

YEAR 4 SHARING THE PLANET – INTRO TO THE SUSTAINABILITY COMPASS

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LEARNING PLAN OVERVIEW

Subject(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Sciences • Social Sciences • Environmental Education
Grade Level (s)	Upper Primary (ages 8-11)
Systems Tool(s)	Sustainability Compass
Purpose of Using Tool	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquiry • Critical Thinking
Summary	This plan is a 'tuning in' activity to a new unit of inquiry under the transdisciplinary theme 'Sharing the Planet'. The Sustainability Compass is used as a thinking tool to consider how we can share ecosystems with other living things.

Learning Objectives

To introduce the students to the Sustainability Compass thinking tool and apply it to their new learning taking place in our STP unit. It will serve as a starting point for students to share their thinking in relation to sharing ecosystems with other living things.

Material and Settings

- A3 blank paper for first thoughts/associations with the words: Nature, Society, Economy and Wellbeing
- A3 printouts for table groups of the Sustainability Compass
- Pens/pencils
- Projection capabilities for displaying the lesson slides and for viewing the video linked into the lesson

Learning Context

The audience will be Y4 students (28 in total). The lesson will take place in the classroom within a timetabled lesson which is 55 minutes in duration.

Purpose of Using the Systems Thinking Tools

I chose the Sustainability Compass as a tool to encourage critical thinking about the connections between humans and other living things. In addition, to make use of the Sustainability Compass to highlight that we are sometimes in conflict with the ecosystems that surround us which may lead to imbalances with negative effects.

Learning Plan Step-by-step Description

- The Central Idea for the unit will be introduced/displayed and students will be asked to identify keywords for future reference.
- First thoughts - in table groups, students will be asked to fold the A3 blank paper they have been given in half 2 times to make 4 sections. Students will be asked to think about the 4 words (Nature, Economy, Society and Well-Being) and what they mean to them. In their table group, students will write down on the paper the 4 words in different sections and then record the first ideas that come into their minds. (8 min). Following this time, each group will share 1-2 of their ideas but cannot repeat what has previously been shared.
- A simple definition of sustainability will be shared as a review of the concept which was examined in our previous unit of inquiry.
- The elements of the Sustainability Compass will be introduced and a brief explanation will be given as to how it may be used.
- As this is the beginning of a unit, students will be given a short time to discuss and feedback on what their initial thoughts are to the question: What is an ecosystem?
- We will watch a video together entitled 'Understanding Ecosystems for Kids: Producers, Consumers, Decomposers' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJEToQ49Yjc>
- Student groups will each be given an A3 size copy of the Sustainability Compass and we will discuss in brief how to compass an issue using P.A.T.H.
- Students will be provided with the topic: **Sharing ecosystems with other living things**
- The following instructions will be given and displayed for group work:
In your group, complete the following:
 1. Write the topic in the centre of your Sustainability Compass
 2. Review the ideas you wrote earlier about your understanding of the words Nature, Society, Economy and Wellbeing.
 3. Think about the video we watched together and our topic focus. Write down your ideas in the section of the Sustainability Compass where you think they best fit.

4. Draw arrows between the ideas that you think are connected - share your thinking with your group members.
 - Students will be given 15-20 minutes to work on their Sustainability Compass and may use the A3 paper from their first thoughts about the 4 Compass points to extend their thinking
 - The students will be given a reflection question to complete for home learning. We will follow up in the next lesson where students can share their thinking with their classmates and explore the interconnectedness of ideas related to the topic.
 - [Copy of lesson plan](#)
 - Photos - [Photo 1](#) and [Photo 2](#)

REFLECTION

Plusses

The students were engaged throughout the lesson and the recording of their first thoughts early on regarding the meaning behind the 4 points helped to facilitate discussion when compassing the issue.

As the primary objective of the lesson was to introduce the Sustainability Compass, I think it went well and the students have learned that there is an interconnectedness between human decisions and actions with other living things which may have not been previously considered.

Areas for Improvement

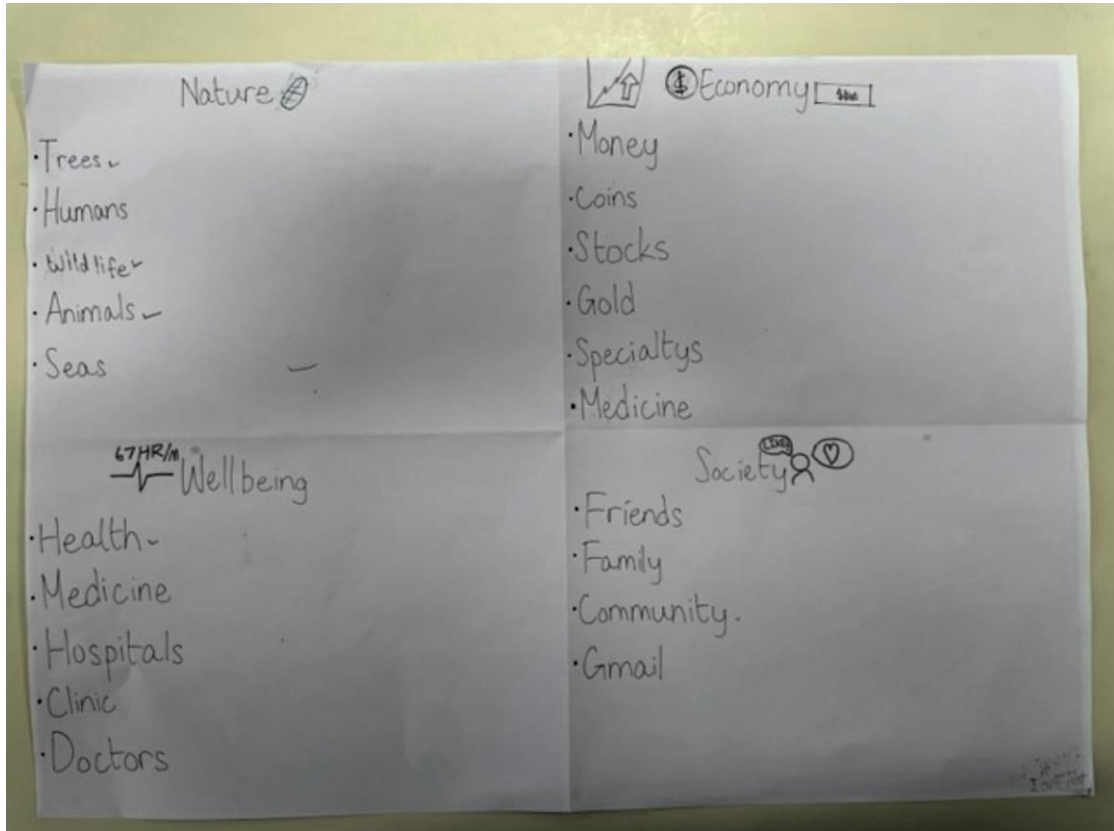
I think I would have chosen to compass an issue that the students had a deeper understanding of. As the unit of inquiry for this lesson was only two days in, student knowledge of ecosystems was limited or surface level in some cases.

However, compassing a new issue without prior knowledge allows me to compass the topic again at the end of the unit and assess how student understanding has evolved and the clarity of the connections being made.

EVIDENCE

[Copy of Lesson Plan](#)

Compass 1



Compass 2

