The School for Innovative Folk

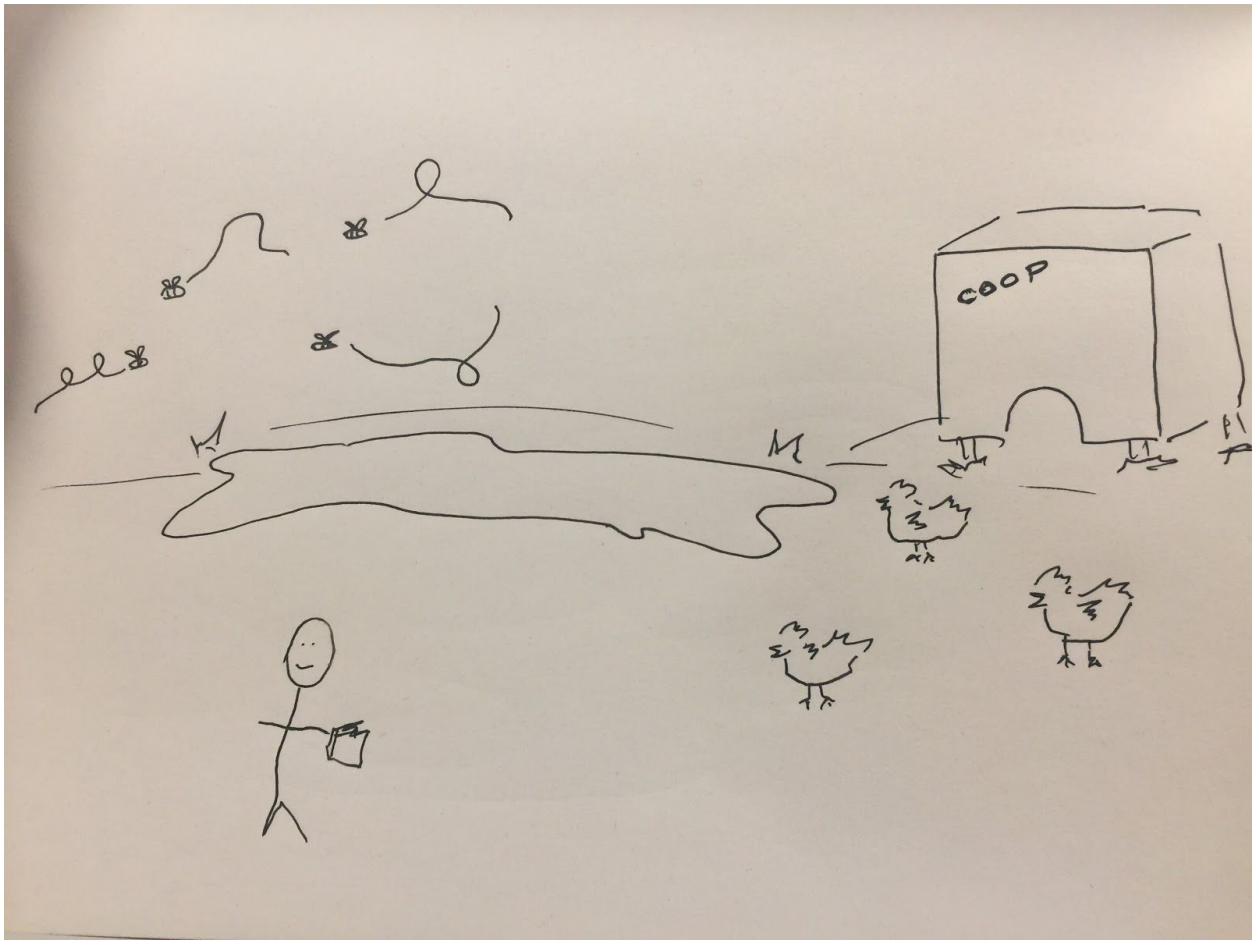
At The School for Innovative Folk, we focus on progressive learning through the reclaiming of historical stories, and skills that connect our modern society with our environment and our bodies through making, meaningful participation and critical thought. This experientially driven education gives student the personal agency to become active and ethical producers of technology and systems and dismantles the passive consumer ideology.

Students are taught math and in depth technological skills through coding and circuits established both on and off the screen. Through storytelling of reclaimed narratives, we discuss the signals, patterns and encrypted messages of marginalized voices, recognizing them as an origin point of code. Students use textiles and weaving to portray, analyze and assess data and algorithms, deepening their literacy of bias in collecting, selecting and utilizing data. Circuits are both built on a breadboard and performed through the analysis of symbiotic relationships in nature to help students see the interconnected nature of a network or web beyond the obvious context of resistors and chips.

Students learn about the environment through developing an ongoing relationship with the natural spaces around them. The SIF regularly requires students to monitor the biological structures at play outside their classroom window. They explore the source of food through guided foraging excursions and work to understand the limits of these resources through hands on case study and observance of proportions of consumable plant matter throughout the year. Food played an important role at the Folk School as it is our intention to help students build a sustainable and informed relationship to what they ingest in an attempt to lower health risks and conditions within the community.

The School for Innovative Folk teaches chemistry, biology and physics through the manipulation of food and molecular gastronomy. Students will see how natural acids, chemicals and agitants can change the form, structure and movement of atoms, shifting cell patterns and reconstituting the layout of food. This is helpful both in the context of laboratory science as well as in building a tangential awareness of what we put in our bodies, how government agencies may mislead or misinform us on the quality of food that we buy and how we might engage in the active pursuit for better, more transparent health alternatives. Our students explore the history and origin of fermentation extensively. They grow fungus and bacterial cultures like kombucha scobies and ginger bugs to understand the evolutionary pattern of natural systems.

Our students learn business and entrepreneurial skills by managing a small chicken farm and a small bee hive, distributing fresh eggs and honey once a week to members of the community. Through this small contained business, they attain a grasp on societal impact, budgeting, time management and, of course, the social, empathetic and human impact of managing a living structure like a coop of chickens. These small economies help build a gage for ripple effect and demonstrate the power and responsibility of a single person in the fabric of our society.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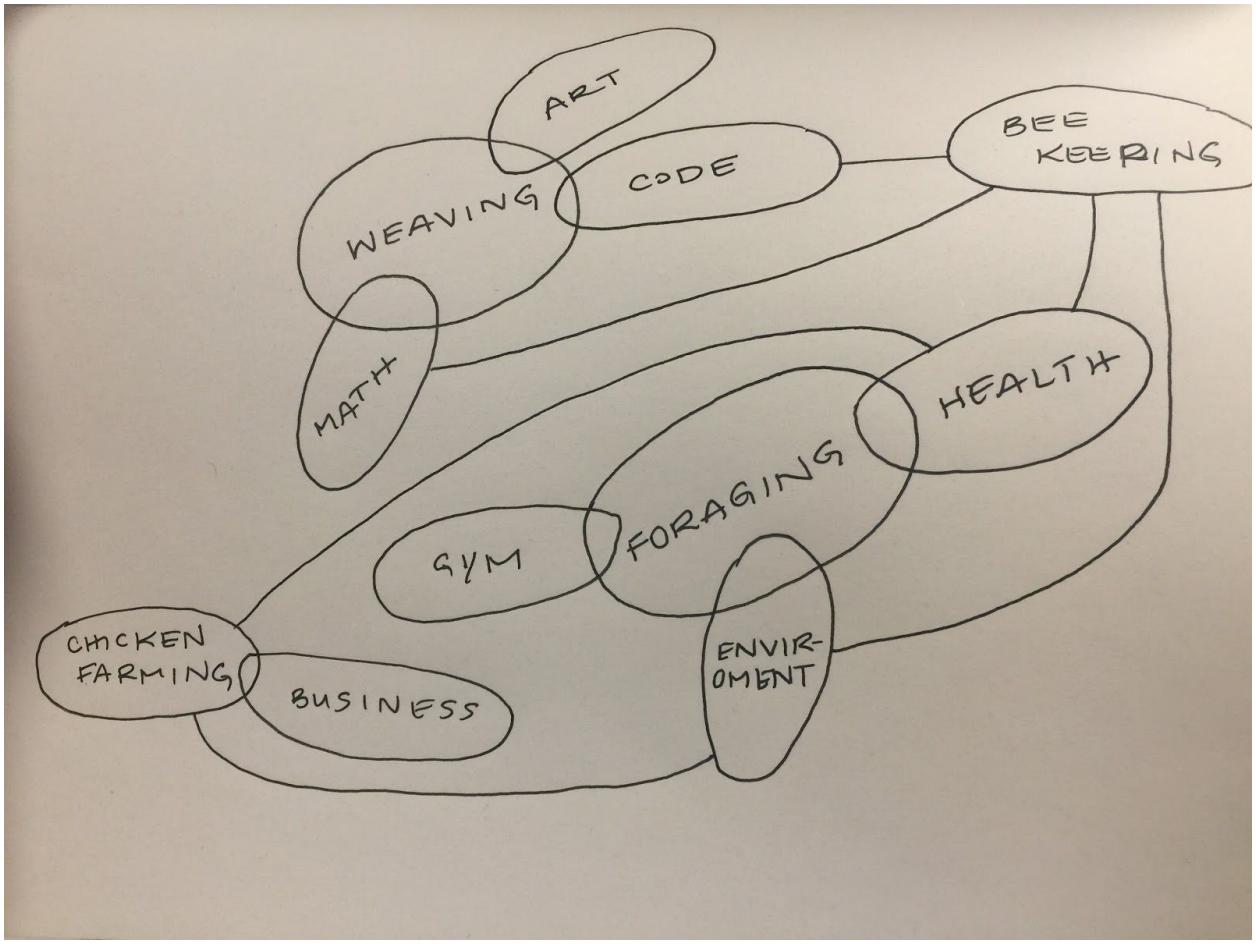
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