Grade 1 Our World IPC Unit: Having a Pet
(Submitted by Mabetty Perez Molina, 2017, while serving as Grade 1 Teacher at International School of Havana, Cuba)

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<th><strong>Tool(s) used:</strong></th>
<th>• Sustainability Compass</th>
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| **Purpose of using tool:** | • Generating Questions  
• Synthesizing Thinking  
• Guiding Discussion |
| **Overview:** | The students were able to look at the topic at hand from different angles. This tool gave them the opportunity to engage in a group discussion, exchange ideas and synthesize information integrating others’ input. |
| **Context of lesson/case study:** | Grade 1 class  
International Primary Curriculum  
Milepost 1- Our World (Environment) unit |
| **Participants (# and description):** | 6-7 year old students (12 mainstream students, 3 EAL students) |
| **Topic, Theme, or Key Understanding of unit/project:** | Topic: Having a Pet  
Key understanding: How does having a pet impact our lives? |
| **Length of unit/project:** | A three lessons project with the IPC unit Our World |
| **Resources/materials & setting required:** | Classroom, whiteboard, chart paper, markers |

**Lesson Plan/Description of the Project:**

**Building the field:**
- As part as the Our World IPC unit a series of lessons were devoted to research about animals. The children learned the names and characteristics of a range of animals and explored how to treat animals with care and sensitivity. This topic led to conversations about animals that could be kept as pets.
- In small group the students created file facts posters about pets using different sources of information (teacher-selected sections of books, children-friendly web pages and conversations with a guest speaker)

**Sustainability Compass:**
- Everyone has a marker: Previously to introducing the children to the Compass tool, they were asked to work in small groups to share their ideas about pets and recording them on chart paper. Each child was given a marker and everyone was expected to add own ideas to the chart without discussing them with the rest of the group. Group members must be mindful of allowing everyone some space to add ideas or drawings. This activity generated collective summaries of the knowledge and understandings developed in previous lessons and each group chart paper was displayed as a visual reference for subsequent activities.

A different Compass:
- Since our students are quite familiar with the four directional points and the image of the compass it
was relatively easy to introduce the new meanings of the four key dimensions of the Sustainability Compass framework. Obviously, it was necessary to unpack the meanings of Nature, Economy, Society and Well Being using a language relevant to the students and accompany each term with some pictorial representation that the children created or suggested themselves.

- Once the children were familiar with the meanings and components of each dimension, we presented them with prompts such as; ‘Would you recommend a friend to have a pet?’, ‘Is it a good idea to have a pet?’ How would having a pet impact our lives? This was the starting point for a class discussion where we tried to answer those questions in the context of each dimension of the Sustainability Compass. After some modelling of possible answers and where to place them on our compass the children were invited to work in small groups to add their ideas to each section of the Compass.

**Compass Carrousel:**

- The class was divided in four groups. Four tables were set with one big triangle, each labelled with one of the four dimensions and its corresponding pictorial representation. Each group had 5 minutes to add ideas corresponding to each of the dimensions by visiting the four triangles. Then we construct our Sustainability Compass on the board with the four triangles. After revisiting the information displayed each child was asked to individually answer our prompting question: Would you recommend a friend to have a pet? The children were asked to consider the aspects discussed in each dimension of the Compass in order to answer that question.

**What do you think now?**

- Each student was asked to write his/her ideas about if they would recommend a friend to have a pet using all we had learned during the previous activities.

**Teaching tips/ideas:**

- Revisiting the Sustainability Compass model repeatedly helped the children recall the language and use it purposefully in consequent learning activities opportunities for children’s own life experiences.

**Reflection**

**Plusses:**

- The children were able to relate to the terms and concepts used in the Sustainability Compass model.
- The children were able to dig deeper into the topic and used group contributions to enhance their thinking about the topic.
- This learning experience provided an opportunity to practice team player skills.

**Challenges:**

- It would have been better to invite the guest speaker after the Sustainability Compass was presented to the children. This would have facilitated to use the language of the Compass contextually.

**Suggestions for other practitioners and educators:**

I first thought that my first graders would not be able to understand words like society, economics or even well-being. Those abstract concepts appeared to be quite beyond what they could grasp and applied to a real life situation. However, once they were unpacked into real-life examples the children could easily identify ideas and situations pertaining to each dimension of the Sustainability Compass.
Evidence and Resources:

Sustainability Compass

Three Good Reasons to Have a Pet

Everyone has a Marker

A Different Compass
Compass Carrousel

Our Sustainability Compass- Would we recommend a friend to have a pet?

What do you think now?
People should have pets because they can play with you and make you happy. Sometimes they are not good for their owners because they can be dangerous. People should not have pets if they are not prepared to take care of them.

Matthew

People should have pets because they are cute and because you can play with them. My cat is called Fluffy.

No Nimesh

Not because pets run away from your house. And you have to clean them daily. Sometimes you have to treat them. Pets eat more.