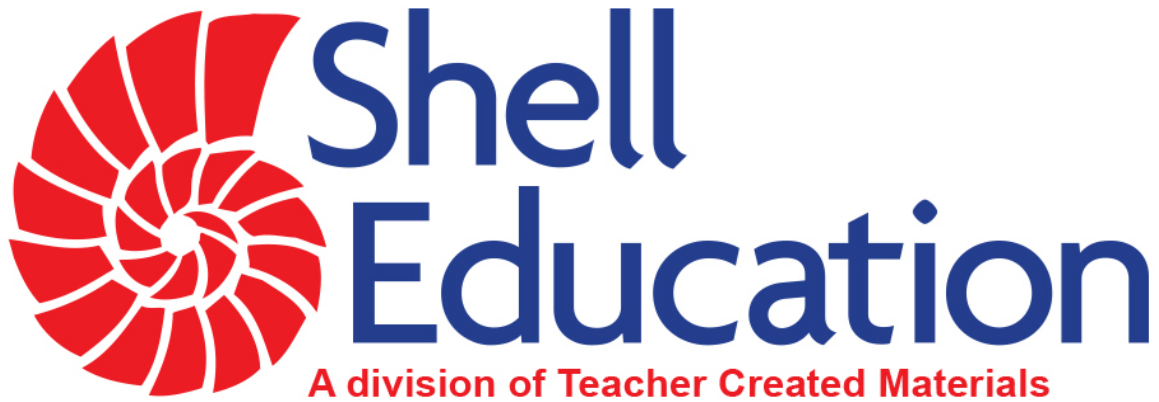


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5



ENGAGING  
MONITORING  
FOCUSING  
BUILDING  
TEACHING

STRATEGIES

FOR  
YOUR

VIRTUAL

CLASSROOM

Jennifer Jump

# Table of Contents

## Introduction

Welcome .....	5
<b>Tips for Distance-Learning Environments</b> .....	6
Synchronous Instruction .....	6
Asynchronous Instruction .....	9
Which Instruction to Use .....	10
Independent Learning .....	11
Hybrid Learning .....	11
<b>Key Practices for Virtual Classrooms</b> .....	12
Project-Based Learning .....	12
Culturally Responsive Learning .....	13
Social-Emotional Learning .....	14
<b>How to Use This Resource</b> .....	15

## Strategies

<b>Organizing Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	17
<b>Building Community in Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	22
<b>Managing Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	27
<b>Engaging Students in Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	32
<b>Teaching Reading in Your PK–2 Virtual Classroom</b> .....	37
<b>Focusing on Social-Emotional Learning in Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	42
<b>Supporting English Learners in Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	47
<b>Using Small Groups in Your Virtual Classroom</b> .....	52
<b>Monitoring Student Progress Virtually</b> .....	57
<b>Engaging Parents in Virtual Learning</b> .....	62

## Appendices

<b>Appendix A: Bibliography</b> .....	68
<b>Appendix B: Student Activity Pages</b> .....	69
<b>Appendix C: Technology Notes</b> .....	91
<b>Appendix D: Digital Resources</b> .....	96

# Welcome

Virtual teaching is not new, but a complete reliance on educating students in virtual classrooms is. There were few distance-learning experts in March 2020, when COVID-19 forced students and teachers around the world into virtual learning environments. As educators, our heads were spinning with definitions of new instructional strategies, such as synchronous and asynchronous learning. Our brick-and-mortar classrooms have always been crucial environments for building relationships with students, supporting their academic growth, engaging with rich texts, solving complex problems, and answering difficult questions. Seminars, turn-and-talks, gallery walks—these teaching strategies made our classrooms collaborative and inclusive. As the spring of 2020 passed, educational systems strengthened and defined new and innovative ways to support students.

This book is born from the work of courageous educators around the world who began innovating in the face of unprecedented challenges. Working with teachers, I began diving into ways to engage with students virtually. Honest and vulnerable conversations opened doors to connections with students through their monitors. I led virtual “coffee chats” with hundreds of educators, building community with them and collaborating around ideas that would form the base of this collection of strategies. This collection is not

exhaustive, as we are evolving constantly to best meet the ever-changing needs of our students, our classrooms, and our schools.

Nothing about this transition has been easy, but together, we—the educational force—are finding our way. We have tried new strategies, learned how excruciating wait time can feel via video, struggled with online whiteboard platforms, researched websites and apps well into our Saturday evenings, and scrutinized our recorded instruction with critical eyes. All this is helping us to develop our expertise in the world of distance learning.

Make the strategies in this resource your own and inspire the students in your virtual classroom, just as you always have when you were in the room with them. Keep the love of learning alive for yourself and your students. Good teaching is good teaching—no matter the learning environment.

*~Jen Jump*

# How to Use This Resource


Choose a strategy and give it a try! Some strategies include student activity pages, which are provided in Appendix B as well as digitally. (See page 96 for more information about the Digital Resources.)

Managing | **VIRTUAL CLASSROOM**

## Attention Getters

Keeping your class engaged and on task in a virtual learning environment is a huge challenge. Students face many distractions at home. They may have easy access to food, television, and other electronic devices. Their parents may be working from home, or they may have siblings who are also engaged in virtual learning. These are just a few potential distractions. Effective attention getters have never been more important. Use two or more attention getters in your virtual classroom to engage students with learning content. These attention getters should be used throughout the day. You may use them to remind your class to stay on task, mark the start of a new lesson, or communicate the end of independent work.

This introductory text provides a brief description of the strategy.



Call-and-response gets students' attention.

## Make It Real

Grades PK–1	Grades 2–7	Grades 8–12
<p>Use attention getters that are fun and require student involvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use call-and-response attention getters. For example, you say “Listen,” and they say “Up.” Or, you say “Chicka-Chicka,” and they say “Boom-Boom.” Or, you say “I like to move it, move it,” and they say “Move it!”</li> <li>Use movement attention getters. For example, “Put your hands on your head, your shoulders, your knees... now freeze.”</li> </ul>	<p>Use music and sound effects to grab students' attention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach several attention-getter songs. When students hear the song, they should redirect their attention to you. Allow students to vote for their favorites.</li> <li>Use sound effects to tell students when to start independent work or engage in virtual chat features.</li> </ul>	<p>Allow students to be part of the selection of attention getters to keep them relevant to teenagers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage students to brainstorm unique attention getters independently or in pairs. Have them submit their ideas using <i>Attention Getter Proposal</i> (page 77).</li> <li>Tell students their attention getters may include words, gestures, sounds, or features from their virtual platforms.</li> </ul>

Ideas for application of the strategy are provided for three grade ranges. Be sure to check out all the options!

More for You

Attention Getter Proposal (grades 8–12).....77

*Keep in Mind!*

As students are learning the routines of the classroom, practice attention getters throughout the day, even when students are focused. This will help students remember how to respond to attention getters when they are losing focus or distracted.

Additional resources are provided to support your teaching of the strategy.

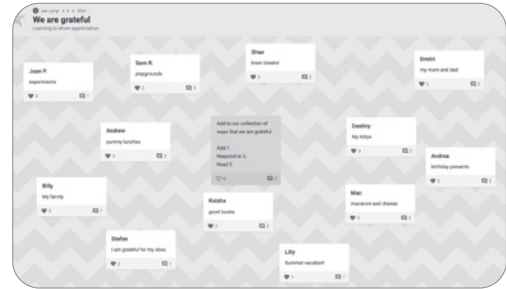
These notes are key things to think about when using the strategy.

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29

Refer to the Technology Notes in Appendix C for suggested apps or websites to support each strategy.

# Gear Up with Gratitude

Gratitude is a complex emotion. It is the quality of being thankful or grateful. Discuss the meaning of gratitude with your students. Brainstorm examples of gratitude as a class. Help students understand the importance of gratitude by providing moments where they can show their appreciation for positive aspects in their day. Complete student reflections about gratitude on online platforms or in small groups.



Students list what they are grateful for on Padlet.

## Make It Real

### Grades PK–1

Clearly model gratitude activities for younger students.

- Tell students three things you are grateful for. Then, brainstorm a list of different things students might be grateful for.
- Help students think about their own feelings as they complete *My Grateful Gears* (page 85).

### Grades 2–6

Challenge students to think deeply about their moments of gratitude.

- Brainstorm a list of things students might be grateful for. Ask students to explain the reasoning behind their grateful moments.
- Allow time for students to complete *Gear Up with Gratitude* (page 86) and share their responses in small groups.

### Grades 7–12

Use videos to start meaningful classroom discussions about gratitude.

- Locate and share short videos of people expressing gratitude.
- Ask students to make short videos describing their grateful moments. Create an online platform where students can post their videos.

### More for You

*My Grateful Gears*  
(grades PK–1).....85

*Gear Up with Gratitude*  
(grades 2–6).....86

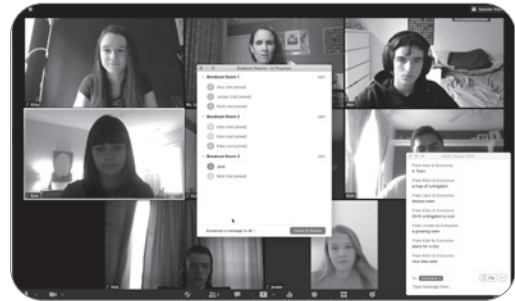
## Keep in Mind

If you create an online board that features student videos, think about starting a new board each week. Otherwise, sharing boards may become overcrowded and difficult to navigate.

Before asking students to create videos, learn about their technology resources. Then, help them locate information about how to create videos using the resources they have.

# Small-Group Work

While understanding your students' individual skill sets will take some time, working in small groups will provide opportunities for observation and insight. Plan and provide small-group instruction to support student learning. You may choose to schedule small-group time in advance or dedicate parts of whole-class instruction to small groups. Either way, ensure that students understand the expectations to maximize small-group time. Be clear about the timing and the concepts that will be taught. Though the idea of multiple virtual small groups may seem difficult, they can be wildly successful by giving students opportunities for more direct learning as well as social-emotional growth.



High schoolers work well in structured small groups.

## Make It Real

### Grades PK–2

Students will need support and guidance in small groups.

- Tell students what to expect from small groups, and support students as they get used to working more closely with you and their peers.
- Based on school and district regulations, ask parents or caregivers to supervise small groups so you can run multiple groups at once.

### Grades 3–6

Help students navigate small-group work productively.

- Give clear guidelines for small-group sessions if you will not be working directly with students. Have students keep track of their learning using *Small-Group Update* (page 88).
- Provide students concrete tasks or assignments to work on while they're in small groups.

### Grades 7–12

Student collaboration promotes social-emotional well-being for teenagers.

- Use small groups to overcome learning gaps, foster discussion, and engage reluctant learners.
- Create groups with diverse student viewpoints.
- Encourage responsible students to take charge and lead small-group work when possible.

### More for You

Small-Group Update  
(grades 3–6).....88

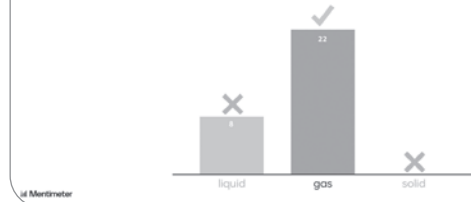
## Keep in Mind

When using breakout rooms during live class, visit different rooms to monitor student progress. Make sure students write down the assignment or take a screenshot before going into their breakout rooms. Small-group work can also happen asynchronously using shared documents.

## Check for Understanding

Are your students getting it? Or do you need to regroup and reteach? In the midst of a great lesson, quick check-ins provide the formative data needed to make instructional decisions. Many virtual platforms provide opportunities for formative assessment. For example, when you need in-the-moment feedback, you can use thumbs-up/thumbs-down or polling features. Use these formative assessments to check for understanding quickly and guide future instruction. Student responses will highlight needs for reteaching, additional support, and targeted feedback.

Which type of matter has molecules that move around their container freely?



This poll identifies a small group of students who need reteaching.

## Make It Real

### Grades PK–1

Clearly model for students what is expected during formative assessments.

- Show students how to hold their thumbs up to their cameras so that they are seen, or use this feature in their virtual class platform.
- Practice formative assessments throughout the day: *What do we do if we understand? Yes, we put our thumbs up. What do we do if we want more help? We put our thumbs down.*

### Grades 2–7

Use polling features for quick, detailed feedback.

- Check for student understanding with multiple-choice questions based on new content.
- Add open-ended questions to your polls so that students may submit their thoughts and questions about new material.

### Grades 8–12

Ask older students to summarize their learning.

- Challenge students to write six-word summaries of the lesson through the chat feature. The shortness of the summaries will make it easier for you to read quickly and also challenges students to analyze more deeply.
- Ask students to describe the central idea of new content and defend their opinions with examples from the lesson. Have them share this learning in an online platform so you can quickly see all students' responses.

## Keep in Mind

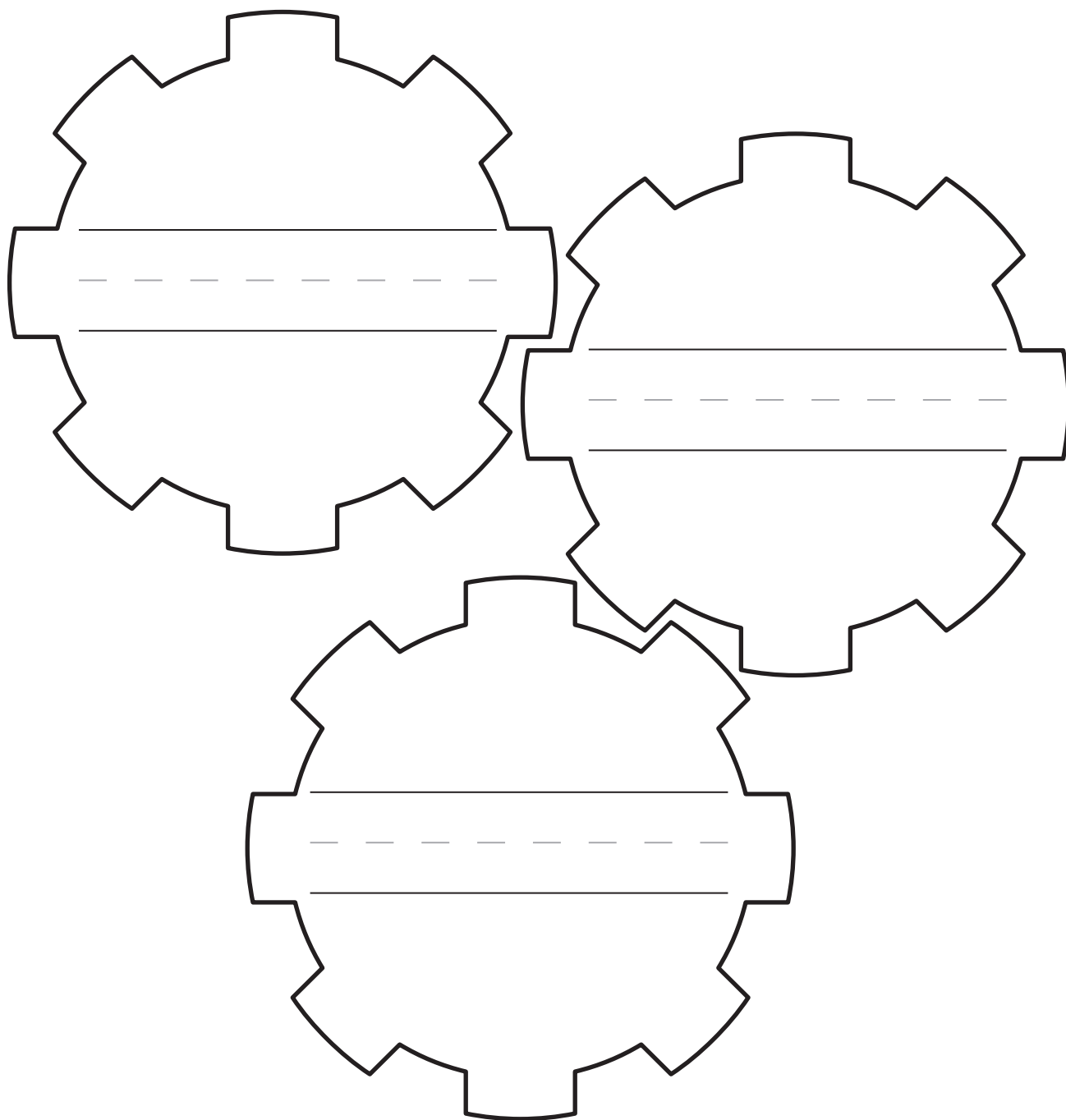
Introduce new technology, such as polling apps, with low-stakes prompts. For example, create a practice poll that asks students to choose their favorite day of the week. Discuss the results as a class to show students how the technology may be used in the future. Then, begin using the technology for true formative assessments.



# My Grateful Gears

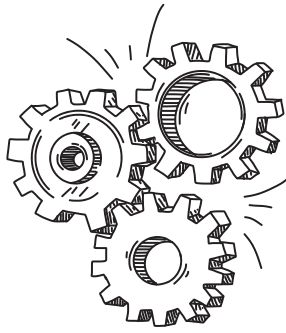
**Directions:** Think about what you are grateful for. Write your ideas on the gears.

I am grateful for ...



# Gear Up with Gratitude

**Directions:** Think about gratitude and moments in your life when you've been grateful. Then, answer the questions.



Describe a time when you have felt grateful.

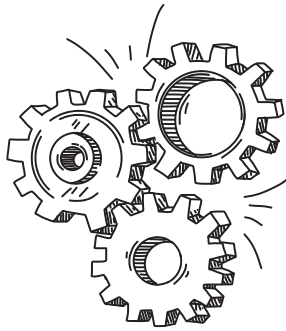
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Who do you feel grateful for at school? Why?

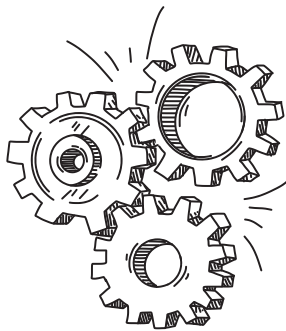
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Who do you feel grateful for at home? Why?

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# Small-Group Update

**Directions:** In small groups, your classmates and teacher will say things that help you learn. Fill in the chart during small-group work. Then, write what you learned.

Who said it?	What did they say?	What does this teach me?

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