



Lesson Plan: Reframing Feelings Before Acting on Them

Slow down and look around you

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Grade level: High School

Approximate time frame: Two to four class periods

Introduction/rationale

In the following lesson students will consider the influence of emotions on thinking and behavior and come to understand how managing one's emotions typically leads to better outcomes. After exploring instances in which fictional characters' decisions and actions are based on reflexive reactions that are not well thought out, students are encouraged to think about how reframing their thinking before they act could improve their responses and courses of action in their own lives.

Instructional objectives

Students will...

- Apply understanding of reframing strategies to a work of literature
- Apply understanding of reframing strategies to situations in their own lives
- Demonstrate understanding of strategies for positive decision-making
- Evaluate and apply decision-making strategies within a work of literature
- Evaluate their own decision-making strategies and reflexive thoughts as applied to a personal situation

Curriculum Standards

English/Language Arts:

- Summarize in a coherent and organized way information and ideas learned from a focused discussion.
- Locate and analyze elements of plot and characterization and then use an understanding of these elements to determine how qualities of the central characters influence the resolution of the conflict.



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Health:

- Apply methods to accommodate a variety of feelings in a constructive manner in order to promote well being
- Explain and practice a model for decision-making that includes gathering information, predicting outcomes, listing advantages and disadvantages, identifying moral implications, and evaluating decisions
- Explain positive techniques for handling difficult decisions

Materials needed

- Work of literature (novel, chapter, or short story)
- Whiteboard
- Paper
- Pencils

Student activities/handouts

Slow Down and Re-Write

Take Two Perspectives and Call Me in the Morning

Student reading assignment

Brain Driver's Education: Operator's Guide section: "Slow down and look around you"

Procedures

Anticipatory set:

Is your first thought or feeling about a situation always correct? Why or why not? Ask students to give examples of times when their own first thoughts/feelings about a situation may be incorrect. How does that first thought affect your decisions?



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Step-by-step instructions/activities

1. “Sometimes our emotional reactions are *reflexive* – like a habit – rather than *reflective* of the reality of a situation. Stepping back and thinking about a situation differently allows you to figure out if your emotional response matches the situation.” Literature is full of characters who – in acting on their reflexive thoughts and emotional reactions – do or say things that cause trouble for themselves and others later on.
2. Provide an example of a challenging moment from literature (a text that the class has recently read or is reading). Ask the class to identify the reflexive thought/assumption/action that leads the character into trouble. Ask the class what might happen if the character took a moment to slow down, look around him/her, and rethink the reflexive reaction.
3. Review the strategies for reframing a situation described in the Student Reading Assignment “Reframing feelings before acting on them” in the *Brain Driver’s Education: Operator’s Guide*:
 - Is there another way to view things?
 - Ask yourself, what is the worst that could happen?
 - Think of pro’s and con’s and evaluate consequences
 - Consider the “big picture,” which may help provide perspective
 - Consider the effect of changing your own thinking
 - Use self-talk
 - Accept that you may not be able to get what you want
4. Discussion: Ask the class how the character in your example from literature might have used these strategies. Would the strategies have helped him/her arrive at a better outcome? How?
5. Provide students with Student Activity handout “Slow Down and Re-Write.” (This activity may be done individually or in small groups.)
6. Review student answers in whole group setting.



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7. Optional journal assignment: Ask students to choose one of the strategies above and make a conscious effort to use the strategy for a week, recording experiences in a journal. Was the strategy helpful in their daily life? Allow time for class discussion.
8. Optional: Assign reaction paper: Student Activity handout “Take Two Perspectives and Call Me in the Morning.”

Assessment

Use class discussion, Student Activity handout(s), and journal assignment to assess student understanding.