

TITLE | MAKING IT STICK

CATEGORY | Garden Educator Training

SUB-CATEGORY | Learning & Teaching Outdoors

OVERVIEW | This document outlines the “Making it Stick” training for garden educators. The training introduces a framework for teaching “sticky” lessons based on the article “Teaching That Sticks” and the book *Made to Stick*, by Chip Heath and Dan Heath.

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Training Rationale:

This training was consistently one of the most highly rated by Education Outside garden educators. It provides an easy-to-use framework that helps educators ensure that students retain knowledge they learn and build upon it in subsequent lessons.

Suggested Time of Year:

September/October. We suggest offering this training early in the school year but after educators have taught a few lessons. This allows educators to evaluate the lessons they’ve taught thus far and allows them to immediately apply the framework to their future lessons.

Suggested Workshop Length:

3 hrs

Training Objective:

Garden educators will be able to apply the framework of SUCCES (Simple, Unexpected, Concrete, Credible, Emotional, Story) to teach sticky lessons that students remember.

Training Overview:

The bulk of this workshop is spent summarizing the SUCCES framework outlined in “Teaching That Sticks”¹ and providing a variety of examples. Leading this workshop will require a thorough reading of this resource. What is written here is only a brief summary.

- **Simple:** Distill one main takeaway for students based on the lesson objective. For example, if the objectives are: “Students will be able to explain the function of a plant stem and understand that it moves water and nutrients from the bottom of the stem to the top. They will also be able to set up an experiment to demonstrate how a stem moves water” the educator might distill in this way: “Stems are water elevators. They move water from the roots up the plant”).

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- **Unexpected:** As written in “Teaching That Sticks,” “*The Ah ha!* Experience is much more satisfying when it’s preceded by the Huh? Experience.”¹ At Education Outside we emphasized the importance of creating knowledge gaps as the process of resolving mysteries is very similar to practicing science. Provide several examples of mysteries that create knowledge gaps, such as: Where are all the baby pigeons? Where do all the leaves go when they fall off of a tree?
 - **Concrete:** In “Teaching That Sticks”¹ the Heath brothers write, “The more sensory hooks we can put into an idea, the better it will stick.” To explain this concept, show examples of visuals, including diagrams, icons, and characters that make abstract concepts grounded in sensory reality.
 - **Credible:** *The Education Outside Curriculum* linked in the Table of Contents includes numerous examples of concrete lessons that allow students to see for themselves the concept being discussed. For example, instead of talking about erosion students, can make their own “cities” in the soil and observe the effects of water flowing over their landscapes. Instead of talking about the function of a stem, students can observe water moving up a stem by placing celery in colored water.
 - **Emotion:** “Emotion transforms the idea from something that’s analytical or abstract or theoretical and makes it hit us in the gut (or in the heart)”¹. Stories are often a great way to incorporate emotion into lessons. Add extra emotion by naming characters after students in the class or using mascots (i.e. Carly the Carrot, Wanda the Worm, etc.)
 - **Story:** As written in “Teaching That Sticks,”¹ “The moment you start sharing a personal story with the class, [students] instantly snap to attention.” There are several examples of lessons that include stories in the *Education Outside Curriculum* linked in the Table of Contents, including Grade 2: Insect Life Cycles.

Activity Ideas:

- Before introducing the framework, have educators reflect on a concept or lesson that they learned in elementary school and vividly remember to this day. Ask them to share with each other and determine what these lessons had in common. In looking for the major themes, they will discover some of the traits that make lessons sticky.
- After introducing the framework, model what it looks like by teaching two versions of a model lesson, one that’s sticky and one that’s not.
- At the end of the workshop, ask educators to adapt a lesson that they plan to teach in the near future in order to make it stickier. Encourage them to apply the framework of SUCCES. Make time to allow them to practice modeling part of their lesson in small groups or pairs.

Assessing Understanding:

- Exit Ticket: Ask garden educators to write a few sentences describing one change they’re planning to make to an upcoming lesson in order to make it stickier.
- *Education Outside’s Best Practices for Teaching*, available in the Table of Contents, references the SUCCES framework, particularly the sections on creating an engaging invitation using different learning modalities. We suggest using the Best Practices Rubric as a tool during lesson observations to assess whether or not the garden educator is implementing the framework.

References:

1. *Teaching That Sticks*. (2010). Retrieved May 22, 2019, from <https://heathbrothers.com/download/mts-teaching-that-sticks.pdf>
2. Heath, C., Heath, D. (2007). *Made to Stick*. New York, NY: Random House