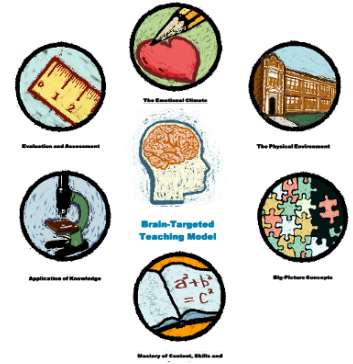




BAIP/Brain-targeted Teaching® Learning Unit



Academic Content: **ELA & Music/Songwriting**

Learning Unit Title: **A Great Heart**

Wit & Wisdom Module: **1, Grade 4**

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Introduction

A whole child education is one that prepares a young person to thrive both within and beyond the classroom. Though the gaining of academic knowledge and wisdom remains of great priority, champions of holistic education are committed to designing learning experiences and cultivating classroom spaces that advance the social and emotional development of their students, support the authentic dreams and creative expressions of each child, is culturally reflective, and promotes overall wellness for lifelong

flourishing. The Brain Targeted Teaching (BTT) model allows the educator to attune to each of these crucial elements, synthesize them into units of study that meet students where they are, and prepare them for their lives to come. This unit, *A Great Heart*, integrates Wit & Wisdom's first fourth grade module, the art of music and song, and best pedagogical practices grounded in neuroeducation through the framework of the BTT model. Furthermore, the neuroscience of the heart itself and how it interacts with the brain is a staple of this learning experience.

Neuroscience of the Heart

Though it is commonly known that the brain hosts one of the body's major neurological centers, the heart is also the host to a hub of neurites. In fact, 40,000 specialized sensory neurite cells reside in the heart that can think, feel, and learn independently of the brain (Braden, 2015). What is more, when an individual is attuned to the intuition of their heart, and can regulate their nervous system, they can harness more of their brain's power.

French physiologist Claude Bernard, considered by some to have laid the foundations for modern neuroscience, began reporting on this power of mutual neurological interactions between the heart and the brain in the 1800s. Charles Darwin took particular interest in Bernard's discoveries, writing "... when the heart is affected it reacts on the brain; and the state of the brain again reacts through the pneumo-gastric (vagus) nerve on the heart; so that under any excitement there will be much mutual action and reaction between these, the two most important organs of the body," (Darwin, 1872). This state of connection, called heart-brain coherence, can be taught, practiced, and achieved by human beings of all ages through simple techniques that will be shared in this unit.

When we help children learn how to live from their heart in the classroom and beyond, we have the potential to pioneer the next paradigm of whole-child education. The teachable skills and perspectives that support this effort include the ability to attune to one's authentic truth and sources of joy, the enhancement of cognitive performance by sharpening abilities to focus, process ideas, and remember more details, and the regulation of the nervous system which fosters greater physical as well as psychological wellness (McCraty et al., 2009). Therefore, by actively teaching methods of heart connection with young people, we intentionally contribute to preparing them for holistically healthier lives.

Learning Unit Overview

In this arts integrated unit, the study of the literal healthy heart through complex scientific texts, as well as the contemplation of a figurative great heart through poetry and

biographies, together provide a rich body of content for academic exploration and self-reflection. Students express their knowledge, build community, and extend their wisdom beyond the classroom through the vehicle of song and music making, while courage and compassion are cultivated daily through peer-reviewed science of the heart strategies. Overall, the character strength of creativity is consistently fostered, as thriving academically, personally, and socially requires a creative spirit and the greatness of heart.

Wit & Wisdom Essential Question: What does it mean to have a great heart, literally and figuratively?

Arts Integrated Essential Question: How can I express what it means to have a great heart, literally and figuratively, through song?

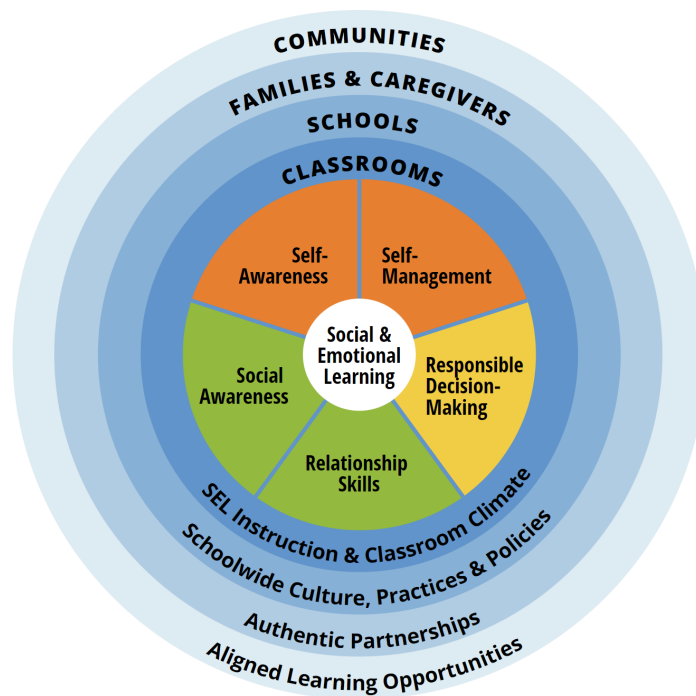
Suggested Student Understandings/Main Academic Standards Addressed (CCSS):

- Knowledge: Students will be able to explain through explanatory writing, speaking, poetry, and song that a great heart:
 - Literally, is one that pumps blood to keep one's body healthy. The heart connects to the complex circulatory system, which supplies the body's cells with oxygen and releases carbon dioxide into the air.
 - Figuratively, is demonstrated through those who are generous, courageous, compassionate, or heroic.
- Reading (RI 4.2, RI 4.7, RL 4.1, RL 4.5): Students will be able to define a figurative and literal great heart by synthesizing textual details and main ideas from biographies of famous women and complex scientific texts, respectively, and express what they have learned/apply the knowledge to their own life through song. Additionally, through reading the text *Love That Dog* and poems by Robert Frost, students will grapple with explaining the structure and meaning of poems and use lyric writing as a method to craft their own poetry exhibiting the meaning of a "great heart."
- Writing (W 4.2, W 4.8, W 4.9): Students will be able to write focus statements, informative/explanatory essays, and summaries supported by the citation of textual evidence. Arts integrated experiences function as pre-writing exercises and opportunities for students to extend their writing.
- Speaking & Listening (SL 4.1): In small-and large-group discussions, students concentrate on peers' contributions to understand, build upon, and respond to their

ideas, and engage with respect, courage, and compassion. Students establish class norms for speaking and listening and extend their speaking and listening skills in three Socratic Seminars about the literal and figurative meanings of great heart as well as during any song/music sharing.

- Language (L 4.4, L 4.5): Students will be able to identify examples of figurative language in a complex text, and explain why the author uses figurative language to describe a scientific concept. Students will apply and extend this knowledge through lyric-writing experiences.

Social & Emotional Learning Core Competencies:



(CASEL, 2022)

BT-1: Setting the Emotional Climate for Learning

In creating a heart-forward atmosphere of belonging and trust, built upon a commitment to fostering unique expression and which nurtures each child's sense of self-worth, self-love, creativity, and compassion (for both themselves and for others), this unit:

- Supports teachers in leading a heart-forward classroom: Every aspect of this unit, including the Educator's Guide, is aligned The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning's core competencies. The guide aims to help teachers lead heart-forward classrooms by:
 - Sharing easy to digest heart-brain neuroscience (including mirror neurons, the role of cortisol, and the heart's role in building resiliency) that impacts teachers, students, and the classroom environment.
 - Modeling paired, simple practices that support cultivating a holistically healthy classroom (including welcome/closing rituals, affirmation and joy building exercises, and mindful-awareness practices).
 - Providing reflective journaling space and additional tools for teachers to engage in their own ongoing personal development and growth.
 - Providing additional support tools for leading students in song-making, including several invitational exercises for practicing these techniques with peers, family members, or their greater school community.

- Supports students in becoming more mindful and attuned to their emotions: Today, thousands of peer-reviewed studies continue to flood the scientific and educational communities attesting to the power of mindful-awareness practices in schools. This unit focuses on classroom routines that heighten heart-brain coherence and therefore help students access its many benefits (as explained in the section *Neuroscience of the Heart* above). These practices include:
 - "A Great Heart Check-In Song": This welcoming routine helps set the emotional climate for learning by giving students the opportunity to connect to their hearts and express what they are feeling at the start of class. This act increases self-awareness, allows the teacher to take an efficient temperature check of the classroom, and encourages all students to engage in courageous vulnerability. The design of this activity with a collective chorus also provides students with the opportunity to raise their emotional state through joyful song and expression.
 - "The Quick Coherence® Technique for Children": This peer-reviewed grounding ritual is offered as a daily follow up to the check-in song and helps with cultivating compassion, gratitude, and overall self-management skills. The one-minute technique, honed and developed by the pioneering heart science research organization, the HeartMath Institute, helps students connect to their breath and physical heart space to regulate the nervous system as well as help prepare their brains for creativity and focus. This

technique can also always be used to quickly reset the emotional climate as often as needed.

- “Grows & Glows” (BT-6) & “Caught Having Heart” (BT-2): These affirming and encouraging feedback routines creates a community of courageous, seen, and heard musicians.
 - “Community of Musicians Norms”: These community-formed agreements support students in engaging respectfully when sharing songs as well as when engaging in Socratic Seminars and other discussions. Structures and suggestions for this activity can be found in the resource pack.
- Uses scaffolding techniques to support student growth: All arts integrated content is created through the Universal Design for Learning model to ensure each student is met where they are and therefore support neurodiversity in the classroom (CAST, 2018). Furthermore, arts experiences strategically build upon one another to help increase student confidence, though the willingness to participate and creatively engage is always celebrated.
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BT-2: Creating the Physical Environment for Learning

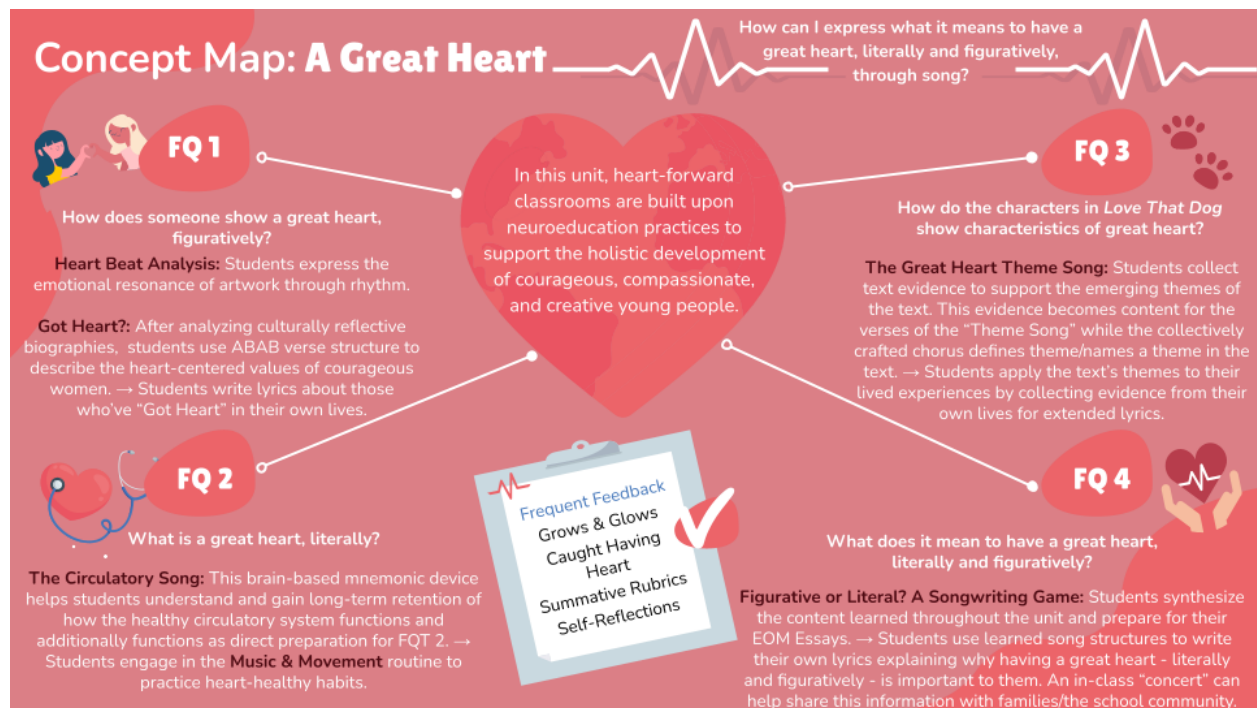
To create a physical space that promotes a community of belonging, supports song performance and creativity, and fosters SEL:

- Seating: Circle arrangement (teacher included)
- Stage area: Made with masking tape or simply a designated space in the classroom for sharing songs or other works. Teachers may choose to include lighting opinions (for dimming, creating a “spotlight” effect), performance props (sunglasses, hats, etc.).
- Word Wall: Domain-specific and music-specific vocabulary on designated Word Wall for repeated reference (class-created as part of the module). Vocabulary cutouts are found in the resource pack.
- “Caught Having Heart” display: Either on a bulletin board display or in a physical jar, students use the heart cut outs to write observations of their peers having heart throughout the learning experiences and post them in the display. Depending on the needs/schedules of individual classes, at the end of each class, day, or week, new

notes can be shared aloud for collective celebration or given privately to individual students.

- “Music & Movement” celebration routine or brain break: This activity uses music and movement to help students express the emotions of their heart as well as physically move to support physical heart health. In the activity, students use the “menu” to first select a song to move to (songs are categorized by the emotion they attune to) and then choose a set of movement directions to follow.

BT-3: Designing the Learning Experience



BT-4: Teaching for Mastery of Skills, Content, and Concepts

The aim of each arts-integrated method below is to help students master the ELA skills, content, and concepts in each of the four sections of the unit (denoted by the four focusing questions) as well as develop the SEL Core Competencies throughout. These techniques demonstrate 1) brain-based approaches that foster long-term memory of new content as well as divergent thinking, and 2) heart-based approaches that support the cultivation of courage and compassion. Together, these practices promote students'

development of individual creativity, which will also be expanded upon via BT-5. What is more, to heightened the unit’s cultural reflectiveness, additional suggestions for texts and artwork are included in the BT-4 & 5 table below.

BT-5: Teaching for Extension and Application of Knowledge

The BT-5 labeled activities in the table use divergent thinking strategies and music making to provide space for elaboration, innovation, and creativity surrounding students’ growing knowledge of a “great heart.” Additionally, the extension opportunities and their paired graphic organizers (found in the resource pack) function as prewriting activities to prepare students for successful engagement on the main unit assessments: Focusing Question Tasks 1 - 3 and the End of Module Essay. Just as these assessments are scaffolded in their design, the arts integration activities build upon each other to foster student confidence and comfortability as they explore and share.

BT-4 & BT-5 in Wit & Wisdom Module Context
<p>Focusing Question 1: How does someone show a great heart, figuratively?</p> <p>Lessons: 1 - 6</p> <p>Aligned Learning Goals/Standards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Differentiate between literal and figurative uses of heart. (RI.4.2, RI.4.4, L.4.4.a)• Identify text evidence to support a focus and organize ideas, citing the source and attributing direct quotation. (W.4.8)• Analyze quotations to explain their meaning based on the literal or figurative use of the word heart. (RI.4.4, L.4.4.a)• Define a figurative great heart by synthesizing textual details from a biography. (RI.4.2)• Create a focus statement about a famous person, and support it with textual details. (W.4.2)• Synthesize details from a painting and a quotation to define a figurative great heart. (RI.4.4) <p>Culturally Reflective Options for Texts and Artwork:</p>

- Alternate Biographical Texts: All available for free in multiple reading levels and languages via <https://newsela.com/>
 - “Feminists: Audre Lorde”
 - “Yuri Kochiyama's Commitment to Social Justice”
 - “Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez: Political Newcomer Takes Surprise Step Toward a Seat in Congress”
- Alternate Local Artwork: For the alternative artwork, Baltimore murals have been suggested due to their visual evocation of the heart and soul of a community.
 - “Long Live the Rose that Grew from Concrete” by Lyle Kissack, Cindy Garcia, and Russell Vander Veen on Greenmount Avenue.



- “Darley Park Gateway Mural, #2” by Whitney Frazier, paired with poetry by Mr. Abdullah Moaney, whose home the mural adorns



BT- 4 Song/Music Based Tools for Mastery:

- Heart Beat Analysis: Students express the emotional resonance of artwork through rhythm.
- Got Heart?: After analyzing culturally reflective biographies, students use ABAB verse structure to describe the heart-centered values of courageous women.
 - Assessment Alignment: FQT1 - In a paragraph with an introduction, focus statement, textual evidence, elaboration, and a concluding statement, explain how a famous woman showed great heart. (RI.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9.b)

BT- 5 Song/Music Based Opportunities for Application of Knowledge & Extension:

- Students write lyrics about those who’ve “Got Heart” in their own lives using the ABAB format and are invited to share their songs with the class.

Focusing Question 2: What is a great heart, literally?

Lessons: 7 - 17

Aligned Learning Goals/Standards:

- Determine the main idea and details to articulate the big ideas of a section of text about the heart. (RI.4.2)
- Identify and explain an example of figurative language in *The Circulatory Story*. (L.4.5, W.4.8)
- Infer what makes a healthy heart using knowledge learned from reading *The Circulatory Story*. (RI.4.2, RI.4.7)
- Share ideas and build on what others say to explain the essential meaning of a text in a Socratic Seminar. (SL.4.1)
- Apply knowledge of content-specific vocabulary about the heart to label a heart diagram. (L.4.6)

BT-4 Song/Music Based Tools for Mastery:

- The Circulatory Song: This brain-based mnemonic device helps students understand and gain long-term retention of how the healthy circulatory system functions.
 - Assessment Alignment: FQT 2 - Gather evidence about a literal great heart, and explain what it means to have a literal great heart by writing an informative paragraph with a focus statement, evidence and elaboration, and a conclusion. (RI.4.1, RI.4.2, RI.4.3, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.8, W.4.9.b, L.4.2.a, L.4.2.c)

BT- 5 Song/Music Based Opportunities for Application of Knowledge & Extension:

- Students engage in the Music & Movement routine to practice heart-healthy habits. Additionally, students can work in groups to create choreography to the song lyrics (therefore enhancing memory as well as promoting healthy movement).

Focusing Question 3: How do the characters in *Love That Dog* show characteristics of great heart?

Lessons: 18 - 29

Aligned Learning Goals/Standards:

- Determine the themes in *Love That Dog*. (RL.4.2)
- Write an informative paragraph about one of the themes in *Love That Dog*. (RL.4.2, W.4.2, W.4.9)
- Analyze the text to find evidence of Jack's figurative great heart. (RL.4.3, W.4.8)
- Describe and explain Jack's figurative great heart, supporting points with evidence from the text. (RL.4.3, W.4.2)

BT-4 Song/Music Based Tools for Mastery:

- The Great Heart Theme Song: Students collect text evidence to support the emerging themes of the text. This evidence becomes content for the verses of the "Theme Song" while the collectively crafted chorus defines theme generally/names a theme in the text.
 - Assessment Alignment: FQT 3 - Articulate a theme of *Love That Dog*, and how it relates to a change in Jack's character, by writing a well-developed informative paragraph. (RL.4.1, RL.4.2, RL.4.3, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9.a, L.4.1.d, L.4.2.a, L.4.2.b, L.4.2.c)

BT- 5 Song/Music Based Opportunities for Application of Knowledge & Extension:

- Students apply the text's themes to their lived experiences by collecting evidence from their own lives for extended lyrics. Students are encouraged to use figurative language as modeled by the module texts.

Focusing Question 4: What does it mean to have a great heart, literally and figuratively?

Lessons: 30 - 32

Aligned Learning Goals/Standards:

- Cite textual evidence to support statements about what it means to have a great heart, literally and figuratively. (RL.4.1, RI.4.1, SL.4.1)

- Synthesize evidence from multiple texts in a Socratic Seminar. (RL/I.4.1, RI.4.1, RI.4.9)

BT-4 Song/Music Based Tools for Mastery:

- Figurative or Literal? A Songwriting Game: Students synthesize the content learned throughout the unit by creating a short verse about the literal or figurative heart using evidence from multiple texts. Next, students share their verses with the class who must guess if the student is describing the literal or figurative great heart in their lyrics. Students add information learned from their peers' performances about the literal or figurative heart to their songwriting pages which double as a prewriting organizer for the End of Module Task.
 - Assessment Alignment: EOM Task: Write an informative essay, with evidence from the module's core texts, that tells what it means to have a great heart, literally and figuratively. (RL.4.1, RI.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.9, L.4.1.d, L.4.2.a, L.4.2.b, L.4.2.c)

BT- 5 Song/Music Based Opportunities for Application of Knowledge & Extension:

- Students use learned song structures to write their own lyrics explaining why having a great heart - literally and figuratively - is important to them. An in-class "concert" can help share this information with families/the school community.

BT-6: Evaluation of (and for) Learning

Feedback is a crucial part of the learning experience and should be frequent, specific, and as immediate as possible for the most impactful and meaningful results. Therefore, this unit plan suggests daily and targeted whole group, teacher-to-student, and independent feedback options, as well as summative feedback protocols that help learners reflect on their total learning experience and set goals and intentions for the future.

Frequent Feedback: Grows & Glows

- **Whole Group**: Following activities and discussion, students share their celebrations and affirmations of themselves and their peers verbally aloud with "Glows." The

teacher models giving specific praise and feedback, and encourages students to do the same. This activity positively reinforces student successes, as well as helps to begin reorienting the brain away from self-criticism.

- After the whole group glows routine is learned, teachers are invited to encourage students to facilitate the exercise to promote leadership development.
- **Teacher-to-Student:** Either verbally or using simple note cards, teachers are encouraged to share specific feedback (both Grows - or areas to improve - and Glows) on students' independent written work as well as discussion participation as frequently as possible. Building on the intention of the whole group feedback routine, this practice helps to build their courage to participate and self-compassion concerning areas to grow.
- **Student Self-Reflection:** At the close of each lesson or as frequently as possible, students reflect on their own growth. Specific questions to help reflection include: What are you proud of yourself for today? What would you like to practice more? Is there anything you need help on? Is there anything you could help a classmate with? These questions, along with the practice of self-reflection more generally, align to the CASEL core competencies for acquisition of SEL, as well as directly foster self-compassion in children. This helps students better track and see their learning as a process of development and begin to release limiting beliefs.

Final Assessments: Rubrics & Reflections

- **Wit & Wisdom Provided Writing Rubric:** See Wit & Wisdom Teacher's Edition.
- **Culminating End of Unit Student Self-Reflection:** It is suggested that students' completed reflections be brought to end-of-unit one-on-one teacher & student conferences to affirm and celebrate the students' accomplishments as well as set goals and intentions for the next unit.

A Great Heart End-of-Unit Self-Reflection

1. How did you use your "great heart" during this unit? How did you show courage, compassion, and confidence?

2. What are you most proud of from this unit?
3. What songwriting/music activities brought you the most joy?
4. Which heart-centering routines brought you the most peace?
5. Which activity was the most challenging for you?
6. How can using the skills of a great heart help you with challenges like this?
7. How did you use your great heart to support our community of musicians?
8. What one skill (character strength or academic) do you want to focus on developing the most during the next unit?