Lesson Planning: Addressing Students’ Social and Emotional Needs When They Head Back to School

Across the country, educators are grappling with the extraordinary challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent study¹ predicts that students will experience a learning loss of 30 percent in reading and 50 percent in math as a result of the crisis. Left unchecked, it’s an academic setback that could derail the futures even of students who were previously on grade level—and would be disastrous for students who were already behind.

Yet learning loss is not the only challenge educators must consider as they plan for next year. Students will also need help coping with the trauma they’ve experienced during the pandemic, processing our national moment of reckoning with systemic racism, and readjusting to school. Those who have lost family members or friends will be grieving. Asian American students may have experienced racist physical or verbal attacks. Students who rely on structures and routines, have experienced trauma prior to the school closures, and/or have lost housing or economic security might struggle to return to school. Younger elementary students might have trouble being separated from their parents or siblings after spending so much time with them.

With those challenges in mind, TNTP and Providence Public Schools partnered together to design transition lessons for the first five days back at school that will help address the academic and social and emotional needs Providence students will have when they return. Collectively, the lessons span every grade level and cover math, English Language Arts, and social-emotional learning. In this resource, we share some guiding questions that you can use to craft your own transitional lessons that will meet the unique needs of your students, as well as an example of one of the high school lessons we designed.

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Guiding Questions for Crafting Transitional Lessons

As you begin to craft transitional lessons for your students, consider these guiding questions:

1. How do these lessons connect to your district/school/classroom’s existing efforts to meet the social and emotional needs of students as they return to school this year? Do they expose any gaps?
2. In our research publication, The Opportunity Myth, we found that students need access to four crucial resources: grade-appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement, and teachers with high expectations. How will your lessons provide access to those four resources?
3. What would it take to use lessons like these in your specific district/school/classroom context?

¹ https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/05/Collaborative-Brief_Covid19-Slide-APR20.pdf
4. What support might teachers need to implement these lessons well?

Sample Lesson Overview
This lesson focuses on teaching students how to navigate COVID-19 and decide what information is reliable. The lesson’s format helps students build habits of discourse, fosters a collaborative classroom community, and teaches students how to make responsible decisions to achieve their goals.

Sample Lesson: Middle School, Day 3

Lesson Plan

About the Lesson
This lesson connects to the theme of navigating Covid-19 that lessons 1 and 2 began but takes it further to how they can decide what information they receive is reliable. The format of the lesson lends itself to continuing to build habits of discourse and a collaborative classroom community, while also focusing on how students can make responsible decisions in service of their goals.

Text
- Why Some of Us Don’t Wear Masks
- Covid-19: How Much Protection Do Facemasks Offer?

(Texts are included in student materials document for Day 3)

Objective
- Students will understand their roles as critical consumers of texts, and the importance of their own critical thinking about sources and potential author’s bias while reading.

Standards
- RI.6.9
- RI.7.9
- RI.8.9

Culturally Responsive Framework Focus Areas
- Element A2 - Carrying the Cognitive Load
SAMPLE TRANSITIONAL LESSON: MIDDLE SCHOOL

- Element C.3.3- Collaborative Discussions (Discourse)

SEL Skills
- Responsible Decision Making 5E: I can consider and respond appropriately to external influences (e.g. media, peers, authority figures) on decision-making:
  - I can recognize and analyze how positive and negative messages from the media, peers, and authority figures influence personal opinions, choices and behaviors of myself and others.
  - I am beginning to evaluate messages and sources to determine what is true.
  - I consider the positive and negative messages of others when I make a decision.

Preparation
- Print/copy/link the Student Materials (includes printer friendly versions of the articles) for yourself and all students in your classroom.
- Read the articles and complete the student handout yourself.
- Identify language proficiency levels of all multilingual learners and create aligned sentence stems (or select suggested ones referenced within the lesson).
- Plan to refer to the reading protocol you used in Lesson 2.

Scaffolds for the Range of Learners
- Teacher read aloud.
- Small group discussions.
- Sentence starters.
- Graphic organizers to record information.

Assessment
- Listen to comments made by students to see if they are recognizing their role as critical consumers.
- Collect and analyze the exit tickets.
- Collect the graphic organizers from students to assess their ability to tell fact from opinion and analyze the author’s purpose, perspective, and biases.
- Take time for an Equity Pause. This pause will allow you to reflect on the lesson, focusing specifically on how the lesson went, as well as how your instructional decisions helped lead to equity for students.
**SAMPLE TRANSITIONAL LESSON: MIDDLE SCHOOL**

**Procedures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Actions</th>
<th>Student Actions</th>
<th>Supports for Multilingual Learners</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ignite</strong> 5 minutes</td>
<td><strong>Activate &amp; Connect</strong></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Ask your students to take 1 minute to record their answer to the prompt:</td>
<td>● Think about and discuss how they know if a source of information is reliable.</td>
<td>● Trust/believe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● How do you know who to believe when people give you conflicting information?</td>
<td>● Share ideas with the class and listen to others.</td>
<td>● Claim/ Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Allow students about 30 seconds to share their thinking with peers. While students are talking, circulate and listen for student comments related to the reliability of sources, motivations, evidence, expertise, etc. that you would like to elevate for the class. Select 3-5 students to call on (Ask permission first...“is it okay if I ask you to share what you said with the group?”)</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Gather students back for a whole group share out.</td>
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<td>● Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Call on the students you selected to share.</td>
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<td>● Conflicting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Disagree/Agree</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Prompts:</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>● Where do you typically get information? Where do you get most of your information about the virus these days?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● What gives you confidence/helps you to trust the information you receive?</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Sentence Starters:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. “I read/listen to/watch ____ for news.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. “To find information about the coronavirus, I look at ____.”</td>
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</table>
## SAMPLE TRANSITIONAL LESSON: MIDDLE SCHOOL

<table>
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<th>Teacher Actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chunk</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. “I trust/believe information from ______.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduce New Information</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 minutes</td>
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</table>

- Tell students that today you will focus on becoming more critical consumers of information. Point out that in the internet age, there is more information available for people than ever. But all information and advice you find on the web isn’t reliable. Some sources give information based on opinions, rather than facts. We need to be able to tell the difference in order to make informed decisions grounded in facts.

- Tell students that for them to make responsible decisions they need to know how to respond to information in a way that reflects the difference between facts and opinions. This will

- Review graphic organizers for reading.

- Discuss how to know a fact from opinion.

- Discuss why each question on the graphic organizer will be helpful in analyzing sources.

### Vocabulary:
- Critical consumer
- Evidence
- Author
- Source
- Bias
- Reliability
- Fact
- Motivation

### Recommendation:
allow them to make more informed choices in their lives.

- Pass out (or direct students to) the student handouts.
- Tell students that you are going to read 2 different articles about face masks with different information.
- Direct them to the Article 1 and Article 2 graphic organizers.
- Tell students that they will record facts and opinions from each article as they read. Ask students to talk for 1 minute with their partners about how they know the difference between a fact and an opinion.

Be sure to remind and reinforce about discussion norms.

- Call on a few students to share their thinking and press the class to agree or disagree and justify their agreement/disagreement.
- Have a student read each of the questions in the graphic organizer, then do a quick think/pair/share about how each question will help them know whether to trust the article. The questions are:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>allow them to make more informed choices in their lives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Create an anchor chart for reference based on the conversation with students about the difference between facts and opinions.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Sentence Starters:**

1. “A fact is _____."
2. “An opinion is _____."
3. “I know someone is stating an opinion when _____."
4. “It is important to know who the author is because _____."
## SAMPLE TRANSITIONAL LESSON: MIDDLE SCHOOL

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<th>Student Actions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>○ What are the author’s claims? What do they want you to believe?</td>
<td>○ Follow along during read aloud.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ What evidence or sources are used to support the claim?</td>
<td>○ Participate in the reading protocol for Article 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Who is the author? What biases or motivations might they have? Are they an expert on the topic, or do they reference experts?</td>
<td>○ Refer to Article 1 while recording facts and opinions in the Article 1 section of the student handout.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Do you think the source is reliable? Why or why not?</td>
<td>○ Refer to Article 1 while independently responding to the questions in the graphic organizer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Chew Process New Information**

25 minutes

- Direct students to Article 1, and read it once through aloud, modeling fluency.
  - Be sure to read the information about the author at the end of the article.
- Read the article again, this time using your classroom reading protocol.
  - Stop after each subheading and have students do a quick Write/Pair/Share to record any facts or opinions presented in that section.
- After students record the facts and opinions provided in the article, provide 2 minutes of independent think/writing

- Follow along during read aloud.
- Participate in the reading protocol for Article 1.
- Refer to Article 1 while recording facts and opinions in the Article 1 section of the student handout.
- Refer to Article 1 while independently responding to the questions in the graphic organizer.
- Engage in small group discussion of the questions in the graphic organizer about Article 1.
- Repeat the process with Article 2

**Vocabulary:**

**Article 1:**
- Letter to the Editor
- Segregate
- Statistics
- Overblown
- Immune systems
- Compromised

**Article 2:**
- Preventive
- Transmission
### SAMPLE TRANSITIONAL LESSON: MIDDLE SCHOOL

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| time for students to respond to the questions in the graphic organizer. | | ● Particles  
● Precautions  

**Reading Supports:** (Repeat with Article 1 and 2)**  
- Follow the recommended procedure in the "Teacher Actions" column.  
- Provide students with explicit directions on what and how to annotate when they come across a fact or opinion and supporting evidence (i.e. highlight, underline, star, mark with F or O, etc.).  
- Chunk the reading as appropriate, pausing for clarifying questions to check for understanding. For example, discussing phrases like “a red letter on our chests”.  
- Model the note taking process using the questions on the handout.  

**Sentence Starters:** (Consider copy/pasting sentence frames into the graphic organizers)  
1. “The author claims that ____.”  
2. “The author wants me to believe ____.”  
3. “As proof, the author states...”

- While students are writing, circulate quickly and watch for students who may need additional support. Consider carrying your copy of the student handout that you completed yourself as you circulate and refer to this as you spot check students’ responses for understanding.  
- Have students compare and discuss their responses in groups of three for 4 minutes.  
  - While students are talking, circulate quickly and listen and watch for students adhering to the protocols, using the sentence starters, and being critical of the sources. Select 3-5 students to call on (ask permission first... “is it okay if I ask you to share what you said with the group?”)
### Review

**Apply New Information**

**15 minutes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Actions</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Use your attention getting signal to gather students back for a whole group discussion.</td>
<td>● Participate in a whole class discussion about the two sources.</td>
<td>4. “The author also includes the fact that...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Call on the students you selected to share.</td>
<td>● Reflect on the importance of being critical of sources.</td>
<td>5. “I trust this author on this topic because ____”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Consistently remind students to use the sentence starters and have them repeat their thinking using the sentence starters if they do not.</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Vocabulary:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o After each student shares, ask for a thumbs up or a thumbs down to show whether students agree or disagree, then cold call on someone and have them use the sentence starters to respond to their peer’s thinking.</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Finish the discussion by trying to come to a consensus about which is the more reliable source and why.</td>
<td></td>
<td>● Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Wrap up the period by asking students to respond to the exit ticket prompt:</td>
<td><strong>Sentence Starters:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Why is it important to be critical of sources?</td>
<td>1. “It is important to be critical of sources because ____.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. “If I were deciding to wear a mask, I think ____ is a more reliable source because ____.”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Teacher Actions
- Thank everyone again for sharing their thoughts.

### Student Actions

### Supports for Multilingual Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equity Pause</th>
<th>Teacher Reflection After the Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Overall, how did the lesson go? From your perspective? From your students' perspectives?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Which of your students engaged fully in the lesson? Who did not? How do you know?</td>
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<tr>
<td>● How might your instructional choices have affected the experiences of your students with different identities during the lesson?</td>
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<tr>
<td>● What are the implications for your next steps for relationships and community building? For responsive instruction?</td>
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</table>

### Student Materials

The following materials accompany the lesson plan for Day 3:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives:</th>
<th>Agenda:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• I will understand my role as a critical consumer of texts, and the importance of my own critical thinking about sources and potential author’s bias while reading.</td>
<td>• Opening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Article 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Article 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reflection &amp; Closing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How do you know if what you are reading is a reliable source?** As you read, use the space below to jot down your thoughts related to the prompts.
### Article 1 – Why Some of Us Don’t Wear Masks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts:</th>
<th>Opinions:</th>
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<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

**What are the author’s claims?** What do they want you to believe?

**What evidence or sources are used to support the claims?**

**Who is the author?** What biases or motivations might they have? Are they an expert on the topic, or do they reference experts?
Do you think the source is reliable? Why or why not?

**Article 2 - COVID-19: How much protection do face masks offer?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts:</th>
<th>Opinions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

What are the author’s claims? What do they want you to believe?

What evidence or sources are used to support the claims?
Who is the author? What biases or motivations might they have? Are they an expert on the topic, or do they reference experts?

Do you think the source is reliable? Why or why not?
I laughed at a letter to the editor of the Bee written by a Harold Groth. He started out asking, "What is with these people who refuse to wear a protective mask?"

He might as well be directing that to me because for the past nine weeks I have not donned a mask.

Harry wants to segregate us. You know, give us a red letter to wear on our chests. He likens this to the smoking law and second-hand smoke.

Hey, Harold, a lot of us are looking at the statistics and thinking we've a better chance of being killed in a car crash than getting COVID-19 yet we continue to drive each and every day. Should we cower in fear and stay out of our cars?

I find masks are uncomfortable and make my face hot. I know that because I put on one to go into Walmart, thinking I had to – but didn’t – but left it on anyway because I was embarrassed, and the mask would disguise my identity. True. It was the last time I wore a mask.

I’m not walking into the grocery store sneezing and coughing so I doubt if COVID-19 would float on my breath and infect the 99-year-old in front of me who does have a mask on and shouldn’t be out if they’re so scared of this virus. Besides if you have COVID-19, every can of tuna, doorknob, bag of potato chips and refrigerator door handle you touch at a store may have your cooties on it so tell me again the value of a face mask?

When you look at the statistics, COVID-19 is overblown and HAS led to my freedoms being usurped. I get that Mr. Groth doesn’t think the Constitution is worthless, but it’s not.

I actually like his idea of separating those in fear from those who aren’t. I bet at the end of it, the immune systems of mask wearers will be compromised greatly.
Can face masks help prevent the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19? Yes, face masks combined with other preventive measures, such as frequent hand-washing and social distancing, help slow the spread of the virus.

So why weren’t face masks recommended at the start of the pandemic? At that time, experts didn’t yet know the extent to which people with COVID-19 could spread the virus before symptoms appeared. Nor was it known that some people have COVID-19 but don’t have any symptoms. Both groups can unknowingly spread the virus to others.

These discoveries led the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to do an about-face on face masks. The CDC updated its guidance to recommend widespread use of simple cloth face coverings to help prevent transmission of the virus by people who have COVID-19 but don’t know it.

Some public health groups argue that masks should be reserved for health care providers and point to the critical shortage of surgical masks and N95 masks. The CDC acknowledged this concern when it recommended cloth masks for the public and not the surgical and N95 masks needed by health care providers.

**How do the different types of masks work?**

**Surgical masks**

Also called a medical mask, a surgical mask is a loose-fitting disposable mask that protects the wearer’s nose and mouth from contact with droplets, splashes and sprays that may contain germs. A surgical mask also filters out large particles in the air. Surgical masks may protect others by reducing exposure to the saliva and respiratory secretions of the mask wearer.

At this time, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved any type of surgical mask specifically for protection against the coronavirus, but these masks may provide some protection when N95 masks are not available.

**N95 masks**

Actually a type of respirator, an N95 mask offers more protection than a surgical mask does because it can filter out both large and small particles when the wearer inhales. As the name indicates, the mask is designed to block 95% of very small particles. Some N95 masks have valves that make them easier to breathe through. With this type of mask, unfiltered air is released when the wearer exhales.

Health care providers must be trained and pass a fit test to confirm a proper seal before using an N95 respirator in the workplace. Like surgical masks, N95 masks are intended to be disposable. However, researchers are testing ways to disinfect N95 masks so they can be reused.

Some N95 masks, and even some cloth masks, have one-way valves that make them easier to breathe through. But because the valve releases unfiltered air when the wearer breathes out, this type of mask doesn’t prevent the wearer from spreading the virus. For this reason, some places have banned them.

**Cloth masks**

While surgical and N95 masks are in short supply and must be reserved for health care providers, cloth masks are easy to find and can be washed and reused.

Asking everyone to wear cloth masks can help reduce the spread of the coronavirus by people who have COVID-19 but don’t realize it. And countries that required face masks, testing, isolation and social distancing early in the pandemic have had success slowing the spread of the virus.
Cloth masks are cheap and simple to make. Instructions are easy to find online. Masks can be made from common materials, such as sheets made of tightly woven cotton. The CDC website even includes directions for no-sew masks made from bandannas and T-shirts. Cloth masks should include multiple layers of fabric.

**How to wear a cloth face mask**

Cloth face masks should be worn in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, such as in grocery stores, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission.

Here are a few pointers for putting on and taking off a cloth mask:

- Place your mask over your mouth and nose.
- Tie it behind your head or use ear loops and make sure it's snug.
- Don’t touch your mask while wearing it.
- If you accidentally touch your mask, wash or sanitize your hands.
- Remove the mask by untying it or lifting off the ear loops without touching the front of the mask or your face.
- Wash your hands immediately after removing your mask.
- Regularly wash your mask with soap and water in the washing machine. It’s fine to launder it with other clothes.

Finally, here are a few face mask precautions:

- Don’t put masks on anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious or otherwise unable to remove the mask without help.
- Don’t put masks on children under 2 years of age.
- Don’t use face masks as a substitute for social distancing.

**References**


