware of all the events.
- The event (time, place, agenda, budget, resources, and audience) should be discussed with the whole group at its initial stage and final planning stage.
- Roles should be administered.
- When the event is finalized, place your event online.

Step 2: Know your partners, affiliates, and outlets to spread
- Notify our partners of our event(s).
- Have a template invite message ready to be sent out via Bronx Digital Meet Up, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and regular email platforms.
  - Each platform should relatively have the same info, but may contain different layouts.
  - I.E. Twitter comprises of 140 characters which will differ from a regular email.
- The draft templates should be reviewed by another staff member. Having another set of eyes can be beneficial for any extra info missed.

Step 3: Create Forms
- Registration form/plan. Make sure to include a referral section (Who would you recommend to go to this event?).
- Social Media Outlet Tracker: TKH website/partner sites, Bronx Digital Meet Up, Newsletter, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and regular email.

Step 4: Resources and Sponsorship
- Subdivide what resources are needed for the event.
- Go through the sponsors list. Choose/add sponsors to target.
- Formulate a plan to accumulate the resources through them.
- Make sure to create a sponsor deck and any promotional material created

Week Two/Month Before Event: Realizations

Step 5: Roles, Run Through, Materials
- Roles should be finalized.
- Staff members should complete a run through of the event to determine if the agenda truly matches the time allotted.
- Finalize who will be part of the event: from staff to audience.
- A checkpoint of event’s status and the gathering of resources.
- Promotional materials are often made within the first week. This week begins the creation of supplemental materials that can be done in-house (i.e. awards, goody bags).

Step 6: Resources and Sponsorship Pt. 2
- Start calling, emailing, and trying to reach targeted sponsors.

Week Three/Three Weeks Before Event: Same Page
Step 7: Communication and Creations
- Status update through a formal meeting, communicating what everyone has done, will do, and any needs for help.
- Everyone should check to see how many people signed up and determine if numbers are on track (audience, resources, budget).
- Continue making the materials to match the numbers gathered.

Week Four-Five/Two-One Week Before Event: Resources
Step 8: Resources and Sponsorship Pt. 3, and Communication
- Continue calling, emailing, and trying to reach targeted sponsors.
- Assess where these resources and what is needed.
- Reach out to partners and give them an update of the event. Make sure partners are on the same page with any changes made.

Week Six/Week of the Event: The Final Touch
Step 9: Tweaks
- Have all the supplemental materials finalized and created (include extra batch just in case for last minute submissions).
- Finalize the event with orchestrators.
- Finalize the event with partnering affiliates.
- Do a final run through with all players on deck.

Step 10: Event
- Assign a case manager to make sure the event is going smoothly and on schedule.
- Double check to make sure the event is being promoted via social media websites and by partners.
- Give out swag and gifts (i.e. sticker, 3D house, tech advice, etc.) to the attendees upon leaving.

Step 11: The Follow-Up
- Email the participants (audience and partners). Thank them for their time.
- Provide a summary of the event, and the accomplishments (adding theirs will be a personal touch as well).
- Include in the email a fun installment or gift
Outreach Strategies

There should be an outreach conversation between TKH, THE POINT (TP) and their partnering affiliates. Placing the TKH and TP logo and info within partners’ website pages, newsletters, promotional ads will help promote Techtivism.

Program sites should be marketing their organization and its Techtivism program on a variety of different platforms: Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), In-House Media (Bronx Digital Meet Up, website), and local press.

Effective outreach should include the following:

1: Newsletters
Newsletters should be consistent. There should be an emailed newsletter about every month using MailChimp, Constant Contact or direct email. The newsletter should contain the following format:

• Greetings and Salutations,
• Sum of the month
• Pictures of specific events during that month
• An incentive of what’s to come
• A donation box
• Links to social media sites: Facebook, Twitter, Bronx Digital Meet Up, etc.

For specific events, it’s okay to do a reminder 5-7 days before.

Newsletters can be created for specific audiences. There should be different directories of email addresses saved. The staff should always receive every form of newsletter.

• A group for the staff/friends
• A group for staff/friends/priority supporters
• A group for staff/general supporters
• Board members

2: Twitter/Facebook/Instagram/Bronx Digital Meetup
Pt. 1: Whenever there’s an event coming up, there should be an automatic blast to these platforms. The day of the event, there should be a posts. During and/or after the event, there should be a post including,

• Pictures and videos
• A question, comment, or quote that causes engagement (retweets or sharing)
  o -i.e.: What did you guys think? Should we do this again? What was your take?

When people comment on posts, the staff should comment back. It helps build a relationship.

3: Imagery
Post pictures of your own events. Seeing is believing. People fund or have more faith in visual pursuits.

• Flyers and newsletters

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• Have an area on the site where one can see recent events
• Share photos with event participants afterwards

**Additional resources**

- TPCDC Mission (community revitalization) & Environmental Justice Principals by Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991 ([http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html](http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html)); open discussion and process session with students
- Social and Environmental Justice programming utilizes the 6 action steps to becoming an activist outlined by ACTION program participants to implement and achieve some results on short term and long term campaigns - ([http://actionthepoint.wix.com/action#!take-action/c6ek](http://actionthepoint.wix.com/action#!take-action/c6ek))
- THE POINT’s youth program is founded on a Transformative Philosophy, a framework defined by the Ford Foundation report *Urban Youth Programs in America* as: “the integration of opportunities through programming for positive change outcomes at both the individual and community level.” THE POINT was included in this report for its grassroots, asset-based approach to youth and community development. THE POINT was the subject of a follow-up study in 2010, *A Community-Based Grassroots Organization in the South Bronx as a Catalyst for Youth Organizing and Activism: Analyzing the Dynamics of a Transformative Youth Program*, which followed THE POINT’s teen activism program, **A.C.T.I.O.N.**, for a year in order to better understand the programmatic strategies that support a Transformative Philosophy (Poncelet 2013).