

Strategic Thinking: Classroom Lesson Plan

Lesson Topic:

Strategic Thinking: Solving Problems While Keeping a Goal in Mind

Lesson Objective:

Students will be able to solve a variety of problems while continuing to meet a stated goal.

Materials:

- Writing utensils
- Oh, No! Now What? worksheets, one per student
- Projector or other method to watch the video

Advanced Preparation:

- Preview the video before sharing it with your students [2:44].
- Make copies of Oh, No! Now What?, one per student.

Warm-up Activity:

1. Say, "Think of a recent problem that you solved. This could be a personal problem, a problem at school, or a problem at home."
2. Ask, "How did you solve it?"
3. Give students a few moments to think, then ask for any volunteers that are willing to share their problem and the solution with the class.

4. Guide students to understand that there are many ways to approach and solve problems. And that there are often better strategies to use with certain types of problems than others.

View the Video: "Strategic Thinking"

1. Tell students they will be watching the video titled, "[Strategic Thinking](#)".
2. Explain that the video presents role models discussing the importance of strategic thinking and providing tips to apply strategic thinking to your life.
3. View the video together. Invite students to formulate questions or comments about the ideas discussed in the video and to be prepared to discuss these after viewing the video.

Video Follow-up:

1. Ask students to offer their questions, comments, reactions, and responses to the video.
2. Ask, "What pieces of advice did the role models offer to help you think strategically about a problem or your life?"
3. Direct students to turn and talk to a partner. Then bring the class together to discuss students' ideas.
4. Explain that learning to think strategically takes practice.
5. Divide students into groups of 2-3 students.
6. Pass out the **Oh, No! Now What?** worksheet.
7. Allow students time to complete their worksheets. Circulate to assist as necessary. *Depending on students' age and ability, you may choose to complete Question 1 as a whole class.*
8. Bring the class back together to share their solutions to the unexpected events. Highlight strong examples of strategic thinking.

9. End by reminding students that learning to think strategically takes practice but it is a very important skill to master to help reach the goals you set for yourself in life. As one role model told us, “When you’re thinking strategically, you’re thinking about what you do today that could impact your future.”

Extension Activities:

1. Have students continue to explore strategic thinking using popular storybooks and novels. Gather a series of books dealing with strategic thinking and problem solving or enlist the help of the school librarian. These books can be read individually, as whole class read alouds, or in small reading groups.
2. Use the “Related Questions to Explore” as discussion springboards or writing prompts to help students further explore strategic thinking and problem-solving strategies.

Related Questions to Explore:

- What is strategic thinking? How does it differ from other types of thinking?
- What types of problems can be solved with strategic thinking? What types of problems can **not** be solved with strategic thinking?
- Have you used strategic thinking before? Explain your answer.
- How would you explain strategic thinking to a younger student? When would you advise them to use this method of thinking?

Oh, No! Now What?

Imagine your group is in charge of planning and managing a fundraising event for your afterschool STEM club. You want to raise at least \$850 to help pay summer camp fees for members that can't afford to attend. After lots of discussion, your group decides to hold an evening talent show at your school. You estimate you can sell 90 tickets.

Here are your planned expenses:

Planned Expenses	Cost
Design event flyers	\$30
Print event flyers, tickets, and backdrop	Flyers-\$15; Tickets-\$35; Backdrop-\$50
Rent sound system (speaker and microphone)	\$75
Photographer	\$150
Photo booth and props	\$80

Your group plans two other ways to make extra money during the event: a refreshment table and a photo booth.

You estimate your total sales and sales prices:

Estimated Sale Prices	
Ticket to the talent show	\$12/ticket, estimated to sell 90 tickets
Refreshments	\$200
Photo booth photos	\$2/photo, estimated to sell 60 tickets

1. How much money do you estimate the event will make? Hint: Subtract your total expenses from your estimated sales.

2. When planning and managing events, you can always count on something unexpected to happen. Read through the table below. Then, work with your group to think strategically about how to handle each unexpected event. Remember to keep your goal in mind—you need to earn at least \$850 from this event!

Unexpected Event	Your Plan to Handle It
<p>You planned to ask parents to donate juice and baked goods for the refreshment table, but you aren't getting enough donations! It would cost \$75 to purchase the items from a store.</p>	
<p>The local newspaper contacts you before the event and asks if they can send a reporter. However, they want to be the only one with photos of the event. This means you'll have to cancel the photographer and photo booth. The newspaper offers to donate \$250 towards your goal.</p>	
<p>The printing company calls to let you know that it will cost \$100 to print the backdrop for the stage instead of the \$50 they originally quoted you.</p>	
<p>One week before the event, you realize that you've sold 150 tickets! This is a lot more people than you planned for... What might you need to change or consider to make your event work with so many extra attendees?</p>	



Ideas for Future Lessons/Activities Related to Strategic Thinking:

1. Learning from the Past: How Can We Use Past Events to Guide Decisions for the Future?
2. Math Connection: Using Strategic Thinking to Solve Challenging Word Problems
3. Career Focus: Strategic Thinking at Work
4. Literature-Based Learning: Identifying Strategic Thinking and Problem-Solving in the Autobiographies and Memoirs of Famous Females
5. Group Work: Using Strategic Thinking on a Team
6. Setting the Stage! Preparing to Think Strategically About All Types of Problems
7. Types of Thinking and Their Uses: Strategic, Creative, Practical, and More!
8. Asking the Right Questions: Approaching Problem-Solving from the Right Angle