

13- S Formula

For Applying the Full-Circle Learning Curriculum

Lesson plans around the five spokes of the Full-Circle Learning wheel include some combination of the following 13 types of activities, which blossom into a full unit lasting up to two months, depending on the learners' age level and on the educational goals. The steps appear here not in the order in which the teachers plan them but, rather, the order in which the class experiences them. Project-based approaches require working as a teaching team or sitting with your materials as a teacher to “see the end from the beginning.” Your vision will bear fruit in the life of the child and community only if you practice this habit each year and each semester.

The steps involving academic context may expand into many steps, from the simple to the complex, involving functions you want to teach, books you want to assign and act on, objects students will engineer, guest presenters they will assist on a project, and many more options to enhance your required content while moving learners toward associating the habit-of-heart with altruistic service, career goals and an immediate community transformation outcome.

This curricular model does not carry alone the task of connecting thinking and caring to meaningful action. You will also engage in a workshop session that helps you integrate classroom management strategies that foster an altruistic school culture and identity among your students.

Meanwhile, these basic steps describe the basic approach to developing a learning unit within the curriculum. Your pacing guide will include as many of these units as there are habits-of-heart spanning a school year, perhaps three to five per year.

13-S Steps

1. Sense It.

This anticipatory set introduces the new learning unit—and a new habit-of-heart— using one or more of the five visceral senses. Beyond that, it builds a foundation for the eventual project goal you will introduce at the end of the unit. It stores a positive memory learners will associate with the theme. For example, a unit on “Sacrifice” may begin with a an eyes-closed activity in which students tickle each other with a feather and guess what it is. They learn a story about a relative who sacrificed time to create downy feather beds when they had no other way to provide for their family in times of hardship. They measure feathers to determine how much more effort it would take to stuff a bed with down feathers than with longer, stiffer quill feathers. Later in the unit, one service project may relate to birds or ducks or pillows and honoring those who lived through the event in history that required such a sacrifice. The sense it step is not used to relive a shared trauma, but to create a positive context for defining the new habit-of-heart, memorable through odor, taste, sound, touch and sight—as many senses as possible. This step occurs once at the beginning of the unit and can take five minutes or the better part of a class period if it has multiple parts. It should incite joy or curiosity.

2. See it.

Write the habit-of-heart on the board in large letters.

3. Say it.

4. Clap out the number of syllables. Have the students clap with you.

5. Synchronize it.

Give the syllables in the word different pitches and sing or chant the word together, to help the students remember the word (or let a volunteer offer an appropriate melody). Synchronizing pitch and syllabic sounds is especially effective with long words.

5. Shape it.

Draw the shape of the word around the written word. Have all students write the word on their own paper (or for young preschoolers, provide a paper with the word prewritten) and draw the shape around it. Explain that this box is not part of the written word but will help them remember how to spell it.

6. Symbolize it.

Demonstrate an action associated with the word. Have the class practice

this action, or let students suggest actions associated with the word. Challenge students to draw a symbol next to the word that will help them remember what it means. You may offer several symbols as suggestions.

7. Show it.

Assign role plays using everyday situations to ensure that learners understand applications of the habit-of-heart. (Follow this up with the server nomination classroom strategy you will later learn.) Incorporated the conflict resolution bridge as an important show-it step for demonstrating the parallels between applying the habit to personal, community-based and global problem-solving challenges. Choose hypothetical challenges that will advance an understanding of the content in your serving project goals.

8. Storytell it.

Read aloud a story about the trait, engaging age-appropriate learning skills among the students. Discuss who in the story applied the habit-of-heart and how their habit affected the outcome and the happiness of all the characters. This story may be a local fable, a novel, a biography or may come from your history book or other content. Some classes have written their own stories and held a storytelling festival or a puppet show for the community. Also use guided imagery to help students envision the quality's application in their lives. (Literacy take-home books may be available for the youngest preschoolers.)

9. Sing it.

Music serves three primary purposes in a Full-Circle Learning unit: To inspire, to advocate and to uplift. These motivations need not undermine but have proven to the learners' natural creativity and instinctive love of music. The teacher may apply local educational standards for music using a combination of 1) singing or songwriting techniques that also advocate the lyrical theme about the habit-of-heart; 2) incorporating dance from the wisdom exchange partner's musical forms, and 3) including songs written specifically to address the themes of the unit as well as academic concepts about science, the environment, geography, social studies, etc. The performing arts (music and dance numbers) are performed as part of the community service or to honor a field trip host sharing their knowledge or to reinforce messages taught in the local community.

A Habit-of-Heart song may be adapted for local use by rehearsing it frequently and studying the lyrics and vocabulary for the purpose of English-language learners, then varying the rhythm, discussing the song's meaning, and adding harmonies when sung.

10. Standardize it.

Extend the learning concepts across the curriculum, using backward planning. Your curricular goals will often determine your end goals for service (Share It and Send It). If you have linked your habit-of-heart unit theme to a service project goal and studied your academic pacing plan, you will find opportunities to reinforce the desired learning concepts for social

studies, science, math and literature/language arts content lessons. Often a dilemma posed by a social studies, science, environmental or engineering challenge suggests the relevant community service needed as the culmination point in the unit, and all the other content areas align to support that goal. Even when no clear connection appears, students may use artistic or engineering skills to create gifts for guest presenters and writing skills to advocate for the underserved, for example.

Apply process-based and project-based learning to adapt the themes for your own specific community needs and regional age-specific education standards. Rely on the curriculum manuals as idea starters or when you need a starting point for your unit plan. (Over the course of the year, if there are four themes in your curriculum, you may choose one theme per quarter, adapting each one as much or as little as needed.) For leisure-time activities, provide space in the classroom where students may invent new products, create art independently and explore concepts based on their learning, if you are in a region with physical space and recycled resources available. These artifacts too may become gifts students use to teach others. (As students, we learn 70+% more effectively when we teach others.)

11. Send it.

This is a service step that travels to someone too distant to visit face-to-face. It may be a shared piece of wisdom around a community transformation challenge, sent to a the global wisdom exchange partner. It may be a letter to a local official explaining how to apply the current habit-of-heart to solve a community problem or thanking them for demonstrating that habit to bring the community closer to solving the problem. It may involve sending photos on the internet or a letter in the mail. This step helps learners experience their membership in the human family in a meaningful, participatory way. It always includes a service aspect around the current habit-of-heart.

12. Share It.

Students have already experienced global connections on a small scale. They now need to see the value of their teaching and learning in their own community. They sing and present their learning and give handmade gifts to an audience of adopted grandparents or to the select community group you preselected who need their service or deserve their honoring ceremony. At the very least, they teach the concepts to students in another classroom by singing or pantomiming songs and displaying artwork. (In one school, the youngest students taught the older students their songs periodically, and vice versa.) In a school or setting where all students are presenting, students may participate in a school-wide museum or other off-site service field trip. Also have students return their Habits-of-Heart homework depicting how they practiced their learning at home. The deep value of the Share It step comes when student look into the eyes of someone whose life they have deeply touched and realize

realize the value of their character, creativity, cognitive skills and collaboration, as change agents and humanitarians. This is the central goal of the unit.

13. Sustain it.

Allow circle time for discussion. You may pass around an object to encourage each student to speak. Ask, Who benefited from our learning and our service? Whose wellbeing did our efforts affect? Elicit responses that include members of the human family, the classroom family, and families at home, as well as other living things the projects may have benefited in the present or future. If needed, remind them of the connections between classroom content, projects in the community, and character lessons with service as the outcome.

Encourage each student to clarify the feelings associated with the act of using skills to help, teach or serve. Follow up the discussion with a journal writing assignment or thank-you notes to those who helped with the project, or with something on the bulletin board or in the class portfolio that documents community input (the math charts or drawings, for instance) and helps students feel a sense of closure as they associate the habit-of-heart with a direct benefit on the lives of others, in the transformation of community and in their own character formation.

“Sustain it” means to sustain the habit as part of a personal approach to addressing personal and community challenges. As you move to another habit-of-heart in the next unit, you will apply the new habit through the same integrated process of character formation, academic growth, arts development, conflict resolution and service. Continue server nominations and other teaching strategies that sustain the classroom culture, but in your teachable moments, you can still remind students of this habit they have added to their character and contextual vocabulary.