EDUCATION WORKSHOP

Raising the Volume
Episode IX
A conversation on finding your voice with Dr. Kylon Jerome Middleton.

RAISING THE VOLUME
with Marcus Amaker & Charlton Singleton

Sixth Grade and Up
CORE SUBJECTS AND 21ST CENTURY THEMES

Mastery of core subjects and 21st century themes is essential for all students in the 21st century. Core subjects include English, reading or language arts, world languages, arts, mathematics, economics, science, geography, history and government, and civics. In addition to these subjects, schools must move forward to include not only a focus on mastery of core subjects, but also an understanding of academic content at much higher levels by weaving 21st century interdisciplinary themes into core subjects.

Global Awareness
1. Use 21st century skills to understand and address global issues.
2. Learn from and work collaboratively with individuals representing diverse cultures, religions, and lifestyles in a spirit of mutual respect and open dialogue in personal, work, and community contexts.

Civic Literacy
1. Participate effectively in civic life through knowing how to stay informed and understanding governmental processes.
2. Exercise the rights and obligations of citizenship at local, state, national, and global levels.
3. Understand the local and global implications of civic decisions.

Work Creatively with Others
1. Develop, implement, and communicate new ideas to others effectively.
2. Be open and responsive to new and diverse perspectives; incorporate group input and feedback into the work.
3. Demonstrate originality and inventiveness in work, and understand the real world limits to adopting new ideas.
4. View failure as an opportunity to learn; understand that creativity and innovation is a long-term, cyclical process of small successes and frequent mistakes.
5. Implement innovations.
6. Act on creative ideas to make a tangible and useful contribution to the field in which the innovation will occur.
OVERVIEW

Everyone has a story. It's our place to take a moment to listen. Once you listen, your eyes open. You can put yourself in someone else's shoes and try to comprehend their experiences. You may be inspired, you may come away with more knowledge, or you may find a bit of yourself in someone else.

Raising the Volume is a series of Black stories. Stories about Black entrepreneurs, judges, authors, artists, and leaders in our community. Stories that need to be heard. Led by the Gaillard Center's Artists-in-Residence, Charlton Singleton and Marcus Amaker, Raising the Volume gives a platform to Black community members and opens us all up to honest discussion.

As you introduce this series to your students, follow the bullet points below for discussion. Your students will find that they are challenged to think about uncomfortable things. Those conversations are what will help us change our world. In the words of Judge McFarland, “To break down racial barriers, start where you are.” Let's start where we are and see what change we can bring to our community.

For each lesson, split your class into small groups for discussion or discuss as a whole. Choose the model that is the most comfortable for your students so they feel free to discuss opinions openly.

 Teachers, if you are interested in scheduling a cross-school discussion on Raising the Volume Episode IX, please email Sterling DeVries at sdevries@gaillardcenter.org. Through cross-school Zoom calls, we can offer students from one school a different perspective on the video with students from a second school. We will schedule class-to-class meetings where whole groups can discuss various topics covered in Episode IX.
Raising the Volume

Episode IX: A conversation on finding your voice with Dr. Kylon Jerome Middleton.

(CLICK THE IMAGE TO WATCH EPISODE IX)
Dr. Kylon Middleton attended Charleston County School District schools and by the age of sixteen, he was attending the College of Charleston. It was at the College that Dr. Middleton “hit the wall of racism.” He was determined to take pre-med courses, but his Academic Advisor gave him different advice. He told Dr. Middleton, “sciences were not for Black people, and I was not going to make it.”

Dr. Middleton was left “completely lost.” Up until that experience, he had been built up at Burke High School; now he was faced with racism head on. As a student today, can you imagine an Academic Advisor telling you that you cannot be something because of your race, your sex, or any personal difference?

Despite his challenge at the College, Dr. Middleton was taken under the wing of a different advisor, one that encouraged him to become an English major. Dr. Middleton went on to teach school, travel to the University of North Carolina and Duke University to extend his education, and become a principal and a superintendent. His interaction with his new advisor had a life-changing impact. Dr. Middleton dedicated himself to the school system for almost three decades.

Have you had an experience with someone that changed your path and helped you discover your true passion or purpose?

In addition to Dr. Middleton’s work as an educator, he became a pastor at the age of sixteen. After retiring as a superintendent, he was assigned as the Pastor of Mt. Zion AME Church. As the Pastor of a historically Black church in downtown Charleston, SC, Dr. Middleton states, “We are in the sea of gentrification.”

What is gentrification? Why is Mt. Zion AME in the midst of it?

Dr. Middleton creates opportunities through his position as a Pastor for the community “to have very courageous dialogue with the police.”

Why does the community need to have open dialogue with the police? Why is it essential for the Black community to open up to the police, and why does Dr. Middleton consider this a courageous feat?
LESSONS

Over 100,000 enslaved Africans were brought through Gadsden’s Wharf here in Charleston. The story of Gadsden Wharf is written below in the article The Story of Gadsden’s Wharf by Nic Butler. Read through the article and take notes on the most profound facts that stand out for you. Why do you believe Dr. Middleton states that Charlestonians have never dealt with the issues of slavery? What does he mean? Discuss with your group.

Dr. Middleton mentions the poem and song, “Lift Every Voice and Sing,” the National Black Anthem. The anthem was written by James Weldon Johnson and adopted by the NAACP as the National Black Anthem in 1919.

Read the poem on the next page and discuss why these words are meaningful.

As a self-proclaimed “Outside Agitator,” Dr. Middleton leaves our viewers with words of advice:

“Something has to fuel your involvement. Lend your voice, your talent. Choose your mission field. Find what is going to give you inspiration.”

What is your contribution to our community? How do you interpret the statements above?

Charleston City Gazette, 21 March 1805
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LESSONS

Lift Every Voice and Sing
By James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?
We have come over a way that with tears has been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.
Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our God,
True to our native land.

James Weldon Johnson
Carl Van Vechten, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons
ABOUT DR. KYLON JEROME MIDDLETON

Kylon Middleton was born and reared in Charleston, South Carolina and educated in the public school system in Charleston County. Kylon graduated from Burke High School and matriculated to the College of Charleston, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and Communications. He has received graduate and advanced degrees from the following institutions: Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary – Columbia, South Carolina; University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Duke University – Durham, North Carolina.

He served as a high school English teacher, an assistant principal, principal, and central office administrator in the public school systems in South and North Carolinas.

Kylon has successfully served as a Pastor in the African Methodist Episcopal Church for over 25 years. He is currently the proud Pastor of Historic Mount Zion AME Church on Glebe Street, where he is leading the congregation in a multi-million restoration and expansion project and breathing new life into the congregation with a focus on racial healing, reconciliation, and transformation.

Kylon is extremely active in the Greater Charleston community. He led the City of Charleston’s Illumination Project. He is the YWCA Tri-County MLK Ecumenical Chairperson, Charleston 350th Community Outreach and Service Committee Chairperson, a member of the Social Justice Racial Equity Collaborative, member of Coastal Community Foundation G&L Committee, Charleston Forum Board of Directors, Chapter President-Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity, Inc., WM-Boaz Lodge No. 309 F&AM PHA, member of Progressive Chapter No. 310 OES, a member of the Robert B. Elliot Holy Royal Arch Masons, and a member of the George Washington Carver Consistory No. 162. Most recently, Kylon was elected to Charleston County Council, representing District 6.

Kylon has one son, Kylon Joshua Middleton, a graduate student at East Carolina University.
ABOUT CHARLTON SINGLETON

A native of Awendaw, SC, Charlton Singleton began his musical studies at the age of three on the piano. He would then go on to study the organ, violin, cello, and the trumpet throughout elementary, middle and high school. In 1994, he received a Bachelor of Arts in Music Performance from South Carolina State University. Since that time, he has taught music at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, as well as being an adjunct faculty member at the College of Charleston. In 2008 he co-founded and became the Artistic Director and Conductor of the Charleston Jazz Orchestra: an 18-piece jazz ensemble of some of the finest professional musicians in the Southeast and the resident big band in Charleston, SC. Mr. Singleton is also the organist and choir director at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Charleston, SC. In November of 2016 he was named the inaugural Artist-in-Residence at the recently renovated Gaillard Center in downtown Charleston. He remained in this position until July 2019; at that point he was named Artist-in-Residence Emeritus. In this position he continues to lead the Summer Youth Jazz Orchestra Camp as well as lead the “Jazz Through the Ages” assembly, which attracts a capacity crowd of students at the Gaillard Center.

As a performer, Charlton leads his own ensembles that vary in size and style. He has performed in France, Great Britain, Scotland, Spain, Germany, Austria, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, Canada, the Netherlands, as well as many great cities throughout the United States. He is a founding member of a new ensemble called Ranky Tanky. The group is a quintet that interprets the sounds of Gullah from the Southeast Coast of the United States. In 2017 Ranky Tanky reached the top of the Billboard, iTunes, and Amazon Contemporary Jazz charts with their self-titled debut recording. In 2019 they accomplished the same feat with the release of their sophomore effort, “Good Time”, which recently won the 2020 Grammy Award for “Best Regional Roots Music Album”.

In addition to performing, he is in demand as a speaker, clinician, composer, and arranger. He has also shared the stage with and/or worked with some of most talented entertainers in the world, including Bobby McFerrin, Jimmy Heath, Slide Hampton, Houston Person, Darius Rucker, Fred Wesley, and Cyrus Chestnut to name a few. Outside of music and entertainment, he and his wife, MaryJo, are the proud parents of Shalamar and D’Marcus, as well as their pets...Sassy, Jango, Mojo, Kota Bear, Pumpkin, and Ginger.
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SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS

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South Carolina

CITATIONS

- https://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/black-authors-spoken-word-poetry/lift-every-voice-and-sing/
- https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jamesweldonjohnson.jpg