



LESSON PLANS - TEMPLATE

YOUR SELF SERIES™ - PURPOSE

The majority of today's students are overwhelmed and feel unworthy - turning toward inappropriate, risky and sometimes violent behaviors to express or numb emotions. The effects are daunting to our future generations. Internal and external influences can act as obstacles to their growth and contribute to mental health issues, but a strong sense of self can protect teens.

Indeed, research has consistently shown that when properly implemented, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) programs improve academics and pro-social behaviors by 20% and 11% respectively, thereby better preparing teens for life's inevitable challenges (Durlak, et. al., *Child Development*, Jan./Feb., 2011). **YSS™** is one such SEL program that not only provides social emotional learning, character development and life skills, but also develops a framework for students to find personal relevance across a wide variety of subjects. That framework is unique to YSS: it is the only SEL program that provides this greater vision.

The **YSS™** program consists of three books (the Series) and a free website. The Series lays the foundation for understanding and consciously developing the self. Once established, students build upon that foundation by incorporating the many topics found on the website. Each topic found on the website has a corresponding **Lesson Plan** ("Mission") to help teachers effectively utilize the content while promoting life skills and meeting various mandates and standards. An overview of the **Lesson Plan** content is found below.

YSS™ - LESSON PLANS

Meeting Your Needs

Your Self Series™ meets many national and state standards and mandates. The program, including the Series, meets the general criteria for:

Social Emotional Learning curriculum

Character education

Life skills development

The books and website combined also meet:

National Health Standards

Common Core State Standards

21st Century Skills

21st Century Community Learning Centers' Program Description

Anti-bullying mandates

Prevention Strategies/Programs

To help you find the best fit, each component within the **Lesson Plans** will include a **text box** (shown below) to delineate the National Health Standards, Common Core State Standards (CCSS), and 21st Century Skills addressed by each section. It will also include the specific areas of competency that align with 21st Century Community Learning Center (CCLC) programs. To learn more about each of these and to which specific standard we refer, please visit the respective websites:

National Health Standards: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/standards/>

CCSS: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy>

21st Century Skills: http://www.p21.org/storage/documents/P21_Framework.pdf

21st CCLC: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/21stccclc/index.html>

National Health Standard addressed:

CCSS addressed:

21st Century Skills:

21st CCLC content:

WHY YSS™ LESSON PLANS?

The **YSS™ Lesson Plans** make your life easier by fulfilling all the mandates and standards listed above and engaging and empowering students to be thoughtful learners. In addition, **YSS™** sets forth goals and objectives that are broken down into three categories of learning:

- **TO KNOW:** This is the most basic level of learning where the objective is fundamental knowledge of concepts and ideas related to the topic. (Rote memorization is a common form of “to know”.)
- **TO DO:** This is the next level of learning when students acquire skills to be able to manipulate and act upon the knowledge provided. This is experience-based learning.
- **TO BE:** This is the optimal level of learning where students are able to apply the knowledge and the skills acquired to their overall sense of self. **To Be** is the self awareness surrounding every topic: *“Who am I in relation to this topic?” “What does this mean to me?” “How does this information empower me?” “Who will I become now that I have this knowledge and these skills?”* When you reach the level of **To Be**, you have empowered students with new skill sets.

Traditional learning has been primarily focused on “to know.” More recently, PBL and service learning allows students to acquire experience surrounding a topic: the “to do.” But the last element, “to be,” optimizes this experience-based learning by fostering

personal meaning, intrinsic motivation and individual purpose. The main focus of all **YSS™** work is to acquire “to be” knowledge.

When we teach in a manner that informs, inspires and connects students to their sense of self and to a greater purpose, humanity and citizenship become values not just taught, but experienced and continually embodied.

The **YSS™** Lesson Plans have been created with this purpose in mind.

You are on a mission, too - to educate future generations whose own mission is to contribute to society and to live life with meaning. This is why we have used “Missions” as the theme to the Lesson Plans. Students are thus **agents** in training and you, from now on, will be referred to as **HQ**, as you provide the headquarters for knowledge, connection and assurance.

MISSION BREAKDOWN

Below are the elements found in each **YSS™ Lesson Plan/Mission**.

Each Lesson Plan/Mission asks you to read the Mission Possible and requires your students (referred to as agents) to do the Recon. You choose among the many other options offered for each Mission.

There are nine missions within each Lesson Plan (listed below). Seven of those missions are a stand alone lesson plan (two extras include vocabulary and direct assess). Exactly how many missions you do for each topic will depend on your time frame, resources, educational demands and learning objectives. For instance, if bullying is a large concern in your environment and you are required to meet mandates associated with the topic, you may choose to do three or five of the missions from the Bullying Unit. Conversely, you may choose to do only one of the missions from eating disorders. Or, perhaps someone at school has recently committed suicide and agents are having a difficult time focusing on work. You may choose to suspend academics for a few days and focus on a few of those missions.

All **Missions** will provide detailed information on Time Needed, Materials Needed, Advanced Preparation, Learning Goals (including What Agents Will Be Able to **Know**, **Do** and **Be** at the end of the mission), Procedures and other individually applicable information.

All **YSS™ Missions** enlist the help of agents ranging from 5th to 10th grades.

The components of each Lesson Plan are listed below.

“Mission Possible” introduces the “Lesson Plan” topic and contains the table of contents and the basic directions. Remember, you are required to read **Mission Possible**.

“Optional: Pre-Ops” assessment activities help your agents to think deeply about their beliefs, perceptions and general understanding of the topic before doing any recon. Suggestions for post assessment and comparative analysis are suggested to weave into the end of the unit.

The **“Recon”** is mandatory for all agents and must be done before all other **missions** besides the **Pre-Ops**. It involves simply reading the online posts to develop awareness and intelligence on the topic **before** formal operations begin. A **Teacher Clarification** (HQ Clarification) is part of this section to make sure that all agents are clear about specific concepts before moving forward (we don’t want any cognitive casualties).

The **“Debriefing”** section asks agents to reflect on what the material means to them on a personal level. (Debriefing is always a good idea before heading into the field for training or missions.) Two options are provided.

Debriefing #1: Self-reflective questions offers a list of questions to have agents contemplate their thoughts and feelings about the topic. As teens strive towards their new identities, self-reflection is an important part of the process that results in more compassion and self-awareness. Integration of material is more meaningful when the self is part of the process. Questions are to be selected for an essay or journaling exercise.

Debriefing #2: Group discussions allow for both personal expression and comparison of meaning (how their opinions and beliefs may differ from other agents). Group discussion is a time for agents to share their thoughts and feelings on a topic while in a safe environment. Group discussions foster empathy, self-awareness and social skills. Teachers choose from a list of discussion topics provided.

For those new to the **YSS™** group experience, agents will need to set group rules, expectations and consequences for people who do not follow the rules. HQ acts as the facilitator of the agent discussion. HQ needs to keep in mind the verbal and non-verbal skills he/she is striving to promote. Some general guidelines include:

- Encourage agents to refer to each other by name, respectfully. (Or badge number, if you choose to really role-play.)
- Encourage “I” statements, rather than (sometimes accusatory) “you” statements.

- Have agents look at each other, in the eye.
- Watch for non-verbal signs of disrespect and offer alternative expressions of disagreement and/or interaction.

A list of at least five suggested group discussion topics will be offered. Each discussion question is also suitable for a debate format, simply divide the class into two groups and set ground rules before beginning.

“Field Ops” offers two important interactive formats to help agents more fully integrate the topic information. A **Project Based Learning** and a **Service Learning** example provide essential life skills and a larger sense of purpose while meeting many state and national standards.

Project Based Learning is an innovative approach to teaching whereby the agents work on a particular problem or issue, learning and applying information in a way that they find personally meaningful and relevant and that has real world implications. PBL adds depth of understanding and self-advocacy through authentic engagement in the issue. The projects they develop address the problems and/or atmosphere that the issue has created and offer solutions for the community, environment, or whatever/whomever is affected by the problem.

PBL is often done in a group format, which tends to create a high level of involvement and engagement. A group project reflects the way your agents will operate, learn, achieve and enhance their future life endeavors in work, play and relationships. Teamwork and communication skills, as well as goal-oriented focus and decision-making skills are continuously at play. For anyone unfamiliar with PBL, please visit <http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-learning> to learn more.

Service Learning links service within the community to the classroom. It is a teaching strategy whereby agents take what they learn in the classroom, go into the greater community (the field) and learn hands on methods for improving a situation, distributing information, interacting with civilians, and/or understanding organizations in the broader effort to solve real life problems. Service learning combines academics with life experience while promoting citizenship.

Not only do agents develop a deeper understanding of a topic, but they explore who they are in relation to the broader community. Service learning allows agents to experience how they can contribute to the world and the value they have as individuals. Agents begin with a topic that affects their community and then they develop strategies to effect positive change.

Most important, service learning reaches the developing self that each agent is experiencing: *How am I contributing to this problem today? How will I be contributing to the solution tomorrow?*

The **“Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)”** offer expanded learning opportunities to manipulate and solidify the topic information or to simply directly assess agent knowledge. The **SOPs** include the following:

“Vocabulary,” because effective communication skills are key 21st Century Skills. In this section we will list vocabulary words from the posts to provide an opportunity to expand vocabulary. You may elect to have agents keep a log of the vocabulary they learn throughout the site and within the **YSS™** books. Although we sometimes provide synonyms or brief descriptions of the words, we encourage agents to investigate their own definitions and apply the words to relevant situations in their own lives.

“Optics,” because incorporating all aspects of the brain is important when solidifying new information while nonlinear expression enhances creativity and “out of the box” thinking. Some agents are born visual, creative learners. Weaving this aspect of the learning process helps ensure that all agents connect with the material and manipulate it in a way that resonates with who they are.

After completing a graph or visual depiction of the mission information, agents are then challenged to take the concept one step further, whether that means to evaluate change and visually depict that change, or to make predictions on how a problem could be addressed and show the flow of those predictions. This additional requirement of **“Optics”** is a valuable part of integrating the information and incorporating executive function skills.

“Direct Assess,” because some settings will need to directly assess what agents have learned during recon and in the field. Some material simply must be understood for it to have meaning, which is why the recon mission has the Teacher Clarification. This Direct Assess method asks pointed questions on the material to make sure agents have read and understood the topic. Direct Assess can be used as a discussion platform as well, rather than an assessment. This way, teachers can be sure agents have grasped the knowledge before attempting to incorporate it into their sense of selves.

“Related YSS™ Posts” point you in the direction of additional Missions and posts that may augment the current topic.

Troubleshooting

If your population is having difficulty with material found on the **YSS™** website, we strongly suggest implementing the **YSS™** curriculum for the purpose of helping secret agents develop a solid sense of self. A sense of self means knowing who you are – your values, beliefs, past experiences and your role as a productive, compassionate member of society. Without a sense of who they are, your agents may not be able to

confidently apply the content of the posts to themselves. The **YSS™** books will help. Please visit this page for more information: <http://yourselfseries.com/products/>

If any one of your agents becomes emotionally distant, withdrawn, shares information with you of concern or makes comments about harming himself or others, immediately seek professional help.

YSS MISSION RUBRIC

A rubric can be used to assess the level of understanding, interaction, comprehension and personal relevance that an agent exhibits while learning the topic at hand. The rubric below has been separated by the sections above (**Recon, Debriefing, Field Ops, Standard Operating Procedures**). Within each section is a breakdown of targeted skills. Learning for each of these targeted skills can then be graded 1-4 signifying the level of understanding and interaction with the material.

RECON

Interaction with material

- 1 - Agent did not read the material.
- 2 - Agent read the necessary material but was confused about content.
- 3 - Agent read the material and engaged in class discussion.
- 4 - All of 3 plus agent made use of all links.

Knowledge Obtained

- 1 - Agent did not understand the material and was unable to apply it to himself.
- 2 - Agent had some basic understanding of the material, but needed help during clarification.
- 3 - Agent grasped most of the material and was attentive during HQ time.
- 4 - Agent fully understood material and contributed greatly to HQ time.

DEBRIEFING (SELF-REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS)

Interaction with material

- 1 – Agent did not interact well with the debriefing.
- 2 – Agent read all the posts assigned.
- 3 – Agent read the posts and did the extra interactive work online (What would you do...? and Popular Polls).
- 4 – All of level 3 plus agent took notes and created a sheet of key concepts/ideas.

Emotional Skills developed

- 1 – Agent has difficulty relating to the material's emotional relevance. Agent has trouble articulating how he feels as a result of the material.
- 2 – Agent demonstrated some emotional insight. Agent was able to label some of his feelings and relate them to the material.
- 3 – Agent demonstrated appropriate emotional awareness and regulation, relating how the material made him feel and connecting those feelings to past experiences.
- 4 – All of 3, plus agent demonstrated an increase in his emotional awareness, showed emotional regulation skills and took into account the emotional differences of others.

Grasp of information

- 1 – Agent struggled with the basic concepts of the post.
- 2 – Agent showed a general understanding of the information. Agent was able to relate the topic to himself or others to demonstrate some understanding.
- 3 – Agent showed an understanding of and interest in the information by relating material to self, others and the greater community.

4 – Agent showed 3 above as well as interest that was demonstrated in additional work such as an essay, unique story or offering suggestions to use the information for a common good.

Completion of classroom activities

1 – Agent did not complete the work assigned and did not participate in class discussions.

2 – Agent completed half of the work assigned and participated in approximately half of the discussions.

3 – Agent completed all the work assigned and was an active participant in the group discussions.

4 – All of 3 above plus agent showed respect for classmates, made good eye contact, followed rules well and showed respect for others. Agent also demonstrated insight when answering questions.

FIELD OPS (PBL AND SERVICE LEARNING)

Completion of the project

1 – Agent did not complete the project or contribute to the group work.

2 – Agent completed the task but with minimal effort as demonstrated by a lack of enthusiasm. Showed an inability to fully connect the project to himself and/or displayed less than optimal teamwork skills.

3 – Agent completed all required work and contributed well to the group work by making an effort to get along with others, working in a timely fashion, and contributing a his/her perspective to the project. In individual work, the agent completed all work in a timely fashion, while attending to penmanship/visual aspects and contributing his/her unique perspective.

4 – Agent met criteria 3 above plus made an extra effort to contribute to the project that went above and beyond academic expectation such as helping others within the group or adding additional elements to the project not necessary for completion.

Social skills demonstrated (for group work projects)

1 – Agent could not work effectively with others and thus did not contribute and/or may have detracted from the project. Specifically, agent failed to meet deadlines and did not finish assigned work. In addition, Agent failed to respond to group messages and contacts and lowered the level of the group project potential.

2 – Agent had some difficulty working with others but made contributions. Specifically, though group work may have been difficult in some capacity, he still made an effort to contribute to the overall project.

3 – Agent worked well with others and as a result made contributions. Specifically, agent exhibited good teamwork skills (communication, eye contact, respect, positive attitude), and helped promote team spirit to advance the project.

4 – Agent demonstrated a keen awareness of the social factors within the group (see 3 above) and helped to manage the team, thereby making a significant contribution to work as a whole.

Self skills assessment

1 – Agent did not demonstrate knowledge of his potential value. Agent had a difficult time relating who he is to the mission. A clear disconnect existed between the mission and the agent's sense of self.

2 – Agent had some difficulty engaging in the process: appeared insecure with his contributions. Specifically, agent demonstrated difficulty relating to the material, but made an effort to complete the mission regardless.

3 – Agent managed his emotions, controlled his behaviors and exhibited confidence in adding to the mission. Specifically, agent was able to relate the material to himself and benefit in some demonstrable way as a result.

4 – Agent was able to relate to the material in a way that demonstrated his keen self awareness, his values and how this insight could benefit not only himself but provide additional meaning to others and the mission.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES - SOPS

(VOCABULARY, DIRECT ASSESS, AND OPTICS)

1 – Agent did not participate or work on any SOPs even though they were assigned.

2 – Agent's effort on SOPs was low, but agent did complete an assignment.

3 – Agent participated in SOP and showed very good effort and results.

4 – Agent completed all aspects of the SOP in a timely and productive fashion.