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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 3 How Do I Solve My Problems?

Grade Levels 3–4

Emotional Literacy Unit Three “How Do I Solve My Problems?”

This unit is very student-driven and revolves around conversation and openness. Students are asked to create their own “Guide to Life,” which they will do by brainstorming the biggest conflicts that they are facing at school and in their lives. This only works if students feel safe with each other and are able to capitalize on the ensemble-building work they have been doing all year while playing theater games at the start of each class.

One of the most important things to do when teaching this unit is to explicitly teach the vocabulary words “conflict” and “resolution.” It’s important that students realize that every problem they are facing has multiple solutions. If students come up with silly ideas for resolutions (for example, if one of the problems they come up with is “too much homework,” and a student suggests, “feed all the homework to chickens,” as happened in one class), ask the rest of the class if they agree or disagree. Treat every answer with openness and seriousness, so students know that they are in a safe community to brainstorm their ideas. In the chicken example, a student raised her hand and said, “Homework sucks, but we have to do SOME of it. I want to get a job someday, and I have to do work at home sometimes.”

It may be helpful to engage small groups in conversation. You might also consider turning your learning space into a “roundtable.” Students can use the conversation piece they’ve been working with all year during circle time to problem-solve. Reiterate that this is a safe space, where stories and personal details do not leave. Some students may open up about very violent experiences during this unit; some of the biggest problems students come up with have a lot to do with violence and trauma. Let this space be conducive to having conversation, but remain aware of how feelings might grow vulnerable, and be ready to change course if the need arises.

Because this unit relies heavily on writing, offer students the option to create comics or drawings to convey their ideas. Try to avoid having students shut down because they are frustrated with language. Calligraphy can also be an exacting art; let kids get crazy with their own font and lettering ideas. Bring in font books and hand-lettering books as samples.

Although this unit has the potential to be frustrating because of the necessity of language, conversation, and exacting art, it also has the potential to be one of the most liberating units. Students have the opportunity to take ownership over their lives, and they’re able to talk about difficult subjects in a safe space. The final product—a finished book—is something they will be proud of all year. It can be exciting for older kids to read their “Guide to Life” to kindergartners in the same building. This project gives students the opportunity to demonstrate leadership and growth in brand-new ways.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 3.1 How Do I Solve My Problems?

Lesson: Draft Book

Grade Levels 3–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How can I be an active member of an ensemble?

Lesson Objectives

- Define and describe “conflict” and “resolution”.
- Create a simple book with a basic binding.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem. (VA:Cr1.1.2a)
- Demonstrate safe procedures for using and cleaning art tools, equipment, and studio spaces. (VA:Cr2.2.2a)
- Analyze how art exhibited inside and outside of schools (such as in museums, galleries, virtual spaces, and other venues) contributes to communities. (VA:Pr6.1.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2)



Materials needed

Brainstorming paper, chart paper, 11 x 17 paper, scissors, colored pencils



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable, sadness, joy, fear, surprise, anger*

Visual Arts: *draft, book arts, binding, lettering*

Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Favorite” question: What is your favorite song?

Feelings question: Think about the five emotions we learned in the **last unit** (display **emotions cards** if desired). Which one most closely matches the way you are feeling right now?



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Distribute brainstorm paper: *Today we are going to brainstorm a list of all the problems that are facing you at school today.* Give an example that seems to fit, and maybe engage in short discussion about why that might be a problem for some people, and not for others.
- Students should spend 5 minutes individually brainstorming problems.
- If they come up with a problem they think is especially significant, invite them to raise their hand to share. Brainstorm a class list on chart paper. Vote on the top three problems facing kids in the class today.
- Discuss how all problems have solutions. Introduce **conflict** and **resolution**.
- Explain that we will be making a how-to book: a guide to life. Review the meaning of **draft**.
- Show examples of **books as art**. Many artists make books as their visual art form. They feature unique **binding** and **lettering** styles to make them special.

Keep in Mind

- Go over norms for the art space.
- Reminders on how to use the supplies and materials safely.
- What do I need to keep in mind about myself as I am learning a new art form?
- What should I do if I'm unhappy with my work?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Start with a large sheet of paper (11 x 17 at least).
- Follow the directions to fold a **simple folded working draft book**.
- Label the cover (come up with your own title).
- Label the table of contents, title page, and where chapters 1, 2, and 3 will go.
- Decorate the cover.
- Create an About the Author page in the back with a decorated self-portrait as the author photo

Extensions: Students can decorate and adorn their draft books all they want. These will be theirs to keep and will help them make sure they put down the things they actually want to write.

Closure: Have students partner up. One shares an easy-to-solve problem, the other says the solution. Then partners switch.

Optional Writing Prompt: What problem did we pick today that is most important to you? Why?



Big Picture

We will use these books as drafts as we work toward creating a big class book of How Tos: How to Solve Our Big Problems. We will work on designing beautiful pages and expert binding to create the kind of book we would want to find in the library.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Either ask the question or play the game.

I Do/ We Do

You pick the problems: How to Make a Friend, How to Be Kind, What to Do if You Get Mad. Have students practice a role-play about “How to Make a Friend” to demonstrate problem and solution. (*Karen was alone. She didn't have anyone*

to play blocks with! Then she said Hello to Martin. Now Karen is not alone. What was the problem? What was the solution?)

You Do

The book should be simple enough for K and 1 to do; if not, you can precut and fold them, or you can have students simply cut six pages and staple along the spine. They can still decorate and designate pages for chapters.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 3.2 How Do I Solve My Problems?

Lesson: Chapter 1 of Guide to Life

Grade Levels 3–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How can I be an active member of an ensemble?

Lesson Objectives

- Define and describe “conflict” and “resolution”.
- Create a draft of an advice page.
- Create a piece of writing in fine calligraphic lettering.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem. (VA:Cr1.1.2a)
- Demonstrate safe procedures for using and cleaning art tools, equipment, and studio spaces. (VA:Cr2.2.2a)
- Analyze how art exhibited inside and outside of schools (such as in museums, galleries, virtual spaces, and other venues) contributes to communities. (VA:Pr6.1.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2)



Materials needed

Final draft papers (11 x 17), draft books (from [previous session](#)), draft paper, calligraphy pens or paintbrushes and black ink, [calligraphy alphabet](#)



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable, sadness, joy, fear, surprise, anger, conflict, resolution*

Visual Arts: *draft, book arts, binding, lettering, drop cap*

Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Favorite” question: What is your favorite thing to have for breakfast?

Feelings question: Think about the five emotions we learned in the [last unit](#). Which one most closely matches the way you are feeling right now? Why?



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Review the three problems selected in the last session.
- Explain that you are going to write advice for how to solve these problems (review vocabulary: “conflict” and “resolution”). *All problems have many possible solutions. If you knew someone was being faced with this problem, how would you advise they solve it? Let’s solve a problem together as a group.*
- Display the following problem on the board: “Alexis is always tired at school.” *What advice do you have for Alexis? Draft advice page together: Why is the problem important? What is the cause of the problem? What can Alexis do to solve it? *Not getting enough sleep keeps you from learning at school. You might need to go to bed a little earlier every night. Another solution would be to make sure you eat a breakfast that helps you to wake up, like one that has lots of fruit!**
- Display a **calligraphy alphabet**. Tell students they can use this as a model. *Bookmakers used to have to write every letter by hand, and they paid special attention to the way the letters looked. Making letters is an art form all its own.*
- Define **drop cap**: Using an especially fancy letter as the first letter in a sentence.
- Demonstrate some ways to use a calligraphy pen (hold it at a constant 45-degree angle, and experiment with pressure).

Keep in Mind

- Making letters with calligraphy pens can be very frustrating. Make sure you create a draft FIRST, so you don’t make a mistake when you are working on your final draft paper. How can you avoid feeling frustrated with your work?
- How can we protect these pens/brushes so we can use them again and again?
- With such a precise art form, how can you ensure that your work remains interesting to you and unique?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Begin with your draft book.
- In pencil, draft exactly what you will write on your book pages: advice to the first problem voted on by the class.
- In pencil, transfer your idea to a large piece of draft paper. Practice writing with the calligraphy pen, and practice forming letters that are interesting to you.
- Create a final version of your advice page. Be sure to include a chapter title.
- Update your draft book with chapter titles and illustrations

Extensions: Students can sketch illustrations on all three of their drafts: first, midway, and final.

Closure: Writers’ circle: A few writers read aloud their advice pages, if they are feeling particularly proud of them.

Optional Writing Prompt: What would be a not-so-safe way to solve this problem? Why is this problem not so safe?



Big Picture

We will use these books as drafts as we work toward creating a big class book of How Tos: How to Solve Our Big Problems. We will work on designing beautiful pages and expert binding to create the kind of book we would want to find in the library.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Play the Level 1 version of Zip Zap Zop.

I Do/ We Do

Do the advice page for the major problem as a **group write**: Kids talk and you write simple sentences on the board that they can easily copy.

You Do

Use markers instead of calligraphy pens. Students copy, illustrate, and decorate letters with skinny markers to create drop caps. Alternately, students can work as a table group, with each student making a word for the sentence, and then all words can be glued together to make a class page.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 3.3 How Do I Solve My Problems?

Lesson: Chapter 2 of Our Guide to Life

Grade Levels 3–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How can I be an active member of an ensemble?

Lesson Objectives

- Define and describe “conflict” and “resolution”.
- Create a draft of an advice page.
- Create a piece of writing in fine calligraphic lettering.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem. (VA:Cr1.1.2a)
- Demonstrate safe procedures for using and cleaning art tools, equipment, and studio spaces. (VA:Cr2.2.2a)
- Analyze how art exhibited inside and outside of schools (such as in museums, galleries, virtual spaces, and other venues) contributes to communities. (VA:Pr6.1.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2)



Materials needed

Final draft papers (11 x 17), draft books (from [previous session](#)), draft paper, calligraphy pens or paintbrushes and black ink, watercolor pencils, [calligraphy alphabet](#)



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable, sadness, joy, fear, surprise, anger, conflict, resolution*

Visual Arts: *draft, book arts, binding, lettering, drop cap*

Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Favorite” question: What is your favorite sport to play or watch?

Feelings question: Think about the five emotions we learned in the [last unit](#). Which one most closely matches the way you are feeling right now? Why?



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Review the three problems selected in the **first session**.
- Review final draft pages created during the **last session**.
- Explain that you are going to write advice for another one of the problems today (review vocabulary: “**conflict**” and “**resolution**”). *All problems have many possible solutions. If you knew someone was being faced with this problem, how would you advise they solve it? Let’s solve a problem together as a group.*
- Follow the same guidelines as in **session 3.2**, but this time, add the option to create an illustration using watercolor pencils.
- Demonstrate how to use watercolor pencils carefully, and only after you are completely done lettering.

Keep in Mind

- What are some ways you can be sure that your words and lettering are complete and ready to be added to a book?
- What are some ways every person’s work might look different? What are you proudest of in terms of your capabilities as an artist and a writer? How can you use your strengths in the work you create today?
- How can you help a friend who might be struggling without taking over their project?



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Begin with your draft book.
- In pencil, draft exactly what you will write on your book pages: advice on the first and second problems voted on by the class.
- In pencil, transfer your idea to a large piece of draft paper. Practice writing with the calligraphy pen, and practice forming letters that are interesting to you.
- Create a final version of your advice page. Be sure to include a chapter title.
- Add an illustration using watercolor pencils.
- After creating your image, apply water sparingly and gently to create a paint-like effect.

Extensions: Students can sketch illustrations on all three of their drafts: first, midway, and final.

Closure: Writers’ circle: A few writers read aloud their advice pages, if they are feeling particularly proud of them.

Optional Writing Prompt: What was it like for you when today’s problem turned up in your life? What did you do?



Big Picture

We will use these books as drafts as we work toward creating a big class book of How Tos: How to Solve Our Big Problems. We will work on designing beautiful pages and expert binding to create the kind of book we would want to find in the library.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Play the Level 1 version of the game.

I Do/ We Do

Do the advice page for the major problem as a **group write**: Kids talk and you write simple sentences on the board that they can easily copy.

You Do

Use markers instead of calligraphy pens. Students copy, illustrate, and decorate letters with skinny markers to create drop caps. Alternately, students can work as a table group, with each student making a word for the sentence, and then all words can be glued together to make a class page.



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EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE THROUGH THE ARTS

Unit 3.4 How Do I Solve My Problems?

Lesson: Chapter 3 of Our Guide to Life

Grade Levels 3–4



Yearlong Objectives

- I can recognize my own unique skills.
- I can express myself with words and art.
- I can work as part of an ensemble.

Essential Questions

- How can I be an active member of an ensemble?

Lesson Objectives

- Define and describe “conflict” and “resolution”.
- Create a draft of an advice page.
- Create a piece of writing in fine calligraphic lettering.

National Arts Standards

Note: For consistency, all arts standards listed are second grade standards. However, National Anchor Standards naturally build on each other. To adjust for your grade level, find the corresponding Anchor Standard for your grade.

- Brainstorm collaboratively multiple approaches to an art or design problem. (VA:Cr1.1.2a)
- Demonstrate safe procedures for using and cleaning art tools, equipment, and studio spaces. (VA:Cr2.2.2a)
- Analyze how art exhibited inside and outside of schools (such as in museums, galleries, virtual spaces, and other venues) contributes to communities. (VA:Pr6.1.2a)
- Contribute to group guided drama experiences (e.g., process drama, story drama, creative drama) and informally share with peers. (TH:Pr6.1.2)



Materials needed

Final draft papers (11 x 17), draft books (from [previous session](#)), draft paper, calligraphy pens or paintbrushes and black ink, watercolor pencils, [calligraphy alphabet](#)



Time needed

90 minutes



Vocabulary for this lesson

Social-Emotional: *comfortable, uncomfortable, sadness, joy, fear, surprise, anger, conflict, resolution*
 Visual Arts: *draft, book arts, binding, lettering, drop cap*
 Theatre: *ensemble*



Warm-Up Phase (15 minutes)

Circle: “Favorite” question: What is your favorite holiday?

Feelings question: Think about the five emotions we learned in the [last unit](#). Which one most closely matches the way you are feeling right now? Why?



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Review the three problems selected in the **first session**.
- Review final draft pages created during the **last session**.
- Explain that you are going to write advice for another one of the problems today (review vocabulary: “**conflict**” and “**resolution**”). *All problems have many possible solutions. If you knew someone was being faced with this problem, how would you advise they solve it? Let’s solve a problem together as a group.*
- Follow the same guidelines as **last time**, but this time, add the option to create an illustration using watercolor pencils.
- Demonstrate how to use watercolor pencils carefully, and only after you are completely done lettering.

Keep in Mind

- What are some ways you can be sure that your words and lettering are complete and ready to be added to a book?
- What are some ways every person’s work might look different? What are you proudest of in terms of your capabilities as an artist and a writer? How can you use your strengths in the work you create today?
- How can you help a friend who might be struggling without taking over their project?

You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

- Begin with your draft book.
- In pencil, draft exactly what you will write on your book pages: advice on the first and second problems voted on by the class.
- In pencil, transfer your idea to a large piece of draft paper. Practice writing with the calligraphy pen, and practice forming letters that are interesting to you.
- Create a final version of your advice page. Be sure to include a chapter title.
- Add an illustration using watercolor pencils.
- After creating your image, apply water sparingly and gently to create a paint-like effect.

Extensions: Students can sketch illustrations on all three of their drafts: first, midway, and final.

Closure: Writers’ circle: A few writers read aloud their advice pages, if they are feeling particularly proud of them.

Optional Writing Prompt: What other problems have you thought of while working on this project?



Big Picture

We will use these books as drafts as we work toward creating a big class book of How Tos: How to Solve Our Big Problems. We will work on designing beautiful pages and expert binding to create the kind of book we would want to find in the library.



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Play the Level 1 version of the game.

I Do/ We Do

Do the advice page for the major problem as a **group write**: Kids talk and you write simple sentences on the board that they can easily copy.

You Do

Use markers instead of calligraphy pens. Students copy, illustrate, and decorate letters with skinny markers to create drop caps. Alternately, students can work as a table group, with each student making a word for the sentence, and then all words can be glued together to make a class page.



I Do/ We Do (20 minutes)

Explicitly Teach

- Show class the assortment of pages that will be bound into a book. Review bookmaking vocabulary.
- Explain that we will be binding the class book today using a Japanese side binding. Show examples, if possible. Each person will also have an opportunity to bind her own small, personal book to take home.
- Discuss how books are like ensembles: Each of the pages and ideas must work together in order to make a complete whole.
- Talk about the parts of the book. This book will need a table of contents, a cover, and an About the Authors section.

Keep in Mind

- This book binding is complicated and can be frustrating. What can you do if you accidentally make a mistake?
- How do we share supplies and keep spaces clean and safe?
- What can you do to make your book unique? How can you ensure that you are working as a group?

NOTE: *This project is good practice as a book binding, but will be more successful if students are able to work on some of the extensions. Try to leave time for the extensions, or develop them into a subsequent class.*



You Do (55 minutes)

The project, step-by-step

Teacher will model the book binding on the large class book at the front of the room, while students make their own books at their desks.

- Teacher should have class pages pre-punched and assembled in order, with two covers (front and back), a blank page at the front for a table of contents, a blank page at the back for an About the Authors section, and blank pages separating the chapters.
- Students should have a stack of papers (any size or shape will do) with covers (front and back) and holes pre-punched.
- Teacher models the binding step-by-step with a string. Students use floss on their bindings.
- See extensive [book binding directions](#). Do not use a needle; make the holes using a hole punch so thread can easily go in and out of holes.
- When books are finished, students can decorate them or create them as they see fit. *See Extensions.*

Extensions: The class book needs to be finished, which can happen in a number of ways. Here are a few ideas:

- All students can collaborate on the cover by making their own square-shaped pictures and affixing them to the cover.
- Each student can make a letter for the title of the book.
- Take a class picture for the cover or the About the Authors section.
- Each table group can create art for the chapter pages, so each table group has made a chapter.
- Students can vote for their peers to design the chapter pages.

Closure: Have students confer in small groups about what this book might be used for.

Optional Writing Prompt: What other problems have you thought of while working on this project?



Big Picture

We have written our first book. Now we're ready to put it in the library and help rising students with the biggest problems at our school!



Adjustments for K-1

Warm-Up Phase

Play the Level 1 or 2 version of the game, or choose either the game or the circle question.

I Do/ We Do

Look at book pages and read sections aloud to students. Have them tell you what they think about the book. Give compliments and reviews.

You Do

Skip the book-binding section. Come to the class with the book already bound. Have students design covers or chapter sections individually using markers. Attach elements of children's covers to the book after class is over.