

Digital Futures Fall Pilot: Middle School Lesson Packet

This packet guides you through the four pilot steps: reviewing materials, completing Survey 1, preparing for and facilitating the classroom activity, and completing Survey 2, approximately 1–2 hours total. Survey links are provided in your acceptance email.

Step 1: Review the Lesson and Prepare

Read the complete lesson below before completing Survey 1. You will use this same script when you facilitate in Step 3.

> Lesson at a glance

- **Lesson title:** Real Situations, Real Risks: Navigating Digital Spaces Safely
- **Grade band:** 6–8
- **Duration:** Approximately 30 minutes
- **Key skills:** Risk assessment, anticipating escalation, and matching safety responses.
- **Learning objectives:** Assess the risk level of fictional digital situations; trace how risks could spread or escalate across digital spaces; and select appropriate safety responses, explaining when independent action is sufficient or trusted-adult support is needed.

Intro: Inclusive Hook	Part 1: Sort the Scenarios by Risk Level	Part 2: Pattern Across Platforms	Part 3: Match the Response	Part 4: Reflect & Connect	Part 5: Exit Ticket
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> Prepare your materials

Before facilitating, prepare the materials below using ordinary classroom supplies. Simple handwritten materials are sufficient; student devices, projectors, and audiovisual equipment are not needed.

- **Scenario Cards – Six to eight per set.** Write brief fictional middle-school digital situations, such as an unknown person sending a direct message, a late-night group-chat argument, racist jokes in a multiplayer game, a private screenshot shared to a class chat, a spreading rumor, or repeated unwanted messages after a block.
- **Risk-Level Cards – Three shared cards.** Label them “Lower,” “Mid,” and “Higher,” using the risk-level descriptions in Part 1. Space them out on a table or the floor for scenario ratings. Higher-risk situations include coercion and safety concerns requiring adult support.
- **Response Cards – Eight shared cards.** Write: “Disengage/Step away,” “Mute or unfollow,” “Block,” “Report on the platform,” “Document safely,” “Tell a trusted adult,” “Tell a parent/caregiver,” and “Tell a counselor or school staff.”
- **Decision Path Strip – One classroom visual.** Draw the three-step thinking process: “Notice → Name the level → Match a response.” Keep it visible during the activity.
- **Sticky notes – About four to six per student.** Use these for scenario ratings and drawing an arrow chain showing how a situation could spread across digital spaces. Two colors may help distinguish activities but are not required.
- **Writing supplies – Enough for each student.** Gather pencils or pens and one to two index cards or pieces of scrap paper per student for private notes, response planning, and independent or partner work. Keep one larger sheet available to model the arrow chain in Part 2.

- **Exit Tickets – One per student.** Provide paper with enough space for the four ‘Read, Rate, Respond’ prompts in Part 5.

➤ Facilitation guidance

Guide students’ reasoning and safe decision-making. Maintain a supportive, non-punitive tone. Use fictional scenarios to help students assess lower, mid, or higher risk; trace how a situation could spread from a direct message to a group chat, screenshot, or wider thread; and select one to three appropriate responses. Model how to consider both the immediate situation and what could happen next. Invite students to explain their reasoning and determine when independent action is sufficient or adult support is needed. Recognize that peer dynamics can make asking for help difficult; reinforce help-seeking as a strategic, capable choice.

Protect privacy and offer participation choices. Do not ask students to describe personal incidents, identify other people, or show real messages, accounts, or images. Use fictional scenarios throughout, including during partner or group discussions. No personal accounts, devices, or actual posting are required. Students may speak, write, draw, point, listen, or pass. No student is required to share a personal experience. Offer an individual or educator-supported alternative to partner work when needed.

Adapt for your students while preserving the core activity. You may adjust vocabulary, pacing, the number of scenarios, group size, and response options to meet students’ developmental, language, and accessibility needs. Keep the focus on assessing risk levels, tracing possible escalation across digital spaces, and matching responses to the situation, including when adult support is required. Preserve opportunities for students to explain their reasoning, with support as needed. Note any adaptations so you can describe them in your post-facilitation feedback.

Plan for support before beginning. Review the fictional scenarios for topics that may be sensitive for your students. Review your school or setting’s procedures for responding to student safety concerns and identify whom to contact if a student needs help. This lesson supports safety and help-seeking skills; it is not a clinical, disciplinary, or crisis-response tool and does not replace your setting’s support procedures.

Respond calmly if a student shares a concern. Fictional scenarios may bring up real experiences or distress. You might say, “Thank you for telling me. Let’s talk somewhere private so I can help.” Acknowledge what they say without asking for details in front of the class. Redirect the group to the fictional scenario and arrange a private follow-up as appropriate. Connect the student with appropriate support, such as a school counselor, designated safeguarding contact, school-based clinician or health center, family liaison, or community resource, following your setting’s procedures. If a disclosure or observation raises concerns about abuse, exploitation, sextortion, non-consensual image sharing, stalking, self-harm, threats of harm, or immediate danger, follow your setting’s safeguarding and reporting procedures promptly. For urgent safety concerns, do not wait until the lesson ends. Offer a private check-in if a student appears distressed. Respect their choice not to talk unless a disclosure or observation raises a safety concern requiring action. Connect students with culturally and linguistically appropriate support when available; do not provide legal advice.

Keep classroom checks separate from pilot submissions. Scenario ratings, response planning, and the exit ticket are opportunities to check understanding, not graded assignments or student data submissions to UCLA CTS. Students may respond through writing, drawing, pointing, or speaking, as appropriate to the activity. Keep individual reflections and exit-ticket responses private; students are not required to share them publicly. Do not submit student work to the UCLA CTS team. Your educator feedback should describe general classroom observations without student names, direct quotes, screenshots, account information, or other identifying details.

➤ Lesson script

When you facilitate in Step 3, use **DO** for actions and **SAY** for suggested language, adapting as needed for your students.

Intro:
Inclusive Hook (Spark Engagement)

Materials:
→ None

Duration:
~ 5 min

DO:

Greet students. Explain that this lesson is not about sharing personal experiences or deciding who was right or wrong online. It is about learning how to look at a situation, recognize potential risks, and think through possible responses. Tell students they will not be asked to share personal stories, name specific people, describe screenshots, or talk about anything that has actually happened to them.

SAY:

"Quick frame for today. We're going to talk about realistic, fictional digital situations like DMs (i.e., direct messages), group chats, gaming, comment threads, and shared posts. You do not have to share anything personal. If you choose to participate, you can speak in general terms. For example, you might say, 'Someone in middle school might...' That is exactly the level of detail we're looking for.

Risk shows up differently in different digital spaces. A heated message in a DM is different from a heated message in a group chat. And the **same risk can move across platforms**. A screenshot from one space can end up in another and become bigger.

*Today is about three things: **noticing the risk, naming how serious it is, and matching the right response.** In some situations, you can handle it yourself. Some need a trusted adult. Knowing the difference is the actual skill."*

DO:

Remind students they may write privately, pass on any prompt, or speak in general "someone my age" terms.

Part 1:
Sort the Scenarios by Risk Level

Materials:
→ Scenario Cards
→ Risk-Level Cards
→ Sticky notes
→ Pencils or pens

Duration:
~ 6 min

DO:

Place the three Risk-Level Cards (**Lower, Mid, Higher**) on the floor or table, spaced out. Read the descriptors aloud.

SAY:

"Lower-risk: Uncomfortable, maybe annoying, but unlikely to cause real harm if it's left alone or handled with a small adjustment. ***Mid-risk:*** Real harm is possible. Things could escalate. ***Higher-risk:*** coercion—using pressure, manipulation, intimidation, or repeated requests to get someone to do something they do not want to do—or situations where safety is at risk. These situations require adult support and should not be handled by a student alone. Consent means a clear, freely given, informed, specific, and ongoing yes to that action. Pressure, silence, freezing, uncertainty, or withdrawal do not count as consent.

I'm going to read a few scenarios. After each one, place a sticky note on the level that you think fits. Keep your reasoning to yourself for now. We'll talk about it afterward."

DO:

Read 4 Scenario Cards aloud, one at a time. After each, give 30 seconds for students to silently place or write their rating. After all scenarios are rated, briefly discuss the ones with split ratings. Invite students to explain their reasoning, and clarify misunderstandings that could minimize a serious safety concern.

Part 2:
 Pattern Across Platforms
Materials:

- Scenario Cards
- Risk-Level Cards
- Sticky notes
- Pencils or pens
- Paper for the educator's arrow-chain example

Duration:
 ~ 5 min
DO:

Pick one Scenario Card from Part 1. Trace how the same kind of risk might **migrate across digital spaces**. Use a hand-drawn arrow chain (DM → screenshot → group chat → wider audience).

SAY:

“The same situation may not stay in one place. What starts as a heated DM might become a screenshot. The screenshot might end up in a group chat, and the group chat might reach a wider audience. What happens online can also affect school, friendships, teams, family relationships, or other in-person settings. When you see something at one level, ask: Could this move into another digital or in-person space? If it moves, does the risk level go up?”

DO:

Invite students to draw their own short arrow chain on a sticky note for any one scenario.

Part 3:
 Match the Response
Materials:

- Scenario Cards
- Response Cards
- Decision Path Strip
- Index cards or scrap paper
- Pencils or pens

Duration:
 ~ 7 min
DO:

Lay out the eight Response Cards. Briefly name each one and what it usually does (Disengage, Mute, Block, Report, Document, Tell a trusted adult, Tell a parent/caregiver, and Tell a counselor or school staff). Keep the Decision Path Strip visible and refer to it as students choose their responses. Students may point to or write down their choices from the shared Scenario Cards and Response Cards.

SAY:

“One—there is rarely just one right response. A good response may combine actions such as disengaging, blocking, reporting, telling a trusted adult, and, when it is safe and appropriate, documenting what happened. The order depends on the content, platform, and safety situation.

Two—adult support is always available. Higher-risk situations should not be handled by a student alone.

Three—some situations are beyond what a student should manage alone. Anything involving threats, private images shared without consent, persistent harassment, coordinated targeting (i.e., two or more people

organizing, encouraging, or repeatedly joining actions against the same person), or another serious safety concern requires adult support.

Choose a Scenario Card and 1–3 Response Cards that fit the situation. Be ready to explain, in general terms, why those responses make sense.”

DO:

Allow 3 minutes for students to work independently or with a partner. Then invite two volunteers to share their pairings with the group.

Part 4:
Reflect & Connect

Materials:
→ None for oral discussion
→ Index cards or scrap paper and pencils or pens for optional written responses

Duration:
~ 4 min

QUESTIONS

Invite reflection using the questions below. Students may respond aloud, write privately, or pass.

- **Self-Awareness / Internal Noticing:** What clues help me recognize when something is not safe?
- **Context / Cause-and-Effect:** How do risks develop or spread in different digital spaces?
- **Agency / Decision-Making:** When should I handle something myself, and when should I get help?

Part 5:
Exit Ticket

Materials:
→ Exit Tickets
→ Scenario Cards
→ Pencils or pens
→ Risk-Level Cards
→ Response Cards

Duration:
~ 3 min

FORMAT

Each student receives paper with enough space for four brief responses. Students complete it privately. Responses using "someone my age" language are fully acceptable.

Students may respond through brief notes or another response format described in Facilitation Guidance. Allow students to finish during the transition if needed.

Prompt – "Read, Rate, Respond"

Choose one of the Scenario Cards from today's activity (or invent a fictional one). Then answer:

1. **Read the risk:** What is one risk in this scenario? (Be specific and name the type of risk.)
2. **Rate the level:** Is it Lower, Mid, or Higher risk? Briefly explain why (what about the context tells you).
3. **Spot the pattern:** Describe one pattern in how the risk could develop or spread across digital spaces.
4. **Match the response:** Pick 1–2 responses (Disengage, Mute, Block, Report, Document, Tell a trusted adult, etc.). Determine whether this is a situation you could handle on your own or one where you should ask a trusted adult for help. Explain your reasoning.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

A student meets the objective if they:

- a. Name a specific risk
- b. Rate it with a defensible reason rooted in context
- c. Describe a plausible pattern of escalation or spread
- d. Match a response to the level, including a clear judgment about whether independent action or adult support is appropriate.

Step 2: Complete Feedback Survey 1

Before facilitating, complete “Survey 1: Lesson Packet Review Feedback” using the link in your acceptance email. Share specific feedback on the lesson’s clarity, developmental fit, materials, and preparation requirements. Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Step 3: Facilitate the Classroom Activity

Facilitate “Real Situations, Real Risks” using the lesson script in Step 1 (starting on [page 3](#)) and the materials you prepared. You may adapt language, pacing, and participation options for your students while preserving the core activity. Note any adaptations so you can describe them in Survey 2.

Step 4: Complete Feedback Survey 2

After facilitating, complete “Survey 2: Post-Facilitation Feedback” using the link in your acceptance email. Provide specific feedback grounded in your classroom experience, including adaptations and suggestions for improvement. Where possible, identify the lesson part, instruction, or prompt your feedback refers to. Allow approximately 15 minutes.

Reminders:

- Do not include student names, identifiable information, direct quotes, screenshots, account information, or copies of student work in your responses.
- Completion of all steps is due by Friday, November 6 unless agreed upon in writing with pilot coordinators.
- For any questions or concerns, reach out via email: digitalfutures@seis.ucla.edu