

TEACH

EDUCATION FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

**EXERCISE
RESOURCES**
FOR STUDENTS



**VIRTUAL
MUSEUM
TOURS**

DISTANCE LEARNING:
HOW WILL WE GET
THROUGH THIS?

NOTES

The world has moved online, with people spending more time in this digital landscape than ever before. As many schools remain closed or kids rotate between school and home, e-learning has skyrocketed. Coupled with parents also working from home, this means multiple connections within a single household simultaneously reliant on the Web.

All of this online activity highlights how vulnerable we are to hacking and ransomware. Schools in particular have been victimized by unscrupulous actors, as their systems generally tend to be less secure than those that serve the business community, for instance. And this malicious activity appears to be on the rise. In August/September 2020, schools accounted for almost 60 percent of all ransomware incidents in the United States.

Our feature article, written by regular contributor Adam Stone, lays bare the vulnerabilities of school-based systems while detailing what steps educators, parents, and students might take to protect themselves against cyber criminals. Teachers can play a vital role in mitigating these negative events, as a lot of attacks take advantage of online behaviours—such as students surfing the Internet more widely or engaging in social media use—which open systems to potential malware. Teaching proper cybersecurity techniques (for example, not clicking on random links sent via unknown email accounts) plays a large role in helping to prevent ransomware from invading school and home-based systems. Creating awareness and even integrating online etiquette into a Civics class may go a long way to keeping a school's cyber space safe.

As a full-time virtual educator and home-schooler of four children, contributor Sherry Siewert is well-versed in coping mechanisms when it comes to online learning. She has developed tried-and-true methods

and techniques to help teachers and parents manage this new, pervasive digital learning environment. Practical and easy-to-implement, these tools will save a lot of potential frustration and help keep things on an even keel in any household where parents are juggling roles while trying to work from home themselves.

Teacher Kristina Kramer has invoked nostalgia in her virtual classroom, hearkening back to the simpler times of the 1970s. She thinks of that period during her own childhood as being more carefree, where kids spent large amounts of time outdoors just being kids and playing with friends. As a result, she created a series of childhood challenges for her grade four students. Each challenge could be something as ordinary as learning to ride a bike, baking bread, planting seeds, or even just reading in the backyard. Students

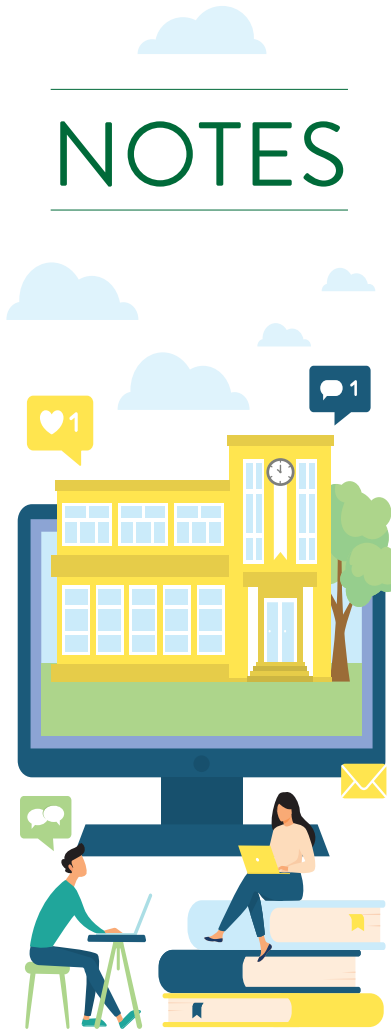
(and their parents) got behind the initiative, sending in photos and videos of their accomplishments. It became another way to get kids out of the house or break up the monotony of sitting in front of a screen all day. Practical, as well as heartwarming, Kristina shows us that there are lessons to be learned from these classic, timeless activities.

Our Webstuff column explores fitness apps so parents with kids at home can keep them physically active and motivated. Field Trips lists the top 15 virtual museum tours from around the world; trips that may provide stimulating learning experiences either from home or while at school.

These are extraordinary times. We want to wish everyone well. Continue to learn. Be safe.

Until next time.

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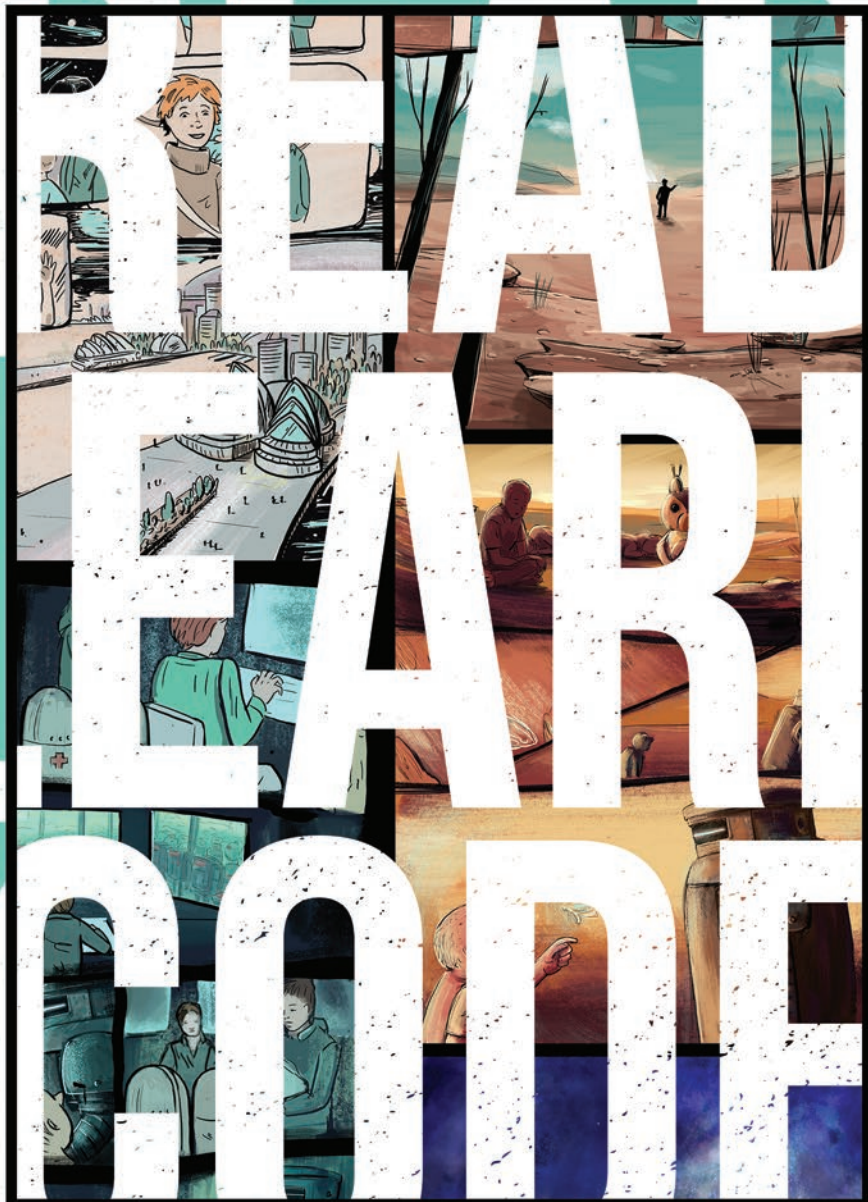
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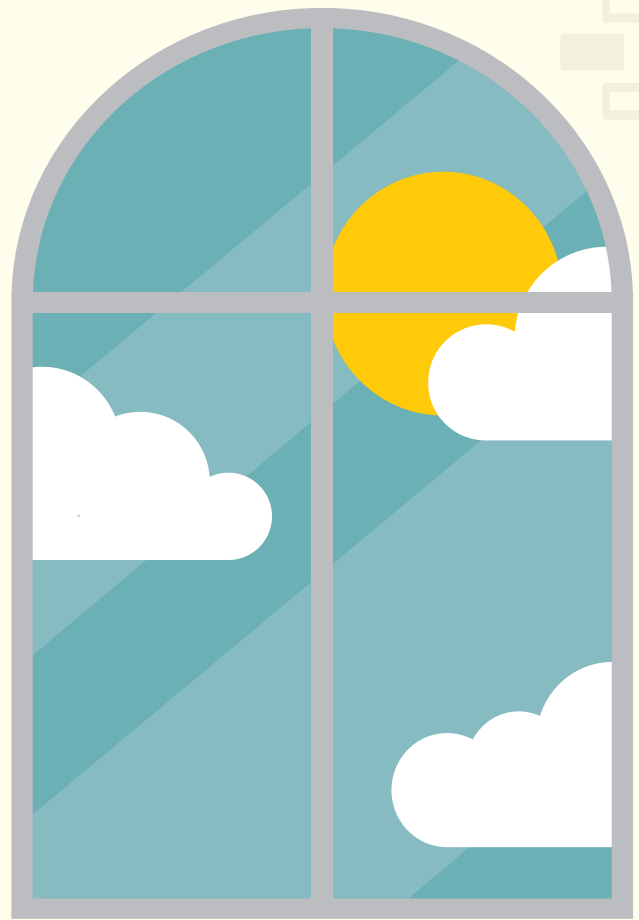
Virtual Museum Tours

Although many museums remain closed for in-person field trips during the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual exhibitions can be a fun and engaging alternative—with the right online content. Offering guided audio and video tours, artist and curator Q&As, behind the scenes exclusives, and additional teaching materials and activities, here are 15 of the best virtual museum options currently available. (Educators can also check out Google Arts & Culture for an inside look at 2000+ additional museums. Visit artsandculture.google.com to learn more.)



- 1 AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
New York, NY
amnh.org/plan-your-visit/field-trips
- 2 ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO**
Chicago, IL
artic.edu/visit-us-virtually
- 3 BRITISH MUSEUM** London, UK
britishmuseum.org/learn/schools#explore-our-sessions-and-resources
- 4 BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS**
New York, NY
bronxmuseum.org/education
- 5 CANADIAN MUSEUM OF HISTORY**
Gatineau, QC
historymuseum.ca/exhibitions/online-exhibitions

- 6 **CANADIAN MUSEUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**
Winnipeg, MB
humanrights.ca/education/covid-19-learn-at-home
- 7 **THE GUGGENHEIM**
New York, NY
guggenheim.org/at-large
- 8 **METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART**
New York, NY
metmuseum.org/art/online-features/metkids
- 9 **MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**
New York, NY
moma.org/calendar/groups/58
- 10 **NATIONAL GALLERY**
London, UK
nationalgallery.org.uk/stories



- 11 **NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM**
womenshistory.org/womens-history/online-exhibits
- 12 **PACIFIC MUSEUM OF EARTH**
Vancouver, BC
pme.ubc.ca/visit/virtual-learning-resources
- 13 **RIJKSMUSEUM**
Amsterdam, Netherlands
rijksmuseum.nl/en
- 14 **VAN GOGH MUSEUM**
Amsterdam, Netherlands
vangoghmuseum.nl/en/visit/enjoy-the-museum-from-home
- 15 **SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY**
Washington, DC
naturalhistory.si.edu/visit/virtual-tour

Refreshing your classroom's approach to cybersecurity in 2021

By Fred King. Business solutions architect on Cisco's Global Education Team.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the conversation around security in schools was focused on physical safety. Virtual security was often an invisible afterthought for educators, and dealt with by IT administrators focused on protecting the school's network and the devices that connect to it.

With the transition to remote learning, all that has shifted. The school is also no longer the central hub and devices are spread across students and teachers' homes -- meaning less control over these personal networks, and less in-person oversight into websites and applications being accessed.

As we enter the second half of a challenging school year, here are three security practices educators should consider adopting (or revisiting) in the new year.

Contain your app sprawl

The transition to remote learning has naturally led to experimentation in the classroom with many educators embracing collaboration tools and online applications to keep students connected and engaged. This has also led to an unfortunate side effect: app sprawl.

Getting the number of separate logins under control is one step you can take to streamline classroom security and reduce the risk of a breach.

Start by checking if your preferred apps have integrations within the school's chosen learning management system. If not, is there a close equivalent? Over the past few months, LMS companies have expanded partnerships to embed apps and collaboration platforms, like **Cisco Webex Education Connector**, directly into platforms like Canvas, Moodle, Schoology and many others.

Know what security threats exist

As students and educators are spending even more time online -- and on networks that lack security protections -- it's tempting for attackers to target and exploit their devices. In the US, the FBI **issued a warning** that school boards are increasingly being targeted by hackers. This was spurred by a ransomware attack in a Baltimore school network, which led to lost data, network downtime and ultimately the cancellation of online classes.

Just as media literacy has become important, students of all ages and educators need to understand what potential threats exist online and how to avoid falling into a hacker's trap. Bad actors are using email phishing scams, unpatched software, and even remote desktop applications to gain access to sensitive data.

Go back to security basics

You don't need to be an IT expert, but being aware of what security solutions are in place and responding appropriately when they're activated can be crucial in preventing a breach. Good security is often invisible and will only make itself known when presented with a potential threat -- this could be a pop-up notification or blocking access to a website.

It sounds simple, but taking time to read the security notification on a website, email or installing a security update in a timely manner (we know the "ask me again tomorrow" button is tempting), and encouraging students to do the same builds good habits for the long term.

[See how Cisco is reimagining education here.](#)



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The bridge to possible





On the Frontlines: How Teachers Can Help Defend Against Ransomware

By Adam Stone

Mobile County School District in Alabama. Houston County Board of Education in Georgia. Guthrie Public Schools in Oklahoma. What do they all have in common?

They are among the latest K-12 organizations to be hit by ransomware attacks, according to the most recent [Armor Threat Intelligence Briefing](#). The report found that over 500 K-12 schools in the U.S. have potentially been impacted by ransomware attacks since January 2019.

The pace of such attacks has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the rapid shift to remote learning has opened up new vulnerabilities. The FBI and the U.S. Cybersecurity Infrastructure and Security Agency have warned K-12 schools to be on guard.

In August and September of last year, 57 percent of ransomware incidents involved K-12 schools, compared to 28 percent of all reported ransomware incidents from January through July, the agencies note. “Cyber actors

likely view schools as targets of opportunity, and these types of attacks are expected to continue through the 2020/2021 academic year,” the agencies warn.

In a ransomware attack, malicious software is inserted into a system, encrypting all data and rendering the system effectively inaccessible. Attackers then demand a ransom for the key to decrypt the data.

The IT shop typically is responsible for defending against such attacks. But with K-12 schools increasingly being targeted, there are steps classroom teachers can take to safeguard systems and help their schools to avoid falling prey to such incursions.

THE THREAT LANDSCAPE

Ransomware often finds its way onto the system when a user clicks on a malicious link in an email, a move that triggers a download and runs a malicious file or program.



“Students and teachers are a particular target during the pandemic,” says Jim Siegl, senior technologist for the Future of Privacy Forum’s youth and education project. “There have been examples of attacks disguised as homework assignments... or where the attacker is pretending to be a parent, claiming their child had a problem uploading an assignment.”

The push to remote learning has elevated the risk. “User behavior that is acceptable on a home device, such as browsing social media sites or connecting over insecure WiFi, could—if done on a school-provided device—open up an entire school district’s network for hackers to exploit,” says Rodney Joffe, senior vice president and fellow at security solutions provider Neustar.

At the same time, bad actors may be highly motivated to try to access school systems, says Lynette Owens, founder and global director of Trend Micro’s Internet Safety for Kids and Families program.

“They know school systems often do not have the greatest amount of resources or strongest security infrastructure in place, versus a bank, hospital or government entity for example,” she says. At the same time, “the data they have is critical: you have a lot of data on minors and school employees.” In the face of this complex and growing threat, classroom teachers might serve as the first line of defense.

THE TEACHER’S ROLE

Ransomware starts with end-user behaviours. This puts teachers in a unique position to help mitigate the threat, says Albert Fox Cahn, executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.).

“The way ransomware gets installed is not through some sophisticated high-tech exploit. It’s because of weak passwords or email phishing attempts where people click on a bad link,” he says.

“Teachers can make cybersecurity training a part of modern civics education. Just as students need to be educated on what is a reliable news source, they need to be able to navigate the cybersecurity threats of daily life,” he says. “That includes using phishing tests and other tests that are designed to educate students about their own susceptibility to these attacks.”

Owens likewise encourages teachers to take a proactive role in informing students about online risks. “Teachers

can help educate their students to distinguish between credible, safe resources online versus those that are not,” she says. “Encouraging digital and media literacy skills across classrooms and in all grades is an important step toward ensuring all members of a school’s community can benefit and not be harmed by their use of the internet.”

Specific to ransomware, Owens says that in the era of remote learning, teachers need to set out clear expectations so that kids at home will be better able to distinguish between a legitimate school communication and a phishing attempt.

Teachers should tell students exactly when and how they intend to communicate with them through online means. “For example, let students know that they will receive an email every week regarding upcoming homework or quizzes,” Owens says. “Students would then know to be on the lookout for this and might more readily flag an email that they may not have been expecting from the teachers.”

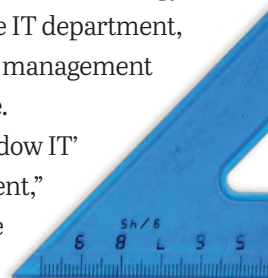
If a teacher’s email has been hacked and the students receive an unexpected email purporting to be from that teacher, “this can train students to speak up if something seems off,” she says. Teachers also can help to mitigate the ransomware risk by being thoughtful about any third-party applications, software, or other tools that they introduce into their classroom tool kit. Such products can potentially serve as a launchpad for a ransomware payload.

One easy safeguard when using third-party tools: “Read the terms of service when signing up for a new program, and take time to fully understand the information they’re sharing before signing in to websites or applications with a Gmail or Microsoft account,” says Matt Dascoli, education strategist at Dell Technologies.

“Right now, many teachers are looking to access additional online content or applications to help with remote learning, but they should be wary about where they are getting content and the information they are giving in exchange,” he says.

As a further safeguard, teachers should avoid technology that hasn’t been vetted and approved by the IT department, says Surita Bains, director of product management focusing on education at Absolute Software.

“Teachers should avoid introducing ‘shadow IT’ into their classroom and school environment,” Bains says. “It is important that software and online tools are evaluated for their





security posture. By engaging the school or district IT team when looking to use new tools, teachers can ensure the technology they and their students are using isn't introducing risk to the classroom."

In fact, experts say a cooperative relationship with IT leadership at the school or district level may be key to empowering teachers who are looking to safeguard their classrooms against ransomware attacks.

ADVOCATING WITH IT

Take for example the issue of data and systems backups. A timely effort to back up systems is key to ransomware defense. Should attackers encrypt the system, administrators can simply revert to a recent backup and effectively short-circuit the attack.

On a personal level, "teachers should maintain good backups of their lesson plans and other critical educational data in the event something happens to their computing device," says Robert Capps, VP of marketplace innovation at NuData Security.

Teachers should not be made responsible for large-scale systems backups or the backing up of day-to-day classroom data—that responsibility falls to the IT team—but teachers can play a key role in advocating for such measures. "They should be speaking to their school officials to make sure those officials are doing everything they can to create an effective backup strategy," Cahn says.

While this advocacy work goes above and beyond the teacher's ordinary classroom responsibility, experts say it makes sense that teachers would take on the role. As

the front-line defenders, "teachers must advocate to not only school but district leadership on the importance of investing in proper IT security resources and technologies," Bains says.

By insisting on school- and district-level safeguards, teachers can free themselves to focus more fully on their educational efforts. With IT handling systems integrity, teachers "regain the ability to dedicate themselves to educating students," Bains says.

BEST PRACTICES

Even as they push for high-level controls, teachers can implement best practices at the classroom level to help keep the threat of ransomware at bay.

This starts by observing their own online interactions. "Ransomware tends to come through email, so teachers can carefully examine every email that comes through their inbox, looking for red flags like misspelled words, suspicious senders/email addresses, inconsistencies in the email content, and call to actions for clicking on links," Owens says. They can likewise teach their students to follow these same guidelines.

Overall, the rise in ransomware gives teachers new incentive to double down on their efforts to elevate student awareness around digital literacy. Kids who know how to spot a malicious link, who are thoughtful about their passwords and diligent about their downloads, are less likely to introduce malicious elements into the system.

Teachers need not shoulder this burden alone. In addition to engaging with IT staff, teachers can turn to parents as partners in security. With more kids working on devices at home—devices that may connect back to school networks—educators and parents should be collaborating to ensure classroom best practices remain in force in remote learning scenarios.

"Ultimately, teachers and parents must maintain an active awareness of how students are using remote learning tools and platforms in order to keep them—and school systems—safe," Joffe says.

ADAM STONE is a seasoned journalist with 20+ years' experience. He covers education, technology, government and the military, along with diverse other topics.

Mrs. Kramer's 1970s Childhood Challenge

By Kristina Kramer

After 30 years of teaching and 14 years of being a parent, it wasn't the books, the courses, or the counseling that would so clearly encapsulate the purpose of my job as an educator and a mom. It would be a 30-second video clip of a 10-year-old boy on a bike that would pierce my heart and show me what is really important in this world.

It was May of 2020, and I was scrolling through my emails after a long day of Zoom and Google Classroom. My eyes were getting bleary, so I took off my Telluride ballcap (brought out especially for our "wear a hat to Zoom class" day) and popped on my blue light glasses before checking one last email, from the parent of a student that I was a bit worried about.

The email contained a video of Jake, who was new to my school that year. Jake struggles with anxiety and goes to therapy for food aversion. And now, Jake stays home while his dad works on the front lines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

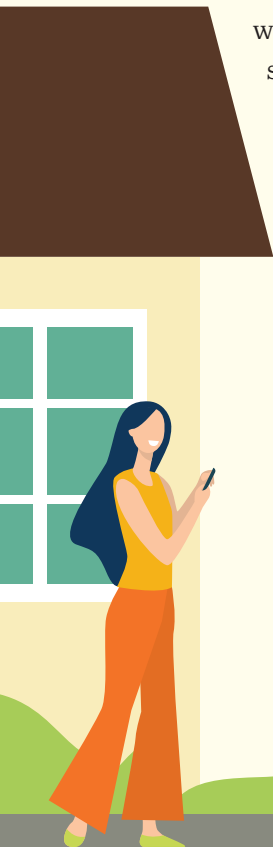
The video showed Jake attempting to ride a bicycle for the first time. It was a spring morning and the birds were chirping in the background, along with the sounds of the chimes on the front porch where Jake's mom was filming from. I held my breath as Jake shakily took off down the driveway and wobbled slowly onto the road, then I let out a sigh of relief as he kept peddling.

His blue jacket flew behind him like Superman's cape, while his mom whispered encouragement the entire time. When Jake finally stopped and turned to look into the camera, he was beaming from ear to ear.

In that moment, Jake wasn't the kid with anxiety or the kid with tactile issues. He was just Jake, a boy on a bicycle.

He was completing a series of tasks I had created on Google Classroom called, "Mrs. Kramer's 1970s Childhood Challenge." It was something I started a month into the pandemic. I was worried about all of the screen time my 4th grade students were being exposed to and wanted a way to get them off their screens and out of doors. It's said that there is always a blessing in dark times, and this was it: my chance to share my 1970s childhood with 25 children of 2020.

Having grown up in the time before the digital craze, much of my own childhood was spent outside. Youth sports was not a "thing" yet. Instead, my friends and I played in the woods, built forts in the backyard, or rode around the neighborhood on bicycles (mine complete with a banana seat and fringe dangling off the handlebars). There were also the usual games of four square, tag, and kick the can, but we used our imaginations too and created plays and shows for our families. The common rule for children was to be home by the time the streetlights came on. That was it.



Could I effectively transfer some of that 1970s magic to my students? With parents pulling their hair out trying to home-school their children, and kids at risk of becoming virtual zombies, I knew I had to try. As a parent myself, I know the trick that if something is assigned by a teacher, it becomes law. Would that work in this case?

Each day I came up with an activity based on the weather or something special happening on the calendar such as Earth Day or April Fools' Day. Then I would demonstrate part of the activity for the students. If I was baking bread from scratch, I'd show them the dough. If I was searching for seeds in nature, I would share a few that I'd found in the woods near my house.

Each challenge that was successfully completed would count as five points, and I kept a running tally of which students completed it. There would be a deadline for me to tally up the points, with the winner(s) receiving a prize. The prizes included things like a visit from me with a small gift or Starbucks gift card, or something for the student's family to pick up during our designated "drop off/pick up" days at school. Yes, this was a little extra work, but it was so worth it.

I often received photographs attached to the students' assignments, or even photo texts or emails from their parents. Jake was only the first in a long line of wonders from my 4th graders. Soon enough my inbox was flooded with pictures: Andrea reading in a soccer net in her yard, Mark displaying his homemade cookies with a big smile, Leanne standing at the end of a friend's driveway chalking a message of hope, and Laurie proudly showing off a big bag of garbage that she collected in a local park for the Earth Day challenge.

Like the first buds of spring, the challenges blossomed and grew. Luke proudly planted a mini garden. Henry made mud pies. Julia wrote in her

journal while sitting on her trampoline, taking jumping breaks in between each paragraph. Nicholas spent an afternoon reading beneath a tree in his backyard. Valerie actually got a letter back from her mailman and began a pen pal relationship, and Elliott found the most beautiful natural heart in a tree during his nature walk. Within a month, the kids were buzzing each morning, eager to know the challenge of the day.

Even parents were sharing their excitement about their children's newfound skills and passions. They began making comments during the principal's virtual "Parent Coffee" meeting about how grateful they were to have these assignments for their kids. A grandfather thanked me for the time he got to spend with his grandson building their own version of a tepee in the backyard during our Native American unit. Many parents sent me messages about baking bread from scratch with their children. They said it reminded them of their own childhoods, and that now their families didn't want to go back to store-bought bread. One parent commented that her daughter was actually eating the lettuce she'd planted during the Challenge and was now open to eating more vegetables. But it was the myriad of bicycle-riding videos that surprised me the most. Several parents wrote to me admitting that they simply hadn't taken the time to teach their child to ride a bike yet.

That's when I knew that these were more than just fun activities to pass the time in quarantine. They were a way to give kids a gift they didn't even know they wanted or needed. A gift of time, of fresh air, of connection to the earth and values almost extinct. The benefits were far exceeding my expectations.

This past year was filled with what I've called "wartime teaching": life and death going on all over the world and a hefty dose of fear each morning for



our children. In this time of crisis, we need to ask ourselves, “What is most important?” In my opinion, the answer is fairly simple: read a really good book and write in a notebook every day. Do math problems, perform real science experiments, and then...get outside.

Now, after ten months of this pandemic and countless hours on my computer, I finally get it. As sure as I sit here, I know this to be true. The world will go back: back to work, to sports, to driving kids from activity to activity, to eating in the car, to falling into bed at night exhausted from all of the running. But I have one hope. My deepest hope for our children is that as life returns to normal and the children of 2020 grow up to become the adults who do the driving and the running, there is some small gem inside of them, a diamond of remembrance of 2020—the year the world stood still.

As educators, we know the research is clear that exercise and outdoor activity boosts standardized test scores, enhances attitudes about learning, improves behavior, and raises overall achievement. We know that being in nature lowers stress levels and gives children a deeper appreciation of the environment. My 1970s Challenge started as a way to get kids away from their screens, and ended up doing so much more. Breathing fresh air and playing outdoors gave kids (and parents) a much-needed reconnection to ourselves, each other, and the planet.

*Student names have been changed.

KRISTINA KRAMER has been teaching grades 1-8 for 31 years. She has a Master’s degree in literacy and is also an adjunct professor at Wheeling University in Wheeling, WV. She leads professional development workshops in the areas of reading and writing. In her free time, she explores the great outdoors through biking, hiking, traveling, and gardening. She currently lives in Wheeling, WV with her husband and son.

These activities allowed me to explore areas of interests I never knew existed within my son. We thoroughly enjoyed spending time together while delving into new and exciting adventures such as cooking, baking, setting a table, gardening, and nature exploration. Without this unit of study, I would have missed the opportunity to know my son in a way I hadn’t prior imagined.

—Wendy H.



Group of Seven: Lawren Harris Inspired Animated Collage

GRADES:

11 TO 12

SUBJECTS:VISUAL ARTS,
HISTORY**DURATION:**

3 TO 5 CLASSES

**KEY CONCEPTS & ISSUES**

Lawren Harris is one of the most well-known landscape painters and founding members of the Group of Seven. Students will learn how Harris' artwork progressed from a nationalistic interpretation of Canadian landscape towards a universal vision of how nature has spiritual power. Harris was informed by theosophy and transcendentalism that eventually led to abstraction. Students will explore the works of Harris and will create an animated collage based on those works and their own interpretation of nature. Students will be asked to move beyond the surface of Harris' paintings and create a new profound reality using animated collage techniques.

- Creation of Spaces and Landscapes
- Apply the creative process to create original artwork using printed images and technology

**PRIOR KNOWLEDGE**

- History of Group of Seven
- Analysis of Group of Seven work and significance
- Collage techniques



MATERIALS REQUIRED

- *Mystic Learnings: The Group of Seven* graphic novel (available on www.groupofseven1920.com)
- Group of Seven PowerPoint presentation (teacher led) and supplementary handout (available on www.groupofseven1920.com)
- Printer
- Scissors
- Access to device with camera, Internet access, and basic photo editing software (smartphone or tablet)
- Motionleap (formerly Pixaloop, free to try) or similar app



EXPECTATIONS/OUTCOMES

The overall expectations listed below serve as an entry point for teachers.

Students will:

- Increase their knowledge of the Group of Seven and their importance to Canadian history;
- Analyze the social importance of forging a Canadian art movement that represented Canada's natural landscapes;
- Demonstrate an understanding of how to use technology to create an animated collage;
- Be able to document the process of developing ideas to create their own artwork.



SKILLS ACQUIRED

- Application of Critical Analysis Process to collage
- How to properly photograph 2D artwork
- Basic photo editing (crop, adjusting brightness, contrast, etc.)
- Using Motionleap app to animate photograph of collage



BACKGROUND

The Group of Seven believed that the European-oriented view of the painter's profession was doing little to foster cultural awareness of Canadian society. When the Group of Seven first formed, Canada was still attached to its imperial connection to Britain. Canada and its art scene was in need of signs and symbols with which to assert its own distinctive national identity. With the support of the National Gallery of Canada, some private patrons and Lawren Harris, the Group of Seven concentrated on making landscape paintings that focused on nature as a form of Canadian identity.

Lawren Harris is one of the best known landscape painters of the Group of Seven. After attending a gallery exhibition of Scandinavian art in Buffalo, NY, Harris and J.E.H MacDonald began to focus on landscape oil paintings.



Mystic Learnings: The Group of Seven
graphic novel



Example of an animated collage

This new Canadian movement was clearly established by 1913 with the stated intention by the group to focus on exploring the landscapes of Canada's North. The group mainly focused on landscapes in Georgian Bay, Algonquin Park, and the Laurentians. All of the members of the Group of Seven except for Lawren Harris, had formal training in the business of commercial art. This background knowledge of design can be seen in the stressing of large, bold forms and movements with an emphasis on colour and contrasting tones.

After the end of the First World War, the group reunited and travelled throughout Ontario, specifically the Muskoka and Algoma regions. They also ventured to other areas of Canada including, British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and the Arctic. In the fall of 1918, the group took a box-car trip to Algoma. They wanted to create plein air sketching, which stressed the use of colour and light to capture the essence of a scene. It was Harris that financed the box-car trips to the Algoma region and, later, to the northern shores of Lake Superior. The Lake Superior landscape was one of Harris' favourite places to paint. He felt that it was a "pure" and "spiritual" place. The sketches and paintings created during these trips were showcased in an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario in April 1919.

In 1920, Harris's paintings were more stylized: his work had become more abstract and simplified. It was during this time period that Harris stopped signing and dating his artworks. By 1926, members of the Group had begun to travel further across Canada. They visited the West coast and the Arctic. They were the first documented artists of European descent to paint the Arctic. By the end of 1931, the Group of Seven were well known and decided it was no longer necessary to continue as a group. The Group of Seven subsequently announced they had disbanded and a new association of painters would be formed called the Canadian Group of Painters. The Canadian Group held their first exhibition in 1933 and continued to showcase their work until 1967.

In 1955, Robert and Signe McMichael began to collect and exhibit works from the Group of Seven at their home in Kleinburg, ON. In 1965, the McMichael family formally reached an agreement to donate their collection and their Kleinburg property to the Government of Ontario for the purpose of establishing an art museum. In addition to housing a collection of works by the Group of Seven, the museum property also contains the burial ground for six members of the group, including Jackson, Lismer, Varley, Harris, Johnston, and Casson; along with four of the artists' wives. The Group of Seven introduced Canadian art to the international stage and for many, their work continues to represent the Canadian national identity.



STEP ONE

TEACHER DIRECTED DISCUSSION

- Students begin by reading the Group of Seven graphic novel and discussing the Group's work and its significance

- Teacher guides students through analysis of Group of Seven artwork, focusing on colour theory, elements and principles found in the work of Lawren Harris (paintings included in PowerPoint)
 - Analysis ends with touching on the importance of celebrating natural landscapes in art, the concept of nostalgia, and the importance that places and landscapes can play in treasured memories
- Teacher leads class discussion on concept of natural landscapes, nostalgia, and memory
 - This could be done as group activity; the teacher has student groups present their ideas to the class to facilitate further discussion and gauge student understanding



STEP TWO STUDENT LED EXPLORATION

- Individually, students are then asked to reflect on their own personal memories of important natural landscapes and spaces, drawing parallels from class discussion to their individual treasured memories; students are asked to think of specific places that come to mind
- Once students have developed an idea of what their created ideal personal landscape or place would include, students then choose three to five paintings of Lawren Harris' to print, cut, and arrange into a collage



STEP THREE PHOTOGRAPHING THE COLLAGE

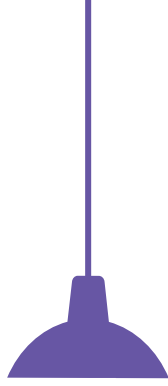
- Once students have arranged their collage pieces into their created interpretation of a natural landscape, they will digitally photograph their collage
- Students may choose to glue or affix their collage pieces to a larger piece of blank paper or bristol board before photographing so that they can move their collage around their space without unarranging it
- To photograph their collage, students should choose a space near an open window or door to utilize natural light
- Standing over their collage, and without blocking the natural light, students will photograph their collage from above, using their device's camera grid lines to keep the edges of their collage parallel with the viewfinder
- After the image has been photographed, ensuring even lighting and framing of their collage, students are encouraged to crop their image and complete any necessary editing (adjusting of contrast, brightness, etc.) of the photograph of their collage.



Example of an animated collage

TO SEE MORE OF THIS LESSON PLAN, VISIT
WWW.GROUPOFSEVEN1920.COM

Exercise Resources for Students



Making sure kids get enough exercise during the colder months of the year can be a challenge—especially now, in this period of remote teaching and with outdoor options limited. But despite the lack of in-person gym classes, field trips, or winter sports teams, there are still ways students can be physically active at home. These free resources can help to get kids up and moving while showing them how fun exercise can be!



COSMIC KIDS YOGA Free – Website

On this YouTube channel, kids can follow along with instructor Jamie as she takes them on yoga “adventures.” Every interactive journey focuses on a different theme to introduce children to new poses, for example: rockets, mermaids and pirates, dinosaurs, and the jungle. The videos each include a yoga lesson, a mindfulness session, and a short guided meditation to ensure a full mind-body experience. New videos are posted weekly, and there are over 500 to choose from. Check them out at youtube.com/CosmicKidsYoga.



GONOODLE GAMES Free – iOS, Android, Website

All kids need is a smart device and their own bodies to play games with this fun app—no controllers or extra hardware necessary! GoNoodle Games offers five movement-based games that require kids to be active in order to play. Whether it’s waving their arms to pop bubbles, using their hands and feet to play goalie and block incoming soccer balls, or jumping around to steer a jetpack through space, these games are a good way to make screen time, active time. The games were also designed with kids’ privacy in mind. While the games do rely on use of a device with a camera in order to work, no personal information is collected, and the app is compliant with both the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act and the General Data Protection Regulation. Find out more at gonoodle.com. (Note that teachers can create a free account on the GoNoodle website to access over 300 additional videos and activities for students.)

NFL PLAY 60

Free – iOS, Android, Website



NFL PLAY 60 is a health and wellness campaign developed by the NFL—in partnership with organizations such as the American Heart Association, the Special Olympics, and United Way—to encourage kids to be active for 60 minutes a day. The NFL PLAY 60 app offers short workouts and exercise games that kids can play. Each time they complete an activity, they can earn coins to customize their avatar, and also unlock new skills and achievements. NFL PLAY 60 has also recently teamed up with GoNoodle to produce short [training videos](#) for kids, which are hosted by NFL players! The NFL PLAY 60 website even includes [lesson plans](#), [virtual experiences](#), and [links](#) to other digital education resources that are designed to keep kids active. Visit nfl.com/causes/play60 for more details.

UNICEF KID POWER

Free – Website



This digital platform uses principles of social-emotional learning (SEL) to empower students to save lives by getting active. When they sign up for a free account, kids, families, and entire classrooms can help malnourished children across the world. The website contains 100+ Kid Power Up exercise videos that include categories such as Dance, Yoga, and Sports and Fitness. Watching 10 of these short videos unlocks 1 nutrition packet, which UNICEF delivers to children in areas where food is needed most. Each video also earns Kid Power Coins, which can be donated to various local community causes. (These causes—sending meals to families in need, planting trees, providing masks for health care workers, etc.—each connect to one of the United Nation's [Sustainable Development Goals](#).) The more exercises kids do, the more lives they save. Visit unicefkidpower.org to learn more.

NIKE TRAINING CLUB

Free – iOS, Android



For older students who want to build healthy habits and get active at home, the Nike Training Club app is a good place to start. The app offers nearly 200 beginner, intermediate, and advanced workouts that range from 5 to 60 minutes and vary from low to high intensity. Users can choose workouts that target different body areas and muscle groups, or they can create their own customized training plan which runs for 4 to 8 weeks. The NTC app provides equipment-free programs which are designed for at-home training, as well as full-equipment programs that can be used at the gym. By completing a certain number of workouts, users can also earn achievements and collect trophies on the app. For more information go to nike.com/ntc-app.





Distance Learning: How Will We Get Through This?

By Sherry Siewert, MEd.

Teachers and parents (and teachers *as* parents) are scrambling through a tool box of teaching and parenting techniques, looking for the right tools to help them with managing students. Too many are coming up empty-handed in this new world of distance learning.

Teachers have been forced to abandon the classroom management tools that they are accustomed to. As a result, they find it challenging to provide instruction without a firm grasp on student focus. They are speaking words into cyberspace with no assurance that they are reaching listening ears.

Alternatively, parents have been forced into the role of classroom manager. They are responsible for keeping their children accountable for their schoolwork and behavior, and many are doing this for multiple children at different grade levels and for teachers of various teaching styles.

Educators desperately want to help the parents but feel cut off from their students and familiar resources. Parents feel an obligation to step up to the plate but have no idea how to swing the bat. What if there was a way to combine tried-and-true classroom management tools with parenting techniques, giving all stakeholders a new toolbox to rummage through?

I had to give up some of the typical classroom management techniques I once used when, three years ago, I took a job as an online high school English teacher. My techniques became less about managing students and more about communicating expectations with them and their learning coaches (our title for parents or guardians assigned to help the students at home). It really comes down to the students, their learning coaches, and intrinsic motivation. Yikes—that's the key, isn't it? Not just teaching students *what* to do, but *why* to do it.

After one year of teaching in a virtual classroom from home, I decided to home-school my own children. I have four boys who, at the time, were in grades 6, 4, 3, and preschool. I tried to plan and prepare us for the new routines, but that first year there were many bumps along the way and we learned as we went.

When schools closed and the nation locked down, I was already using my new tactics that meshed classroom-style management with parenting skills to have focused kids who got their work done on time. (Some days were better than others, but that's true for parents and teachers alike.)

Here are some of the tools I found that helped me as a parent-teacher, as well as some ideas I've shared with

learning coaches when they sometimes struggle to be the teacher-parent.

TIP #1: “TREASURE BOX” OR REWARD SYSTEM

Any box, bag, or even just a piece of paper with the rewards written on them will do. Teachers have used this to provide coveted scented-pencils, cute eraser tops, in-class job privileges, and extra minutes for recess to keep students on task. Parents have likely done the same with things their children value. It might be simple, but it's effective.



Admittedly, there is not much the teacher can do in this area during distance teaching, but they can suggest that parents be the ones to determine when a treasure box reward is deserved. Personally, I keep two “treasure boxes”; one houses cheaper items and the other, weightier rewards. My kids can choose from the first any time I think to offer, or they think to ask. I offer treasure box rewards for daily piano practice or completing an assignment within the hour (and I set a timer—another valuable tool). Offered items include 30 minutes of video game time, a 30-minute activity of choice with me (game, craft, etc.), ice cream, \$1-\$3 toys, and lollipops.

The weightier treasure box is reserved for when they finish a full chapter book or, most often, when they have finished their schoolwork all week without too much wrangling on my part. Yes, there have been weeks when one child or another did not receive this reward. This treasure box contains 60 minutes of video game time, one-on-one time with me, or a favorite treat.

TIP #2: CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

Since teachers can still use this tool sometimes in live sessions by asking appropriate Depth of Knowledge (DOK) level questions, encouraging student repetition, or using various sensory triggers (i.e. audio and visual) for attention, the major difference here will be for the parents. After a student leaves the virtual classroom, there is far more time now for the parent to step in and assist with the learning process.



These simple tips may already be known to some parents, but many will find them new and extremely useful. To help them get and keep their child's attention, they can:

- Ensure direct eye contact and be on the same level as the child (e.g. sitting in a chair instead of standing or hovering over them);
- Ask for a verbal repeat in the child's words after reading directions;
- Provide helpful memory cues for recall, such as a list of steps with pictures or a tapping action along with a recitation. The parents can find these cues themselves through an internet search or the teacher can provide them.

TIP #3: TIME-BLOCKING

There are no longer bell schedules and no 50-minute blocks of time to neatly fit in a math lesson, so instead, time-blocking can be used. Sharing this tool with your students' parents can make an impressive difference.



Time-blocking is the method of setting aside a chunk of time for a particular task. First, make a list of tasks, then determine how much time each task generally requires. Schedule in required activities (live class sessions, lunch break, doctor's appointments, etc.) then fill in the rest. This is something teachers can model for parents or send instructions for in a short email or video.

Keeping the schedule flexible makes it easy to accomplish daily goals as well as squeeze in a five-minute task here or there, as needed. Those tend to pop up throughout the day. Setting timers can really help with this tool.

TIP #4: LIGHTENING THINGS UP

The days of anticipating a class party, the movie day after finishing a novel, or the spontaneous outdoor game of dodgeball have vanished (for now). This is where parents need the most help—taking a break!



Fun activities to suggest to your students' families could include a weekly family movie or game night, scavenger hunts (teachers can provide a list of items and align them

with lessons), and outdoor game time. Encourage parents to do this *often* to ease tensions, especially when tensions seem the highest.

Trouble with getting children back on task when the activity is over? Treasure box.

TIP #5: AVOID BURNOUT

Veteran teachers know the value of silent activity stations and pre-planned transitional activities (such as video clip segues, stand and stretch, etc.). However, parents often struggle as they jump their kids from one task or virtual meeting to another.



Offer these gentle reminders to parents (and practice them yourself!):

- Emotions are hormones coursing through your body. These hormones, on average, take two minutes to run their course. When you feel emotions rising, slowly drink a glass of water, wait for it to subside, then act.
- If there is no time to wait, breathe deeply by counting to five and then breathe out to the same count. Breathing has a calming quality.
- When you are feeling tapped out, release the locus of control and let the consequences run their course. Whatever they are, you will be in a much better mind frame to deal with them if you apply the other steps in this tool.
- The word that teachers dread is “burnout.” At this time in our educational history, parents are just as likely to suffer from it as teachers. Remember to make time for yourself and *stick to it*. As a home-

schooler and full-time teacher, this is a tough one for me. The days I do it are measurably better for myself and my kids.



Teaching is *hard*. Parenting is *hard*. It’s refreshing to know that instead of floundering on your own, you can reach out and help each other. I know you have more ideas and tools in your trusty old tool box than I have offered here, so take your favorite parenting tricks and mix them with your favorite teaching techniques. Share your expertise with your students’ parents and don’t forget to apply it to yourself, your children, or your family and friends.

The best answer to the question, “how will we get through this?” is, “together, although we’re apart.” Share ideas, resources, and tools to make distance learning more manageable and less stressful for *all* stakeholders and we’ll all reap the benefits as the future unfolds.

I believe that there is strength to collect from any perceived weakness. Right now, the weakness lies somewhere in our fears about providing quality education, but I predict that the strength to come will be students’ increased abilities to manage their time, take ownership, and begin to seek out learning for its own sake.

SHERRY SIEWERT holds a Master of Education degree from Northcentral University in Arizona. She is in her third year teaching English for an online high school and has several years’ experience teaching middle school in a brick-and-mortar classroom.



Sparking innovation in the classroom

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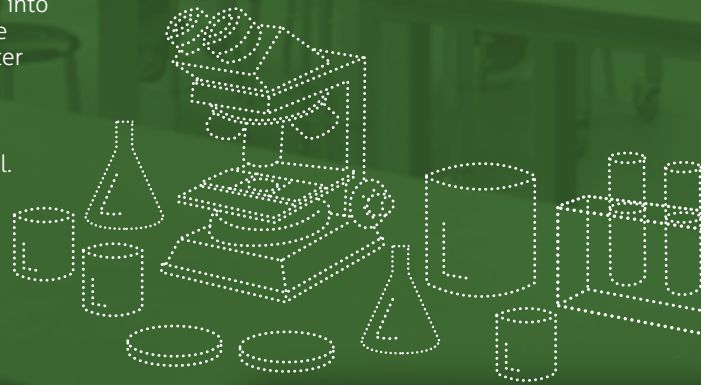
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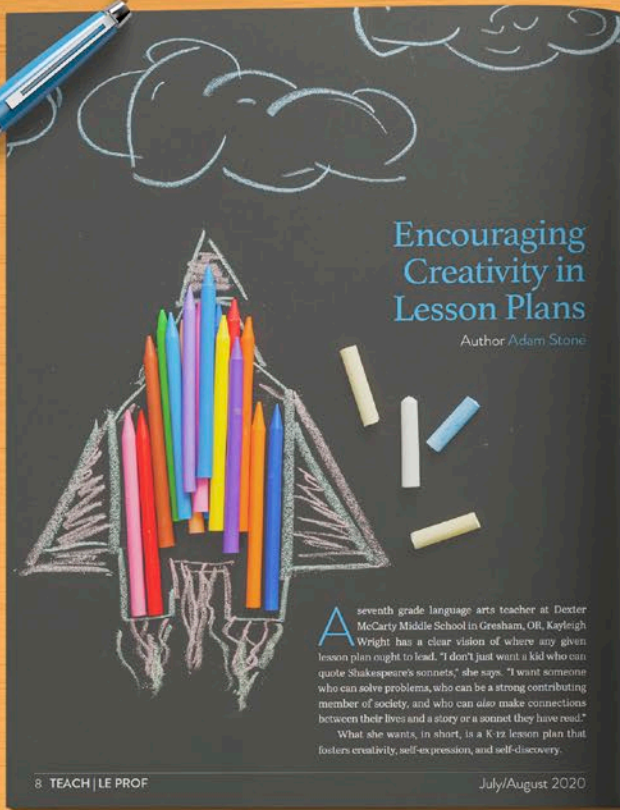


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This is not easily achieved, says Cassie Tabrizi, CEO of educational consultancy, Create abilities. "It can be incredibly easy to treat lesson planning like a checklist. Objective check. Standards check. Activity check," she says. Education experts say there is a better way. A thoughtful lesson plan can encourage exploration, freeing kids to speak in their own voices and infusing creativity into the learning process. Parents and teachers see the value in this: Gallup research found 87 percent of teachers and 77 percent of parents say teaching that incorporates creativity in the learning process has a bigger payoff for students.

FIRST STEPS

In order for students to find their own unique voices, they first need to feel their voices are valid. Before setting down to craft the lesson plan, teachers need to make an upfront investment in relationship-building.

"Whether it's through surveys or one-on-one interviews, you have to know who is in your classroom in order to create an environment in which they will take risks for self-discovery," says Rowena Shurn, senior policy analyst and program specialist at the National Education Association.

Shurn taught in Prince George's County, MD schools for 14 years, and found that this early effort paid dividends when she moved on to the actual lesson planning. "You take that information—who they are, what they are interested in—and you have that profile in front of you when you make your lesson plan," she says. "It's what allows your students to show up as their authentic selves."

Deborah Poulos is a teacher with over 27 years experience and the author of *The Conscious Teacher*. She studied every student's cumulative record files at the start of every year, and built that knowledge into her lesson planning. "I had strategies to individualize and differentiate so I could meet students at their levels," she says. "They knew I thought they were important."

PLAN FOR CHOICES

How to write a lesson plan that empowers those valued individuals to speak in their own voices? Step 1: Give them choices. Students learn in different ways, and the lesson plan needs to reflect that individuality.

When Wright gives out a persuasive writing assignment, for example, she keeps it loose. "It can't



always be five paragraphs, five sentences in each paragraph," she says. "You can get the same amount of information from them if you let them do it in different ways. They can create a commercial, they can create a blog, they can [create vlogs]. I just need to see that they can make a persuasive argument."

At The Avery Coonley School in suburban Chicago, second grade teacher Sarah Batzel even finds ways to make math an open-ended exercise. "Let's say I want to talk about fractions. I give them patterned blocks and ask them to build a figure that represents 'one third.' They grapple with the concept, but there is more than one way of doing it," she says. "They make their own choices."

She did the same in science class, as kids designed their own glue. "We tested corn starch, we tested flour, then the children got to design their own mixture in their own way, using the data we had collected," she says.

It's that combination of data—of facts, information, and a clearly defined end product—that keeps this kind of open-ended work from becoming a free-for-all. "Parameters foster creativity," Batzel says. "It's not just 'go make a shape.' There is real math in there, and they work within that."

Shurn builds her lesson plans on a tic-tac-toe approach: Eight ways of mastering the information (pick your own) plus a blank square if none of the others appeal to you. "Some people can demonstrate their abilities visually. Another student may be more kinesthetic, so

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