

"I Love You Because" 8-Step PBLP (Grades 7-12)

Objective: To explore the historical, cultural, and personal significance of identity, appreciation, and belonging within a diverse learning community. Learners will reflect on the value of cultural heritage, shared human experiences, and interpersonal understanding.

Goal: Foster empathy, cultural appreciation, and interdisciplinary understanding among students by having them explore and celebrate the background, customs, and values of their peers.

Round Table

❖ **Opening Discussion:**

- One thing I value about my selected peer's identity is...
- One story I want people to know about me is...
- Something I'd like to understand better about my peer is...

❖ **Purpose:** Establish trust, openness, and reciprocal understanding between peers through guided appreciation and storytelling.

❖ **Materials:** Reflection journal

Reflection Point

❖ **Discussion Questions:**

- What makes me and my peer feel appreciated and understood?
- What traditions, values, or life experiences have shaped their identity?
- What do I want to remember and respect about their story?

❖ **Purpose:** Encourage deeper reflection and cultural humility by exploring shared and unique aspects of identity through personal insight.

❖ **Materials:** Reflection journal

Knowledge Setting

Science (S): The Biology of Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Objective: Understand how human connection and belonging affect the brain, body, and overall well-being.❖ Activity: Study the impact of empathy and social bonding on brain chemistry. Explore how feeling understood and valued affects health outcomes.
Technology (T): Storytelling in the Digital Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Objective: Understand how digital tools can be used to document, amplify, and celebrate individual stories and cultural traditions.❖ Activity: Understand how oral storytelling traditions interact with preserving family history. Examine how storytelling has evolved and how society today preserves and shares identity online.
Engineering (E): Designing Systems of Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Objective: Understand how environments, tools, and routines can be intentionally designed to promote respect and emotional safety.Activity: Study how design can reduce social exclusion and encourage collaboration.
Arts (A): Portraits of Appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Objective: Understand how visual and performing arts can express appreciation, love, and identity across cultures and time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Activity: Study examples of how friendship, love, or cultural celebration is expressed.
Mathematics (M): Patterns of Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Objective: Understand commonalities and differences in specific lineages, backgrounds, interests, or habits within a group. ❖ Activity: Analyze surveys or graphs related to identity markers (e.g., languages spoken, favorite meals, family structures, traditions) to map shared and unique characteristics.
Social Studies (SS): Mapping Our Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Objective: Understand how personal and family histories intersect with broader historical movements, migrations, and cultural traditions. ❖ Activity: Explore example timelines of origins or migration stories and connect them to major historical events, cultural milestones, or geographic contexts.

Project Examples

Progress Map for Project Delivery

❖ Step 1: Project Proposal

Students gather foundational knowledge through a collaborative knowledge-setting session to prepare for a project-based learning process. They meet with community partners (if possible) and create a written proposal outlining the project focus and intended community benefit.

❖ Step 2: Initial Project Proposal and Community Engagement Plan

Students submit proposals and reflect on community input, refining their plans. They outline how the project addresses real-world needs and aligns with learning objectives.

❖ Step 3: Research Progress Update

Students conduct research and gather data by consulting with community partners to guide their project development and ensure accuracy.

❖ Step 4: Draft of Final Project

Students compile findings into a working draft of their final project proposal.

❖ Step 5: Final Project Refinement and Approval for Implementation

Students apply final feedback to strengthen their project and submit it for approval. Approved projects move forward to the community involvement and assessment phases outlined in the SOP.

Science (S): Belonging & Mental Health PSA	<p>❖ Project Example: Partner with a local mental health clinic to co-create a public awareness campaign on the emotional and biological benefits of feeling seen, valued, and appreciated. Research how showing appreciation impacts stress levels, empathy, compassion, and social behavior.</p>
Technology (T): Digital Appreciation Network	<p>❖ Project Example: Partner with a local tech innovation hub and design a secure and simple app that only allows participants to submit and receive peer appreciation messages tagged by theme (e.g., culture, kindness, acceptance, and appreciation).</p>
Engineering (E): Blueprint for Belonging	<p>❖ Project Example: Partner with a design organization, community planner, or school facilities team to create an Empathy Roadmap Blueprint that advocates for how intentional engineering supports (or hinders) peer connection and appreciation.</p>
Arts (A): Appreciation Mural or Exhibit	<p>❖ Project Example: Work with a local artist-in-residence, muralist, or cultural arts nonprofit to co-create a public art piece based on student tributes to one another. Each piece will complete the sentence “I love you because...” and include symbolic elements reflecting the honored student’s culture, customs, or strengths that they’ve suggested.</p>

Mathematics (M): Mapping Differences & Common Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Project Example: Partner with a data literacy nonprofit, university math education team, or civic data organization to help students conduct surveys that map classroom differences and commonalities across customs, values, and identities. Graph the data to create a visual “Harmony Map” that promotes peace through understanding.
Social Justice (SS): Our Living Histories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Project Example: Partner with a cultural center, genealogy nonprofit, or local history museum to support students in conducting peer-to-peer oral histories that trace their family stories, cultural traditions, or meaningful customs. Curate a timeline that shows how each student’s background connects to broader historical events or geographic movements that spark appreciation.

Community Involvement

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Objective: Students implement their final, approved projects in direct collaboration with community partners, transforming appreciation into meaningful action that fosters empathy, connection, and a culture of belonging. ❖ Activity: Once final project proposals are approved, students work with selected partners to bring their project-based lesson plans to life. Partners and educators co-evaluate the outcomes using tailored rubrics, ensuring the work reflects authentic engagement and impact. |
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Assessment

- ❖ **Objective:** Evaluate student learning through the lens of historical understanding, community engagement, and applied appreciative and empathetic action.
- ❖ **Methods:** Use a rubric that measures depth of content knowledge, interdisciplinary application, creativity, implementation effectiveness, and community impact. Include student self-assessments, peer reviews, and formal feedback from community partners to ensure relevance and authenticity.

Feedback Loop

- ❖ **Activity:** Facilitate a structured reflection to help students process how learning about and appreciating others can change both relationships and environments.
- ❖ **Journal Prompt:**
 - How did it feel to be appreciated for who you are?
 - What did you learn about your peers that surprised or inspired you?
 - How did your project contribute to a stronger sense of connection and appreciation in the group or school?
 - What are you now more intentional about when interacting with others?
 - What is empathy?

Resume Integration

- ❖ Students write resume bullet points and action statements that highlight their experience with cultural research, peer appreciation, and project implementation.

For more 8-Step Project-Based Lesson Plans check out our website at www.steamsinitiative.org

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