Working Assumptions

LESSON PLAN

Care Capsule

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workingassumptions.org

Working Assumptions is a cultural non-profit that explores the everyday give-and-take of family and care through visual storytelling, encouraging reflection and dialogue.

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This **lesson** is intended **for educators** who teach **learners of all skill levels**, whether in a group setting, classroom, or workshop.

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Overview for Educators

This lesson invites learners to create a **care capsule**—a visual collage that captures a memory or period in which care, whether given or received, felt particularly present and emotionally resonant. Using methods such as sourcing personal photos, making use of found materials, and accessing memory, the learner will create a collage that illustrates a past **care network**—the relationships between the people, objects, and places that provided meaningful support for either the learner or someone the learner cared for.

Materials

Learner access to a personal photo archive
Cardstock, glue, scissors
Found materials (magazines, photographs, images from the internet)
Camera or smartphone
Computer or printer for editing and assembling a collage
Pen or pencil
Time for reflection

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Sharing the Collage

Having your group share their collages with others can deepen their memories by building connection and community around storytelling.

Consider one of the following:

- **Mini Exhibition**: Host a small gallery walk in your community space where learners can display their collages. Invite peers, teachers, friends, or family to attend.
- **Group Discussion**: Create a circle space for each person to briefly share their work and any part of their story they feel comfortable offering.
- **Collective Book or Zine**: Compile collages and captions into a collective publication. This could be a physical book or a simple PDF to distribute to families or the school community.

The process encourages reflection, creative storytelling, and connection to memory through visual language.

Share the following pages with your learners to guide them through each step.

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Reflecting on the Past

There are periods in life that stand out in hindsight. These times are sometimes very obvious to us at the original moment, and sometimes their importance does not become apparent until much later. Some periods are short, while others span several years.

This lesson will guide you in exploring your personal archives to identify a period in your life when care felt especially meaningful. By the end, you'll have created a visual and creative collage about your experience.

For example, a period can be:

A Life Phase	A Climactic Moment	Specific to a Time or Place
Learning to swim	A celebration	Childhood in a multigenerational home
Mourning a loss	Taking the SAT	Eight years of service in the military
Becoming a caregiver	A turning point in a relationship	An extended stay at a hospital

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Think of a time in which you gave or received care. How would you describe that time in your life, and who were the people that formed your care network?

- Are there places, songs, people, smells, or foods that bring the memory back to you?
- Who was present or absent during this time?

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Archive Deep Dive

Start digging through your phone, albums/photos, social media, or memory. Gather anything related to care that stands out to you. Create a folder or pile for your finds.

What photos bring forgotten moments back to life? Are there parts of your story that don't have a photo, but still feel important?

Choosing a Period

As you look through your materials, notice what you're drawn to. Pay attention to what you remember and to any new feelings that surface with those memories.

Ask yourself why you want to create this collage:

- Do I want to commemorate this period?
- Do I want to relive this memory and explore it further?
- Would I want to share this story with someone?
- Should others remember this period, too?

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Visualize Your Past Care Network

Now that you've chosen a moment, it's time to gather the materials you need to assemble your collage.

1. Curate Your Materials
Choose the photos or images that feel most important.

2. Select Supporting Materials
While collecting materials, think of the following:

- **Colors** can represent emotions. Select moods that correspond to the period you are remembering.
- **Texture** adds layers, depth, and richness to your work. Consider using materials that enhance your images.
- **Space** can symbolize time, absence, or perhaps importance. Think about how you want to arrange your materials in relation to one another.

3. Seek Other Perspectives

- Ask people who were present at the original moment in time if they have photos or stories to share.
- Search online for related images or historical context.

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Create Your Collage

Finally, it's time to bring everything together! As you follow the next steps, think about the story your collage begins to tell.

1. Select Your Surface:
Choose a surface to place your images, such as cardboard or paper.



2. Print & Arrange:
Lay your images on a surface and think about the relationships between them. Begin attaching your images.



3. Add Layers:
Use arrows, string, text, or symbols to show connections—who or what provides care?



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4. Create Your Caption:
A caption can enhance your work by adding something surprising that others might not know from just looking at it.

When I was a teen, my family decided to continue the tradition of throwing a quinceañera to celebrate my 15th birthday. My mother was at the heart of it all. She began saving extra change in a small elephant-shaped bank. She jotted down plans in her small orange notebook, wrote names and numbers, and tracked the budget. In her free time, we visited nearby family members and asked them to contribute—whether through money, labor, or time.

My mom's savings and the family contributions covered the venue, my dress, music, and other expenses. On the day of the event, I had family visiting from out of state and even from Mexico. Some cooked, some decorated, and some simply showed up.



M.T., *Untitled*, 2025

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Reflect on Your Care Network

- How is your care network different now than it was then?
- Do you feel any differently about this period in time after visualizing it? If so, how?
- Are there any memories in your past that you wish you had photos of?

Looking through my photo archives more than a decade later, I see how many hands offered care in the months leading up to the celebration. Now, many of those people have passed, and certain traditions have faded. Revisiting that time made me see changes I've carried quietly for years—ones I hadn't fully realized until now.

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