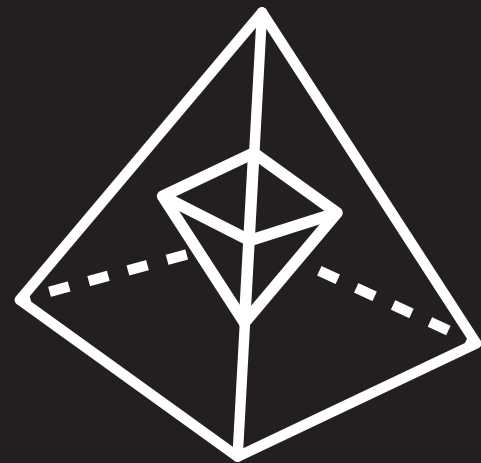


# Part Two: Rida Framework



The Rida Framework is the primary tool that DFS uses to humanize schooling. Inspired by Brazilian educator and theorist, Paulo Freire, this planning and evaluation tool asks educators to engage in continuous cycles of action and reflection. Freire believed that such cycles of critical thinking and action were key to any transformative learning process.

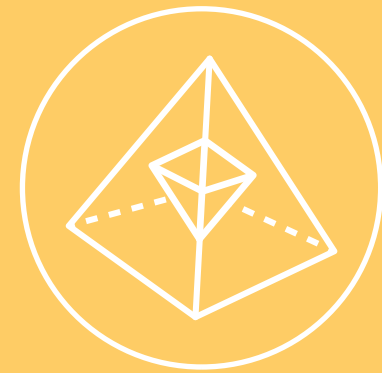
The term “Rida” comes from the popular culture expression to “ride or die,” referring to people who can be counted on during times of extreme duress. Education scholar Jeff Duncan-Andrade applied the term to teaching in his seminal article, “Gangsta, Wanksta, Rida,” in which he analyzed the practices of four South Los Angeles teachers and articulated a framework for effective urban teaching.

From these diverse influences, DFS developed the Rida Framework as a practical tool that can support educators to develop clear visions for humanizing education in their classrooms, practices for implementing those visions, and evaluation methods for tracking their progress.

The DFS Rida Framework consists of the following elements:

**Context >> Purpose & Principles >> Vision >> Skills & Curriculum >> Metrics**

Traditionally, schools demand that educators develop curriculum by first looking to the content and state standards they are required to meet. This approach fuels a culture motivated by test-taking and scores, rather than a culture of meaningful learning. It also makes school irrelevant to the students’ everyday lives. The Rida Framework, instead, requires that the teacher first deeply reflect on the context of their classroom, the purpose of education within that context and their ultimate goals as an instructor. This big picture approach gives school content a critical sense of place and purpose. From this approach, users of the Rida Framework articulate practices (action) that will result in desired/outlined outcomes within their classrooms, which they will document and evaluate via pre-determined metrics (reflection). Throughout the year, teachers revisit their Rida Framework document in order to make edits and adjustments as they move through cycles of action and reflection.



# CONTEXT

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## RIDA FRAMEWORK

In order to begin the process of building humanizing classrooms, you must first understand your context, i.e. the place and community in which you teach. Our communities act as ecosystems, comprised of many interdependent elements: our schools, the economy, our systems of governance, our infrastructure and the stories we hear and tell about our communities. In order to address problems within our communities we must consider the whole network of relationships that comprise our context.

Our context extends beyond our cities and into the world. We are living in a world that is increasingly connected and fast-paced. Despite a rapidly changing global context our schools are still using a static approach to teaching, where the teacher presents information and the students must memorize that information. Our world demands that we change the way we are teaching to reflect our greater context.

## Activity: Context Brainstorm

One way to gain perspective on your context is to map it out.

Context Brainstorming is a simple exercise to generate a complex map of relationships that make up your community. By making these relationships explicit you can start to see the web of relationships that are playing out within your classroom. These maps are not perfect, static maps of your neighborhood or city. Instead they represent our relationships, which are complex, evolving and dynamic. By mapping out our context, we can begin to change and impact those relationships.



### MATERIALS

Sticky notes  
Large paper  
Writing implements  
Timer

### STEPS

1. Gather a group of 1-5 participants, ideally colleagues who are familiar with your context.
2. On a large sheet of paper or on a board, draw out two concentric circles. Label the outer circle "greater" and the inner circle "immediate."
3. Set the timer for five minutes.
4. Starting with the inside circle, take five minutes to generate as many short answers as you can to the questions:
  - a. What are the defining features of your school, your school's neighborhood, your city?  
  
Give them different colored sticky notes for positive, neutral, and negative features.
5. Say your ideas out loud and then write them down on sticky notes and place them in the inner circle.  
  
As you all share your ideas aloud, you can build upon each other's ideas. Write down the new ideas and place the sticky note next to the original idea.
6. Now move to the outer circle, set the timer again and repeat steps 4-5 using the questions below.
  - a. What values and trends are you observing in the nation?
  - b. What values and trends are you observing in the world?
  - c. What do you think will be the defining features of the world your students experience as adults?

### WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- How does the immediate circle impact your classroom?
- How does the outer circle impact your classroom?

For general debrief guidelines, see the "Root Practice: Debrief" on page 58.

Don't forget to document your map when the activity is done. You can take a photo of your map and upload the photo to your Rida Framework or type up the ideas. You can also continue onto the next context activity in which you will cluster themes that emerged in the brainstorm or you can move on to the next section: Purpose & Principles.

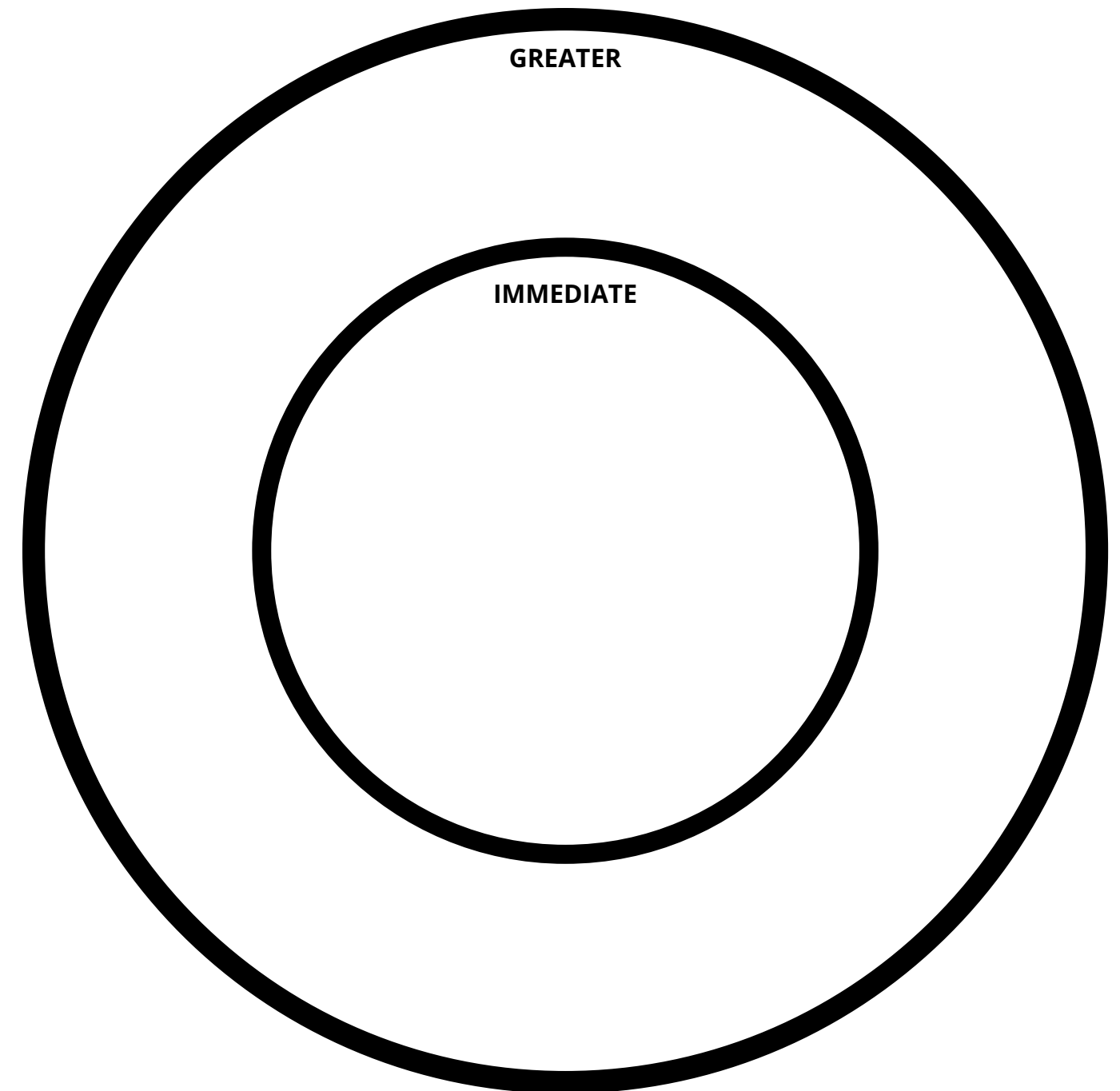
# Example: Context Brainstorm

This is a completed sample of a context brainstorm for your reference.



# Context Brainstorm

This is a blank template of a context brainstorm you can use to complete the activity.



## Activity: Find Themes

Now that you have mapped your context, you can explore common themes that may have emerged during your brainstorm.

In this activity you will draw connections across ideas that reveal larger themes about your classroom's context.

For example, you might find that your school has an abundance of community partners or that there is a lack of youth spaces in your community. Being able to cluster these recurring themes make it easier to return to your map when trying to develop curriculum around your context or when trying to reevaluate your context.

### MATERIALS

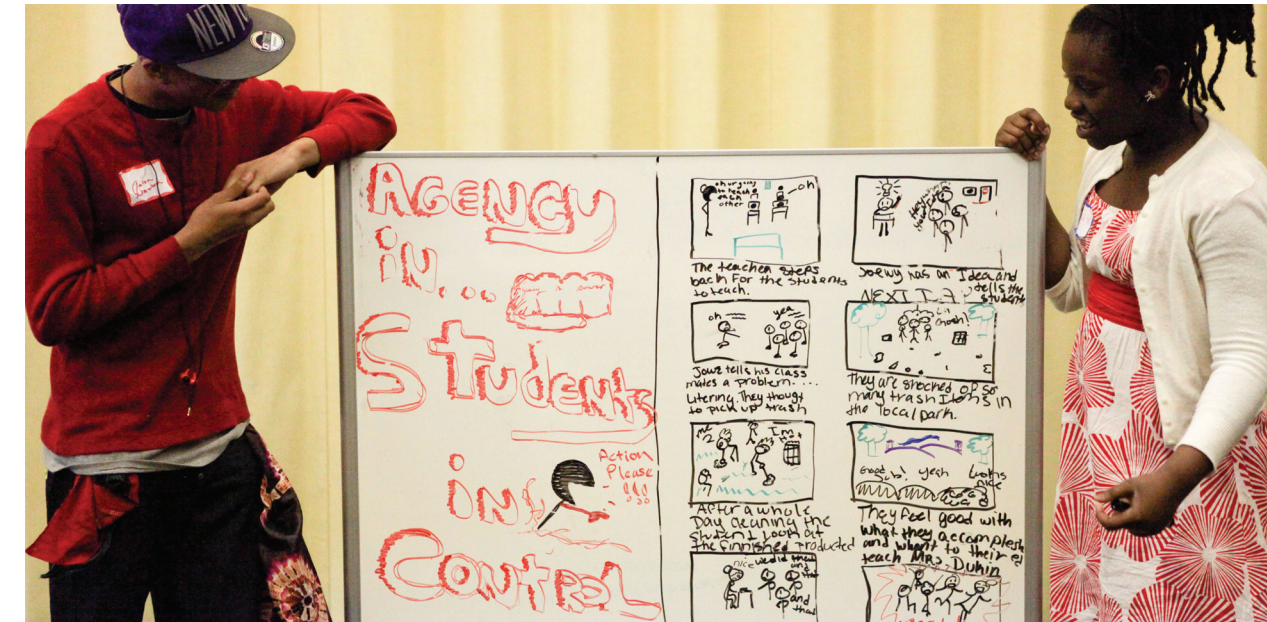
Your map from the context brainstorm

Sticky notes

Writing implements

### STEPS

1. Looking at the answers you have come up with in the "Context Brainstorm," start reading them out loud to the group.
2. When you find answers that relate or overlap move these sticky notes to the same area on the board – do this until you have arranged most of the ideas into clusters.
3. Then try to come up with a name or title for each cluster. For example if one cluster contains "not enough books in the school" and "budget cuts," you could name this cluster "lack of school resources."



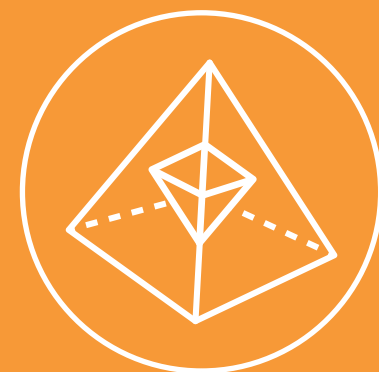
### WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- Are there any themes that emerged that surprised you?
- What assets and/or shortcomings do the themes reveal about your classroom's context?

For general debrief guidelines, see the "Root Practice: Debrief" on page 58.

You can take a photo of your themes and upload the photo to your Rida Framework. We recommend you type up themes directly into the Rida Framework to remember the major ideas that emerged from this activity.



# PURPOSE & PRINCIPLES

## RIDA FRAMEWORK

The next step in the Rida Framework is developing your purpose of education and the accompanying principles. Your purpose is a broad foundation for your work in the classroom – it is your anchor, your reason for being in the classroom. Your principles help ground your purpose in the day-to-day activities of the classroom. These principles should be clearly visible in the classroom, shared, discussed and referenced repeatedly throughout the year.

We introduce our principles at the start of the year and reference them at least once a week, especially when a teacher or student exhibits or breaks a principle. Such moments should be seen as teachable moments that bring a dynamic sense of life to what can otherwise become static phrases that may or may not resonate with students. Simply put, making them visible and saying them is never enough. Principles should be utilized within a committed process of discussion and analysis to remain relevant and accessible to your classroom.

# Activity: Writing Workshop

Your purpose is the cornerstone of your work in the classroom. It is vital that the purpose statement clearly lays out why you are an educator. First working alone and then in a group, you will challenge and push each other's ideas to develop the most rigorous purpose statements possible.

After a first draft, purpose statements can be vague, general and often misleading. At the end of this activity you should have a clear purpose statement (ideally one succinct sentence) that speaks to the challenges of your context, and how you plan to address those challenges.

## MATERIALS

Writing implements

Timer

## STEPS

1. Do a "freewrite" using the prompts below. During a freewrite, you set a timer and write non-stop for the whole time, never taking your pen from the paper. If you run out of ideas, write something meaningless until you arrive at another idea. The important thing is: do not stop writing.

For each of the prompts below do a freewrite for 5 minutes.

What is knowledge? Where does knowledge come from?  
How is knowledge created?

What knowledge is most appropriate for your context?

What is the purpose of education in the context you described above?

What is the purpose of your school?

Why did you become an educator?

2. Read back through your notes. Highlight the key words and concepts that stand out to you. From there, come up with a single sentence that describes your purpose as an educator. Underneath the sentence write a short paragraph (2 or 3 sentences) to further explain your purpose statement, if necessary.
3. Then partner with a colleague for a feedback session, ideally someone who is familiar with your context and who is also writing their purpose. Take time to read over each other's purpose statements and freewrites carefully. In providing feedback, give dedicated time to each purpose (at least 10 minutes per person).
  - a. Start with what you notice about the purpose statement.
  - b. Then pick apart the words in the purpose, paying special attention to the verbs. As teachers we often write that we will "give," "open" or "show." These terms imply that action is to be done by the teacher to the student. Push yourself and your partner to develop purpose statements in which both teachers and students are taking action. Make sure every word in the purpose statement is accurate and intentional.
4. Take the feedback and then rewrite your purpose statement, and if necessary go through the writing process again, until your purpose sentence is clear.

## WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- Where did you get stuck?
- What did you learn about yourself as an educator through this process?

For general debrief guidelines, see the "Root Practice: Debrief" on page 58.

Make sure to transfer the completed purpose to your Rida Framework.

## Activity: Define Your Principles

If your purpose is a roof, then your principles are the walls of the house – you see them more often, you touch them, you use them for support. Principles are guiding truths, like mantras, that you repeat to yourself and to your students again and again. If your principles have an impact, you might even hear your students repeating them in conversation.

In this activity you will work to develop a set of principles that become pillars of your classroom.



### MATERIALS

Writing implements

Timer

### STEPS

1. Looking at your purpose statement, draft 2-3 short statements that you can use to remind yourself and/or your students of your purpose of education. Some examples used in other classrooms:

#### Process over Product:

The strongest solutions and learning happen through the process, not in a moment at the end of the process. Scientists set-up experiments with the aim of having their theories fail.

#### Seek not to be right but to be true:

You can say/explore anything if the pursuit is towards truth and justice. Respect and evidence are great equalizers.

2. Principles are vital, especially in challenging moments when you need to explain the values underpinning the classroom. Principles should also be used to reinforce and amplify positive behaviors in the classroom.

See if your principles can be applied in these scenarios:.

- a. You look around the room and you see your purpose of education fully evident in your classroom. You say to your students, “class, you are really embodying the principle of \_\_\_\_ right now”.
  - b. Your students are frustrated with a process and push back asking why they have to do something. What principle will you remind them of?
  - c. You’re disappointed in your classroom. What principle will you use to help steer things back on track?
4. Make any necessary edits to your draft principles. Ideally, these will be your principles for the entire year so they should feel right and reflect your purpose and context.

### WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- How do your principles relate to your context and purpose?
- What specific behaviors do you want your principles to encourage?

For general debrief guidelines, see the “Root Practice: Debrief” on page 58.

Make sure to transfer the completed principles to your Rida Framework.





# VISION

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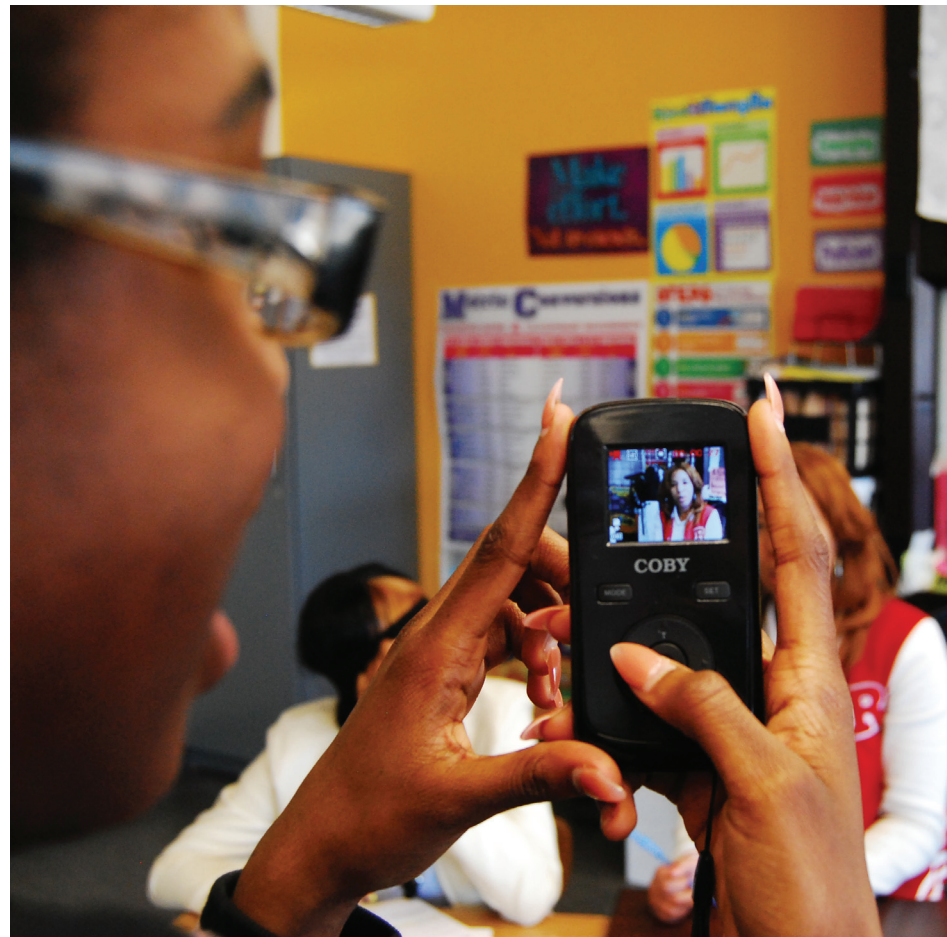
## RIDA FRAMEWORK

The vision for your classroom should grow out of a deep understanding of your present context and your purpose within that context. A vision is an ideal scenario of what happens when you achieve your purpose in the classroom. When you project your purpose into the future, you might see something unexpected. A liberated classroom full

of empowered youth is not necessarily the peaceful, obedient classroom that many of us have been trained to see as the ideal. This is what makes visions so powerful. They help us identify observable outcomes that become a tool for measuring the effectiveness of our work in our classroom.

## Activity: Tell a Vision Story

A vision story should describe, in detail, what it looks like when you put your purpose into practice. In this activity you can write or record a story about what your classroom looks like at the end of the school year. You should be examining your purpose and projecting how your purpose will translate into actions, events, and behaviors in the classroom.



### MATERIALS

Writing surface  
Writing implements  
Timer  
Optional: audio recorder

### STEPS

1. Imagine what a day in your classroom looks like at the end of the year if your purpose is achieved.
2. Write or record a story detailing this scenario – give yourself at least 15 minutes. The story should be written in the present tense. Use the following prompts:  
Tell the the story from the 3rd person perspective, observing your classroom from the outside looking in.  
Describe how the the students look, sound, speak, think.  
What is your role as the teacher in the classroom?  
Describe how you look, sound, speak, think.
3. Read or listen back to your story and write down or highlight key details that stick out to you.
4. Then compare the story to your purpose. Take a moment and write out the reasons why your story does or does not support your purpose. What specific moments in your story reflect your purpose? For example, if your purpose is for students to be empowered, where does empowerment show up in your story? Who has the power in the story – is it you, the teacher or the students?
5. After comparing your story to your purpose, make any necessary changes to your story.

### WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- What was easy to imagine?
- What was hardest to imagine?

For general debrief guidelines, see the “Root Practice: Debrief” on page 58.

Make sure to transfer the completed vision story to your Rida Framework.



# SKILLS & CURRICULUM

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## RIDA FRAMEWORK

It is not a mistake that we are just arriving at curriculum in our Rida Framework. Traditionally, curriculum is the starting point in a classroom, but the goal of the Rida Framework is to help us see that our role in the classroom is not only to deliver curriculum, but to develop the leaders that our world demands.

Your curriculum should be tailored to achieve your purpose, whether that is empowerment through teaching math skills, or building strong community through science. When you have a purpose-driven curriculum, it becomes more directly relevant to you and your students. Skills help anchor your purpose within your curriculum, the way that principles help anchor your purpose within your classroom culture.

DFS has identified “11 Essential Skills” that we believe will prepare individuals to solve real world problems, imagine

new realities and build movements that span communities across the world. They are: **observation, curiosity, innovation, metacognition, collaboration, grit, empathy/ solidarity, purposefulness, critical consciousness, foresight, and optimism/hope.** We developed these skills through research that identified the role of character development in preparing at-risk youth for academic success. That research was accompanied by focus group conversations with our network of students, educators, artists and community members where we brainstormed the skills we need for the world we want to build.

In this section you will identify the skills you need to develop in your classrooms in order to achieve your purpose and vision. From there you will develop curricula that cultivates those skills.

# 11 Essential Skills

Ultimately, we need agents of social justice who are able to solve deep-rooted problems, imagine new realities and build movements that span communities across the world.

DFS has identified the following 11 essential human skills that we believe will prepare our participants to do this work, with a commitment to ethical agency and interdependence.

## Optimism/Hope

Belief that the best possible outcome is attainable.

## Grit

Perseverance of effort in the face of obstacles or challenges.

## Curiosity

Genuine desire to know more about the topic or practice at hand evidenced by analytical questioning (versus procedural).

## Observation

A push to observe the world critically, objectively and in detail.

## Innovation

A culture of looking at what could be possible beyond what already exists.

## Foresight

Awareness of the future and understanding of how actions today impact tomorrow.

## Metacognition

Practices to effectively think about one's thinking (understand one's own cognitive process) and the thinking of others.

## Purposefulness

Clear intentions behind the "why" of tasks in the classroom, especially in relation to how the work connects to one's life and future.

## Empathy/Solidarity

A push to understand the thoughts, feelings and motivations of others in the world.

## Collaboration

A culture of resourceful interdependence; people understand their limits and reach out to others for support and direction.

## Critical Consciousness

Questioning of established systems, practices, hierarchies, processes and histories, both macro and micro.

# Activity: Big and Essential Questions

This activity will help you generate your “Big Question” and more specifically your “Essential Questions” that will help you incorporate the skills you want to develop into your curriculum. These questions are the building blocks for the major projects and units of your curriculum.

These questions serve as the “thread” for the school year; the Big Question is a broad question that the classroom returns to throughout the year, while the Essential Questions are the smaller questions that help you start to unravel the larger, Big Question.

## MATERIALS

DFS 11 Essential Skills

Big Question Grid

Sticky Notes

## STEPS

1. Begin by choosing 3-4 skills from the DFS list of 11 Essential Skills that you want to actively develop in your classroom; these skills should connect to your vision for your classroom. We ask you to choose only a few because we see these skills as connected cogs, as you turn one they all start to turn.
2. List your major curriculum goals for the year. For example, do you need to cover the Industrial Revolution? Do you have assigned textbook chapters or specific learning goals, like getting students reading at a certain grade level?
3. Once you have your skills and curriculum laid out in the Big Question Grid, gather 2-3 other people who are familiar with your context and your vision for your classroom.
4. Review your selected curriculum and skills.
5. Take 5-10 minutes to brainstorm topics and questions that relate to both the skills and the curriculum. Think of it as a venn diagram – you need to find the connections and the points of overlaps between the skills and content. Say your ideas aloud, so it is easier for everyone to build upon each other’s ideas. Write the ideas down on sticky notes and place them on the Big Question Grid.  
  
For example, if your chosen skills are optimism and hope and your content area is geometry, you might identify topics such as architecture or design and explore questions such as “Can we use geometric principles to build a better city?”
6. Once you have generated questions and topics you can identify common themes and cluster related sticky notes into smaller groups.
7. Take these themes and use them to develop your Big and Essential Questions. The final choice should be up to the educators who are going to be leading the classroom. You as the educator should be genuinely inspired by your Big and Essential Questions.

The Big Question should be broad and deep enough for you to investigate for the entire year. Your Essential Questions should help you answer your Big Question. For example, in one english classroom the Big Question was “Who am I in the world?” and one of the Essential Questions was “How do writers use literature to tell stories about their communities?”

Essential Questions should be tailored to engage with your curriculum goals and context, so in the earlier example of the question “Can we use geometric principles to build a better city?” try to be more specific – what are some real problems in your city that geometry could address?

## WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- What are you most excited to explore through your Big Question?
- What surprised you in the process of connecting your classroom curriculum to the 11 Essential Skills and your context?

For general debrief guidelines, see the “Root Practice: Debrief” on page 58.

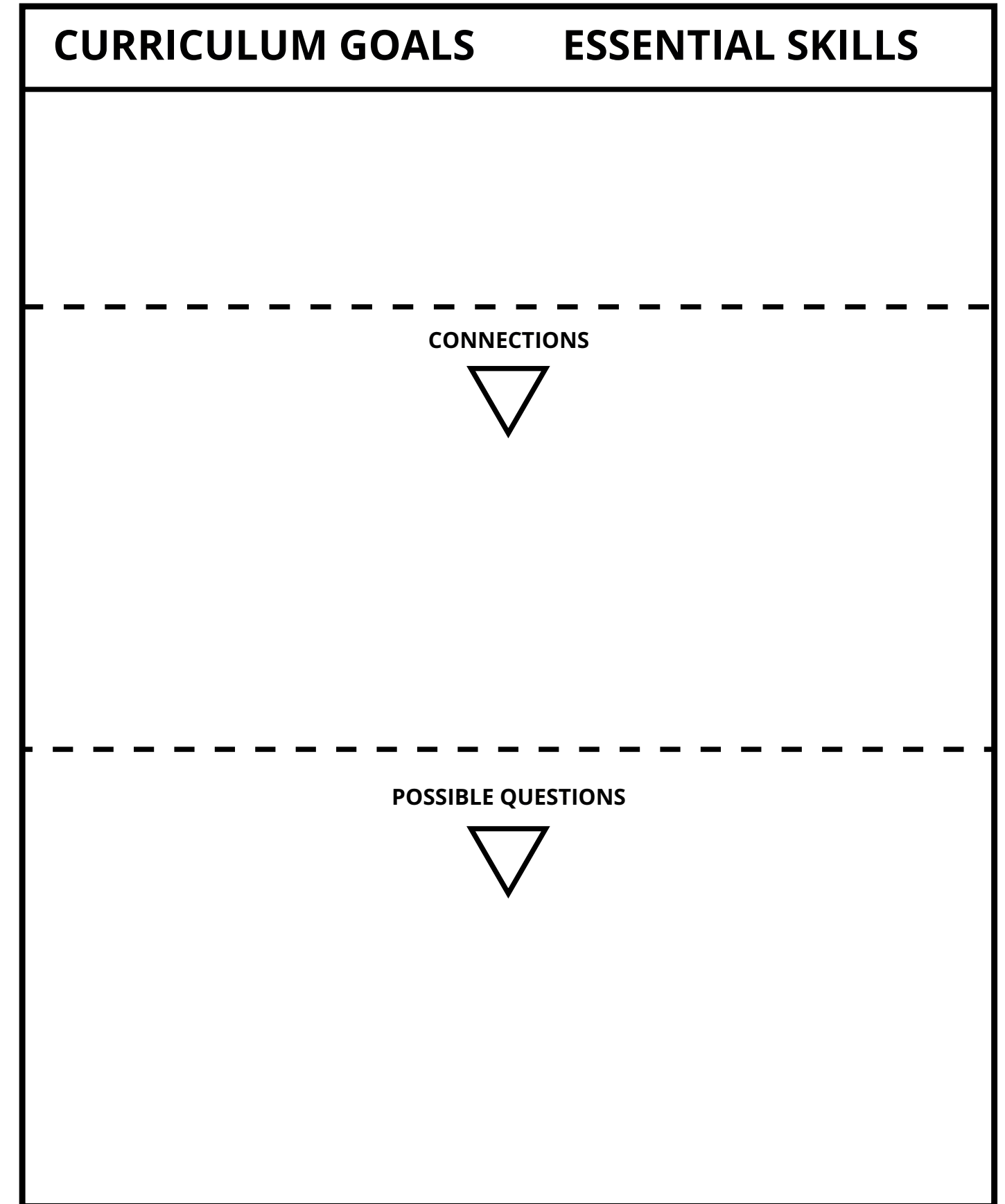
Once you have the final questions, you can include them in the long term unit planner.

# Example: Big and Essential Questions



# Big and Essential Questions

This is a blank template of the Big Question Grid you can use to complete the activity.



# Activity: Planning Deliverables

Deliverables should serve as tangible goals for the year, and they often include a concrete product or completed actions at the end of a process. In this activity, you will develop plans for your classroom's year-end goals. Deliverables usually evolve over the course of the year so we don't expect you to have all of your deliverables now. As the goals become more clear you can return to your Rida Framework to update your deliverables as they develop.



## MATERIALS

Big Question Grid  
Long Term Planner

## STEPS

1. Reflect on your Rida Framework as a whole, consider your Big and Essential Questions and the time frame you have for delivering specific content.
2. Considering your Rida Framework, write out ideas for the deliverables that your classroom will produce, along with a brief 2-3 sentence description of your deliverables.

Examples of past classroom deliverables:

### Simple machine comics and videos

In the 1st semester, as a class we will work in small teams on a long term project on simple machines. We will define all of the simple machines, describe how each machine works to change direction and size of a force. Then each group will have to find examples of where you find simple machines in everyday life. Each group will create a comic and/or video showing what they learned.

*In this 7th grade Science classroom the teacher wanted to develop the skills of observation and collaboration, while covering physics. In this deliverable you'll notice how the skills and curriculum show up in the description. They are working in groups (collaboration), they are finding examples in the real world (observation) and covering small machines (physics content).*

3. Now plot out an ideal timeline for your deliverables. Often deliverables are completed around the midpoint of the year and at the end of the year. Consider what needs to happen before the deadline and develop concrete milestones that lead up to the deadline. Use your Long Term Planner to help you plot out milestones and deadlines for each deliverable.

## WRAP UP

Consider the following questions:

- Is this plan feasible?
- Is this plan valuable to the classroom and the community?

For general debrief guidelines, see the "Root Practice: Debrief" on page 58.

# Long Term Planner

The Long Term Planner is a diagram that helps you organize your “Big” and “Essential” Questions and deliverables from your Rida Framework. The goal of the planner is to help you move from a Big Question to more detailed lessons and projects that help you arrive at your deliverables.

We often create multiple versions of the Long Term Planner throughout the year, creating one at the start of the year for each of the four quarters of the year. Then, in the fall and winter, we create more detailed versions that plan out month by month or even week by week.



# Example: Long Term Planner

**BIG QUESTION :** Who are you in the world? -----

1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
<b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION :</b> Who am I?  The Individual - Agency	Who am I within family and friends?  Micro - Family & Peers	Who am in within history?  Macro - History	Who am I within society?
<b>CURRICULUM MATERIALS</b>  Code of the Street  "Audacity" by Dream Hampton	Film: "Do the Right Thing"  Longer Novel TBD	"Indian Education" by Sherman Alexie  Johnathan Kozol  National Disgrace	Film: "Grown in Detroit"  This American Life: Harper High School
<b>PRACTICES &amp; ACTIVITY</b> Improv Skits (collaboration)  "Where I'm From" Poem  Intro Google Docs  Debate	Social Commentary: (narrative writing)  Editing Workshop  Audio Workshops (how to record your work)	Social Commentary: (Persuasive writing)  Peer Editing workshops  Debate	Social Commentary: Research Paper  Layout & Illustration Workshops for Zine  Final Debates
<b>RESOURCES</b>  1. Duckworth Grit research  2. Google Docs test	Community Field Trip TBD	Apathy: TED talk	Reflection Work sheets

1

Make an Audio Collection of student recorded pieces.

DELIVERABLES

2

Produce a collection of student work in a zine

DELIVERABLES

# Long Term Planner

**BIG QUESTION :** -----

1ST QUARTER	2ND QUARTER	3RD QUARTER	4TH QUARTER
<b>ESSENTIAL QUESTION :</b>			
<b>CURRICULUM MATERIALS</b>			
<b>PRACTICES &amp; ACTIVITY</b>			
<b>RESOURCES</b>			

1

DELIVERABLES

2

DELIVERABLES



# METRICS

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## RIDA FRAMEWORK

The last section in the Rida Framework is metrics, or how you measure success in your classroom.

Metrics drive all major decisions in our school systems today. The data derived from standardized testing is used to justify everything from school closures to teacher pay rates and

student tracking. This creates a culture of high-stakes testing that discourages authentic teaching and learning. With this in mind we must develop more humanizing forms of assessment that are appropriate for our unique contexts.

# Activity:

## Documentation & Evaluation Outline

Honest reflection and evaluation is not possible without documentation. In this activity, you will develop tools for documenting your classroom's progress and a format to reflect on your year. You will also design evaluation tools to measure your growth towards your purpose and vision.



### MATERIALS

Writing surface  
Writing implements  
Timer

### STEPS

1. First you have to decide what you want to measure throughout the year – this is a good time to consider your vision. The tools you choose should be informed by what you want to measure. Most classrooms use a combination of tools including transcripts, surveys, interviews, video and rubrics to document the learning that is happening.
  - a. Transcripts are often used to measure growth during practices like debates and/or fishbowls. They are a powerful way to track the evolution of conversations in the classroom, i.e. do questions become more complex or frequent during debates throughout the year?
  - b. Video is a great way to track the group behaviors of the classroom. It is an easy way to document whether or not students are making eye contact with the speaker or staring into space, or how students enter the classroom and their traffic patterns in the classroom.
  - c. Short surveys are useful for tracking the thoughts and ideas of individual students. Many of the most powerful surveys are delivered at the start and the end of a process and ask the same questions. You can measure the impact of the process by the difference in student responses.
  - d. Rubrics are a set of observable criteria ideal for measuring very specific aspects of a classroom. For example, in a writing exercise a rubric could measure growth based on use of vocabulary or length of the piece.
2. Plan when and how you're going to use documentation in your classroom, and who specifically will be doing the documentation. Documentation can be used in a number of ways throughout the year. For example, transcripts are often used for debriefing practices like debates, rubrics can help the classroom collectively plan how to improve practices and measure their progress, and surveys can be administered at the start and end of every major project.
3. Lastly, make sure that you as the educator have space to reflect about what you are learning in the classroom. Plan reflection times for yourself.

### WRAP UP

Take a deep breath, because you just completed your Rida Framework!