MODULE 7 · LESSON PLANNER

Conceptual Understanding *Lesson Planner*

Teaching one unit of inquiry from beginning to end with a graffiti wall. A practical, teacher-facing guide to setting up and using a graffiti wall as an ongoing thinking tool through every stage of the inquiry cycle, illustrated with one complete unit of inquiry.

AGE RANGE	FORMAT	FOCUS
Middle Primary (adaptable)	Set-up guide + one full unit	Graffiti wall + inquiry cycle

HOW TO USE THIS PLANNER

Start with the overview and the set-up guide to build your graffiti wall. Then follow the worked unit of inquiry, "Where do sounds come from?", to see how the wall is used at every stage of the inquiry cycle. Pair this planner with the companion **SilvaStone Inquiry Cycle Printable**, which provides ready-to-display cards for each stage of the cycle to place beside your wall.

THE KEY MESSAGE

A graffiti wall makes children's thinking visible. Carried through the inquiry cycle, it captures the whole learning journey, from first questions to confident understanding, in the children's own words.

> *"The walls of the classroom belong to the children."*
>
> — Module 7: Conceptual Understanding

A GRAFFITI WALL CAPTURES

- Prior knowledge
- Questions and wonderings
- Predictions and theories
- New vocabulary
- Connections between ideas
- Misconceptions to revisit
- Revised, growing understanding
- Real-time reflection

SECTION 1 · OVERVIEW

The graffiti wall and the inquiry cycle

Two simple tools that, used together, make a whole unit of inquiry visible

The inquiry cycle gives the unit its shape

The inquiry cycle is a dynamic, student-centred journey that moves from sparking curiosity to applying new understanding in the real world. It is not a straight line but a recursive journey, with ongoing reflection at its heart, where each stage builds on the last.

The graffiti wall makes the thinking visible

A graffiti wall is a living, child-height record of a class's thinking. Children add their ideas in writing, drawings, home language or clippings. Used across the cycle, it gathers rich data when activating prior knowledge and becomes an ongoing reflective tool that captures children's authentic learning as it grows.

THE SEVEN STAGES OF THE CYCLE

- Provocation
- Activating prior knowledge
- Exploration
- Sorting our thinking
- Research
- Application of knowledge
- Taking action and real-world connection

COMPANION RESOURCE

The **SilvaStone Inquiry Cycle Printable** provides a ready-to-display card for each stage of the cycle. Print these and place them beside your graffiti wall, so children can see which stage of the journey they are in as their thinking grows.

ONGOING REFLECTION, AT THE HEART OF THE CYCLE

Return to the wall at every stage, not only at the start and end. Each visit lets children reflect, connect their thinking to their peers', and watch their collective understanding take shape in real time.

SECTION 2 · SET-UP GUIDE

Setting up your graffiti wall

A calm, child-height canvas that belongs to the children

1. **Choose the space.** Reserve a wall, board or roll of paper, and place it at the children's own eye level so everyone can see, reach and add to it.
2. **Keep it calm and neutral.** Use a plain, neutral background so attention stays on the children's thinking rather than on decoration.
3. **Add the central question.** Write one clear question, large and at the centre, that opens the unit, for example "Where do sounds come from?".
4. **Provide the tools.** Offer sticky notes, markers, pencils, scissors, glue and images or clippings, so every child has a way to contribute.
5. **Invite every learner.** Welcome contributions in writing, drawings, symbols, home language or clippings, so age and language are never a barrier. The children lead.
6. **Protect the voice.** Record thinking in the children's own words and never correct the wall in red pen; it is a living record, not a finished display.
7. **Model the connections.** Gather the class often to read contributions aloud, group similar ideas and show how thinking can be linked.
8. **Photograph the journey.** Take a photo of the wall at each stage, so the class can look back and see how far their understanding has travelled.

MATERIALS

A wall, display board or large roll of paper at child height; a neutral background; sticky notes in several colours; markers and pencils; scissors and glue; magazines, newspapers and printed images for clippings; a camera or tablet to photograph the wall at each stage; the SilvaStone Inquiry Cycle Printable stage cards.

TRYING IT FOR THE FIRST TIME

Start with something simple and open before using the wall for a subject concept. A whole-class discussion around a question such as, "Why is it important to be caring towards our friends, our teachers and our learning resources?" is an accessible first step, and it connects directly to the IB Learner Profile and to the Personal Learning Goals that underpin the IPC.

REMEMBER

Mistakes are welcome. When early ideas are recorded without correction, children learn that a first thought is a starting point, not a final answer, and become far more willing to think out loud, revise and persevere.

SECTION 3 · THE UNIT OF INQUIRY

Where Do Sounds Come From?

A Middle Primary unit under the transdisciplinary theme "How the world works"

LEARNING INTENTION

Children investigate how sounds are made, how they travel, and how living things use and change sound, building and revising their understanding together on a shared graffiti wall across the whole unit.

CENTRAL IDEA

Sound is a form of energy that travels, changes, and helps living things communicate.

KEY CONCEPTS

Causation, function and change. Related concepts: vibration, pitch, volume, energy and communication.

LINES OF INQUIRY

- How sounds are made and how they travel (causation).
- How people and animals use sound to communicate (function).
- How we can change, control and record sound (change).

AGE RANGE	THEME	DURATION
Middle Primary (Years 3–4)	How the world works	Four to six weeks

SECTION 4 · THE UNIT, STAGE BY STAGE

Beginning the inquiry

Provocation, activating prior knowledge, exploration and sorting our thinking

PROVOCATION | ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE | EXPLORATION | SORTING OUR THINKING | RESEARCH | APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE | TAKING ACTION

1. **Provocation · spark curiosity.** Transform the room into a "sound laboratory": dim the lights and play an evocative soundscape (a storm, a heartbeat, birdsong, a drum, a whisper), or set out closed boxes that each hide a different sound-maker. Children shake, listen, guess and wonder. Keep it captivating and fun; the aim is to make them curious, not to explain.

   Graffiti wall: not yet. Simply gather the children's first exclamations and questions.

2. **Activating prior knowledge · gather what they know.** Set up the graffiti wall at child height with the central question "Where do sounds come from?". Invite children to add everything they already know and wonder, in writing, drawings, home language or clippings. This is your baseline; resist correcting anything.

   Graffiti wall: rich data on prior knowledge, misconceptions and questions to build the unit upon.

3. **Exploration · investigate first-hand.** Children explore sound directly: feel a drum vibrate grains of rice, pluck stretched elastic bands, and tap glasses filled to different levels with water. The aim is first-hand noticing and fresh questions, not yet formal explanation.

   Graffiti wall: new observations and "I noticed..." questions added beside their first ideas.

4. **Sorting our thinking · make sense together.** Gather at the wall. Read the contributions aloud, group similar ideas, draw connections, and introduce the vocabulary children now need: vibration, pitch (high and low) and volume (loud and soft). Gently surface misconceptions to revisit, never erase.

   Graffiti wall: ideas organised and connected; new vocabulary placed beside the children's own words.

SECTION 4 · THE UNIT, STAGE BY STAGE

Deepening and applying the inquiry

Research, application of knowledge and taking action

PROVOCATION | ACTIVATING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE | EXPLORATION | SORTING OUR THINKING | **RESEARCH** | **APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE** | **TAKING ACTION**

5 **Research · become sound investigators.** Children investigate more deeply: make string telephones, explore tuning forks, build simple instruments, record and change sounds, and find out how people and animals use sound to communicate. They weigh what they find and draw evidence-based conclusions.

Graffiti wall: a growing record of findings, evidence and fresh questions in the children's own words.

6 **Application of knowledge · show what you know.** Children apply their new understanding in a fresh context, for example composing a short piece that uses high and low, loud and soft sounds, or explaining to a partner exactly how a particular sound is made.

Graffiti wall: revisited so children can match their new understanding against their first thoughts.

7 **Taking action · make it matter.** Children apply their learning to a real purpose: design a distinctive sound signal for a school routine, create a quieter corner for focused work, or perform a soundscape that tells a story for another class. Celebrate the journey the wall has recorded.

Graffiti wall: revisited one last time to show how far the class's understanding has travelled.

THE WALL AS AN ONGOING REFLECTIVE TOOL

Notice that the wall is never "finished" and then forgotten. It is revisited at every stage, gathering the children's authentic learning as it grows, so that reflection becomes a continuous habit rather than a single event at the end of the unit.

SECTION 5 · THE LEARNING JOURNEY

Documenting and assessing the journey

Turning the wall into evidence of conceptual growth

WHAT TO CAPTURE

- A photograph of the wall at every stage of the cycle.
- The children's exact words, drawings and clippings, unaltered.
- Individual "I used to think... now I know..." reflections.
- The questions, theories and connections that emerged along the way.

FROM THE WALL TO A PORTFOLIO

Add the staged photographs and each child's reflections to their learning journey or portfolio. Together they form a rich, authentic record of how understanding developed over the whole unit.

ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Activating prior knowledge gives a baseline; the taking-action wall shows the growth. Comparing the two reveals each child's conceptual progress. Timely feedback and self-assessment along the way are among the most powerful influences on learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Black & Wiliam, 1998).

OWNERSHIP AND AGENCY

When children can see their progress laid out before them, they reflect, self-assess and take ownership of their next steps, developing the agency of self-regulated, lifelong learners.

ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS TO ASK OF THE WALL

- How has the class's thinking changed from activating prior knowledge to now?
- What new vocabulary and concepts are the children using?
- Which misconceptions were revised, and how?
- Which children need a fresh provocation to re-engage with the idea?

IN CLOSING

The wall tells the story of their thinking

A graffiti wall does not display the answer; it makes the journey of understanding visible

REMEMBER

Carried through the inquiry cycle, a graffiti wall turns a unit of inquiry into a visible, shared learning journey. It gathers rich data when activating prior knowledge, grows with the children's thinking at every stage, and ends as an honest record of how far their understanding has travelled, written in their own words.

> *"When students can see how their understanding evolves over time, they gain a deeper understanding of their own thinking."*
>
> — Module 7: Conceptual Understanding

FINAL TEACHER REFLECTION

- Whose thinking is visible on the wall, and is it in their own words?
- Where did unexpected questions or theories emerge?
- How did the children's understanding grow across the cycle?
- How will this learning journey inform what I plan next?