

It has become increasingly clear to educators that more than content knowledge is needed to prepare students to succeed in school, work, and life. Secondary schools are brimming with lists variously identified as college and career readiness skills, life skills, 21st-century soft skills, noncognitive competencies, and habits of learning. A cross-walk of these lists, combined with our extensive experience in secondary schools, inspired Engaging Schools to develop a set of **student competencies, skills, and target behaviors**

that align with the developmental and cultural needs of secondary students. They also mirror the academic and behavioral expectations held by secondary teachers and live naturally in equity-centered classrooms. We call these “Learning and Life Competencies for School, College, and Career Success.”

Effective remote learning – especially with an equity lens – demands an even more responsive teacher presence, more refined facilitation skills, and more care and attention to the kinds of questions, discourse, learning tasks, and feedback that will hold students’ academic engagement.

So what does embedding Learning and Life Competencies into a remote classroom experience look and sound like? The snapshot that follows illustrates how a teacher can integrate Learning and Life Competencies in real time, in a secondary remote learning lesson. The teacher meets with students for formal remote lessons three times a week for 60 minutes and provides office hours for individual and small group support and tutorials twice a week. In the chart that follows, the left column describes what the teacher and the students are doing, and the right column identifies the desired *student competencies, skill sets, and target behaviors*.

Adapting the lesson: Although this sample lesson illustrates an English/Language Arts course, the entire lesson can be adapted by changes to the writing prompts and readings. For example:

- **Social Studies:** Investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your local economy (retail, industry, entertainment, personal services, food services, etc.).
- **Science, Math, or Graphic Design:** Using health data from your local community, create an infographic that disaggregates the pandemic data month-by-month over the last six months in the following ways: age, gender, and race composition of people who test positive for the virus; people who have been hospitalized; people who have died.

Virtual Learning Lesson Snapshot

Actions / Activities	Competency	Skill Set
	Target Behavior	
Before remote learning class begins: Ms. Green's welcome slide includes four items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A message with the name of the course and name of the class. 2. A thank-you for logging in on time. 3. Materials needed for remote class, including links to online documents. 4. The remote learning guidelines in a sidebar. 	Self-Management	Self-Regulation
	<i>I follow instructions, procedures, and rules.</i>	
	Social Efficacy	Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy
	<i>I can use neutral, non-aggressive language to express myself.</i>	
	Academic Efficacy	Organizing to Learn and Study
<i>I organize myself and my materials.</i>		
Students log in: Ms. Green greets students by name either in the chat box or verbally.	Social Efficacy	Healthy Relationships
	<i>I greet and talk to people in a friendly manner.</i>	
Opening "bell," greeting, and class gathering: Ms. Green uses a chime to officially begin instruction. <i>"Thank you for arriving to class on time. It's the afternoon, so let's do a quick gathering to check in. In the chat box, rate how you're feeling about your day so far, from 5 to 1. (5 = I'm upbeat and totally ready to lean in, 3 = I'm okay, I guess, 1 = I'm kind of out of sorts.)"</i> Ms. Green summarizes the ratings: <i>"Wow, we're all in different places today. I hope we can turn some of those 1s and 2s into 4s and 5s by the end of our class."</i>	Academic Efficacy	Organizing to Learn and Study
	<i>I attend class every day and arrive to class on time.</i>	
	Self-Management	Naming, Expressing, Managing Emotions
	<i>I name and express emotions accurately.</i>	
Ms. Green posts a slide of the agenda: <i>"Take a look at the agenda and find your name in one of the five color groups. You will be meeting in your breakout rooms later in the lesson in these groups."</i>	Self-Management	Self-Regulation
	<i>I sustain my focus and pay attention. I follow instructions, procedures, and rules.</i>	
One student sends a private message to Ms. Green: <i>"I'm baby-sitting my sister right now, so it is really hard to focus."</i>	Social Efficacy	Assertion and Self-Advocacy
	<i>I take the initiative to seek help.</i>	
	Self-Management	Self-Regulation

Virtual Learning Lesson Snapshot

<p>Ms. Green responds to her privately in the chat saying: <i>“Sounds like a challenging day for you. Leave your mic on mute and participate when you can. Let’s catch up in office hours tomorrow, okay?”</i></p>	<p><i>I accept help, feedback, correction, or consequences with good will.</i></p>	
<p>Outcomes for the lesson today and setting the stage for the work:</p> <p><i>“Everything we do today will prepare you to write an opinion essay that you will submit to our local paper. This is the third time our paper is seeking student voices during the pandemic. Here is their question: ‘In what specific ways has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you and your family? And, what is something you have done to turn a challenge into an opportunity?’</i></p> <p><i>“Please take two minutes to think about the essay question and respond to this prompt: What might make this an interesting question for the writer and for the reader?”</i></p> <p><i>“I’m going to ask for a volunteer from each color group to share your smart thinking. Use your electronic note catcher or your notebook to capture your thoughts.”</i></p> <p>Ms. Green summarizes students’ thinking about the prompt and says:</p> <p><i>“So, you pointed out many entry points the writer can take to answer the question, and you shared how a reader gets to walk in someone else’s shoes. Thank you. Your experiences will reflect unique perspectives that are your own. We have some really good starting points.”</i></p>	<p>Academic Efficacy</p>	<p>Investment in Quality Work</p>
	<p><i>I attempt each part of the question. I engage in critical, reflective, and creative thinking.</i></p>	
	<p>Academic Efficacy</p>	<p>Organizing to Learn and Study</p>
	<p><i>I manage my time and tasks.</i></p>	
	<p>Self-Management</p>	<p>Self-Regulation</p>
	<p><i>I sustain my focus and pay attention throughout the task.</i></p>	
	<p>Social Efficacy</p>	<p>Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy</p>
	<p><i>I can verbalize and present my ideas to others.</i></p>	

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<p>Ms. Green provides instructions for working collaboratively in break-out rooms:</p> <p><i>“To help you with your opinion essay for the local paper, we are going to look at two different essays and evaluate their quality. We are going to read these two essays in the main room. These essays focus on how students around the country are experiencing remote learning as a result of the pandemic. I am confident you could write your own opinion essay.</i></p> <p><i>“While reading, think about these two questions: ‘What is the writer doing well?’ and ‘What might the writer do to strengthen their essay?’ Use your writer’s checklist to support your opinion. The directions are on-screen. The timer is on for seven minutes. Send me a private chat if you have questions.”</i></p> <p>The timer goes off and Ms. Green says, “You are going to use breakout rooms to share your opinion with your color group. In your groups, I want you to imagine you are the publisher of the local newspaper. Discuss the two essays, your evaluation, and come to consensus on which essay you would send to the paper.</p> <p><i>“On your breakout room white board, post the essay title that you feel should be sent to the newspaper and three reasons why. You will have about 8-10 minutes for your discussion. Be prepared to share your reasons in the main room.</i></p> <p><i>“Just to make sure we’re on point, I’d like someone from the red group to summarize what we are expected to accomplish.</i></p> <p><i>“I’ll broadcast a message when half your time is up. At that point, you should be discussing your evaluations with evidence and your recommendation.”</i></p> <p>Students enter their break-out rooms and get to work.</p>	Self-Management	Self-Regulation
	<i>I sustain my focus and pay attention throughout an activity or task.</i>	
	Academic Efficacy	Quality Work
	<i>I engage in critical, reflective, and creative thinking.</i>	
	<i>I revise, edit/proof, and correct for quality and accuracy.</i>	
	Social Efficacy	Cooperation and Participation
	<i>I work effectively with different students.</i>	
	<i>I take turns, listen to and encourage others, and do my fair share.</i>	
Self-Management	Perseverance	
<i>I persist until I finish the task.</i>		
Academic Efficacy	Goal-Setting and Self-Assessment	
<i>I make sure I know the criteria for quality work.</i>		

Virtual Learning Lesson Snapshot

<p>A group is off-task in their break-out room:</p> <p>As Ms. Green enters a break-out room, she notices that the purple group is chatting about a new app, and they haven't posted anything on the white board.</p> <p><i>"Hi -- pause for a moment. I don't see anything posted on the white board. Jonah, please summarize what your group has accomplished so far and what you still need to do."</i></p> <p>The group has not evaluated the essays. Ms. Green asks the group two steps they will take in the next five minutes to complete the task.</p> <p><i>"Okay, sounds like you're set. I want to see your good thinking on the white board. Thank you in advance for focusing on the task and working together cooperatively. I'll check back in five."</i></p>	Self-Management	Self-Regulation
	<i>I accept help, feedback, correction, or consequences with good will.</i>	
	Social Efficacy	Communication and Problem Solving
	<i>I use problem solving strategies to work things out.</i>	
	Social Efficacy	Cooperation and Participation
	<i>I work effectively with different students.</i>	
	Social Efficacy	Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy
	<i>I can verbalize and present my ideas to others.</i>	
	Self-Awareness	Knowing Myself
	<i>I know when I have done the right thing and when I make mistakes.</i>	

Virtual Learning Lesson Snapshot

<p>Whole group discussion:</p> <p>Ms. Green conducts a poll to identify which essay the students thought should be sent to the newspaper.</p> <p>Ms. Green projects the essay with the most votes. She randomly pulls index cards with students' names and asks them to defend their choice, and if it is not the essay they chose, what might be some reasons this essay was chosen. While students are sharing, she is highlighting sections of the essay to illustrate student's points.</p> <p><i>"This was an exercise in evaluating writing for publication and an exercise on point of view – understanding that we might have our own perspective about a piece of writing and we are able to step back and consider another point of view for looking at the same essay."</i></p> <p>Ms. Green conducts a second poll as a formative assessment: <i>"Select two skills you want to focus on when writing your own essay as a result of evaluating the sample essays."</i></p> <p><i>"It looks like many of you want to make sure you have a compelling anecdote to bring your essay to life. I look forward to reading these!</i></p> <p><i>"Just for fun -- post in the chat one opinion about remote learning that you agreed with as you read the essays."</i></p> <p>Ms. Green expresses her appreciation for their feedback about remote learning:</p> <p><i>"I'm really glad we've captured your thinking about remote learning in the chat box. It gives me good data for continuing to make our remote learning time together a really good experience."</i></p>	Academic Efficacy	Quality Work
	<p><i>I engage in critical, reflective, and creative thinking.</i></p>	
	Social Efficacy	Assertiveness and Self-Advocacy
	<p><i>I can verbalize and present my ideas to others.</i></p>	
Academic Efficacy	Goal-Setting and Self-Assessment	
<p><i>I make sure I know the criteria for high-quality work.</i></p>		

Virtual Learning Lesson Snapshot

<p>Homework and office hours preview:</p> <p><i>“Before office hours tomorrow, please submit two things for me to review:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Your brainstorm/outline/thinking map for your opinion essay.</i> <i>2. Two writing skills from your Writer's Checklist that you want to focus on when you write this essay.</i> <p><i>“I am really interested in hearing your approach to the essay topic and concrete experiences that will support your approach.</i></p> <p><i>“We will meet in your color groups during office hours tomorrow. Find your schedule in the online link.”</i></p>	Academic Efficacy	Organizing to Learning and Study
	<i>I prioritize and manage my time and tasks.</i>	
	Academic Efficacy	Goal-Setting and Self-Assessment
	<p><i>I monitor my academic progress through self-reflection and conferencing.</i></p> <p><i>I set learning goals and identify action steps to improve my performance.</i></p>	
<p>Lesson Feedback:</p> <p><i>“You were having some really thoughtful conversations today. What's one thing you appreciated about a peer or the process we used? Let's hear four or five voices.”</i></p> <p>Ms. Green closes the formal lesson:</p> <p>Ms. Green thanks everyone for such stellar participation today; and says, <i>“Goodbye for now. See you tomorrow. Take care of yourselves this evening.”</i></p>	Academic Efficacy	Investment in Quality Work
	<i>I engage in critical, reflective, and creative thinking.</i>	