

Metacognitive Skills

Resisting Impulsivity

Secondary

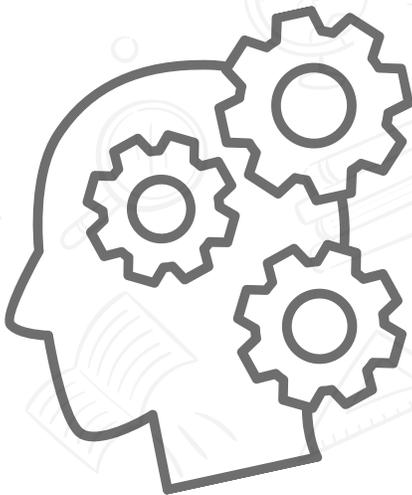


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RESISTING IMPULSIVITY

When faced with a desire to form a quick conclusion, this skill helps students refrain from doing so until more relevant information can be gathered before action is taken.

Introduce the skill of resisting impulsivity using the video lesson or an introduction of your own design that covers the same content. The text of the recording is below:

Video script -- Have you ever been in a situation where you formed a quick conclusion without really stopping to think things through? Maybe you were frustrated with a math problem, so you quickly wrote an answer instead of rechecking your work. Maybe your text to a friend sounded unintentionally rude because you didn't stop to reread it. Maybe you clicked "buy now" on something without checking to see if it was worth it. Or maybe you wrote a quick thesis statement before taking the time to think of what you were really trying to say. These kinds of hasty decisions happen all the time, and they're exactly when resisting impulsivity really matters.

This skill helps you respond in a more thoughtful, deliberate way instead of reacting automatically to your first instinct.

Here's a strategy that will help guide your thinking as you resist impulsivity:

1. Ask yourself if this is a situation where you should stop and think before forming a conclusion or taking action.
2. If it is, identify the conclusion you've already formed or the action you're about to take.
3. Try to determine if you could form a better conclusion or take a better course of action, and if yes, do so.
4. Identify what you've learned about the situation.

Here is an example of someone using this strategy.

Yasmin is writing an English paper. She's supposed to analyze the main character in a novel and support her ideas with evidence from the text. She remembers several scenes where the character takes charge and seems entirely sure of themselves. She



quickly writes a thesis saying the character is confident and assertive, and she's ready to start her paper.

But before she begins, she remembers that there are some parts where the character hesitated and second-guessed themselves. She wants to do well on this paper, so she decides to pause and make sure her thesis statement fully describes the character. She goes back and rereads her notes and looks more closely at a few key scenes.

As she reviews, Yasmin notices several moments where the character privately admits they're insecure and need reassurance before taking action. She realizes that her original thesis was too simple and didn't fully capture the character's complexity.

She knows she can write a better thesis, so she revises it to show that the character's confidence hides a deeper insecurity. She learns that resisting impulsivity allows her to notice essential details she might have missed if she had rushed. She's proud that she thought it through, because in the past, she would have just gone with her first instinct.

Resisting impulsivity is useful outside of school as well. For example, Brielle texts her friend that she passed her driver's test. Her friend replies, "Seriously?" Brielle thinks this is a little rude, and her first reaction is to come up with a sarcastic reply. But before she hits send, she pauses and thinks carefully. She comes to the conclusion that her friend is always supportive of her, and she wouldn't mean to be disrespectful. Brielle replaces her irritated reply with a positive message. By stopping to think before forming a conclusion, she avoids starting an argument and keeps the conversation calm.

Whether you're in school or not, resisting impulsivity helps you make more thoughtful choices in your work or catch yourself before reacting in a way you might regret later. As you practice, you get better at noticing when you feel impulsive, and you'll stop to think about a better course of action or a better conclusion. Over time, you grow more confident in your ability to respond thoughtfully and act in ways that reflect your best judgment.



Once students have been introduced to the skill of resisting impulsivity, emphasize the following points with them:

- Resisting impulsivity means pausing to think before forming a conclusion or taking action, especially when your first reaction is quick or emotional. Discuss with students using prompts like, “What does it feel like when you are about to react without thinking?”
- This skill is especially useful in situations where quick reactions can lead to mistakes or misunderstandings, such as academic work, communication with others, or decision-making outside of school. Discuss with students using prompts like, “What kinds of situations make you most likely to act on your first instinct?”
- Strong emotions, time pressure, or habits can trigger impulsive responses, making it important to notice when you feel rushed or reactive. Discuss with students using prompts like, “What feelings or situations tend to push you to act quickly without thinking?”
- An important part of resisting impulsivity is recognizing when a situation warrants pausing and thinking more carefully before responding. Discuss with students using prompts like, “How can you tell when it’s worth slowing down instead of responding right away?”
- Resisting impulsivity involves identifying the conclusion you’ve already formed or the action you are about to take. Discuss with students using prompts like, “What would be your first thought or reaction in a situation like this?”
- After identifying your initial reaction, the next step is considering whether a better conclusion or course of action is possible. Discuss with students using prompts like, “What might change if you took a moment to think this through more carefully?”
- Revising your response after careful consideration can lead to clearer, more accurate, or more respectful outcomes. Discuss with students using prompts like, “How did revising her thesis help Yasmin produce stronger work?”
- Reflection helps you identify what you learned by slowing down and thinking carefully. Discuss with students using prompts like, “What did Yasmin learn about her thinking when she paused instead of rushing?”
- Resisting impulsivity outside of school helps prevent conflict or poor decisions. Discuss with students using prompts like, “How did Brielle’s decision to pause before replying change the outcome of the conversation?” or “How might slowing down and thinking first change the way you handle challenging situations in the future?”



LEVELS OF COMPETENCE

There are specific levels of competence for this skill against which students can be evaluated (see **Table 1**). It is important to note that the levels of competence are articulated as a scale that can be used to make judgments about students' status and growth. That scale has score values that range from 0.0 to 4.0. At the 0.0 level, the student cannot demonstrate any part of the skill even with help. At the 1.0 level, the student can perform some of the foundational aspects of the skill with help but not independently. At the 2.0 level, the student can independently demonstrate the foundational aspects of the skill but not the behaviors described at the 3.0 level. The 3.0 level on the scale represents proficiency in the skill. When students can independently demonstrate these behaviors, they have reached the desired status for the skill. At the 4.0 level, the student demonstrates everything at the 3.0 level AND goes above and beyond expectations by adding useful adaptations to the skill. Finally, the scale describes half-point scores that indicate partial progress toward the next level of the scale.

Periodically evaluate students' status relative to these levels of competence using the assessment activities in **Table 4**.

It is also important to note that **Table 2** and **Table 3** contain versions of the scale that can be used by students to rate themselves. These scales are both stated in an "I CAN" format. Periodically, students evaluate themselves relative to the levels of competence using the Full-point or the Half-point self-evaluation scales.



Table 1: Levels of Competence

4.0	The student can articulate specific situations (in school and outside of school) in which they should resist impulsivity, set goals to do so, and evaluate progress.
3.5	In addition to score 3.0 performance, partial success at score 4.0 content.
3.0	The student will recognize when they are not resisting impulsivity and respond by executing a complex strategy involving self-analysis.
2.5	No major errors or omissions regarding score 2.0 content, and partial success at score 3.0 content.
2.0	<p>The student will recognize or recall vocabulary associated with self-analysis as it relates to resisting impulsivity (for example, <i>cautious, deliberate, impulsive</i>) and perform basic processes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe a complex strategy involving self-analysis for resisting impulsivity (articulated by the class or the teacher in the form of a standard operating procedure [SOP]) (for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask yourself if this is a situation where you should stop and think before forming a conclusion or taking action. ○ If it is, identify the conclusion you’ve already formed or the action you’re about to take. ○ Try to determine if you could form a better conclusion or take a better course of action, and if yes, do so. ○ Identify what you’ve learned about the situation. ● Understand what an individual might think and feel while resisting impulsivity (for example, feeling emotional at first; thinking, “Wait, let me stop and think about this more cautiously.”)
1.5	Partial success at score 2.0 content, and major errors or omissions regarding score 3.0 content.
1.0	With help, partial success at score 2.0 content and score 3.0 content.
0.5	With help, partial success at score 2.0 content but not at score 3.0 content.
0.0	Even with help, the student demonstrates no success.



Table 2: I CAN Student Assessment Form (Half-point scale)

4.0	I can articulate specific situations (in school and out of school) in which I should resist impulsivity, set goals to do so, and evaluate my progress.
3.5	In addition to score 3.0, I can do some of what is required at the score 4.0 level.
3.0	I can recognize when I am not resisting impulsivity and respond by executing a complex strategy involving self-analysis.
2.5	In addition to score 2.0, I can do some of what is required at the score 3.0 level.
2.0	<p>I can recognize or recall vocabulary associated with self-analysis as it relates to resisting impulsivity (for example, <i>cautious, deliberate, impulsive</i>) and perform basic processes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe a complex strategy involving self-analysis for resisting impulsivity (articulated by the class or the teacher in the form of a standard operating procedure [SOP]) (for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask yourself if this is a situation where you should stop and think before forming a conclusion or taking action. ○ If it is, identify the conclusion you’ve already formed or the action you’re about to take. ○ Try to determine if you could form a better conclusion or take a better course of action, and if yes, do so. ○ Identify what you’ve learned about the situation. ● Understand what an individual might think and feel while resisting impulsivity (for example, feeling emotional at first; thinking, “Wait, let me stop and think about this more cautiously.”)
1.5	On my own, I can do some of the things at score 2.0 level.
1.0	With help, I can do some of the things at score 2.0 level and 3.0 level.
0.5	With help, I can do some of the score 2.0 level things but not the score 3.0 level things.



0.0

Even with help, I cannot do any of the score levels.



Table 3: I CAN Student Assessment Form (Full-point scale)

4.0	I can articulate specific situations (in school and out of school) in which I should resist impulsivity, set goals to do so, and evaluate my progress.
3.0	I can recognize when I am not resisting impulsivity, and respond by executing a complex strategy involving self-analysis.
2.0	<p>I can recognize or recall vocabulary associated with self-analysis as it relates to resisting impulsivity (for example, <i>cautious, deliberate, impulsive</i>) and perform basic processes such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describe a complex strategy involving self-analysis for resisting impulsivity (articulated by the class or the teacher in the form of a standard operating procedure [SOP]) (for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask yourself if this is a situation where you should stop and think before forming a conclusion or taking action. ○ If it is, identify the conclusion you’ve already formed or the action you’re about to take. ○ Try to determine if you could form a better conclusion or take a better course of action, and if yes, do so. ○ Identify what you’ve learned about the situation. ● Understand what an individual might think and feel while resisting impulsivity (for example, feeling emotional at first; thinking, “Wait, let me stop and think about this more cautiously.”)
1.0	With help, I can do some of the things at score 2.0 level and score 3.0 level.
0.0	Even with help, I cannot do any of the score levels.



Table 4: Assessment Activities

4.0	Ask students to document specific situations in and out of school when they've used the skill of resisting impulsivity. They should be able to describe the goals they set for themselves, what they did, and how well they performed.
3.0	Have students document a time they used the skill of resisting impulsivity. They should be able to provide a detailed description of the event and a critique of their own behavior.
2.0	<p>Ask students to explain the following terms: <i>cautious</i>, <i>deliberate</i>, <i>impulsive</i>. Their answers should be generally accurate but not necessarily detailed or complete.</p> <p>Ask students to describe a basic process that has been provided to them for resisting impulsivity. Their descriptions should include explicit steps such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Ask yourself if this is a situation where you should stop and think before forming a conclusion or taking action.● If it is, identify the conclusion you've already formed or the action you're about to take.● Try to determine if you could form a better conclusion or take a better course of action, and if yes, do so.● Identify what you've learned about the situation. <p>Ask students to describe some of the self-talk and thinking that should occur when someone is resisting impulsivity. Their answers should include things like they are feeling emotional at first and think, "Wait, let me stop and think about this more carefully."</p>

