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Grades 9-12  
Psychology for Living  
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Moving Forward by Reflecting Inwards: An exploration of place both physical and emotional places to determine a starting point for life skills

### **Abstract Summary**

In order to “live deliberately” and with a sense of purpose, a person needs to have a sense of self-awareness as well as an idea of familial connections. This unit, designed for an elective course that examines some of the complexities of being an adult, asks the students to examine exactly where it is that they live. It begins with the premise that in order to know where you want to end up, you need to know where you started. The concept of sense of place grounds the unit with the opportunity to examine the surrounding area as well as delve into stories of the past.

The two-week, seven lesson unit, will be used to start the class, focusing on more abstract concepts before we tackle the more practical nature of the course. Each lesson incorporates a variety of strategies that ask students to think and present using a variety of techniques. It asks students to look at their current lives to prepare more concretely for their future ones.

## **Duration and Objectives**

The seven lesson unit spanning approximately two weeks will try to establish the ways in which a person's identity is shaped by the people and places around him/her. The hope is to establish a sense of place for where they are currently in their lives before working to develop skills that will help in the future. There is an incorporation of written components, reading, oral presentation, interview skills and good listening skills mixed in to the lessons.

The unit will last seven 54 minute class periods. Each class is focused on individual and group participation and students will be assessed both informally on participation and formally on written, oral and visual presentations. The unit begins with a personal investigation into place before moving into a larger focus on the town of Framingham. It concludes with a visit from a long time Framingham resident as well as an interview with a person close to each individual student. The establishment of a sense of place drives the focus of self-discovery that comes from an understanding of where a person currently is in his/her life.

## **Objectives**

Students will begin to:

- Establish a working definition for a personal "Sense of Place"
- Make connections to the area in which they currently live by investigating familial and location based relationships
- Make connections with trusted adults about their past
- Experience and learn about resources offered in Framingham

## **Outline**

The unit is designed to last for two weeks, incorporating 7 lessons. Each lesson is

designed to fit into a 54 minute block period. The discussions in particular will vary based on the group of students.

- Lesson one: Goal Setting/ Where are you now?  
Complete Goals to establish future plans  
Discuss social, personal, societal hindrances and supports
- Lesson two: Establishing a Sense of Place  
Create a working definition  
Share stories of place from well-known authors  
Sit outside and explore the surrounding school neighborhood
- Lesson three: Where are you from?  
Share visions from the front porch homework assignment  
Discuss influence of smaller scale microcosm of the neighborhood
- Lesson four: Town of Framingham Web quest  
Explore on-line resources that outline significant places in and around town
- Lesson five: What do we have to Learn from the Past?  
Visit from a 92 -year old town resident to discuss changes in Framingham
- Lesson six: Sharing our “Places”  
Students will share in a two minute presentation the stories they learned from the interviews as well as discuss a personal definition of place
- Lesson seven: Visual representations of What Our “Places” mean  
Gathering information from each of the previous lessons, students will identify what they see as a theme and visually represent that theme  
Medium used to represent can vary based on student interest

### **Lesson Details:**

#### **1. Goal setting**

- Have students complete the personal worksheet outlining a path they currently predict for themselves. See Appendix A.
- On the board, write the three questions at the bottom of the worksheet. Students will

be asked to walk around and fill in their answers to the questions so that students can observe and learn from each other. A discussion will follow responding to what factors serve as troublesome.

- Assessment: Students will be assessed daily using the class participation scale on the grading rubric. See Appendix B.

## 2. Where are you in this moment?

- Read excerpts from writers who focus on a place: See Appendix C, D, and E. The selections come from *All Souls* by Michael Patrick MacDonald, *Animal Vegetable Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver, and *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith.
  - After students read the selections ask them to take a piece of paper and fold it in four squares. On each square ask students to draw a picture representing the one thing that stands out from their reading of each selection. On the fourth square, ask them to draw a picture of a place that holds a special memory for them.
  - Ask for a few volunteers to share what they have drawn.
- Defining “Sense of Place”
  - On the board write the words the students are brainstorming about when asked to define “sense of place”
  - Create a working definition that the class can agree on to put on display on a poster board in front of the room. Ask students to keep in mind this development of sense of place as they move through the next few days.
- As a class we will walk down to the woods that abut the school. We will spread out as much as possible and sit for five full minutes observing something happening around us. It cannot be a person that you can see from your perch.
- The next ten minutes will be writing about what you saw, how it made you feel, how sitting still for five minutes made you feel.
- Assessment: Students will be assessed daily using the class participation scale on the grading rubric. See Appendix B.

HW - Sit and observe from your front porch for 10 minutes. Write about it. Can be in journal, stream of consciousness, but must include proper English.

### **3. Where are you from?**

- Assign interview project: See Appendix F. Rubrics were designed in collaboration and are used throughout the Framingham High School community and will be used for oral presentation skills. See Appendix G.
- In small groups, we are going to discuss the Sense of Place you discovered from your front porch. Please answer the following questions after each person has shared what they saw from their front porch.
- Questions to discuss:
  - In what ways does a house affect a person?
  - In what ways does a neighborhood have an affect on a person?
  - Do you believe people are restricted by houses and neighborhoods?
  - What defines a “family”? In this modern day and age, how do you define it, do not consider what others may think, yet.
  - What do you have to learn from your family that cannot be taught elsewhere?
- Assessment: Students will be assessed daily using the class participation scale on the grading rubric. See Appendix B.

**HW:** Explore 3 places in your neighborhood and sit or stand in each place ALONE for 5 minutes. Write a minimum of one paragraph describing each place.

### **4. Researching Framingham**

- Web quest – in small groups of three, students will complete a web quest to try and gather information about the town of Framingham. See Appendix H.
- Students will informally share their information with each other.

### **5. Going back a generation**

- Visit from Framingham resident - past relationships with the local VFW will hopefully allow me to get a guest speaker into speak with the students about his lifetime of Places.

- I hope they will have a chance to hear from an elder how different places have different effects on a person's life.

HW: Answer and be prepared to discuss the following questions. Do the dreams and hopes of your family matter to you? How does that influence you? How does that impede you? How will you benefit from it? How will the Town of Framingham influence you?

#### **6. Oral presentation, share the stories of older generations**

- Students will be prepared to present on the interviews they were assigned at the start of the week. The presentations must include a written component of some sort as well as be approximately two minutes in duration. Students will be judged based on the attached rubric, see Appendix I.

#### **7. Visual**

- This in- class assignment is a visual representation of what they have learned. Students will be asked to identify an overarching theme from their interviews with members of their family as well as the introspective time they have spent in and around Framingham. In addition, they will need to find a corresponding quotation from a published author to capture that theme. The quotation will ground their presentation.
- Students will then create a collage, painting, drawing, etc. to help define the Sense of Place they have established over the past few classes.

#### **List of Materials and Rubrics:**

Appendix A – Goal Setting Worksheet

- 5% of overall unit grade

Appendix B – Class participation Rubric

- 10% of overall unit grade each time it is used

Appendix C – *All Souls* excerpt

Appendix D – *Animal Vegetable Miracle* excerpt

Appendix E – *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* excerpt

Appendix F – Interview Project Handout

Appendix G – Speaking Rubric (FHS)

- Final product including presentation total 45%

Appendix H – Web quest worksheet

- 10% of overall unit grade

Appendix I – Interview Project Writing Rubric (FHS)

- Visual representation 20% of overall unit grade

In addition to the attached sheets, materials also include:

Access to a computer lab

Relationship with elderly Framingham resident

Art supplies and poster board

**Massachusetts State Standards for Family and Consumer Sciences:**

The lesson will focus on the following standards:

- Integrate multiple life roles and responsibilities in family, work, and community settings.
- Evaluate the significance of family and its impact on the well being of individuals and society.
- Demonstrate respectful and caring relationships in the family, workplace, and community.
- Evaluate the impact of parenting roles and responsibilities on strengthening the well-being of individuals and families.

Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/health/1999/appi.html>

Appendix A

Goal Setting Worksheet

Please fill in the boxes for where you see yourself in the next few years of your life. There is no right or wrong answer, so be honest with yourself. Consider the dreams you may have as well as where your family may see yourself.

Aspirations for...	2 Years	5 Years	10 Years
Education			
Housing			
Job			
Salary			
Personal Life			
Extras			

What may help you achieve these goals?

What may impede you from achieving these goals?

What can you do to promote yourself to others?

Appendix B

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Floeckher – Class participation rubric

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Individual involvement</b>	Student demonstrates continued presence in the discussion, fills out all assignments and listens attentively to what others have to say.	Student demonstrates some presence in the discussion, fills out most assignments and listens to what others have to say.	Student does not contribute to the discussion, partially fill out assignments and listens to what others have to say.
<b>Works well with others</b>	Student listens and responds appropriately to comments and views of other students.	Student listens and responds to comments and views of other students.	Student does not always listen or respond appropriately to comments and views of other students.
<b>Remains attentive and focused</b>	Student is visibly paying attention to the points of views of his/her peers. His/her comments reflect thoughtful contemplation of discussion.	Student is visibly paying attention most of the time to the points of views of his/her peers. His/ Her comments reflect thoughtful contemplation of discussion.	Student is easily distracted and not paying attention to the points of views of his/her peers. His/ Her comments reflect little contemplation of discussion.
<b>Total</b>			

Appendix C

QuickTime™ and a  
decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

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Appendix D

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Appendix E

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Appendix F

## Interview Project- a Voice from the Past

Many of you were born and have been raised your whole life in Framingham. However, just as many were born or have lived outside of Framingham as well. Each place in which we live shapes not only who we are, but where we want to go. Believe it or not, the adults in your life have also been shaped by similar happenings around them. For this assignment, you will interview a trusted adult to find out where his/ her “place” in this world is in his/her mind. The adult has to be someone you feel an attachment and a responsibility to in some way.

Who are you interviewing?

How do you know this person?

It does not need to be verbatim, but please gather some of the following information. Please inform the person that you will be sharing portions of your talk with your class.

1. If someone asked you where you are from, where would you say?
2. Please describe that place in detail.
3. Can you identify one memory from that place?
4. How has the place changed since you last were there?
5. How did that place shape a part of you?

In a well written essay, that adheres to the attached rubric, give a detailed account of a) “Sense of Place” as you define it b) A description of the interviewees “Place” c) a connection you feel with the place and or person.

## Appendix G

**SPEAKING – Framingham High School**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never/Not Observed</b>
<b>Demeanor</b>	Polished delivery	Confident and at ease	Shy, but makes an adequate presentation	Nervous, reticent, hesitant to the degree that it distracts the audience
<b>Content</b>	Full development, exhibiting unique or creative use of material	Full comprehension of subject matter; logical presentation; appropriate length	Understanding of subject matter. Presentation is organized	Lack of understanding of the subject matter, poorly organized, inappropriate length
<b>Delivery</b>	Spirited, passionate, and vivid use of language	Volume and rate are clear and appropriate	Either volume or rate is inadequate	Volume and rate are inadequate (i.e. too fast or too slow)
<b>Rapport with Audience</b>	Excellent eye contact; clear, dynamic and highly engaging	Consistent eye contact; focused delivery	Some eye contact and enthusiasm	No eye contact; little enthusiasm

## Appendix H

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Floeckher

Framingham Web quest

In small groups of three, please try to find as much on the following topics as possible. I listed the town website to get you started, but feel free to explore. Please remember to cite all of your information.

<http://www.framinghamma.gov/>

The Town of Framingham has:

State Parks

Local Parks

Historic Buildings

Important Dates

Influential People

Proud to live here because:

Appendix I

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mrs. Floeckher – Written component of interview/ Sense of Place

**WRITING**

<i>Criteria</i>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>Always</b>	<b>Usually</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never/Not Observed</b>
<b>Thesis/Hypothesis and Focus</b>	Unique thesis/hypothesis clearly stated. Focus evident throughout.	Thesis/hypothesis clearly stated. Focus evident but contains some extraneous information.	Thesis/hypothesis poorly developed, limited and/or vague. Focus is unclear.	No clear thesis/hypothesis. Lacks focus.
<b>Organization and Transition</b>	Clear, logical, well-planned organization with effective transitions.	Organization is evident but not consistent. Transitions are used.	Inconsistent organization. Ineffective transitions.	Lacks organization. Little to no evidence of transitions.
<b>Support, Elaboration, Evidence and Analysis</b>	Specific and sufficient examples and details support thesis/main idea. Interpretation of evidence leads to logical and unique conclusions.	Most examples and details support thesis/main idea. Interpretation of evidence leads to logical and obvious conclusions.	Some examples and details support thesis/main idea. Interpretation of evidence leads to faulty conclusions.	Most examples and/or details do not support thesis/main idea. Illogical and/or no conclusions.
<b>Word choice, Language, Tone</b>	Effective and rich choice of language including content specific vocabulary. Language appropriate for intended audience or task.	Appropriate choice of language and content specific vocabulary. Evidence of awareness of audience or task throughout most of the work.	Limited choice of appropriate language and content specific vocabulary. Limited awareness of audience or task.	Inappropriate and vague choice of language and content specific vocabulary. Little to no awareness of audience or task.
<b>Mechanics and Usage (grammar, spelling, sentence structure) Proofreading</b>	Mechanics are correct. Sentences patterns are varied. Proofreading has resulted in effective editing and revision.	Mechanics are mostly correct; errors do not affect comprehension. Sentences are complete, and show variation in structure. Proofreading shows evidence of editing with some revision.	Mechanical errors are evident. Some sentence fragments and/or run-ons. Word choice is not always acceptable. Proofreading shows evidence of some editing, but no revision.	Frequent mechanical errors that confuse the reader. Sentences are mostly fragments or run-ons. Word choice is vague and unacceptable. Evidence of proofreading is lacking.

## Bibliography

Kingsolver, B. (2007). Called Home. *Animal, vegetable, miracle* (pp. 1-2). New York: Harper Perennial.

MacDonald, M. P. (1999). All Souls' Night . *All souls: a family story from Southie* (pp. 1-3). Boston: Beacon Press.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework - October 1999 - Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. (n.d.). *Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*. Retrieved August 2, 2011, from <http://www.doe.mass.edu/framework>

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