

HOW MIGHT WE UNDERSTAND AND BUILD A CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABILITY AT QATAR ACADEMY SIDRA?



Submitted by Preet Dhaliwal, Sustainability Instructional Coach at International School Ho Chi Minh City

LEARNING PLAN OVERVIEW

Subject(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Citizenship Education • Teacher Education • Education Program Development • Sustainable Development Project
Grade Level (s)	Adult Education
Systems Tool(s)	Sustainability Compass
Purpose of Using Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion • Action Planning
Summary	3 x 30min Sessions Staff induction and orientation EL3 - PYP 5 teaching teams

Learning Objectives

- Gain a collective understanding of QASidra Elementary teacher’s understanding of the concepts of sustainability
- Build awareness and understanding of the QASidra’s philosophical and strategic aims with regard to the concept of sustainability
- Be introduced to the concepts of systems thinking and sustainable habits of mind
- Introduce and apply understandings of the Sustainability Compass to explore opportunities for authentically embedding concepts of sustainability within our written, taught and assessed curriculum

Material and Settings

- Allocated workshop time during staff induction
- Google Form to determine participants prior knowledge and perspectives
- [Cloud Institute - Fish Game](#) (Systems thinking provocation)
- [Systems thinking: a cautionary tale \(cats in Borneo\)](#)
- [Habits of a Systems Thinker](#)
- [ATL and Learner Profile Placements](#)
- [An Introduction to the Sustainability Compass](#)
- [Sustainability Compass prompts](#)
- Sustainability Compass analysis template
- What might I change? What might I explore more? - Exit ticket charts
- Post its

Learning Context

In this lesson sequence, we will use Qatar Academy Sidra's guiding statements and sustainability-focused strategic objective as a provocation to explore our elementary teaching team's collective understanding of the concept of sustainability, and to explore possible authentic learning opportunities that will embed sustainability concepts within our curriculum. Throughout the learning process, participants will also be introduced to the concept of systems thinking and sustainable habits of mind.

Prior to the lesson sequence baseline data (in the form of a Google Form) will be collected in order to provide an initial collective understanding of the teaching team's prior knowledge.

This learning sequence is designed to achieve the following aims:

- Gain a collective understanding of QASidra Elementary teacher's understanding of the concepts of sustainability
- Build awareness and understanding of the QASidra's philosophical and strategic aims with regard to the concept of sustainability
- Be introduced to the concepts of systems thinking and sustainable habits of mind
- Introduce and apply understandings of the Sustainability Compass to explore opportunities for authentically embedding concepts of sustainability within our written, taught and assessed curriculum

Qatar Academy Value Promise:

"We inspire and empower our learners so that they are equipped as future change agents for a sustainable world."

Qatar Academy Sidra's Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 6 -

“Realise a culture of sustainability”

“Realise a culture of sustainability”

Strategic Objectives:

- Embed the concept of sustainability across the curriculum
- Embed sustainable school practices
- Achieve financial sustainability

Essential Questions

What is our understanding of the concept of sustainability?

What might a sustainable world look like?

What is systems thinking?

What are sustainable habits of mind?

What are the opportunities to embed a concept of sustainability in learning and teaching?

What might education for sustainability look like in and beyond the classroom?

How might we empower and inspire our learners to create change for a sustainable world?

Purpose of Using the Systems Thinking Tools

The Sustainability Compass tool is intuitive and with very quick instructions participants can begin seeing the interconnectedness of social issues.

Learning Plan Step-by-step Description

Session 1:

Aim: Introduction to systems thinking.

- Complete survey questions via Google Form to gather baseline data for Education for Sustainability at QAS.
- Ask staff to play [The Fish Game](#) twice without viewing analysis and then begin small group discussions with prompting questions:
 - Did you ever make it through 10 days of fishing without depleting the fish stock in the lake?
 - Which of the following did you assume was the objective of the game:
 - Have as many fish as possible for yourself after playing all ten days?
 - Have as many fish as possible for the whole group after playing for ten days?
 - Have as many fish as possible in the lake after ten days?
- After enlightening the group that we must create a win-win situation in order to ensure sustainability of resources, follow up with a challenge to capture 18 fish without depleting the resource in 10 days and encourage participants to view the game analysis

- Play [Systems Thinking \(Cats in Borneo\)](#) video and ask participants to reflect on an exit slip - "As an educator reflect on how you have or might use systems thinking with your students."

Session 2:

Aim: Explore and make connections to the dispositions of a systems thinker.

Introduce and build familiarity with the Sustainability Compass.

- Habits of a Systems Thinker - Review exit slips from previous session. What observations are we able to make? Introduce the [Habits of a Systems Thinker](#) graphic and discuss initial thoughts. In mixed groups, participants compare and contrast the habits of a systems thinker, [ATL skills and Learner profile](#) to identify connections. Discuss with participants observations and connections that were made when comparing and contrasting.
- Watch [An Introduction to the Sustainability Compass](#). Discuss reflections and clarify understandings using think, pair, and square routines. Participants think individually and record one reflection and one question. Pair and share reflections and discuss questions, then join with another pair to create a square and share reflections and questions.
- Physical Compass sort. Have four Compass points in designated corners of the room. Gather participants in the middle of the room. Show one prompt from the [Compass prompts cards \(Sustainability Compass prompts\)](#), participants then move to the area of the Compass they believe the prompt aligns with. Pair with one other person in that area and share justification for their choice. Move to another Compass point and pair with a participant in a contrasting Compass point to share perspectives. Give an opportunity for participants to share before showing another Compass prompt card. At the end of the activity pose the questions - "What conclusions have you drawn about the Sustainability Compass?"

Session 3:

Aim: Analyze and identify opportunities to connect with our school's strategic objectives that focus on sustainability.

- Group participants in mixed grade level groups. Display and orientate participants to QASidra's guiding statement and strategic objectives, focusing on strategic objective one (as bolded in blue).

Qatar Academy Value Promise:

"We inspire and empower our learners so that they are equipped as future change agents for a sustainable world."

Qatar Academy Sidra's Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective 6 - **"Realise a culture of sustainability"**

Strategic Objectives:

1. Embed the concept of sustainability across the curriculum

2. Embed sustainable school practices
 3. Achieve financial sustainability
- Allocate each mixed group one segment of the Sustainability Compass - using the Sustainability Compass analysis template as a visual guide. Groups discuss and analyze the strategic objective - "Embed the concept of sustainability across the curriculum" through their allocated lens of the Compass (Nature, Economy, Society, Wellbeing).
 - Join groups that represent each point of the Compass and have them discuss their findings. Give the following discussion prompts:
 - What connections are you able to make? Indicate these on your Compass analysis template.
 - What themes are arising out of your discussion?
 - Collect participants' Sustainability Compass templates
 - Exit ticket - Have participants post responses to prompts - As a result of our learning so far ...
 - What might I change?
 - What am I motivated to explore more?

Session 4: Completes independently in grade level groups as a part of collaborative planning meetings

Aim: Identifying curriculum connections

- Ask teachers to use the Google Form to make curricular connections with Education for Sustainability standards during collaborative year planning time in August.

REFLECTION

Plusses

When reflecting on this workshop, I am incredibly impressed with how intuitive the Sustainability Compass tool can be. With very quick instructions you can observe how my colleagues were quickly able to see the interconnectedness of the social issues that they were prompted to think about. My favourite part of this workshop was when our teachers transferred this activity to the next unit of study they were planning for their own students. In this video, I was working with third-grade teachers, and I was able to run this workshop in small cohorts across the PYP and noticed a very similar pattern. Some of our discussions became quite heated and triggered personal frustrations on topics such as access to clean water. Some of my colleagues from Columbia passionately shared the corrupt political systems that exploit access to water causing civil war in their country.

Areas for Improvement

In reflection, I wish I could have followed up with my colleagues more often to observe how the Sustainability Compass was being used in their classrooms. I was able to capture some content on the [QAS Sustainability Podcast](#) I hosted.

EVIDENCE

[Compass Education Unit Development](#)