

Session Activity for Scaffolding a Lesson Plan Unit

Imagine a building several stories high.

To create it, the architects must first foresee the future. They must gain a perspective on the landscape and decide where the building will sit, envisioning the views from the top floor.



They will think about the form and function of the completed structure before they create a blueprint of the plan.



Next, the concrete pourers will lay the foundation, in a framework set at the perfect angle, with the long-range vistas in mind. Now the framing and scaffolding will begin, to prepare the structure for completion by all the technicians who contribute siding, wiring, insulation, plumbing, flooring, and interior design.



By the time the building fulfills its purpose, all who had a hand in creating it or in using it will feel a great sense of purpose.

(Bottom Photo: One Planet Teachers in Ethiopia enjoyed a Tenth Anniversary event in the African Union Building)



About the Metaphor

As an architect for the destiny of *doers* from every walk of life, an educator needs an architect's eye for craftsmanship to create a well-designed lesson plan unit!

A teacher or teaching team first must acknowledge the environment in which the learning will take place and envision those in the broader community who could benefit from the applied learning by the end of the unit. Farsightedness helps teachers visualize the results before planning.



Next, the teacher will lay a foundation based on character (one relevant habit-of-heart), selecting the angle at which the starting conversation will engage the learners, to support the unit's farsighted perspective and culminating project. The foundation must engage the senses. It will differ with each learning unit, based on the habit-of-heart.

The teacher will proceed to scaffold steps and strategies geared to visual, audial, linguistic, analytic, and kinesthetic portals to learning—tantalizing every type of learner—resulting in peak experiences that teach, inspire and serve the broader community as well. The planning process will incorporate design elements that rise from the habit-of-heart foundation but use building blocks from the academic and creative arts syllabus as the infrastructure of a life-shaping experience for these students and those who will benefit from their learning.

The unit will be complete at last when all can stand together at the top and see what they've created and see how their work improved the lives of others.

Teachers of learners from preschool through college have applied this process to imbue learning with purpose.

Skim through the sample projects on the following pages. For more examples, visit the home page, the annual report links and the map dots at www.fullcirclelearning.org.

Next, proceed to page 11 to practice the planning process. If you are taking the course through a coach or instructor, you may be asked to send online responses to the questions after you complete them.

(80 points suggested for full participation)



Sample Pest Reduction Projects

Above: Students taught their community officials about pest control and presented conflict resolution solutions regarding disposal methods.

Left: A farmer's field thrived after students offered organic pest control solutions.

Below: Students studied growing methods and raised a first crop to feed the elders in their community.



Sample Agriculture Projects

Right: Public awareness raising projects such as these integrate math, botany and climate science with field trips to the farm, store and farmer's market. Students had to shop for a meal and determine how many miles it had traveled and how much water was required to grow it.

Below, Right: Learning to sequester carbon from a no-till farmer, students then informed the public.



Below, Left: During a drought, preschoolers used hands-on activities to learn about the water cycle. Measuring cups helped them learn fractions and make pumpkin pies. They invited in local farmers and sang a song a patience, offering them pie and honoring them for practicing patience during the drought.



Sample Health Disparities Projects

Upper Right: Nigerian students at Harvard International reached 20,000 people in one year with prevention messages about local health risks. They visited specialists in hospitals, then took their messages to households and schools in neighboring towns, also distributing malaria nets to those in need.



Right: Zambian students conducted a wisdom exchange with Nigerian learners, comparing strategies for health disparities projects to address their typhoid outbreak.



Center Right: Gambian children worked with a local hospital and convent to provide nutrition training for mothers of malnourished babies. The students made the visuals and became the teachers.

Lower Left: US students have helped save their families' lives, according to parents, through diabetes training and prevention projects.

Lower Right: During Breast Cancer Awareness Week, students became orators and singers in a global wisdom exchange that began in Cameroon.



Lower Center: Coronavirus projects have inspired global learners to integrate science, art, music, mask sewing, letter writing, and empathy to heal the world and honor health care workers during a pandemic.





Sample Natural Resource Projects

All grade levels study natural resources in some way, but some students have truly seen the relevance of the topic.



Upper Left: Bendu considered herself a change agent after the unit on Acting on Convictions. Her community experienced a serious flood that contaminated the drinking water. Everyone got dysentery. She interviewed the families then designed a water filtration and taught each family to use it, to deal with this increasing challenge. Her class also conducted a plastics clean-up on Oceans Day.

Upper Right: A teacher in Haiti integrated every subject into her lesson plan unit before having children lead parents (subsistence farmers) to the fields, where they would learn to plant trees on crop rows to prevent erosion.

Below Left: Learners such as Lian integrated trigonometry and chemistry, using clinometers to conduct carbon counts to measure the carbon in a forest. They were able to report the value of the community's local carbon sink.

Below Right: Students in an extreme wildfire zone learned from forestry expert Jamie Ervin how to guide the public to resolve controversies in forest management.





Sample Energy Projects

Upper Left and Lower Right: Learners in various countries have visited renewable energy projects, to gain knowledge of renewable energy options they could share with the public. In California, above, they explored a hydrology project. In Liberia, students experienced transportation and building innovations at the Environmental Development Center.

Upper Right: Students in a rural area tried to bring portable solar power to every elder in their community. Where it proved less feasible, they wired 12-volt batteries to homes. One man's life was saved from the bite of a deadly cobra the very first night. As he put it, he was saved by "the presence of the light."

Lower Left: Some students have sent their ideas as global wisdom exchanges. These Tanzanian students helped transform cooking methods in their community based on the solar oven design received from a school in a partner country. They recreated it with recyclable parts. The project had three side benefits: 1. Deforestation diminished. 2. Girls were able to stop collecting kindling for wood fires and return to school; and 3. Methane from dung-patty-fuel was no longer released into the air.



Projects that Redefine Family

Top: Students reading and writing books were each assigned a “sister or brother” in a younger class during daily story time, to enhance bilingual literacy.

Center: Learners studying homelessness in the US learned how to create charts and graphs before taking their awareness campaign to the community. Starting each class with a Humanity Circle, they acknowledged those without houses as part of their human family.

Lower Left: Many teachers have integrated literacy, history, science, art, and music into intergenerational projects. This girl in California reads to adopted grandparents.

Lower Right: Boys in Zambia sew a doormat to give to elders in their community.

Lower Center: Children in China grew food in the school’s environmental garden and delivered it to the class “grandparents” next door at the onsite adult care center. The children played memory games with the seniors as well. The center was designed to strengthen intergenerational ties.



Projects that Promote Appreciation of Diversity



Top: Many schools have incorporated drama, music, reading, social studies and science into projects that encourage students with diverse learning needs, whether socio-emotional, cognitive or physical. This school also demonstrated how to correct stigma that hurts albino students at other schools in the region.

Below, dancers at the Multisensory School participate equally in projects.



Center: A wisdom exchange between many schools in the Gambia and Zambia challenged people to celebrate the beauty of diverse cultures. Schools hosted performances where previously warring ethnicities gathered to dance and sing.



Bottom: In China, preschool teachers have advanced appreciation of diverse perspectives through projects such as

classroom banquets at which children appreciate their diverse tastes in foods. In this activity, the children vary facial features to explore the unique shapes that compose the many faces in the human family.



Projects that Teach Peace

Left: Teachers in a town along a busy highway decided to reduce the road rage causing too many accidents. Their learners made key chains for a car dealership and taught the dealers conflict resolution skills, garnering the promise that they would give out a keychain with every car sold. Five years later, accidents reduced, and the dealership requested more key chains.

Top Right: Fearing unrest during an upcoming political election, Natasha Chan led her school's movement to promote intertribal unity among 27 Zambian tribes. The successful project led to a wisdom exchange with another country and many meaningful applied learning activities in class.

Bottom Right: In a third country three years earlier, students from multiple Liberian schools staged a rally to prevent a violent coup, offering their help and explaining to the planners that they had gained knowledge of the diplomatic skills needed to talk together and resolve differences.



Practice the Process

The following exercise will help you walk through a few practical steps to create a hypothetical scaffolded lesson plan unit.

1. Find an article.

Take an objective look at the needs of the people in your community. You may already know people in your community who can communicate a need. If not, research an article or interview detailing the practical concerns of a specific group. Is it a place that allows you to visit? Is there a guest there who could instead come to a classroom? Jot down questions and key points. Do the group's challenges relate to a lack of housing or affordable food, or to a high incidence of an infectious disease? Has a weather incident threatened crop yields on small farms? Perhaps the community simply has an abundance of orphans or elderly people, alone and in need of extra resources and care. Who is helping this group, and what **habit-of-heart** could better ensure a solution? List the needs and solutions based on available information. *Notes on how you thought through this step:* _____

2. Plan to start the Humanity Circle.

On the first day of school, your students will introduce themselves, each to the next, as a member of the human family. They will strive to establish a bond as brothers and sisters in a classroom family. Over each unit, they apply their learning based on a habit-of-heart theme, to address a new community need, gradually expanding their family to include broader sectors of society. After they have studied many habits and academic units, their lifelong learning will seem relevant as it relates to the betterment of their human family and the family of living beings. *Notes on how you practiced the introductions with your class or household:* _____

3. Plan to expand the circle.

If your students could visualize the needs of the group represented in the article you found, how might they do so? Can you put a face on the issue as you integrate the academic, artistic, peacemaking and service components in your curriculum? *Notes on what activities students can do to listen to and honor farmers:* _____

4. Plan and present an integrated curriculum.

By now you will have begun to outline your curriculum steps and habit-of-heart on the 13-S Steps. You will have reviewed a list of the academic requirements in your national or regional syllabus for the grade level you teach. Imagine a habit-of-heart or character trait your students could exercise to apply these evolving

skills toward the positive community outcome you have identified in the article. Jot down the real-world skills in your curriculum. For example, perhaps at some point in the coming six weeks, your students will study percentages in mathematics. They will explore weather in environmental science and maps in geography. In writing, they will learn the basic elements of a paragraph. The article you selected dealt with low crop yields due to pest infestation. You think about the habit-of-heart needed by the farmers who must strive to endure the season. They must show extreme patience. You choose this as the habit-of-heart that you will introduce. The students will strive to master it in their personal lives and will honor the farmers who show it in their efforts to feed the community. *Did you choose a habit of heart, an article and at least three learning outcomes? Explain:* _____

5. Align the beginning and culminating activities.

Next imagine how your students can assist the farmers. Perhaps they will research weather patterns that invite pests and research organic solutions for the farmers. They may create charts to track the weather patterns. They could study maps to see guess which regions have similar challenges, then research what has been done there, to offer these solutions with farmers. They could go to the infested areas and assist with solutions, demonstrating conflict resolution exercises to deal with disputes that accrue. They could organize the community to help with the cleanup. At last, they would write up their research to share with local farm bureaus, global environmental organizations, and wisdom exchange partners in another school

When the project comes to a close, they could hold a ceremony with songs, dances, and gifts of art, to honor the farmers for their patience. They could even follow up during next semester's botany project with growing experiments of their own, to share with the farmer.

See the end from the beginning and introduce the unit with a positive sensory experience of patience relating to tasty or aromatic food grown on a successful farm. *Note: Did you find ways to correlate academic standards with all aspects of the 13-S unit:* _____

6. Communicate the significance of life skills.

For young students, you may send habits-of-heart homework assignments to engage whole families in supporting the development of the child. For older students, summative assessments may integrate the habit-of-heart and community impact into your learning goals. A project rubric given at the start of the project demonstrates to the learners the fact that they will be assessed equally based on the patience shown to others during project work as well as the academic skills exercised making the charts, maps, and write-ups. The focus will

also be on changing lives, the most essential part of the project. You'll see an example of a rubric in another unit. *Note: Think of at least one life skill and one academic skill you could link, based on the article you found.*

7. Celebrate the unit's end.

At the end of the unit, the class will add more people to their family circle on the board. They will contemplate the value of patience in helping them assist their human family. They will commit to sustaining the habit-of-heart even as they move on to a new one. *Note: Jot down any additional closure activity that works for the project you designed?* _____

8. Develop your scaffolded steps.

Research has demonstrated that diversified strategies help each type of learner bond with the content on which your project is based. Each one may have their memorable moment at a different point of the learning unit, but all will feel they've contributed together to something beyond themselves as you present a scaffolded unit based on the 13-S steps. Leave a template blank for later use. Download the other copy. Based on the examples given here, write in the key words as if you were to present this lesson plan to your learners. *Note: how did you make adaptations for the region, grade level and project goals?*

Discussion

Discuss your responses above with a teaching team or a peer. Submit your responses to a coach if requested to do so.

Exploration

Explore the many options for projects already implemented by schools around the world. Go to www.fullcirclelearning.org. A map features dots with the project highlights of various countries.

The Educator feature at the top has a Curricula button with books such as Habits of Heroes, Habits of Humanitarians, Habits of Oneness, and (for 3-6 year olds) Habits of Habits of Helpers, among many more specialized curricula. These books offer springboards for ideas, which you can customize as you plan your learning unit.

You will also find distance learning units developed by teachers around the world under the heading Learners. These units were developed for home use during the global pandemic.

Remember to complete the review questions.