

WHAT'S YOUR PROCEDURE FOR THAT?

A Classroom Management Guide
From Morning Meeting to Dismissal



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**For teachers everywhere who dared to go toward
the challenge of making a difference in the lives of
children.**

Introduction

I know what you are thinking...

How hard could it be? I mean, really: how difficult could it be to manage a classroom? They are just children. They are just kids. So, why all the fuss? What is with all the classroom management talk? Sit here. Sit there. Raise your hand. Get in line. Walk in the hall. Go to lunch. Go to the bathroom. Now, let us move to centers.

Kids can do all this without a problem BUT let me ask you a question: What will you do when transitions do not flow so efficiently?

Keep reading.

Of course students can do all that! They can do it all. The goal, therefore, is to get dozens of kids to accomplish a task all at once and without incident, while taking ownership of their own accountability and behavior. Nevertheless, how do we get multiple little humans to transition in the classroom, outside of the classroom, to the bathroom, to lunch, out to recess, engaged in teaching, and back to the restroom ALL WHILE SAVING THE TOILET PAPER!

Well...

Every day, educators all over the world manage to move little humans throughout the school building by using established routines and procedures. Classroom management is the foundation on which everything in your class is built. Every transition, restroom break, and lesson which is delivered, will only be as effective as your established procedures. If you can think of it, there should be a procedure for it!

“When students come from backgrounds that lacks structure, it is vital for the teacher to have a classroom that is high in structure.”

Patrice Cannon

Getting to Know You and Your Students' Personalities Through Their True Colors

So there I was, in a classroom with 25 little people looking to me for guidance and instruction. Teaching was not my first choice and consequently I had no education background. I had neither student taught nor substituted prior to stepping foot into the classroom. Therefore, I started teaching on an alternative certification and had no clue about teaching. The day I signed my contract happened to be "Meet the Teacher" night. Considering that my new classroom was previously a storage room, I rushed from human resources after signing my contract so that I could fix up my classroom. I was hired to teach at a school that had been low performing for several years, had high discipline issues, and was a more challenging school in the district.

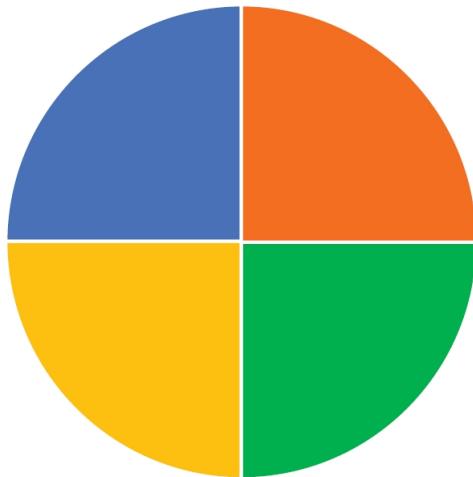
As much as I wanted to be confident, I was nervous, scared, and confused all at the same time. The next morning, students began walking into the classroom, wearing their backpacks, and had their school supplies in hand. Eventually I told them to put their backpacks on the back of their chairs and place their school supplies over on a table. Afterwards, I would decide what to do next.

What I did not expect was for some students to go in and out of their backpacks all day. Neither did I have a plan for the student telling me his parents requested that he not share school supplies; nor did I plan for what could happen if I needed the table which was now full of school supplies. I did not plan for backpacks not staying on chairs all day, or for the fight which ensued after one student stepped on another student's backpack that was on the floor.

So, there I am: a floor full of backpacks, a table full of supplies, and a student crying. And, I just remembered the student who had asked to go to the restroom earlier had not returned! I was so busy putting out fires in my classroom each day that I had not noticed the teachers looking through the window, laughing and taking bets about how long I would last. Still, each day I would contain the fire, then crashed on the couch from pure exhaustion at night. I spent more time redirecting, threatening, and disciplining students instead of teaching

- mainly due to my lack of classroom procedures.

In my first year of teaching, I learned when students do not have procedures or routines, they will create their own. Effective classroom management keeps students safe in the classroom and allows the teacher to maximize instruction time. Procedures also maintain structure and organization. It is not impossible to establish effective procedures and routines; that was just my first year experience. Teaching students the classroom procedures and routines, is one of the first lessons you will teach!



Before we meet our children, we must first meet ourselves. Who you are will travel into any room, any career, any relationship, and any classroom! Being aware of who you are empowers you with the knowledge of how to respond to others. It makes it easier to settle conflicts, while having the insight to be able to relate to others. We reject what we do not understand; but tend to accept and become more settled when we do understand. Knowing and understanding ourselves will affect how we see and understand others. As educators, we want to be careful not to seek to change our students in order to fit our personality comfort. Instead, we should value who they are while empowering them on their level. We can only do this after we have first discovered and accepted ourselves.

We all have a unique and different personality. There are several personality tests from which we can choose, all of which outline our personality's behaviors and characteristics. Nonetheless, I have chosen to explore the True Colors Personality Test with you. This particular personality test attempts to identify various personality

styles, labeling them with colors. This model of categorizing personalities is based on the work of Isabel Briggs-Myers, Katherine Briggs, and David Keirey. Don Lowry developed the True Colors System, which uses four distinct colors (orange, gold, green and blue) to designate personality types and behavioral styles.

Lowry's objective was to understand how personality styles can be used, thereby initiating better communication and understanding between people within a multitude of places. Moreover, he anticipated for it to lead to positive self-worth and self-esteem. The belief is that, with an increased understanding of ourselves and others, conflicts will decrease. You must first learn your personality color, so that you can understand personality colors of your students and/or colleagues. Only then will you have a better understanding of how you and they behave.

Everyone has some degree of each color, but one color is predominant. The following online quiz is designed to identify your spectrum. It can be found online at: <https://truecolorsintl.com/personality-assessment/>. Follow the directions carefully, transferring your scores to the next section in this book. If you have two colors which have the same score, pick a color you think more accurately describes you, or choose a color to which you are drawn.

DON Lowry, Creator of True Colors

“Successful people know who they are and what their True Colors are... when you know what your core values and needs are and feel good about them, you can perform at your highest potential in every area of life. When you share a working, mutual understanding of other’ core values and needs, you have the basis to communicate, motivate, and achieve common goals with utmost dignity, efficacy, and mutual respect.”

After taking the True Colors Personality Test:

Write down your personality color.

How do you see yourself?

How do you think others might perceive you?

Which personality color would be the least challenging with which you could teach or work? Why?

Which personality color would be the most challenging with which you could teach or work? Why?

How could you maintain a good relationship with the oranges?

The blues?

The greens?

The golds?

What do you want to tell others about your personality?

Think about your answers for a minute. Think about the people closest to you. Does this align with anything they have ever told you?

Now, take a minute to think about your triggers. Identify the thing(s) making you feel powerless, afraid, frustrated, and/or angry. Write it down; find out why. Own it and be aware of it. This empowers you to maintain self-control when someone pushes that trigger.

Deal with yourself and who you are. For every issue you have suppressed, there is a student waiting to revive it, trigger it, or test it. We have to be self-aware when working with children. They are like sponges who will soak up many things, including your pain. Unresolved issues make you a walking trigger which enables you to cause pain to yourself and damage others, especially children.

When we attempt to force children into becoming what we want them to be, it creates conflict inside them. There's a spirit inside each of us that is constantly pulling and tugging at us to become who we are.

My first few years as a teacher, I tried to force my students to fit into a classroom mold generally designed and created for my own comfort. Having them get up and move around created anxiety. Essentially I thought the classroom would quickly turn to chaos when the students got out of their seats. Allowing the students to work in

groups created a predictable frustration, because I did not think the students would come back together after interacting as collaborative groups. If I am being really honest, I thought they would be talking about things unrelated to school and content. As far as classroom jobs, it was best if I did it all myself. Therefore, I avoided potential arguments, fighting, and inequity of job assignments.

In return, I did get to do all the work. While I went home exhausted every day, my students went home energetic and happy, but had learned very little. It was not until I discovered my students and their learning styles that this cycle was flipped into something much more productive. What is best for students is not always easy for adults, but it has the biggest payoffs.

When you learn how your students learn, thereby creating a learning environment aligned to their learning style, you inadvertently flip a teacher-centered classroom into a student-centered classroom. This is a classroom of ownership, accountability, engagement, and learning. This is a classroom which releases the teacher from doing all the work. It allows the teacher to construct an environment, giving students what schools were intended to give students: a rigorous learning experience that prepares them for post-education.

Over the next few pages, let's take a closer look into the personality colors.

Orange Personality

ORANGE TEAM

Traits & Benefits	Stressors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Energetic/Hands-on• Spontaneous• Fun-loving• Master negotiator• Seeks attention• Competitive• Adventurous• Takes immediate action• Carefree• Thrives in non-structured environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of freedom• Not being able to use their skills• Not having a voice• Too much repetition• Waits for answers or solutions• Indecisiveness• Routines/structures• Boredom/Restrictions• Deadlines/time constraints• Lack of movement

Perceptions

See themselves as:

Straightforward



Others may see them as:

Rude

Spontaneous



Irresponsible

Easy-going



Not serious

Multi-tasker



Easily distracted

Negotiator



Manipulative

Problem-solver



Indecisive

The Orange Teacher

- Believes in incorporating hands-on activities.
- Spontaneous teacher. He or she can, and probably will, change the lesson in the middle of instruction.
- Flexible.
- Non-traditional.
- Brings innovation and creativity into the classroom.
- Big picture thinker; not about details.

The Orange Student

- Learns by doing.
- Needs hands-on experiences.
- Limits routine and structure, but instead focuses on giving students freedom and "real world" learning experiences.
- Needs instant gratification, so incorporate competitive games that will have instant outcomes.
- These are the students whom other group members do not think they are taking learning serious. Still, they need time for independent study opportunities.

Dear Orange Teachers, Your Students Need You to Know...

Orange Student	Gold Student	Blue Student	Green Student
<p>"You are my favorite teacher."</p> <p>"I feel positive energy in your class."</p> <p>"I like hands-on projects and movement in the lesson."</p> <p>"I like that we have opportunities to change things up a bit."</p>	<p>"I need structure and routines."</p> <p>"If you tell me what the expectation is, please don't keep changing it."</p> <p>"You may get bored easy, but I need consistency."</p> <p>"It's hard for me to take notes when you're jumping around in the lesson."</p>	<p>"I need you to slow down and listen to me."</p> <p>"It hurts my feelings when you are straightforward."</p> <p>"I think it's my fault when the whole class gets in trouble."</p> <p>"I like being in a fun class."</p>	<p>"I need things to make sense."</p> <p>"I am asking questions to get clarity, instead of trying to frustrate you."</p> <p>"Let me show you how I got that answer."</p> <p>"There's more than one way to skin a cat."</p>

Blue Personality

BLUE TEAM

Traits & Benefits	Stressors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimistic• Accepting• Supportive• Caretaker• Enthusiastic• Passionate• Empathetic• Peacemaker• Cooperative• Spiritual• People-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict• Isolation• Rejection• Negativity• Being "used"• Apathy• Too much criticism• Lack of acknowledgement or appreciation• Not being genuine• Not sharing• Being embarrassed

Perceptions

See themselves as:

- Caring
- Trusting
- Giving benefit of the doubt
- Tirelessly working for a cause
- Supportive
- Genuinely interested in others

Others may see them as:

- Too emotional
- Naïve
- Over-committed
- Co-dependent
- Smothering
- Nosy

The Blue Teacher

- This teacher is student-centered.
- Naturally caters to the child's social/emotional well-being.
- Involves every student.
- Works diligently to ensure all students are safe in class.
- Nurturing.
- Takes time to explore the root cause issues.

The Blue Student

- Often needs reassurance.
- Relational.
- Likes to keep the peace.
- Sensitive.
- Wants to make others happy.
- Cares about how others feel.
- Prefers opportunities to socialize.
- Needs physical touch, such as a hug or pat on the back.

Dear Blue Teachers, Your Students Need You to Know...

Orange Student	Gold Student	Blue Student	Green Student
<p>"I like that you try to understand my behavior."</p> <p>"If you do not give me structure, then I will take advantage of the freedom."</p> <p>"I like that you are understanding about late work, because more than likely, I procrastinated."</p>	<p>"It does not matter how we feel about doing it. We just need to get it done."</p> <p>"I like that you appreciate how organized I am."</p> <p>"Please do not tell me to stop taking things so seriously. It is who I am."</p>	<p>"I like that you stand outside the door in the morning, giving us compliments and praise."</p> <p>"I like the opportunities you give us to work in groups."</p> <p>"I like that you spend one-on-one time with me and give me feedback."</p>	<p>"I need time to work alone."</p> <p>"I know you think everyone is a winner, but did I get the highest score?"</p> <p>"The people in my group do not know as much as I do about this subject."</p>

Green Personality

GREEN TEAM

Traits & Benefits	Stressors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analytical• Perfectionist• Problem-solvers• Inventive• Abstract thinkers• Futurist• Calm-natured• Innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of Independence• Emotional meltdowns• Things that do not make sense to them• Judgement or Criticism• Incompetence• Disorganization• Lack of recognition• Repetition

Perceptions

See themselves as:

- Creative
- Intellectual
- Calm
- Goal-oriented
- Can control emotions
- Futurist

Others may see them as:

- Know-it-all
- Egotistical
- Heartless
- Ignores others
- Uncaring
- Weird

The Green Teacher

- Focused on learning.
- More than likely will have a teacher-directed classroom.
- Knowledgeable in the content that they are teaching.
- Will require students to support claims with evidence.
- May not show the emotional side in the classroom or respond to other emotions.
- Use higher-order thinking skills.

The Green Student

- Prefers working independently.
- Needs rewards and appreciation for their thinking and innovative ideas.
- Needs to know the “why” just as much as the “what.”
- Allow them time to bring their own creativity and ideas into the classroom.
- Does not like repetitive, non-challenging tasks.

Dear Green Teachers, Your Students Need You to Know...

Orange Student	Gold Student	Blue Student	Green Student
<p>“I am serious about learning. Sometimes I think you do not think I am.”</p> <p>“If you make learning active and hands-on, I will be more engaged.”</p> <p>“How is there more than one answer?”</p>	<p>“I am having a hard time dealing with the disorganization.”</p> <p>“What is the procedure for asking/answering questions?”</p> <p>“Can you write down what you are saying so I can put it in my journal?”</p>	<p>“I do not feel comfortable disagreeing with someone’s claim.”</p> <p>“Having a relationship with you is just as important as the content.”</p> <p>“I need more opportunities for group work.”</p>	<p>“I understand this teacher.”</p> <p>“We should always have to defend our responses.”</p> <p>“I like that you give me ownership and independence in my learning.”</p>

Gold Personality

GOLD TEAM

Traits & Benefits	Stressors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organized• Structured• Stable and dependable• Self-motivated• Goal-oriented• Values procedures and routines• Work first, play later	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Too many changes• Disorganization• Lack of structure• Lack of procedures/routines• Others who are not following the rules• No follow-through• Saying one thing and doing another• Not following the schedule

Perceptions

See themselves as:

Goal-oriented



All work, no play

Organized



Controlling

Dependable



Predictable

Stable



Uptight

Consistent



Boring

Natural leader



Bossy

Others may see them as:

The Gold Teacher

Can have either a teacher- or student-centered classroom.
Provides a structured classroom setting.
Good classroom management.
Follows their classroom schedule.
Action-oriented.
Does not believe in "free time" or down time in the classroom.
Solid classroom procedures/routines.

The Gold Student

Prefers that the teacher follows the classroom schedule.
Needs steady classroom procedures and routines.
Does not do well with change and/or instability.
Finds it hard to focus within a chaotic classroom.
Needs reliability.
Needs praise for their leadership and organizational skills.
If you say it, do it.

Dear Gold Teachers, Your Students Need You to Know...

Orange Student	Gold Student	Blue Student	Green Student
"I need more flexibility." "Can we play more games and make learning fun?" "I get bored easily, so I need to change things up."	"I enjoy being in a structured classroom." "I like that everyone is being held to the same standard." "I feel successful in this class."	"I feel bad when you tell me I got an answer wrong." "I need to feel praised when I do something well." "I need opportunities to talk to others and build relationships."	"Why do we still need to go through all the steps when I already know the answer?" "There is more than one way to work out a problem." "I need you to listen to some of my ideas."

We often hear the term “differentiation” in schools. How can we differentiate instruction to ensure we are reaching and teaching all students? You do not necessarily have to be an expert in order to distinguish instruction for several students from different backgrounds, all of whom have different learning styles. Instead, you only need to know the right strategies to incorporate them.

Orange students typically learn by doing. They need interactive, hands-on learning activities. Integrate physical movement into lessons, keeping them engaged while helping them actively process the information you are teaching. They have difficulty fitting into daily routines; although, that does not mean you have to do away with them. It simply means you must provide opportunities for freedom within the boundaries you have already established. For instance, incorporate hands-on activities into a lesson you have already prepared. Avoid idol time with orange students, because they will entertain themselves if or when you do not.

Blue students respond to encouragement and can be very sensitive to rejection. When correcting behavior, keep their feelings in mind. Their feelings are fragile, so going overboard with the discipline can ultimately create more damage than correction. Therefore, include growth trackers to help your blue students be successful in the classroom. This will allow them to see their growth on a consistent basis and give them positive affirmation. Also, stand outside the door. Greeting them with positive declarations and encouragement will fill their love tanks.

Green students can easily become impatient with drills and routines. Because they are so analytical, it may seem as if they are being a know-it-all. But understand all they really need is to know why. They thrive in explanations and evidence. Give them opportunities to use higher order thinking skills for this will help them flourish in the classroom.

Gold students will easily adapt to your procedures and routines. They enjoy having structure. Remember that, if you say it, then you will have to be consistent in it. Once you tell a gold student that something will happen, they believe you. Mentally they prepare themselves for it. Keeping steady routines will help them thrive in the

classroom and stick to the schedule. When things have to be changed, simply tell them there is a change. Follow it up with a plan for how an activity will be made up.

Brainstorm ways each of your students can be successful in the classroom. Write your ideas down on the following template.

How will you help your...

Orange Students?	Blue Students?
Green Students?	Gold Students?

The Power of Relationships

After years of being a teacher, an instructional coach, and principal, I have found what continues to matter most is the power of relationships. Whether it is a student-to-teacher, teacher-to-teacher, parent-to-teacher, or teacher-to-administrator relationship, they are all important. All are involved in the progression of creating a healthy learning environment. I firmly believe it is difficult to discipline a student with whom you do not have a relationship. It does not come over as love-discipline, but rather as resentment-discipline. The difference is: love-discipline filters through a child as correction. Resentment-discipline filters through a child as dislike and contentment, which will not change or correct behavior. Likewise, it can often produce other unwanted behaviors.

As a principal, it never failed that I would frustrate a teacher every day. They wanted me to make students disappear in order to make their job easier. In turn, the students were met with disappointment and anger when they reappeared in the classroom. The scenario changed, but the root of the issue remained the same. I listened. They need you to listen. Behind every negative behavior is a negative feeling that is more than likely derived from a negative life experience. What is it? Where did it come from? You can either help with the healing or become what they need to be healed from.

Take Johnny, for instance; a student I got to know very well. He spent more time in my office than he did in his classroom. Every morning, someone was yelling or fussing at Johnny for some odd reason. He was a kid that would tug on your heart and nerves at the same time. He was the kid that you loved but wanted to throw out the window at the same time. Still, I listened to Johnny very often. His mother was working two jobs; tired and frustrated. One morning, while I was standing outside greeting students as their parents dropped them off, I could hear Johnny's mom cussing and fussing at him. Getting out of the car, he slammed the door behind him. Johnny pushed past other students and threw himself against the cafeteria wall. As he approached the cafeteria workers, they asked if wanted eggs or cereal. Still upset, Johnny answered "cereal" very softly. The

cafeteria worker began loudly and aggressively asking him to speak up because she could not hear him. Afterwards, she just puts eggs on Johnny's plate so he could get through the line. Now, he's more upset.

When Johnny sat down, a student across from him called his shirt ugly. Johnny called him a name, but the teacher on duty only heard Johnny and as a result, made him move seats. At this point, Johnny is fuming and he's on his way to *your* classroom!

BUT.... You can deescalate and reset Johnny's day by being present. Be visible. Let your love shine out the darkness. What are his emotions trying to tell you?

You make a difference.

Although you are human, students look for you to leave Clark Kent at home and bring your superman to school every day.

Relationships with parents and students begin the day you sign your contract and become a teacher. The day you get your school roster is similar to going on your first date. You have one opportunity to make a first impression.

One way to safeguard that this first impression goes over well is by sending a welcome letter to your parents. Introduce yourself. Humanize yourself by telling them about you. Provide your contact information and tell them why you became a teacher. If you are unable to send this letter ahead of time, give it to parents as they come to "Meet the Teacher Night." If your school does not have a "Meet the Teacher Night" before school starts, give it to students on the first day of school. Therefore, they can take it home to their parents. Giving your contact information is important, for it shows parents/guardians that their concerns are important to you. Moreover, it indicates that you are available to them.

Building relationships with other teachers will be very important for you. These teachers will be your support system, giving you information when your mentor or administrator is unavailable. When teachers feel like they are on an island by themselves, it can impact your emotional well-being as a teacher. Trust me; maintain good relationships with others. You will need your village.

Before beginning this next section, let me first ask some clarifying questions:

Think of a model classroom, where learning is taking place and students are being successful.

What does that classroom look like?

How is that classroom arranged?

What is the teacher doing?

What are the students doing?

Take a moment to reflect on these questions.

Write down your answers.

Now, let us explore what needs to occur in order for you to create an ideal learning environment. Your classroom vision will be important as you begin to ruminate about procedures and routines.

A common mistake most teachers make is thinking they do not need to teach something that students should already know. Thinking that students “should know” certain things will not bring them any closer to knowing it. Thinking that children should behave as they do at home does not mean you can skip over teaching procedures and routines. Basically, it boils down to what your classroom vision entails. Know how to make it come to pass. Furthermore, know who will be involved in the process. For several reasons, I can assure you students may not emulate the same behavior at school as they do at home: They do not have to share a space with twenty other people their age; they do not have to get in line to transition everywhere they need to go; and, they do not have to transition from learning one subject to the next.

It will be a challenge to teach anything else, should you not take the time to teach procedures. If you do not teach procedures at the beginning, then you will redirect behavior all year. The choice is simple: Establish procedures and routines or redirect behavior.

If you are spending more time redirecting and/or correcting unwanted behavior, that is a sign that classroom procedures need to be taught. If they have already been taught, then they may need to be retaught.

What Are Your Classroom Expectations?

Let us now take a look at classroom expectations. You should have a better understanding of your personality and your student's personality; likewise, you should understand what students need according to their personality. Notice that I did not mention classroom rules. Expectations tell the student what they should be doing. Rules, on the other hand, tell students what they should not be doing. We want students to understand and display the expected behavior, instead of working daily trying to avoid unwanted behavior.

Keep these questions in mind as you create, establish, and/or maintain classroom expectations:

What are your classroom expectations?

How will you teach them to students?

How will you gauge if students have learned them?

How will you maintain the rules?

Students should know there are learning expectations as soon as they come into the school building. School starts when students get to school, not when the teacher has begun teaching. Remember, it is easier to establish procedures rather than correct unwanted behaviors which negatively impact the classroom environment. Classroom expectations should be laid out on the first day of school, being created with the students. For instance, create expectations that inform students of what to do, as opposed to informing students of what not to do.

Examples of Classroom Expectations:

- “ Enter the classroom ready to learn.
- “ Be prepared for class.
- “ Be considerate and respectful of others.
- “ Turn in all work on time.
- “ Follow classroom, hall, and school procedures.
- “ Be on time for school.
- “ Actively participate in classroom learning.

Classroom expectations must be reviewed consistently. For

example, we must review expectations for getting the day started before the students start their day. Review carpet time expectations before students go to the carpet; and review restroom break procedures before the students walk into the restroom. In addition, we must make sure students know and understand the expectation. You cannot hold students accountable for not adhering to the expectation if you have not been clear in stating the expectation.

In the Morning

Procedure for Greeting Students

Many students will walk up to your door. They need love, understanding, a soft touch, or a warm smile. The morning greeting is a great time to fill a child's love tank.

Every day is a new day, and it should be approached as such. Standing at your door and greeting each student is a reputable way to establish new beginnings. Put your hand on each student's shoulder and make eye contact, saying something simple like:

"Oh, I see you got a haircut. It looks nice."

"I would really like for you to be my class leader today."

"Today is a new day. We're going to start over."

While greeting students in the morning, here are other things you may do. Choose what fits your personality, because students are spiritually sensitive. They know when you're being fake, as do you.

*Come up with a special handshake with the children.

*Hug every child. (For your non-huggers, use a handshake or a compliment.)

*Compliment every student in some way, shape, or form.

*Avoid discussing yesterday's behavior. Instead, focus on today's expectation. (Go ahead and put your things away. Get started on the morning work.)

*Use spelling words or math problems you know they can do. This will make them feel successful before they enter into the classroom.

While greeting students, it is important to call them by their name. Always use a child's name during the morning greeting. Pronounce their names correctly. When I was a teacher, and I had difficulty pronouncing a student's name, I would put the phonetically correct pronunciation next the student's name on a clipboard. I would hold myself accountable, ensuring that I was saying a child's name correctly. Our names mean something. It is how we are identified. Take the time to identify a student correctly, thereby honoring their name.

Moving on, create a *How do you feel today?* chart. Doing so creates a

quick emotional assessment of your students. As students enter the classroom and put their things away, they can fill this out on a piece of paper. Try to keep the evaluation as confidential as possible. Students are less likely to be honest in front of their friends. This activity may not be for every student; however, it will work for some kids. Better yet, it could be the difference for just one kid.

Another way to incorporate this chart is by cutting out the pictures. Have the lower grades circle how they feel.

Schedule some time during the day to review the charts as early as possible. This addresses any underlining issues, instead of allowing the student to sit in distress for a long period of time. This could help a student reset his or her day.

How do you feel today?


What I want my teacher to know...
Older students may use this form to explain how they are feeling.



Younger students may require pictures, making it easier to verbalize any issues with you in private.

At the beginning of the school year, review each category with your students. Model what they should do. Instruct students to circle or express the first emotion they feel. This activity can further help students monitor their feelings and develop coping skills. It is okay to express when they feel better.

It will be important to establish solid procedures and routines, so explain the expectation well. Establish the expectation that students should avoid any type of muddling with other student's papers or there will be a consequence. Be serious about this. In turn, it will eliminate any potential for students not taking this seriously when or if things get out of control.

Remember: Children need to feel safe, which includes being permitted to freely express themselves without aftermaths. Be intentional about protecting discretion in the classroom, because it could be all the difference to one child.

How do you feel today?



What I want my teacher to know...

Procedure on How Students Enter the Classroom

Upon students entering the classroom, they need designated areas for these items: backpacks, homework, coats/jackets, and returned paperwork.

This routine should not take a long period of time. Students come into the classroom to learn; consequently, they should know to put their things away and get ready to focus. If you must tell students where to put their items each morning, they will always be waiting on you for direction. This type of routine creates a classroom which is totally dependent on you, crippling them from ever taking ownership. What happens if you are pre-occupied with an issue? This would mean that students would not be able to start working until you were free to tell them what to do. In turn, this creates a codependent classroom versus promoting student autonomy.

Students should arrive, putting their backpacks and coats away (when they have them). It should be in the same designated area every day. Changing this place on a daily basis will only breed confusion or uncertainty. Ultimately, it frustrates your students - especially your gold personalities.

Create a basket for which students can turn in homework. Meanwhile, create another basket for returned paperwork or notes from parents. It will promote a smooth transition, saving instruction time when homework is in the same designated area. Moreover, it makes it easier for you to review it. You can check returned paperwork or notes from parents during your planning period, checking it off the list before dismissal. Therefore, you will know if you are still missing any returned paperwork from a parent. You can then notify the student before he/she leaves school.

Procedure for Returned Paperwork and Morning Work

When paperwork is sent home to be signed by parents, where will students place it upon returning to school? It is the difference between twenty little humans running up to you at the same time,

handing you paperwork while you are trying to get school started. Conversely, they hand you paperwork in the middle of teaching. As I stated before, baskets are your friend. It is a good way to keep materials, as well as other things, organized in the classroom.

Some schools use a grading portal which alerts parents when grades are inputted or any assignments missing. Alternatively, it keeps you from manually having to alert them.

Once students put away their things, they should grab their morning work and complete it.

Morning work should be engaging. It involves a skill to which students have already been exposed and can do independently. That is, of course, unless you are teaching a new skill and using morning work to gauge what the students already know. If so, you would put the disclaimer out to students that it is a new concept. And, you are trying to see what they already know about it. This will help you prevent any instructional frustration. Morning work typically lasts about ten to fifteen minutes. Take attendance, lunch count, or put learning objectives on the board while students are working. This provides you extra time if were too busy before school started.

Avoid using any materials unrelated to academic standards for morning work. After all, it needs to be purposeful and engaging. The expectation should involve learning as students enter the classroom! It will be tough to get students to transition into learning if you start the day with games, busy work, or non-related academic skills. However, the transition into another learning task will flow much smoother if learning happens when students first walk into the classroom.

When morning work consists of skills students can do independently, it should not last for an extended period of time. Overall, this avoids students from becoming bored. Students will entertain themselves when they get bored. You do not want to create a position where students now need to be redirected and re-engaged into learning. This will not be a pleasant way to start your day.

Procedure for Where Students Sit

I have seen several teachers, while working as a principal, that have

allowed students coming into the classroom to choose where they sit on the first day of school. As expected, all the students chose their friends. And so, there was an issue with chattiness from the first day of school.

Having a seating arrangement for students can help with this. Putting the student's names on desks is more than just organizing a classroom for learning. It makes children feel a sense of belonging as when they walk into the classroom. As you have been expecting them, it is a way of saying welcome. There is no way for you to know how children will interact with one another. Despite this, if there are students appearing to be disruptive with each other, then make changes quickly. Though, be careful with singling children out. Get a feel of the classroom for the first few weeks, while rearranging seating arrangements when necessary.

Moreover, it is a good idea to shift students around for several reasons. It gives students opportunities to collaborate with others and work with other students. Children take less time than adults to meet and interact with others, so spice things up a bit. Moving students around at the end of a quarter, every two weeks, or at the beginning of every month are all good times. Another benefit is that it can constantly feel like a new classroom. Overall, this gives you time, space, and opportunity to maintain order and structure in the classroom.

***Please make sure you spell students name correctly. Having names on the desk is a form of greeting; therefore, make the first impression of saying "*Welcome to my class!*" a positive one!

Procedure for Taking Attendance and Lunch Count

Do not spend too much time on this task! Take attendance and lunch count while students are doing their morning work. Utilizing this time will help you avoid using additional instruction time.

While taking attendance, though, always state the expectation before you begin the task:

“When I call your name, say ‘here’ or ‘present.’ If I do not call your name,

please do not answer for another student. Keep working." Afterwards, designate a student leader to take the attendance to the office. Taking attendance may last longer at the beginning of the year since you are getting to know your students; although, it goes fairly quickly when you start to put names with faces.

Now, let me add a disclaimer regarding taking attendance:

A student's name is important. It is their identity. Yes, it matters not only if you know your student's name, but how to pronounce your student's name. There may be times when you might not know the correct pronunciation of a name. In cases such as these, here are some strategies to help you:

- **Ask.** Simply asking either the parents or student how to pronounce the name is among the most effective and easiest strategies. It can establish a good relationship. Essentially it lets the parents know you want to pronounce their child's name correctly. This may lead to the parent giving you grace in the chance you mispronounce the name, because they will be aware of your intent to say it properly.
- **Practice.** Put the phonetic spelling of the student's name next to their real name on your classroom roster. Therefore, you can practice saying it until you get it right.
- **Inquire.** If the student attended the school last year, go to his/her former teacher. Ask how to pronounce the student's name. Take time to inquire about any strategies they may have used to help with its correct pronunciation.

This matters!

When taking a lunch count, again start with the expectation:

"For lunch today, we are having cheese enchiladas or chicken salads. Silently raise your hand if you would like cheese enchiladas. (Count). Raise your hand if you would like a chicken salad. (Count). Raise your hand if you brought your lunch. (Count)." Then, designate a student leader to take the lunch count to the cafeteria.

Simple enough, right?

This can alternatively be done as part of a routine, where students take ownership of their own attendance and lunch count. If you prefer to give the students ownership, create a lunch chart and change the menu daily. For attendance, create another chart with two columns labeled *present* and *absent*. Place all the students' names under the *absent* column. As students arrive, they can move their names into the *present* column. Always double-check the names, making sure someone did not mistakenly move the wrong name.

As students are show up, allow them to place their names under the meal which they would like. Next, have him or her do their attendance. While this requires you to create the chart and individually cut out students' names, that is the most upfront work. Add a Velcro patch or magnet to the back of the name, for this allows students to move their names easily. This also takes a solid procedure which has to be in place. Students come into class, moving their name to the *present* column. They then think about what they want for lunch, moving only their name to the desired meal before going to their seat. The students will need to practice, practice, and practice some more. Over time, this procedure will flow smoothly.

The downside to implementing this particular approach is getting the cafeteria menu before school starts. After all, you are changing it daily on your chart. Most schools know what they are serving by the week or the month; therefore, this may not be as difficult to come by. Nonetheless, be sure to change it daily on your board. The upside to implementing this approach is that it gives students complete ownership, freeing you up to greet students that are coming in the classroom. You can actively monitor students and walk around the class. Furthermore, you can provide assistance to students during morning work; especially if it is filled with skills with which the students are unfamiliar.

Below is a sample of this lunch count chart.

Lunch Count

Cheese Enchiladas	Chicken Salad	Brought My Lunch
Emily David	Paris	Johnny London

Attendance Chart

Absent	Present
Sally Aaron	Paris Johnny London

These charts can be made by using regular dry erase boards. Put magnets on the back of the name, thereby helping with easy maneuvering. They can alternatively be created with pocket charts, using sentence strips to make the names. If you do not have access to either of those materials, then use a big piece of chart paper. Laminate it, label it, and use Velcro patches to help the names stick.

This method, along with the attendance-taking and lunch count methods, can be effective. It may take more preparation at the forefront. Still, it is the difference between you controlling the attendance and lunch count or the students owning the task. There is no right or wrong way. It simply boils down to the teacher's personality and preference.

Procedure for Morning Announcements

By the time morning announcements happen, students should have their belongings put away. Attendance and lunch count have been completed, and students are now completing morning work. Sometimes morning announcements can act as your "timer," allowing you to move onto something else afterwards.

During the announcements, the students usually take directions from whomever is speaking over the intercom. Usually this is custom-

made for each school. However, the universal speech typically goes something like:

- Please stand for the pledge of allegiance.
- Attention; salute; pledge. (Say the pledge.)
- Salute the state's flag. (Say the pledge.)
- Let us have a moment of silence. (Normally this is a minute or less.)
- Then, the announcer may go onto give school-related announcements.

Pretty cool, right? So why would something this simple be in this book? Well, I am going to answer that question with another question. Do you expect the students to just stand up, participate in the morning announcements, sit back down, and finish working?

Of course you do...

and they can.

In fact, they will, but not without a procedure in place!

Again, always start with the expectation. *"When the morning announcements come on, put your pencils down. Stand up, push your chairs in, and follow the announcer's directions."*

Remember: You must teach students the expectation. Practice this expectation before you hold them accountable for it. I can assure you that students will not show up to your classroom automatically knowing how to do this. They must be taught how to do that in which what you are expecting.

Procedure for Assigning Classroom Jobs

These jobs essentially involve students and are aimed in helping them maintain the classroom's procedures and routines. Allowing students to take on some of the classroom responsibilities will free up the teacher to do other tasks. Refer back to your true colors personality assessment. Which students would be a good fit in these jobs? A blue student, who is a little more sensitive, would be a good candidate for showing a new student around the school. They would

be a good partner to a new student who does not yet have any friends. Meanwhile, a gold student is all about routine and structure. Therefore, he or she may be a good candidate for the materials handler. In this role, they would ensure that all materials are organized and put in their correct places. Be creative with classroom jobs. Some teachers prefer giving every child a job, so that everyone is included. Conversely, some only give a few students jobs while the other students have to earn the right to have a classroom job. It will ultimately be up to you.

Remember: If you pick the same student every time, this could be perceived as you having “favorites.” In turn, it could have a negative impact on establishing your classroom culture.

Some students, because of their personalities, may fit in one job better than others. So, it may be a good idea to allow them to try other jobs. This will stretch them out of their comfort zones, permitting them to try other things. However, the importance of creating a safe classroom allows students to try new things; starting with small things. These will bleed over into greater things such as taking instructional chances. Taking chances without a fear of ridicule from others is a conative skill. It can be reiterated in the morning meeting, while additionally being throughout the day.

There is a list of sample classroom jobs on the following page, many of which the teacher can personalize to fit their classroom and students. Some teachers assign small groups of student's classroom jobs; others prefer to give each student a responsibility task. It is really up to you. Gauge your students' energy before making this decision. Each classroom is different and unique; therefore, it is up to the teacher to determine how the classroom flows. Students who easily lose interest, or are not engaged in everyday activities, may benefit from a responsibility task. Likewise, they may become more engaged if they have to earn their responsibility task.

Sample Classroom Jobs:

Reading Wall Leader – A student leader assigned to lead the class in the reading wall routine.

Math Wall Leader – He or she will lead the class in the math wall routine.

Time Keeper – This student keeps time during collaborative group work or anything which requires time to be taken.

Line Leader – This student leads the line during classroom transitions.

Hall Monitor – He or she is assigned to monitor other students, ensuring they are following classroom expectations while in the hallway.

Trash Collector – One or more students, who will be tasked with guaranteeing the classroom is cleaned and all trash is off the floor.

Teacher Assistant – He or she assists the teacher in classroom tasks.

Pledge Leader – He or she leads the class in the pledge of allegiance or additional classroom announcements.

Electrician – One or more students who will make certain the lights are turned on and off upon leaving or entering the classroom.

Door Holder – He or she holds the door open when students are entering or leaving a designated area.

New Student Buddy – One or more students who partner with a new student, helping them get acclimated to their new classroom.

Pencil Sharpener – This student sharpens pencils for students when it's needed.

Materials Manager – One or more students who will get the materials for the group during collaborative group work.

Bathroom Monitor – These students monitor that classmates are following the expectations while they are taking a restroom break.

Caboose – This student walks at the back of the line as the class transitions to different areas throughout the building. You will find that the back of the line is a popular place for students.

Mailman – He or she delivers mail or paperwork to other places in the building: the office, the counselor, cafeteria, other classrooms, etc.

Not only are classroom jobs a good idea but having a procedure for assigning classroom jobs is important.

Remember: The strategy will only be as effective as the procedure. Explain each classroom job's expectation to students before

assigning them a job. You cannot hold students accountable for anything which you have not taught them how to properly implement. Maybe you could have them fill out a job application?

You can assign more than one student to each job. This will help with accountability and relationship building.

Procedure for Structuring a Morning Meeting

Having morning meetings allows the teacher to set the tone for the day. Keep in mind that we can never control what our students have experienced prior to entering our classrooms. However, we can create a safe space which will help to lighten the load. Morning meetings are a good way to teach students conative skills. Overall, these daily meetings can last anywhere from twenty to thirty minutes. Teachers must have an intentional plan while structuring a morning meeting just as they would with any other lessons.

Remember: Do not start a morning meeting routine unless you have time in your daily schedule. This ensures the teacher has a planned outcome. What is the morning meeting's purpose? Like any routine, it must be practiced and repeated.

Read about morning meetings or observe other teachers who have established this routine in their classroom.

Decide if you want to incorporate morning meetings into your classroom structure.

Like any new initiative, students must have a protocol. Take time to teach students the morning meetings' structure, as well as its expectations and goals.

Send a newsletter or other correspondence to parents, informing them of how you are implementing morning meetings in your classroom. Including parents/guardians in your classroom initiatives, as well as informing them of expectations and goals, can prompt at-home reinforcement.

I have listed four components below to help structure your morning meeting:

The Greeting - This is how students will greet one another. Be creative. Personalize the greeting to fit your classroom and students. It is okay if the students choose their own handshake, their own song, and/or their own unique greeting.

Recap - Students will summarize information regarding the previous day's meeting or lesson, while reviewing or reiterating topics. The teacher chooses a topic at the beginning, while establishing the

morning meeting's routines and procedures. During the sharing phase, students discuss their thoughts, feelings, and/or responses toward a topic. They may also defend their responses. Allowing students to defend their position is a good way to build conative skills. It helps students determine how other students will respond when there is a disagreement.

Group Activity - The whole-class activity is the meat of the morning meeting. What will be the focus for the day? The meeting should scaffold from one to the other. In this way, the recap should lead into the whole-group activity.

Closing - Reinforce the intended purpose for the day's morning meeting, as well as its reflection time. Allow students to discuss their takeaways and the day's goals. Before the teacher releases the students, review expectations for transitioning to their next classroom activity.

During Class

Procedure for How Students Transition to the Carpet

Have you ever been on a long car ride with children? They sit in the backseat and get frustrated with each other. At first it sounded like a good idea to take a road trip with children, but you did not take into account: *Stop looking at me. Stop touching me. Leave me alone.* Well, carpet time is very similar. You have several little people sitting in close proximity. By the end of carpet time, you will be ready to pull your hair out or throw a kid out the window. That is, of course, if you do not establish an expectation at the beginning.

Teachers typically do a read aloud, morning meeting, a reading/math wall, and/or have class discussions on the carpet. It is where teachers can build relationships, set daily goals, review expectations, and enhance classroom culture. We love carpet time. However, it is important to have established procedures in place for transitioning to the carpet, while further establishing procedures which help students be successful during carpet time.

Always start by stating the expectation:

“Students, we are getting ready to transition to the carpet for our morning meeting. I know you are ready when your area is clean and neat. Your eyes are on me.”

“Ok, we are ready to move. Table one, please come join me on the carpet for the morning meeting. Table two, please come join us, etc.”

Another method of moving students would be calling on students wearing a red shirt, green shirt, etc. Alternatively, if his or her last name begins with a *T*, come join everyone on the carpet. These techniques will keep the students attentive.

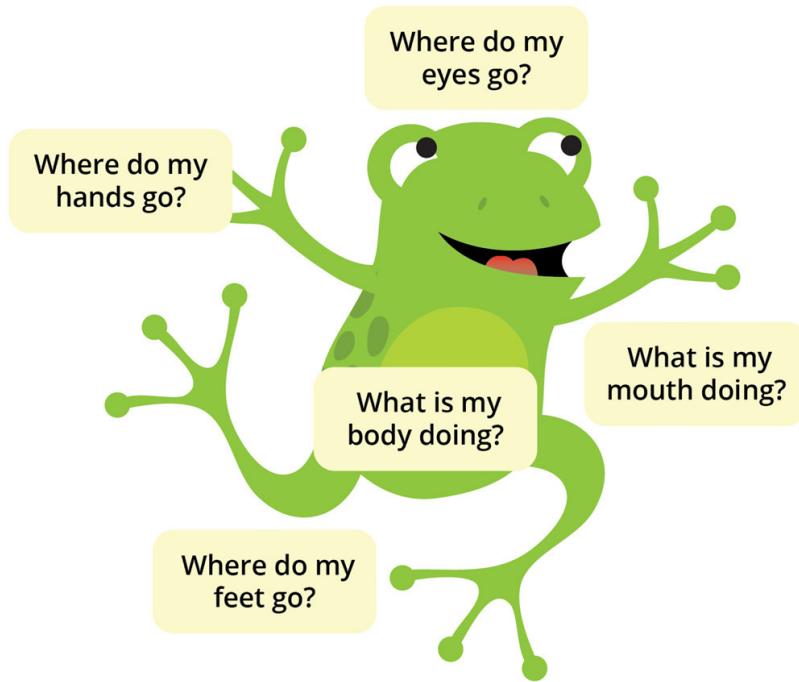
When you are establishing an expectation for how to come to the carpet, and a student does not meet the intended expectation (i.e., they are running to the carpet, yelling or getting up without permission), then send them back to their seat. Ask them to do it again.

REMEMBER: When you do not establish routines, that in itself is establishing routines.

Once students are on the carpet, take time to review the expectation. Practice it with the students. It is okay to go ahead and teach your carpet lesson, since it continues to set the expectation during a read aloud, reading or math wall time, etc.

Think back to the car ride. The first twenty to thirty minutes were perfectly fine, but the irritable triggers did not happen until further down the road. Well, the same occurs with carpet time. Try to limit carpet time to twenty to thirty minutes. Putting students in close proximity for long periods of time is setting yourself up for a stressful day.

The layout on the next page will assist teachers with establishing carpet time expectations. We cannot assume students come with conative skills, so they must be taught. Telling students to keep their hands, feet, and/or objects to themselves is a start, but it must be followed up with teaching students what to do with their hands, feet, and objects.



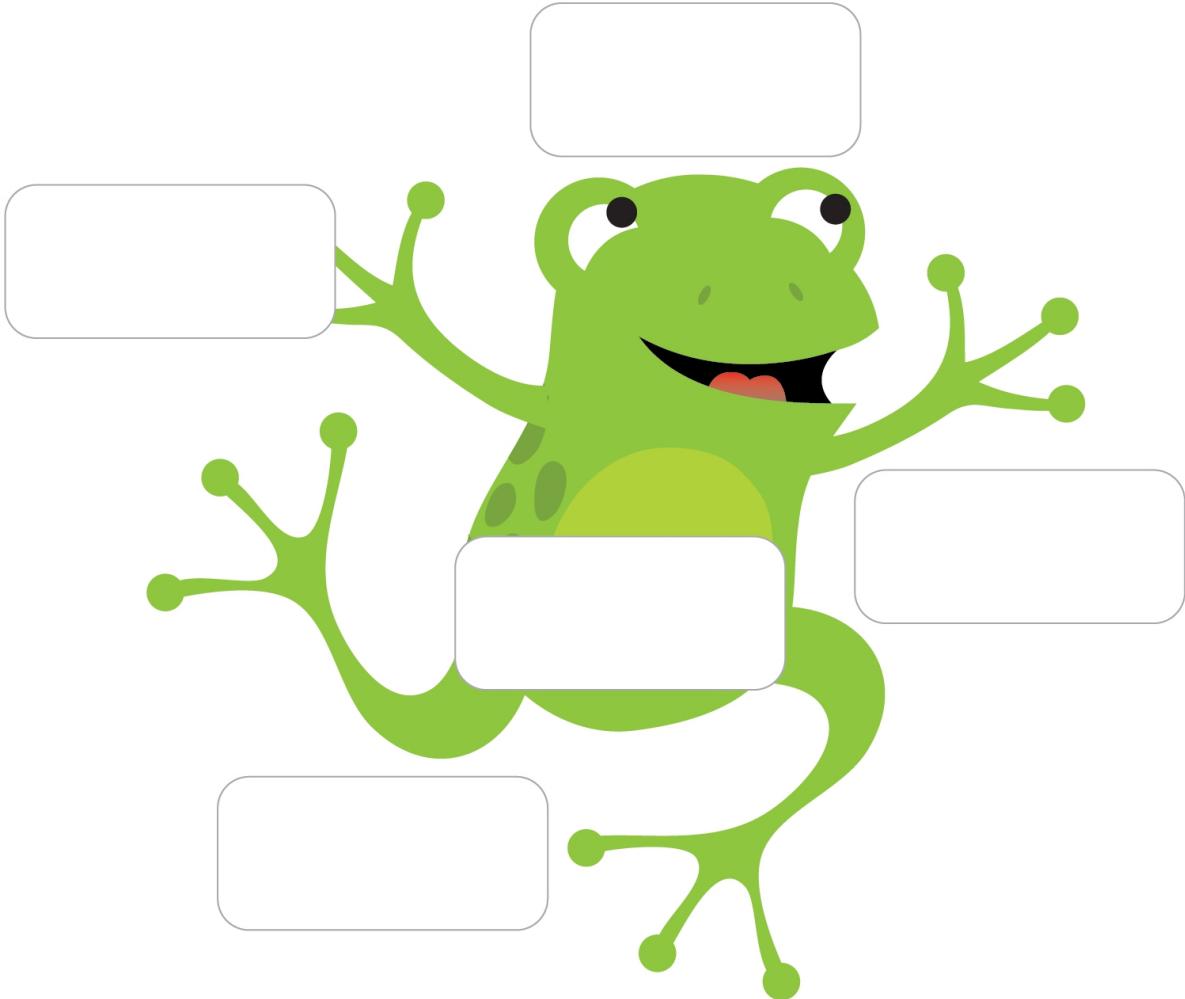
This activity can be done as a class, helping students learn to establish carpet procedures. Display the first chart. As a class, discuss what Otis' eyes should be doing. What is his mouth doing? Where should his feet and hands go? What is his body doing?

Next, use the blank template to write down your student's answers. What do they say their class should be doing? Display this chart where carpet time takes place. This way, it is visible as you review the expectations. The students will have ownership if it is completed as a class.

Once students are seated on the carpet, review the carpet expectations.

We all have the typical “rules” of keep all hands, feet, and objects to yourself, which tell students what not to do. Conversely, our expectations tell students what to do. I was guilty of this as a new teacher, and most of the time, I would spend hours telling students what not to do or to stop doing something. When that happened, the focus was never on the expectation but rather on the unwanted behavior. Using a template like this will help the teacher reiterate the expected behavior with the students while everyone is on the carpet in small groups.





Procedure for Tardy Students

Students are considered tardy when they arrive in your classroom after school has started and more than likely, you have already initiated your daily routine. Therefore, instruction is now underway. Breaking an instructional flow to get materials for tardy students would also break engagement. This has to be avoided. There is not enough time in the school day, and every minute must be protected. Consequently, establishing a set routine and procedure for tardy students helps continue the instructional flow. Below you will find some suggestions to assist in implementing this procedure:

- This can be a job for the class leader! Remember your True Colors Personality Test. Assign this role to those students needing a leadership position in the classroom. The student leader can be responsible for ensuring the tardy student is caught up on what is happening.
- Write directions that are visible for students coming in late. This allows them to see the expectation rather than asking you.
- Have materials ready and accessible for students at all times.

Procedure for How Students Get Class Materials

One day I was sitting in a classroom. The teacher was getting ready to release the students for an interactive activity about the life cycle of a butterfly. She had different types of pasta noodles which represented each of the life cycle phases. She planned for each student to get a paper plate, where she would draw a vertical and horizontal line to make four squares. Then, students would get their pasta noodles and glue them where they went within the cycle. I could tell the teacher had spent a lot of time planning this activity. I also saw her excitement in knowing she had scored high with her students by incorporating a hands-on activity. Then...

When it was time to hand out the materials, the teacher told the students, "Come up and get your activities." Students began pushing one another, grabbing more than one plate. The pasta shells began to get mixed up and things went downhill from there. However, I will say that eventually things got back on track. The students created their butterfly life cycles. They hung in the hallway beautifully with many admirers passing by. Nevertheless, it took two days to sort this out. This activity took double the instruction time it should have taken. Had the teacher had a procedure for getting materials, it would have gone smoother. The teacher used a lot of instruction time cleaning up the mess, rather than having a procedure in place for the materials.

I have seen this over and over in classrooms. Teachers have a dynamic lesson. Then, once the learning is turned over to the students, what could have been a great lesson turns into one of the worse. So, how can we prevent this?

Above all else, assign a person from each group to get the materials for their team. This will take some upfront planning from the teacher. They will have to already have the materials separated. Therefore, students can get their basket or bag of materials for their group.

Secondly, have all the materials separated in different containers. For instance, have a basket for the scissors, a basket for the paper, and another for the pencils. Then, have a few students come up for materials at a time. Once they sit down, another few students can

come up. You can use phrases such as: Table one, table two, red shirts, black shirts, etc.

The above-mentioned teacher separated all the pasta into different bowls, while having each student come up at once. This, in turn, hindered the lesson.

Procedure for Students Sharpening Pencils

Nothing will interrupt instruction or a spelling test like someone sharpening a pencil can! The class is super quiet. Then, all of a sudden, here comes this loud noise that gets everyone's attention. It wakes up the sleeping students and causes you to stop teaching.

The most effective thing to do is to sharpen several pencils ahead of time, having them ready and available for students. This way, if students need a new pencil, they can exchange it and keep working. Then, on your planning period or after school, you or a student helper can assist in sharpening the pencils. Therefore, you can have them ready for the next day. If a student needs to sharpen their pencil, having small sharpeners are also effective. However, make sure students put them back in a designated area. This ensures they are not playing with them during instruction time.

You will soon learn that everything can, and will, become a distraction in class. So, it will be wise to have the pencils sharpened ahead of time.

I had an automatic sharpener in my class. Though early on I learned that, when one student needed to sharpen pencils, everyone else wanted to join in the fun. Suddenly, students who were writing just fine began purposely breaking their pencils, just to get a fresh sharpened pencils. We all like a newly sharpened pencil with a nice tip of lead. However, when several students start coming up to my desk one-by-one and asking for their pencil to be sharpened, it can quickly become a distraction. Furthermore, it can interrupt the flow of instruction.

Remember: It will be up to you to save the pencils.

Procedure for Monitoring and Checking for

Understanding

Imagine that you have just finished teaching your academic standard for a week. It is Friday, and you are ready to give an assessment which checks for students' success. You discover that half of your students scored low. What do you do? Well, many teachers will go back and reteach the whole lesson again. Meanwhile, some may only assume that students understood everything, with exception to the few questions they missed. This is an okay assumption if all the students missed the same question. You can assume that the students did not have a clear understanding of that part of the standard. But what would you do if they all missed different questions? You would have to teach everything over, thereby filling the learning gap or analyzing their work to find the learning gap. However, you will be able to make corrections in the moment if you are actively monitoring students during the lesson.

Monitoring for understanding is an important part of not only classroom management, but also effective learning. Of course teachers should be monitoring for adherence to procedure and routines. They should further be ensuring students are safe. Nonetheless, teachers should be monitoring and checking for understanding of the learning objective. This will allow the teacher to perform on-the-spot rapid interventions for students who are showing a lack of understanding.

REMEMBER: IT IS BETTER TO INTERVENE RATHER THAN RETEACH! Monitoring is an active process which goes beyond teachers just walking around the classroom.

Monitoring for learning gives you the opportunity to check for evidence which shows how students are grasping the learning concept. In order to do this, each student needs to produce something. There is nothing wrong with you asking students to popcorn out answers. You ask questions, but at the same time, think about how you will confirm ALL students understand the learning expectation. Many teachers tend to write a lesson plan, teaching it for a few days. Then, they give the students a test to determine who may or may not have understood the material. There is nothing wrong with that setup, but let me ask you a question: After you

analyze the test data, how do you know which part the student did not understand? Although an assessment tells us if a student was able to regurgitate the information you gave him or her, it does not tell us what is hindering their understanding. Teachers discover this by asking the students to produce evidence, and then actively monitors what the students are doing in the moment.

Having students produce evidence can be accomplished by giving short, quick and formative assessments during instruction. More informal ways of doing a formative assessment during instruction are simple checks such as:

Thumbs up/thumbs down. (Thumbs up if you agree; thumbs down if you do not.)

Stand up/sit down. (Stand up if think it is A. Sit down if you think it is B.)

Using whiteboards to have students produce evidence. (Ask a question. Have students show evidence of their thinking. Have him or her hold up their answers on a whiteboard). If you do not have whiteboards in class, simply put white card stock in a sheet protector. *Tadaaa!* You have a whiteboard!

After asking students to pick their answers, always ask them to justify their thinking. This informs you of how they are processing the information.

Other ways to conduct a formative assessment may involve a little more planning upfront. It includes using technology, such as various programs like poll everywhere or Kahoot. Using these programs require the questions to be entered ahead of time, while every student must produce an answer. The teacher and class are given information instantly. The teacher, meanwhile, can determine if something in the lesson needs to be retaught or if the class is ready to move forward. Doing so allows for teachers to maximize instruction time rather than finding out about days later. Therefore, they know whether a concept needs to be retaught before moving onto the next lesson.

Procedure for Students Asking and/or Answering

Questions

If it is not okay, then it should never be okay!

Every now and then, a teacher just gets tired of redirecting and correcting unwanted behavior. I have been in a teacher's classroom so many times. The teacher asks a question and several students begin blurting out the answers. On other occasions, the teacher releases students to do independent work, but then several students yell out for the teacher to repeat the directions. It does not take long for students to catch onto this. All start yelling out questions to the teacher, and before long, it just sounds chaotic. After a while, the teacher eventually says, "Ok, stop yelling out. Raise your hand if you have a question." But it is too late at this point. The moment the teacher answered the student's question which was yelled out, the teacher validated that this type of behavior would get them the proper response. The teacher is now in a place where he or she has to reteach and redirect the unwanted behavior. As a result, it takes double the time it would have taken. Time could have been saved, had procedures and routines been established, maintained, and/or followed in the beginning.

Belong long, students go from asking simple questions (or responding to questions) to being distracted by other students or the teacher. All this creates a disruptive classroom, which creates confusion.

Simple ways to get students to respond or ask questions include:

Raise your Hand - This is the simplest way to avoid students yelling out in class. Nonetheless, having students raise their hands to ask questions could be problematic for introverts or shy students who are reluctant to raise their hands. Likewise, students who do not know the answer will also be embarrassed when the teacher ask questions. They do not want their peers to become aware of the fact that they do not know the answer. Because only certain personality types raise their hands to inquire of things in class, the teacher may try to mix it up. However, acknowledge those students who are adhering to the expectation to avoid them feeling ignored. If not, this could breed frustration for students following the procedure. If the teacher does not call on them while their hand is raised, this could

prompt them to yell things out in class. A good procedure could possibly breed negative results, should it be poorly implemented. At the same time, a good procedure is designed to hold all students accountable and meant to keep students safe.

Using Hand Signals – Another way to avoid yelling things out in class is to use hand signals, especially for water and restroom breaks. This can prevent the teacher from having to stop instruction when addressing a student asking for a break. Hand signals can be used during instruction time as well, such as facing the palm of your hand forward if you understand the direction. Likewise, face the palm of your hand backwards if you still have questions. Release those who understand the activity, while privately addressing questions from students who still need help. Students may not be as reluctant to ask questions if they know they can do so without public ridicule while in a safe environment.

Assigning a Group Advocate - As a teacher releases students to work in small groups, each group should have an advocate before they get started on a task. He or she addresses and clarifies information with the teacher before the group gets started. For instance, the group advocate ensures students have the tools and resources they need. Therefore, all can be successful at the task. The group advocate would ask, "Does anyone need clarifying information before we start?" In response, the group members would state their questions. When the teacher asks if there are any questions or if anyone needs any clarifying information, the group advocate would speak for the group. This method addresses any questions, giving your introverts or shy students a voice.

“Every student can learn, regardless of race, background, or economic status. Believing that will revolutionize our schools, while not believing that will destroy them.”

Patrice Cannon

Procedure for Engaging Students

My high school math teacher had the same teaching routine each day. She would have us turn to whatever page in the textbook from which she was teaching, go to the blackboard and show us how to work out the math problems. Then, she released us to do them on our own. The problem is, geometry did not make any sense to me. When I told her that, she would just work out another math problem and told me to pay attention that time. Well, I was paying attention, but still not making any connection with how she was teaching it. That is not to say she was a bad teacher. Instead, it just means that she had one way of teaching. We were expected to gravitate toward her teaching style, rather than her gravitating toward our learning style. This is not an uncommon practice. Even today, after walking through hundreds of classrooms, I still see this style of teaching. As teachers, we tend to think we hold all the knowledge. We think we have been sent by God to impart this knowledge into children, without any consideration of how they learn or what they already know. So we just want students to sit down, be quiet, and let us teach them something! However, even if students are sitting quiet, when they are not engaged or hooked into the lesson, they are not learning.

So, how can we engage students in learning? How do we get students to interact and engage with the content?

There are several instructional strategies to use, all which help students become engaged in instruction:

- Putting students into a group provides opportunities for taking turns and talking. Peer interventions are powerful. USE THEM! Students are going to talk with or without your permission, therefore you might as well intentionally plan for it. It is hard for us adults to sit still for hours without talking. We cannot just listen to lectures. It is also hard for children as well, especially the social media and gaming generation.
- **Academic Games** – Learning can be fun. Preparing academic games can take quite a bit of upfront planning for teachers.

Although, they can have big pay offs in the classroom. Academic games are not designed to keep students busy, but it is a way to help students focus on learning.

- Determine what you want students to know and show.
- Determine the game's complexity level.
- Plan for ways to create interactive games at the same complexity level.
- **Physical Movement**- I wrote a book called *101 Ways to Get Teaching Restored When Students Grow Bored*. It contains several interactive instructional strategies. Any lesson can be converted into an interactive lesson. It may take a bit more planning time, but when students are engaged in the learning, they are more likely to retain what they have learned. Students need physical movement while learning. When you observe that students are growing bored, stop your lesson, and find a way to incorporate physical activity. This will help get their blood flowing again.
- **Maintain a Lively Place** – Your attitude matters. Maybe your personality is not to jump around the classroom or on top of desks to engage students. Though, you can still have a lively classroom if it is not already. Showing videos or playing music can help maintain a lively place.
- **Using Electronic Devices** – We live at a time where cell phones and electronic devices are a big part of our lives. As educators, we check our cell phones several times a day for various reasons. Subsequently, we need to understand that we are teaching a generation who is birthed into a reality of technology. They do not know another way to exist. If they have cell phones, use them! Find ways to incorporate them into instruction.
 - Utilize cell phones to look up the definition of vocabulary words. This can be a good resource.
 - Find evidence online to support a claim, for this is another good use of technology.

Procedure for When Students Are Finished Working

“I'M DONE!”

These two words will be engraved in your brain. When students are finished working, they do not have anything else to do afterwards. While students are working, the teacher is usually walking around and monitoring for student evidence. Let us say that you are helping a student try to understand a task. Meanwhile, another student has already finished. The student, upon his or her completion, yells out in class, “I'm done! Teacher, I'm done!” They then get impatient, coming over to where you are. You can tell the student to go back to their seat, but that does not solve the problem. He or she is still finished with their work. What should be avoided is multiple students coming up to you for direction. This leaves multiple students sitting at their desks left to entertain themselves. After all, they have nothing to do.

Remember: It is easier for students to transition into another learning skill rather than being refocused and re-engaged into another learning skill. Think about it. Would you want to stop having fun and go back to work?

Make a *When I'm Finished* list on the board, where you list activities students can do once they finish their work. This is one way students can transition into another capacity of learning.

Below is a sample list which can be used throughout the day as students finish their work. A list of this sort can be created by the teacher. If you would like for the students to have ownership in this, then students and teachers can create it together.

When I'm Finished, I Can...

- Review my work before turning it in.
- Find a partner to review sight word flash cards.
- Find a partner to review math fact flash cards.
- Read a book.
- Add to a writing piece on which I have been working.
- Finish any incomplete work.

Procedure for Test Taking

Teachers give formal and informal assessments all the time. Once we teach a concept, we walk around to monitor if students understand it. Hopefully, we make on-the-spot corrections for students when needed. However, giving students an assessment is not just about checking something off the list in your lesson plan nor is it about obtaining another grade for the gradebook. We give assessments to monitor and check for understanding, along with ensuring mastery of the learning target. This is important, because it gives you necessary information. You can either adjust your teaching, identify who needs intervention, or know if it is time to build on the learning. We want to confirm we have procedures in place which allow students to fully concentrate on the assessment. Afterwards, they will have something to do which keeps them from bothering another student who is still taking the test. We want assessment data to be as accurate as possible.

Ms. Mock was a third grade teacher, and a teacher I was sent to observe during my first year of teaching. On the day I visited her class, she happened to be giving an assessment. The students had full ownership during this time. Ms. Mock, meanwhile, was just a facilitator. It was obvious that taking an assessment was routine in her classroom. The students were well aware of the expectation. Ms. Mock began by informing the students that it was “time for a temperature check.” She never said *test*. She conveyed, when the students think they are being *tested*, it sounds final and creates anxiety. Ms. Mock realized student anxiety was impacting their performance on assessments. She realized some of her students knew and understood the content, but still they were declining during a test. Therefore, changing the name calmed students. She further explained to students that a temperature check helped her to make her teaching better. This, too, relieved students’ stress.

Students knew what to do when Ms. Mock announced it was a time for a temperature check. She used a simple three-step process. On your mark, get set, go!

- **On Your Mark** – Put all items away except for a pencil or materials which are needed for the temperature check.
- **Get Set** – Students received the materials, getting a table divider if needed. The teacher reiterated the expectation of what students should do during and after the test.
- **Go** – Students began working.

Once the students finished taking the test, the teacher had a “warm up for the next exercise” time. This consisted of turning in the assessment to a basket labeled *temperature checks*. Students began reading the learning target for the next step in the lesson, completing a KWL chart: K - what students already know, W - what students need to know, and L - what I want to know.

Now, this will take intentional planning. Teachers will need to know what is coming next. When students create a KWL chart for the next learning target, it allows the teacher to see what the students already know about the skill. Moreover, it helps identify where to start the next lesson. As a new teacher, you are still learning about standards and learning targets. So, it is perfectly fine to have students get a book and silently read after an assessment. Still, remember that students may only do this for so long. They will get bored and start entertaining themselves. Keep in mind, there may be some slow test takers. This can cause another potential problem of students finishing a book and continuing to get up to get one book after another. If that happens with multiple students at various times, it creates a distraction or disruption for students still testing. The expectation after testing should be to respect others. Give those still testing an opportunity to do their best. Additionally, consider putting a sign which says *Taking a Test* outside of your door. Therefore, other students and staff will be aware of you giving a test and it will help minimize interruptions or distractions.

After an assessment, down time is often wasted instruction time. Having students wait for others causes students to become disengaged and bored in class. Incorporating student KWL charts or prediction maps can maximize instructional time, as opposed to having students read silently. In all honesty, how many students do

you think are actually reading?

I'll wait...

If you are not moving onto a new academic standard and building on the current one, students may complete a prediction map instead.

A prediction map allows students to make predictions about what is coming next during the learning phase. The teacher examines the student's thinking, while being intentional about how to adjust teaching. This will help with intentional lesson planning, questioning strategies, and how to plan for evidence.

Students taking a little more time to finish the temperature check can complete their KWL chart or prediction map during center time. Alternatively, they can choose another time in class when they are finished working on a different assignment. Neither the KWL chart nor the prediction map should be used for grades. It is just a way for students to examine their own thinking, while possibly revising this thinking after learning takes place. Furthermore, it allows the teacher to see how the student is thinking in reference to the learning target.

Before introducing the next lesson, these can be reviewed as a class. This way, those that did not have a chance to complete one can still be a part of the conversation.

KWL Student Chart

Academic Standard:		
Learning Target:		
Learning Target in My Own Words:		
Vocabulary Words I Might Hear in This Lesson:		
What I Already Know	What I Need to Know	What I Want to Know

Prediction Map

Students will create a linguistic or non-linguistic representation of what may be coming next in the learning target.

Learning Target:	What the Learning Target Means:
What I Have Learned so Far:	What I Predict Is Coming Next:

Procedure for Classroom Interruptions

Every now and then, there will be a classroom interruption for several reasons:

- Someone comes over the intercom to tell you a student needs to come to the office.
- Someone calls your classroom to get information.
- Someone comes to the door, asking you a quick question.
- A student is sent to your classroom for a timeout.
- Your teacher bestie needs to borrow your small laminator.
- Someone needs paperwork which you forgot to turn in.

We all know this list could go on. A classroom interruption means a break in teaching and learning. Usually, this means you will have to re-engage students and restart your instruction. Depending on how long the interruption is, you may have to reteach the last part of your lesson. Think about this: How long does it take adults to become social with their colleagues when there is a break in a faculty meeting? It does not take long at all. It will not take long for students either, so use this to your advantage. Expecting students not to talk when there is a break in instruction is a battle you will lose every single time. Thus, instead of telling students to be quiet, tell them to talk!

We will dig deeper into collaborative groups next, but I figured this would be a good time to introduce this concept. Students, like adults, need time to process the information they are being taught. This is essential if it is new content. Teachers process information with their colleagues all the time, either by texting during faculty meetings or simply passing a note. They discuss things in the teacher's lounge, or come to another teacher's classroom to "let it all out." It is all a means of processing through something.

When teachers are assigning classroom jobs, students should additionally pick their roles in collaborative groups for the week. This includes: Team leader or facilitator, materials manager, or time keeper. (These roles are broken down next as we discuss

collaborative groups). When there is an interruption, simply say, *Okay, turn to your table group*. (The classroom will need to be set up for collaborative groups.) *Discuss with your team what you understand, as well as some things you may still have questions about.* This routine will likely have to be practiced several times, though the team leader is responsible for keeping students focused on the task. So, they should avoid discussing other things. Upon returning your focus to the classroom, ask a few groups to share what they discussed about the learning; this will prevent them from assuming that was wasted time. If you do not ask students to share after giving them a directive, then they will catch on to this being a filler strategy. The students will eventually start talking about non-related things without the accountability of having to do the expectation.

Remember: You should never expect what you do not inspect.

Most interruptions should not last longer than a few minutes; still, this time can be focused on instruction. Two minutes can be a long time.

Procedure for Students Working in Collaborative Groups

Think about your time in a faculty meeting, a professional development, or a college course. Consider a class where the teacher did all the talking or lecturing. How much did you learn or retain?

When I was in school, my teachers used the “drill and kill” method of teaching. Morning work consisted of a page with fifty multiplication facts. We had to get these correct in order to move to the next level of multiplication. It was the same with reading. By the time we graduated high school, we went off to college with information committed to memory. Although there is a place for memorization and recall, we also went off to college without knowing how to use the information which we memorized.

I have found that many teachers are afraid of getting out of their comfort zone. Teachers tend to believe they are the holder of all knowledge. They believe classroom management consists of keeping ultimate control in the classroom. Their voice is the only one

that matters. They believe releasing students to learn is equivalent to releasing the classroom into a chaotic storm from which they cannot escape. It boils down to fear. We teach how we learned. In this way, collaborative groups are a fairly new concept. I know that, when I was in school, all of my teachers delivered lecture-style instruction. I was usually that student constantly being told to be quiet or pay attention. At some point in the classroom, direct teaching has a place. But after directly teaching a concept, you have to give students time to process the information. The best way to process through something is with someone else. Think about how you process through a problem. It is not uncommon for teachers, especially first year teachers trying to develop their pedagogical skills, to stand and deliver. We are trying to build relationships, maintain our classroom management, and survive teaching altogether.

One way to have students process through the information is by collaborative grouping. This puts learning into the students' hands, while allowing the teacher to monitor for student evidence of learning. He or she is able to provide rapid-interventions to those who need it.

How do we know if students comprehend information if the teacher is the only one talking?

Teachers have to intentionally plan for time spent incorporating collaborative groups in the classroom. Students are not only being released to work together; instead, we are intentionally planning questions and tasks which give us a clearer picture of how students perceive information.

Gathering student evidence helps the teacher determine if they should: retreat (stop moving forward completely and build more background knowledge); reteach (provide a rapid-intervention to a small group or reteach the whole class); or reassemble (bring everybody back together and move on to the next skill).

While incorporating cooperative groups, another procedure should involve assigning clearly defined roles.

Some roles in student groups may be:

- **Facilitator** – The group leader who makes sure everyone contributes to the learning while staying focused on the task.
- **Time Keeper** – The time keeper prevents the team from not going under or over the assigned time. He or she utilizes time in a productive manner. They may say, “We only have ten minutes left and have spent enough time doing this. We need to move on to...”
- **Materials Manager** – The materials manager guarantees the group has all the required materials to successfully do the expected task.
- **Recorder** – The recorder captures the group’s thinking.
- **Reporter** – The reporter verbalizes the overall perspectives for the group.

You would not assign these roles without explaining each role’s expectation(s). Groups are typically made up of four to five people. The goal is to ensure that everyone contributes to the learning by assigning everyone an accountability role.

Another concept to teach concerning collaborative groups is to confirm conative skills are taught and in place. Conative skills determine how students act upon their thoughts and feelings. During collaborative groups, students may disagree with one another. In fact, you want them to have a healthy debate in order to promote higher order thinking skills. One way to reinforce conative skills is to let students know that the classroom space is a safe space. Here they can make mistakes and disagree in a non-judgmental zone. This cannot be taught in one setting. It is consistently reinforced throughout the year through redirecting and accountability; redirecting behavior does not align to this expectation; and holding students accountable when they are not displaying conative skills. Moreover, it holds yourself accountable when you may be having a bad day and not displaying conative skills. In turn, you may not be redirecting students when you are just outright tired of students’ undesirable behavior.

As students are working in groups, it is a time for the teacher to monitor their thinking. What are the students saying? What is their

understanding of the material? What instructional shifts need to be made?

Collaborative groups are effective in turning the learning over to the students. It promotes social/emotional skills, peer coaching, and peer interventions while maintaining the complexity of learning.

Turn the learning over to the rightful recipient. It does not belong to you, but to them.

Teachers are doing all the planning and all the teaching. Sometimes they are the only one engaged in the lesson. At the end of the day, they lug their teacher bags out the building filled with papers to grade. During those times, we discover who understood the task and who did not; but you have no idea which part of the lesson they did or did not understand. However, putting students in groups will not only help students process the content. It will free the teacher to walk around and provide on-the-spot help for students who need it.

Procedure for Transitioning to a New Subject

Think about your favorite movie. What made it your favorite? It was probably something in the beginning which grabbed you. The suspense kept your attention, while the ending left you feeling satisfied.

Beginning and ending a lesson is the punch line to every movie. Think about it. How a movie begins, just as much as how it ends, matters to the viewers. If the movie starts too slow, viewers will more than likely be disinterested for a while. It takes a big movie twist to regain their interest. It is how the movie ends which will determine whether movie goers love or hate a movie. Have you ever watched a movie which was somewhat decent, but you hated the way the movie ended? It ruins it for you. It is the difference between walking out the movie theater wanting more or feeling like you just wasted 120 minutes of your life. If the beginning is slow, you will more than likely spend the movie trying to become engaged. If the movie has a bad ending, you are probably spending time afterwards trying to remember the movie's descent moments. However, due to the lack of engagement, you probably will not be able to recall much. Nevertheless, if you watch a great movie, you can probably

remember it after many years have passed. In fact, you can probably still tell people about it when asked.

Well, it is the same objective for a lesson. As a teacher, you are the movie director. You are trying to engage your audience (the student) into a learning concept. Likewise, you expect it will stick with them long after they leave your classroom. As a director, you have the power to hook a student into a lesson and cause them to enjoy a subject they may initially not show an interest in.

The lesson's beginning is how you hook your students. We always think that the actual teaching is the most important part of the lesson. In actuality, it is the opening. How will you grab their attention before teaching the content? You only get one chance to do this; then, it's gone.

Sometimes a skill which comes easy for us becomes the same skill that is hardest to teach. If a skill is not a struggle for us, sometimes we do not understand the level of struggle in others. Without struggle, we tend to forget how we obtained a success. To effectively teach concepts, a teacher must include the right amount of chunked instruction. Consider a baby. We would not typically give them a full plate of food, but rather we would cut their food into small, bite-sized chunks. Overall this makes it easy for them to eat. It is the same concept with teaching. Students are babies while learning the knowledge, so we have to chunk it for them. Give them digestible bites. We tend to miss certain steps when a skill comes easy for us. We either do not chunk the content small enough for students, or do not give students enough chewing time (processing time) to digest the content. To remedy this, we must allow time for the students to digest the content before giving them more. Even a highly skilled teacher can make this common error.

One afternoon, as I went into one of my math teacher's classrooms to conduct an observation, I discovered that this particular teacher was highly skilled at math. He had a very complex math problem on the board for students to work out; but instead of showing students a step-by-step process of working out the math problem, he showed the class how to work out the entire math problem. In doing this, he spent thirty minutes teaching confused students. To further the point,

he could not understand why the content was so hard for them. After all, it was so easy for him.

When starting a new lesson, keep in mind the bite-sized pieces are important. These will determine a lesson's success or failure. As the lesson is ending, consider what happens when you are finished eating dinner. Once you finish chewing, you decide if you can eat anything else and sit for a while. Do not overstuff students. End the lesson with a closure which helps students digest information. This is similar to giving them water, which flushes down what they have been chewing.

Moreover, always think back to the learning objective. Was the expected outcome accomplished? Could the students produce evidence they understood the learning objective? When concluding a lesson, a teacher should use closure activities which will check for student's understanding or misunderstanding.

Closure Activities:

- **Quick Check** – This is a two to three sentence summary of what they know about the learning objective.
- **Temperature Check** – Using a scale ranging from one to four, have students chart their level of understanding by making a tally mark. Create this on chart paper or regular paper. Put it on the back of the door, so that other students will not be able to see the responses. They can mark their responses on their way out of the class. Then, view the data before starting the next day's lesson. It provides an opportunity to either address misunderstandings, reteach, or review information.

1 2	1 = I do not understand.
III	2 = I somewhat understand.
	3 = I understand the objective.
3 4	4 = I understand and can teach
	others.

- **Exit Ticket** – There are several ways to give students an exit ticket. One way can be to stand at the door. Ask students to

define vocabulary words, math steps, prefixes/suffixes, or any other quick concept they learned that day. Students can also write it down and turn it in as they are leaving class.

- **Technology** - Utilizing technology to perform a post-assessment is another quick check to see evidence of a student's understanding. An online assessment will give teachers and students immediate feedback and data.

Procedure for Snack Time

Snack time is always fun time. Children love to snack. This goes back to your classroom job assignments. Getting a student to help with snack time will free up your time. This will allow you to monitor the classroom while the students are having snack time. Get snacks that are not messy (animal crackers, pretzels, apple slices, celery, etc.). Avoid snacks that contain a lot of sugar, because it is a challenge for a sugar brain to focus on learning. The purpose of snack time is to replenish the energy of our kiddos when they need a mid-morning or afternoon boost.

Recommendations:

Prep the snacks ahead of time, by counting them out and having the exact number you need. Discovering you do not have enough snacks while still trying to monitor and maintain the classroom could get chaotic.

Remember to never withhold food from any student as a form of punishment. Instead, ensure that they are following the classroom procedure regarding preparing for snack time before you hand out snacks.

Students should also clean up their areas. Class leaders can check to make sure materials are put away, areas are cleaned, and everyone is ready to go while you are preparing the snack.

- Materials managers can guarantee that all materials are placed back in their proper areas.
- The maintenance team (if that's one of your jobs) can be in charge of getting Clorox wipes and wiping down areas before

the snack is given.

- Teacher assistants can assist the teacher in handing out snacks to the class.

If your procedure involves only handing out snacks after students have put away their supplies and cleaned up their areas, then stick to that.

Remember: If it is not okay at any time, then it should not be okay anytime. When you establish a procedure, it is important that you uphold your own procedure. Students will only take a procedure as seriously as you do.

Procedure for Student Transitions

If there is anything that sucks up instruction time, it is transitions! Transitions can be challenging whether we are transitioning through centers, another place in the classroom, or somewhere outside of the classroom - especially if the students are enjoying the task they are doing. Therefore, have something solid in place which can help. This particular procedure may be one of the first procedures to teach.

Getting students to smoothly move from one location to another without incident will take an established procedure. However, investing in a timer may be the first step in establishing smooth classroom transitions. Alternatively, using a transition protocol can help. Meaning, when it is time to transition, use a countdown system: four; three; two; one. You can either hold up the numbers or display the numbers on a Smartboard. Teach the students the meaning of each number. An example of this is below.

4	FREEZE! We have completed this task. It is time to move on.
3	Complete your thought. Clean up your space.
2	TRANSITION!
1	Let us get ready to move to our new space!

When implementing this procedure in the beginning, students may need additional time for each step. For instance, you will display the number four for about fifteen seconds. Let everyone know to *FREEZE!* Then, display the number three, letting them know to complete their thought. They can also start cleaning up their spaces. As the students begin to do this routine consistently, it will require less and less time in between each step.

Procedure for When There is a Substitute

Of all the things I had to plan for as a teacher, planning for a substitute was what I liked the least. I disliked it so much that it was not even worth it to take off. But then, here comes the day where you can hardly get out of bed. Therefore, you must take a sick day. In that moment, you have to think about how you are going to get information to a substitute. How will they know what to do with your class? If you do not have a pre-existing plan for a substitute, then most likely planning for your substitute will fall on your colleagues, who will not be happy about it! Like most teachers, they will also shun having to plan for a substitute, especially if it is not their substitute. You know your students, but more importantly, you know what they need. So, the best thing to do is plan, plan, plan!

I'm sure you are a rock star teacher and your attendance is great; but creating a substitute kit is still a necessity. Here are a few things that should be included in a substitute kit:

- Simple procedures/routines.
- Your class roster. This should include notes of students with health concerns, behavior concerns, and any special accommodations. (This may also include a list of students who may be pulled out for additional instruction by another teacher.)
- Seating chart.
- Class schedule.
- A universal lesson plan. This is a lesson plan which can be used at any time for any class. This lesson plan is made up of skills you have previously taught the students. These are skills students can practice.
- Safety drill procedures.
- A buddy teacher that can assist, should they have any questions.
- A page to leave notes and feedback for you.

Get a folder and keep all these items in there ahead of time. This guarantees it is always there, should you have an unexpected absence. Then, you can just email one of your teacher buddies or administrator to tell them where the substitute folder is located. Your colleagues will appreciate this pre-planning step from you.

Remember that we can substitute for a teacher but we cannot substitute instruction. When it comes to planning for someone else teaching your students, it should always be from parts of the curriculum which you have previously taught. I am not saying that a substitute cannot teach subject matter, but you are the one with the relationship with your students. Only you know how they learn. You are the one who knows which students need undocumented accommodations. Some information is hard to give to a substitute because it is in your heart. In this case, plan for the surface which will do the least amount of damage.

Procedure for an Early Dismissal

There are many reasons for an early dismissal. Maybe a student is being checked out early, has gotten sick, or there is a huge snowstorm. In any case, school is being dismissed early! Therefore, establishing this procedure keeps you from interrupting your day with anything unexpected. As a principal, my gold teachers and I would often clash when students were called to the office for an early dismissal. They were always flustered with early dismissals. After all, they had already planned and structured their whole day without accounting for any interruptions. Gold teachers have to do what they had planned; otherwise, it throws off their day. So, once they were informed a student was leaving early, the office personnel would be in the front office waiting for the student. After a while had passed, we were wondering what was taking the student so long. The parent was frustrated and office personnel was confused. This was partly due to the teacher ensuring the student had everything which the teacher had planned for the rest of the day. Doing his or her schoolwork the next day was not an option, since they had a whole new plan for the next day.

This could have been eliminated, however, if the teacher had a set procedure in place regarding early dismissal. It would have kept the office from calling the classroom several times or having to calm a frustrated parent.

Suggestions:

- Plan with the end in mind. For instance, assume every student will leave early. Hand out homework at the beginning, instead of the end of class. (This means the teacher has to already have a plan for homework. He or she cannot make it up in class.)
- If the teacher teaches a lesson, but decides to give students more opportunities for practice at home, then allow students leaving early to get this practice the following day. They can complete their work during center time or an alternate time while in the classroom. At all costs, please avoid using recess as a time to make up work. Students need physical activity. It is

not a punishment for students to leave early.

- Know when to let go. It is okay if students do not get all the work finished for that day. If an early dismissal catches you off guard, give the student the work the following day. Allow him or her an extra day to make it up.
- Minimize classroom interruptions by outlining a procedure which consists of a set routine such as: If I leave early - grab my belongings; turn in work or take it home for homework; put away all materials; check my box for any homework (if you implement a box that is purposed for early dismissal); and quietly go to the office.

Remember: Make a note of all students who left school early. This will help you keep track of homework needs, while also keeping track of all students during regular dismissal. As much as we would like to think that we can remember all things at all times...we are human. I cannot tell you the amount of times other teachers or myself have been searching for students after school before someone says, "Oh, they went home early."

Procedure for Dismissal

You made it to the end of the day! Breathe. Stay Present. Many teachers tend to relax and put their guards down at the end of the day, but this is the time to be most attentive. The final bell may have just rang, but we are still responsible for children until they get to the front door of their homes. Most parents will tell you during "Meet the Teacher" night whether their child rides the bus, walks home, or will be picked up by someone. The parents who do not attend that event will more than likely touch basis with the teacher on the first day of school. However, some parents may tell their children, instead of the teacher, how to go home at the end of the day. Either of these may work, but think about this scenario: What happens if a parent tells their child to ride the bus, but he or she wants to go to their friend's house, and instead tells you they were told by their parent to walk home? You trust him and send him walking home after school. Thirty minutes after school is dismissed, you hear an irate parent in the office yelling about her child, who is in your class, never making it

home. What do you do? Better yet, how could this have been prevented? Take a moment to ponder on this. Unfortunately, it is not an uncommon situation.

For a teacher, parent, or administrator - not being able to find a child is the worst feeling ever! It is even more gut wrenching knowing you possibly had something to do with this error. Developing a procedure for dismissal will help prevent these types of circumstances.

WHEN IN DOUBT, REACH OUT!

If you are unsure of how a child gets home, always contact the parents before dismissal. Create a "How I Get Home" list and post it in the classroom. This way, it is visible to students as well.

When you send your welcome letter to parents, this may be a good time to ask how their child will be going home. Sometimes, circumstances will arise and parents may have to change how their children get home. However, if a child comes to school and informs you that he or she will be going home differently than usual, confirm this with their parent or guardian.

It will be wise to close instruction about ten minutes before dismissal (you may need more time at the beginning of the year) to give students an opportunity to gather their belongings and prepare for dismissal. This helps you to avoid rushing and paying minimal attention at the end of the day. It will also be wise to allow students to prep for dismissal in sections. For instance, dismissal procedures should permit all students who go home in similar ways to have a designated place in the class such as:

- All students who walk home should get their belongings and sit in one area of the classroom.
- All students who ride the bus should get their belongings and sit together in another area in the classroom.
- All students whose parents pick them up, should get their belongings and sit in another designated area.

Of course this will take practice, but it is vital! Take the time to practice and rehearse. Think about where the designated areas will be in the classroom. It may not require you to rearrange your class,

just make minor adjustments!

Outside of the Classroom

Procedure for How Students Line Up

Think about it for a second....

You have just taught a wonderful lesson. The students are ready to transition to the bathroom, lunch, PE, music, the library, and/or recess. The whole morning has been going perfect. Now, it is time to line up. How can we do this in the most effective and efficient way possible? If there is anything that causes a classroom to go from peace to chaos, it is when students have to rise from their seats and transition to another location.

Remember: Everyone wants to be the line leader. Our best students want to be the caboose. No one volunteers for the middle.

Let us flip this scenario. All morning your kids have been very active. It has been a challenge trying to get them to slow down and process any content. Now, it's time to transition! Your anxiety increases every time your students have to leave the classroom. It is one thing for your classroom to be in chaos, but now you are getting ready to move from confined chaos to public chaos. Nevertheless, there's a procedure for that!

An easy way to organize how students line up is to call them by shirt color, shoe color, table numbers, or even gender. This expectation should always be clearly communicated before the command is given. For example, "Once your materials are put away and you are sitting quietly in your seat, you are ready to line up."

"I will know you are ready to go to music when you are standing in line and facing forward with your hands by your side."

"Now, the expectation of when we are in the hallway is to keep your hands to yourself. Respect the learning in other classrooms by not talking."

If the expectation is not adhered to, stop and correct it immediately. Making corrections may come with issuing consequences. However, do not say it, unless you are ready to do it! Students do not take idle consequences seriously. Once they believe you do not back up what you say, you have just lost control of the classroom.

DO NOT CRITICIZE, BUT CORRECT! We improve behavior by

bringing unwanted behavior to the student's attention and informing them of the desired conduct or expectation. Next, give them a chance to make the adjustment. Once the behavior is improved, compliment the student and move forward. Harping on a student's mishaps seldom causes children to revise it. Instead, it embarrasses students, creates resentment, and breeds more unwanted actions. The end result is that you now have a student in your class who does not feel safe with you.

Giving step-by-step instructions is another way to implement this procedure in the classroom. These include:

When I call your name (or use another identifying characteristic: shirt color, shoe color, etc.), stand up.

- Push in your chair.
- Walk quietly to the line. (If they do not, make them go back and try it again.)
- Keep your hands, legs, and objects to yourself.
- Stand quietly in line.

Do not leave the classroom until students have met the expectation. However, if there is one student refusing to fulfill the classroom expectation, allow the other students to transition. Handle that isolated issue afterwards. Punishing all students for one student's behavior will frustrate those who are fulfilling the expectation.

After all, what is the purpose of doing what is expected if it does not matter?

Procedure for Students Taking Restroom Breaks

When students need to go to the restroom, alone or with the class, it gives them time to take a break from learning. During this time, they will be able to socialize with their friends. For the girls, this will be a time to congregate and chat in front of the mirrors. For boys, this will be a time to ball up paper towels after drying their hands and play a little paper towel basketball with the trashcan being the “hoop”. Maybe they will pick it up and put it in the trash if they miss the can, or maybe they will walk out the bathroom and leave the trash on the floor before getting back in line.

Have a quick procedure in place, such as:

- **Use it** – Go in the restroom and do your business.
- **Lose it** – Lose the germs by washing your hands.
- **Excuse it** – Excuse yourself from the restroom by getting back in line.

This procedure will have to be practiced for a while in the beginning, but once the procedure is in place, time should speed up during the restroom breaks. If students are doing anything else other than this, they should be referred back to the procedure. Several times I have seen teachers take twenty to thirty minutes trying to get the students through a restroom break. If we do that twice a day and five days a week, then that is five hours of instructional time being used in the restroom.

To offset down time during a restroom break, refer back to classroom jobs. Assign a bathroom monitor. They will be responsible for ensuring each student is following the bathroom procedure or reporting it to the teacher when someone is not.

Sometimes it can also be a challenge keeping students engaged while at the restroom. Think about what students are doing when they come out of the restroom. Basically, they are expected to sit (or stand) and wait for other students. How can you avoid students getting loud in the hallway or interrupting other classes?

One way to do this is by engaging students with simple instructional strategies. Use flash cards:

- Math facts
- Sight words
- Prefixes/suffixes
- Vocabulary

Students can speak in low tones and practice these concepts with a partner. Alternatively, the class leader can walk around and show the students flash cards. Both of these concepts will free you up to monitor the students in the restroom. The goal is to release the responsibility to the students where they will eventually self-monitor and check their own behavior.

Procedure for When Students Are in the Hallway

The hallway is a sensitive area which is usually filled with staff and students during various times of the day. Several people are going to the restroom, the cafeteria, and anywhere else students need to transition throughout the building. While in the hallway, students need to know the expectation, which is, always to be mindful of what is going on in the classrooms which they are passing by.

I had a teacher who loved for her students to “chant” in the hallway. It was a means of keeping them engaged while transitioning to various places in the building. She would say something, and the students would repeat it. Although the students enjoyed it, and even the students in other classrooms thought it was entertaining, the teachers in those classrooms did not think it was amusing at all. In fact, by the end of the day, I had several complaints in my email about the noise. The complaints ranged from how the noise interrupted students taking spelling tests to teachers had a hard time teaching.

Although this is a true story, that may be a little extreme in discussing hallway procedures. Though, even the less extreme cases were still landing in my email by the end of the day. Basically, what happens in the hallway matters. It has the ability to affect

several classrooms. Establishing hallway procedures begins in the classrooms before the students enter the hallway. Students should know the expectation before they leave the classroom. Some simple procedures while in the hallway can consist of students:

- Respecting the learning in other classrooms by keeping their voice levels low.
- Going straight to their destination and back to the classroom.
- Avoid running, yelling, or bothering other classroom doors while in the hallway.

LET THE SIGNS DO THE TALKING ! You can thank one of my former teachers for this next idea. When she was a first-year teacher, getting students to walk in the hall with low tones was difficult for her. She had a hard time transporting twenty-five kindergartners to music, PE, lunch, recess, or the restroom. When she finally managed to get students somewhere, the hard process started all over when it was time for them to return to class. The only thing she knew to do was yell and scream at students. Everyone in the building knew when her class was in the hallway. After working with her for a while, we began implementing signs to promote silence. These signs can also be used when students are working in class during centers or at other times in the classroom. Moreover, you can use the signs while working with a group or providing an intervention for other students.



These signs can be used in or outside of the classroom. Copy onto cardstock. Laminate, and glue onto popsicle sticks for its most

effective use.

**Quiet,
Please**



**Getting
Noisy**



**Move
Forward**



**It's Time to
Transition**

Procedure for Students Transitioning to Other Places Throughout the Building

Every now and then, a student may need to go somewhere in the building alone. This will also require a procedure that will assure students will go where they need to go and return to class afterwards. The teacher is still responsible for a student as long as they are in the school building. This includes when they leave the classroom and travel somewhere in the building. With younger students, it is simple to send a buddy with them. Usually the person at the destination knows they are coming. So, they will be watching for them. But, every now and then, a student will need to travel somewhere in the building alone and unplanned.

When this happens, one recommendation would be to create passes for various places students tend to go. For younger students, put a piece of yarn or other string on the sign that allows the student to wear it comfortably around their necks. This will make it easier for other adults in the hall to see where the student should be going. If you do not like the idea of students wearing it around their necks, then copy the hall pass on bright colored paper which will also make it visible to others in the building. Therefore, they can assist in helping the student get to where they need to be.

When students are traveling to other places in building, we are trusting the student to go where they need to go and return to class afterwards. It is always a good idea to have other eyes in the building assisting with this. For instance, when a student is headed to the office, it's okay to either get your classroom leader to contact the office, or you contact the office ahead of time. The conversation may go something like, "Hello, I am sending Johnny to the office for _____." (State the reason). This way, another set of eyes is watching for Johnny as well. They can also notify you when Johnny is returning to your class, if he never showed up, or if he had to go somewhere else in the building.

Several places to which students travel in the building that may require a pass include:

- The main office
- The counselor's office
- The cafeteria (Maybe he or she is taking a lunch count.)
- The restroom
- Another teacher's classroom

This procedure should involve students having a pass in order to transition to another place in the building. One way to ensure the student actually went to the place they were directed to report is by having the receiving party initial and/or time stamp the pass. They can also call you.

Another way involves having sign in and sign out forms for older students. Therefore, they can sign out to go where they are going with the time and sign back in upon their return. This helps with documentation. It allows you to see how many times a student leaves your class and for how long, just in case there is a need to meet with a care taker or administrator.



BATHROOM
PASS



OFFICE
PASS



NURSE
PASS



LIBRARY
PASS



HALL
PASS



COUNSELOR
PASS

General Classroom Policies

Classroom Discipline Plan

Our classroom discipline plan governs how students are expected to behave in class, as well as what will happen when they are not following those expectations. It is important for teachers to understand that parents should be informed of how the class will be governed and their role in the matter. If you are teaching in a school where the demographics are different than what you are accustomed to, reach out to your mentor or administrator for assistance. Misbehavior looks different across cultures.

I will encourage you to reflect back to the True Colors Personality Test while developing your classroom discipline plan. First, start with who you are. Start with knowing your personality and then other personalities as well. You may find that you tend to mesh easily with some personalities and conflict with others. I say that because a classroom full of children is bound to find your trigger at some point. I say that because you may be more willing to discipline a color you do not bond with while giving grace to personality colors you get along with. Therefore, you will need to be certain that you are not reacting out of frustration and anger when disciplining or correcting student behavior. Students will be the first to notice and feel the inequity of discipline in a classroom. Creating a discipline plan is a way to govern you as well. I can absolutely promise you that, at some point in the classroom, a child will discover any, if not all, the suppressed stuff you have not dealt with. They will dig it up and use it against you. During this time, you have to be careful that you are not disciplining students out of being triggered.

The goal of discipline is to correct, refocus, or reflect. Let's break down these areas.

Correct: When giving students a consequence for his or her actions, we communicate to them that, every choice they make is followed by consequences. Those consequences are either positive or negative, but there will be consequences. When establishing a consequence, ensure that it is relatable to the choice the student made. For instance, if a student goes into the bathroom and throws toilet paper on the floor or puts an influx of it in the stool, issue a consequence to

where the student has to pick up the toilet paper in the bathroom. Alternatively, he or she can work with the janitor in cleaning the bathroom before or after school. This is a way of correcting behavior because he or she does not want to have to clean the bathroom again. They will get an understanding of what it is like to have to clean the bathroom from the janitor's perspective and hopefully become empathetic of others before making that choice again. If they do not understand the consequence, then increase the days and times that they have to clean.

Now, if a student throws paper towels on the floor, and refuses to pick them up or yells at you in the process, utilize your school's discipline plan to issue a consequence. This plan is a guide toward how the school chooses to respond to students being disrespectful to staff. Also, get the parents on board as well.

Refocus: This is where we turn the learning back over to the students. When talking about refocusing behavior, we want the students to refocus their own behavior. Adults can correct while we let the students refocus. This is the ultimate goal of having a discipline plan. A consequence that is geared toward refocusing behavior is quick and in-the-moment. For instance, if students are getting ready to transition, the teacher may acknowledge or give accolades to those who are following the procedure. The intention in doing so, is for other students who are not following the procedure to refocus after seeing other students getting compliments.

Reflect: This is where students self-regulate while reflecting on a consequence they received earlier. Instead of pushing the envelope to get that consequence again, they will reflect, improve their behavior, and make a different decision. For example, a group of students were caught drinking beer in school, which led to an automatic 6-week suspension. When put in that situation again to try beer, one student reflected upon the 6-week consequence and refused to partake again. A reflection consequence is harsher and deeply felt.

Furthermore, we are teaching students coping skills. Not only are we explaining what not to do, but what they should be doing in alignment to your procedures and routines. For instance, telling

students to be quiet during the test is one thing; however, telling students to be respectful of others testing by keeping their voices at a level zero is another thing. When disciplining, refer back to the expectation. Avoid putting a big emphasis on the behavior. One says you are not following the classroom expectations, while the other says you are a bad person.

Remember: Disciplining a child with whom you do not have a relationship does not result in correction but condemnation. When a child feels condemned, it will take three times the energy to redirect him than it would if you had a positive relationship with him or her in the beginning. Over-discipline (what we tend to do when we are triggered) results in a child operating in fear, which is not effective. Operating in fear can cause children to act out with other behaviors, because they are not self-regulating, but YOU-regulating (they fear you and not the consequence). And if a child is doing the desired behavior, reward him. It will kill the culture of your classroom to only focus on unwanted behavior. If that is the only attention your students will get, then they will gladly give you more of it.

Things to stay away from when disciplining students:

- Food (You cannot have snack time.)
- Literature (Go read by yourself because you got in trouble.)
- Writing (Write a hundred sentences of the same thing.)
- Academics (Complete fifty math problems.)

These things are ineffective. Usually, they will not result in correcting behavior but instead resort to fear and anger. Sometimes it is not a consequence telling students to read when they are in trouble, especially if they enjoy reading. Be careful not to discipline yourself in an effort to discipline a child.

Did you ever play the resistance game as a child? You and another person would face one another, your hands pressed against each other's hands. Meanwhile, you are trying to resist that person from falling into your space with all your energy. You do this until you are tired, and eventually one person will give in to the other. This resulted in one person losing their balance. This is the same with

classroom discipline. If you give into a controlling match with a child, either them or you will lose balance. One person falls down but nobody wins. You are either resisting their behavior or they are resisting your discipline. Either way, the concept does not work.

Rebellion and resistance will surface in children when they are unable to suppress the urge to give birth to their true identity. Everything is not a behavioral concern or an issue just because it does not align to the teacher's personality or preference. We are not changing children with our consequences; we are changing behavior. Instead of trying to make children fit a mode that is comfortable for us, we should seek to understand who they are. Then, get busy loving and supporting them in becoming that.

It takes the relationship with the parent or caregiver in order to keep the balance of the classroom. You and the student's guardian are in a daily co-parenting relationship. It takes both of you, working together, to create a safe, learning environment for children. Both of you hold students accountable for their behavior.

Here are some ways to get parents involved:

- Have your discipline plan and classroom expectations outlined. These should be ready to give to parents during the "Meet the Teacher" night or before school starts. Have a place where you, parents, and students have to sign and acknowledge adherence to the plan. This will be a living document which you can always reference at parent/teacher conferences or meetings.
- Parents, like us, will probably forget most of the things they signed at the beginning of the school year. So, reiterate the classroom discipline plan throughout the year in a newsletter or notes home.
- Parent phone calls are probably one of the most effective ways to make contact with parents or guardians regarding your plan.
- Be visible and creative. When parents drop their students off or pick them up from school, try to touch base with them as much as possible.
- When all else fails, do a home visit. You will have to gauge how

comfortable you feel doing this. I encourage you to take someone with you. Doing home visits to touch base with parents can also help with getting a parent involved with discipline.

When developing a classroom discipline plan, make sure it is aligned to the school's discipline plan. This way, when students have hit the top of your plan, the next consequence should be to start implementing consequences from the school's discipline plan.

Components of a Classroom Discipline Plan:

- **Your Classroom Philosophy**
 - Your classroom philosophy lays out your beliefs about what creates an effective classroom culture and everyone's roles in helping to achieve it.
- **Classroom Expectations**
 - Your classroom expectations lay out the expectations that students are expected to follow in order to create a safe learning environment.
- **Consequences**
 - Consequences should lay out what happens if students are not following the classroom's expectations. It should further explain each punishment's duration before more intense consequences are implemented.
- **Rewards**
 - Rewards are ways to celebrate students who are following the classroom expectations. If you give out snacks, candy, or anything else which can be consumed, please advise parents. Make sure they are in agreement with any edible items. You do not want to turn a celebration from school into a punishment at home.
- **Teacher Commitment**
 - This should list out what the parent and student can expect from you as the teacher and your part in helping to create a successful learning environment.
- **Student Commitment**

- These are the student commitments in helping create a safe learning environment.
- **Parent Commitment**
 - This should list out what the teacher and student can expect from the parent as far as helping to create a successful learning environment.
- **Signatures from All**
 - Everyone should sign as a way of committing to the expectations. These commitments should be in every student's folder. Likewise, they should be revisited with students and parents when necessary.

Sample Discipline Plan

Ms. Allen's Classroom Discipline Plan

My Classroom Philosophy: I believe the classroom is a place where students can learn and thrive, while he or she studies new concepts and skills. I believe the classroom is a hub. Students are given the opportunity and space to learn where they are, while growing into what they want to become. My goal is to create a safe, learning environment. All students can take educational risks, and succeed in any challenge. It takes the effort of the entire village - the teacher, the parent, and the student – to create a safe space.

My Classroom Expectations:

- Enter the classroom ready to learn.
- Be prepared for class.
- Be considerate and respectful of others.
- Turn in all work on time.
- Follow classroom, hall, and school procedures.
- Be on time for school.
- Actively participate in classroom learning.

Consequences:

Each student will start the day with a green post-it on their desks. If a student IS NOT adhering to classroom expectations:

1st – I will give the student a tally mark on their post-its, representing a verbal warning.

2nd – The student will get a second tally mark on their post-it. A verbal counseling is written on the green post-it by the teacher.

3rd – The green post-it will be replaced with a yellow post-it, which means the student will be sent home with a copy of the verbal warning

Rewards:

Each student will start the day with a green post-it on their desk. If a student IS adhering to classroom expectations, they will have several opportunities to gain Allen bucks:

Each time a student is following the classroom's expectation, the teacher will write a dollar sign on their green post-it. Their money will be added up at the end of the day.

\$ Student arrived and put materials away.

<p>post-it. They will need to show this to their parents.</p> <p>4th – The student's yellow post-it will be replaced with a blue post-it. The student will have to fill out a behavior plan, choosing a behavior on which he or she will work.</p> <p>5th – The teacher will contact parent for a meeting to discuss behavior and possible shadowing.</p> <p>If student refuses to adhere to the classroom expectations or correct their behavior after going through this process, then the student will be sent to the administrator for additional consequences.</p>	<p>He or she began working on morning work.</p> <p>\$ Student transitioned to various areas throughout the building without incident.</p> <p>\$ Student completed all work in class.</p> <p>\$ Student participated in collaborative work and whole class discussions.</p> <p>\$ Students adhered to all classroom and school expectations.</p>
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Teacher Commitments:

I will do my personal best to:

- Create a safe and caring learning environment for all students.
- Acknowledge the individual strengths of each student. Provide an equitable learning experience.
- Establish high expectations for all students.
- Keep the parent and student consistently informed of academic progress.
- Assign appropriate grade-level homework with resources.
- Provide an equitable learning experience for all students which promotes academic growth.

Student Commitments:

I will do my personal best to:

- Put forth my best effort to be successful in school.
- Complete my school and homework assignments.
- Work with my teacher in helping to create a safe learning environment.
- Attend school each day.
- Adhere to all school and classroom expectations.
- Respect the learning in the classroom at all times.

Parent Commitments:

I will do my personal best to:

- Work with my child to complete his or her homework assignments.
- Ensure my child is at school on time.
- Partner with my child's teacher in helping to create a safe, learning environment.

- Require my child to be responsible for his or her behavior and attitude.
- Shadow my child when his or her behavior is disruptive and interferes with the learning process.
- Attend as many school functions/assemblies as possible.

Please review each commitment with your child. Discuss what each commitment means. Have your child initial their name, confirming his or her understanding and willingness to follow each standard.

Afterwards, please review your commitments and initial next to each statement, confirming your understanding and willingness as well.

I look forward to our partnership and having a great school year!

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Remember: The brain remembers everything. Correcting behavior can be challenging. Be careful not to try to regain power by making someone else feel powerless. That can ultimately create emotional and mental damage which impacts a child long after he or she leaves your classroom. Being the adult already gives you power. Use it wisely. Never allow a position of power blind you from a position of purpose.

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

Documenting Student Behavior

Each school usually has a student discipline referral system in place. This document is filled out when teachers send a student to the office for disciplinary reasons. Oftentimes, the referral goes with the students after you write them up and send them to the office. Maybe you will get a copy back, but maybe not. However, you still have to find a way to keep the documentation for yourself. More than likely, you will be meeting with parents during a conference. Therefore, you need this information on hand. Some schools have an online database where you can just print off the information and have it. If this is not the case with your school, keeping a log to document student behavior will suffice. If your school does not have a database or you are unable to get a copy of any discipline referral, using old-fashioned notebook paper and pencil for student notes will help you document this information.

We keep documentation for a number of reasons:

- Parent/teacher conferences.
- Student conferences.
- Documentation when deciding if a student needs to be placed in alternative services.
- Documentation when deciding if a student needs additional services.
- Documentation to show a pattern in student behavior.

When documenting student behavior, there is one thing to keep in mind. We document to find solutions. We want to document to show patterns in order to better support those solutions. Avoid documenting student behavior to prove, shame, or guilt. The goal is never to get students out of our class or away from us. Instead, it is to do what is best for the child. Sometimes, that means getting him or her any additional supports they may need.

Establishing Rewards/Consequences

Rewards are just as important as consequences. When I was in the classroom, my very smart school counselor gave me the egg crate idea. Here you and the students come up with five rewards and five consequences. Use two sets of egg crates, labeling one *rewards* and the other *consequences*. Put each reward or consequence on a different piece of paper. Ball it up and put in the egg crate with its label. If the student needs a reward, use the reward egg crate by shaking it up. Have the student select a balled-up piece of paper. Likewise, do the same with consequences. This promotes student autonomy and ownership.

Never make idle threats, but rather state what you can and intend to do. It does not take long for students to catch onto your routines and habits. They will know early on how much rope you will give them.

For those students who need instant gratification, using post-it notes is a simple way to provide an instant reward or consequence. Put a post-it on each student's desk (the same color). When students are adhering to the expectation, put a mark or dollar sign (\$). This is an instant reward for students. When students are not adhering to the expectation, put a tally mark. It represents that they need to refocus. If you put a dollar sign, then at the end of the day, students can add up their dollar signs and convert it to money they can spend at your classroom store. This does not mean that you have to spend a bunch of money on items for your store. Reach out to surrounding businesses to see if they can donate items. Also, ask parents to donate inexpensive items or use social media. Ask friends and family to donate to your classroom store as well.

When thinking about consequences for students, always ensure that you have given students opportunities to turn the unwanted behavior around. If they do, either erase or cross out a tally mark. A consequence should never be a one-and-done response. Also, when establishing consequences, try to handle as much as you can in the classroom. Once you give the power away to someone else to issue these consequences, it is a challenge to get the power back.

If you would like to turn the ownership over to students, have a list of

classroom expectations. Allow students to choose which expectation they would be working toward that day. This can be done with post-it notes as well. On their post-it note, have students write down which expectation they are working toward, such as: working collaboratively with my group, completing all of my assignments, following classroom expectations, etc. Then, if you see students working toward their expectation, put a \$ sign or other mark. If not, add a different mark which lets them know they need to refocus.

It may take a little more monitoring and walking around the classroom, but when students take ownership of their behavior and choices, they are more likely to rise to the occasion.

Parent Contact

As a principal, one of the main issues which was most difficult to deal with was child custody problems. One parent would come to the school demanding one thing, while the other parent would come to the school later demanding another. Of course the school was unable to oblige both parents, which sparked another fire between both parents. Sometimes the two parents would end up at the school, at the same time, wanting different things. Suddenly, I became an instant mediator. Though, as I listened to both parents express their desires concerning the child, neither parent was completely out of bounds. They both had legit concerns. Both genuinely wanted what they thought was the best thing for the child, but their inability to communicate was hindering the child from benefitting from either of their requests. If they could have just paused and listened to one another, maybe they could have developed an effective co-parenting relationship. This, in turn, would have given the child wings. What was keeping the parents from compromising? The answer was simple. Trust. Neither trusted that the other parent was doing what was best for the child. Neither trusted that the other parent would consider them in making decisions for the child. Neither trusted the ability of the other parent. Neither was willing to see the value in what the other was saying. Therefore, they continued to be at odds. Meanwhile, the child continued to suffer and starve from the love of both parents. Both of their ideas complimented one another, but they did not trust one

another enough to explore the concept.

Now, you may be asking yourself what this has to do with school and contacting parents. Well, it has everything to do with it, since parents and teachers have a co-parenting relationship. You both need one another in order to give the child what he or she deserves. We do not contact parents simply to tell on a child or to threaten children with the possibility of being reared when they get home. We contact parents, because we share a child with them. We value their input and need their expertise. Consistent, effective communication with a parent helps develop a trusting relationship.

It is easy to get into a mindset where you, as the teacher, are giving the child something more valuable than the parent (and vice versa). Still, what both of you are offering the child complement one another. By a co-parenting relationship, I simply mean you are both equally responsible in assuring the child has what he or she needs. Likewise, you both need one another in order to make it happen. This comes through communication.

Now, I will have an honest moment here. We know that the goal and most effective way to function is for you and the child's care taker to work as a united front on the child's behalf. Nevertheless, sometimes this task will be much more daunting than it is at other times. There will be times where it is difficult attempting to have a functional co-parenting relationship with the other parent. The thing to keep in mind, however, is that you must have consistency and communication.

Here are some recommendations:

- Continue to communicate with the parent as much as possible, since you need their partnership in caring for the child.
- If you have to make a behavioral call, always start with the positive first. You may have to dig a little deeper in some cases, but take the dive. Every child has a positive.
- Keep good documentation, not so much for a "gotcha" or competition, but to keep the parents informed of the amount of attempts you have made in trying to form a partnership.
- Avoid only calling when there is a behavior needing to be

addressed. Sometimes making positive phone calls to parents will help develop an effective relationship. If a teacher only calls when there is a problem with a child, then as soon as the parent sees your phone number, they are already preparing a defense. They are already approaching a situation guarded. Calling parents about wanted and unwanted behavior can curve a parent's defensive reaction. Therefore, help them put their guards down, because they do not know why you are calling.

- Listen. When a parent does not express interest toward developing a relationship with you, ask why. Listen with an open mind. You may hear the loophole you need to address. Sometimes parents did not have a good experience in school and that experience is bleeding over into their child's educational experience.
- Get your administrator involved. If a child's behavior ensues, then keeping good documentation of parent communication (or attempts to communicate) will be favorable toward you when it is time for administrators to become involved.
- It is okay to ask the parents for advice. Yes, it is your classroom, but remember that it is a co-parenting relationship. Getting input from the other parents is necessary and encouraged. There is someone else in this child's life who knows the student just as well as you do, if not better. Therefore, they can provide insight in an area where you may be struggling with the student.

In no way am I telling you to accept mistreatment or abuse from a parent. There may be times where you find that, no matter how hard you work at trying to develop a good partnership with a parent, it may be challenging. When this happens, continue to communicate well on your part. Start with the positive and give the information. If it begins to get irate or you feel threatened in any way, inform your administrator. Request that they be a part of future communications after you have exhausted all other attempts.

Security and Safety Drills

Transitions can be a challenge at any time of the day, but it can be outright stressful during safety drills! If you have a mentor, ask them where to find the school's safety drill policy and procedures. Then, align your classroom policy to it. If your mentor is unsure, ask your principal. Most schools have a safety drill procedure which breaks down when safety drills are conducted, how to administer the procedures, and the expectations of each procedure.

It will be important to know which exits to take during a fire drill, where to take students during a tornado drill, and what to do in the classroom during security drills. These things should be outlined by the school principal. Likewise, you should easily be able to obtain a copy.

During fire drills, students will have to line up and exit the building to their designated area as soon as possible. Before you leave the classroom, and upon arriving at the designated area, the teacher will have to account for each student. One way to expedite this process is to have students line up in fire drill order. This is something that must be practiced, but fire drill order is typically alphabetical order. Therefore, you can easily go down the list of your roster and account for every student. Most classroom rosters are in alphabetical order, so it is convenient to keep an updated classroom roster at all times. The last student will turn off the lights and close the door.

Once you get the students safely outside to their designated area, you will have to report whether all of your students are present or if there are any missing. This can be done by simply holding up a sign that states: ALL CLEAR or NOT CLEAR. If you display "ALL CLEAR" it means you can account for all your students and there are no immediate issues to address. If you display "NOT CLEAR" it means you either cannot account for all your students, or there is an immediate issue that needs to be addressed. Once you identify the student you are unable to account for, other classes can also assist in the search. They can determine if maybe he or she has gotten in their classroom line by accident. If there is a need to re-enter the building, this should only be done by the school administrator or security personnel. Unless a teacher has been given the all clear to re-enter the building, they should remain at their designated area.

Remember: This procedure may look different at your school site. Your school administrator may use a different sign or signal. However, confirming students are safe and accounted for during a fire drill should be the goal in any school.

One thing I learned early on which helped me during safety drills was to get a backpack. I kept it by the front door at all times and it contained these items:

- An updated classroom roster.
- Kleenex, just in case.
- Your “all clear” and “not clear” signs to hold up stating whether all your students are present or if you are missing any.

The same bag can be used for tornado drills and any other security drill that require students to leave the classroom and transition to other places. You will always have to account for students at all times, both inside and outside of your classroom.

Security drills vary from campus to campus. So, it is best to ask your administrator about security drills. Some drills require students to remain inside the classroom with the lights off, remaining quiet. Other security drills require teachers to continue teaching, but they are to close and lock their classroom doors. These drills make it easier to account for students, while still requiring to have a procedure in place. Always practice the procedure before show time!

Copy these onto cardstock and laminate for easy use.

ALL CLEAR

NOT CLEAR

Parent/Teacher Conferences

As intimidating as this sounds, it is also one of the most effective policies to incorporate while teaching. Without the parents' support, we can only go so far.

The secret to making parent/teacher conferences run smoothly involves pre-planning and scheduling.

Pre-planning: Have all the information ready in advance for each conference. It may be easier to get file folders, labeling each folder with the student's name. Add student work and information as you go. For instance, if there is an assignment relating to writing, math, or reading which you would like to show parents, add it as you go throughout the year. This way, you are not seeking and searching for work when parent/teacher conferences come around. It is already in the folder and you will just need to organize it before the conference. Also, if necessary, send parents information they need ahead of time. Therefore, you can get right into discussing the child. Have progress reports, as well as all other academic data, in the folder and ready to go for the conference.

Scheduling: When parents show up to conferences, sometimes they are just getting off work. They may have other conferences to attend and so, you only have a few minutes to grab their attention. Hence, do your best to inform them about their child's performance. Usually schools have a standard template they send to parents for scheduling times and dates for conferences; though if they do not, there is a sample after this section. Give the parents a few weeks' notice to make arrangements and to select a day and time. When parents have done this, it may help to put all the dates and times on a spreadsheet. Make notes of what you want to discuss with the parents. Be sure to follow up with parents/guardians, confirming their date and time of the conference. What are some things you would like to discuss? If parents/guardians have not selected a day and/or time, you may want to assign them a time slot. Follow up to see if it works for them. By all means, try to have a face-to-face conference. Overall, this is more effective and helpful toward building relationships. If you are unable to meet a parent face-to-face, try a

phone conference. The goal is to touch base with the other co-parent, discussing the child's progress and/or areas of improvement. You need them and they need you to help the child succeed.

A parent/teacher conference typically lasts between ten to fifteen minutes. It can be broken down such as:

- **One to two minutes** – Introduce yourself. Describe how much you enjoy their child being in your class.
- **Two minutes** – Always start with positive data, such as how much their child has grown in a particular area.
- **Five minutes** – Discuss progress reports, academic data, attendance data, and behavior data (if necessary). Discuss the next steps.
- **Three minutes** – Address any questions/concerns which the parent/guardian may have.
- **Two minutes** – Update any contact information from the parent/guardian, if needed.

Take good notes. Be sure to follow up with parents after the conference, answering any follow up questions or providing materials, if needed. Have ongoing communication with parents well after the conference.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE REQUEST FORM

Student's name: _____ Grade: _____

Teacher: _____ Parent/Guardian: _____

Pick day and time(s):

Date: _____ Date: _____

____ : ____ p.m. - ____ : ____ p.m. ____ : ____ p.m. - ____ : ____ p.m.

____ : ____ p.m. - ____ : ____ p.m. ____ : ____ p.m. - ____ : ____ p.m.

____ : ____ p.m. - ____ : ____ p.m. ____ : ____ p.m. - ____ : ____ p.m.

Please check any concerns you may have at this time.

Reading Math Writing

Science Social Studies Behavior

Other (Briefly list any concerns you would like to discuss during this conference.)

Please return this form to your child's teacher by:

Parent Signature: _____

Parent/Teacher Conferences Planning Sheet

Displaying Student Work

What must it feel like for most of a child's school experience to be essentially surrounded by skills they cannot do? Displaying student work should honor and value your student's accomplishments by either showing a progression toward or the completion of a learning objective.

Confidence is built when challenge meets success and praise is the response. Learning new concepts is not an easy task for children. Showing their progress and success is a form of praise. It is also a way for students to receive praise from their peers, other staff members, and their parents who come to see their work displayed. Children need this praise, especially if they have productively struggled to success. When student work is displayed, it can also show other students samples of correct work. We never know what a child may see that can spark their interest and increase an understanding.

We praise openly and punish privately. Never post a student's work that needs improvement in an effort to punish a student. Embarrassing or shaming a student never corrects behavior. Instead, it only worsens behavior. Think about how you might feel if your administrator shamed you in a faculty meeting in front of your peers. Be empathetic with children and use grace. Adults and children both have emotions. We all feel in the same way. Think about the personalities of your students, especially your blue students. They will not recover well from shame or guilt. Never choose to be the darkness in a child's life, when you can be the light.

Be sure to keep all posted student work neat, consistent, and updated. The more student work you post; the more praise a student receives. There is nothing more powerful than what a student believes about himself or herself. Displaying a child's work communicates that they got something right over and over and over.

It may help to keep a calendar of times when you will post or change new student work. Things will get busy throughout the year, so updating student work you have posted inside or outside your classroom is something which can easily get pushed down the

priority list.

Daily Classroom Schedule

A classroom schedule helps with establishing a daily routine for students. When students have an established routine, it creates safety and security for them. It is no longer a secret of what comes next or what time things happen in the classroom. I have found that sometimes teachers do not post a daily schedule, because they have not mastered a daily routine. A daily schedule helps to keep everyone on task as well as a steady instructional flow. Students, meanwhile, will be aware of the expectation.

When developing a daily classroom schedule, give yourself grace. It is very similar to budgeting. When creating a budget, we have this money. We have to decide where the money goes, while keeping emergencies and other miscellaneous financial obligations in mind. When creating a schedule, we have a certain amount of daily instructional minutes. We have to put them where they need to go, keeping mishaps in mind. For example, you will find that some days everyone shows up and the schedule flows smoothly. Conversely, this is not the case on other days. So, give yourself grace. When students do not understand a particular concept, it may take longer to teach it. Give yourself grace. If there is a mishap at the restroom, it takes a little longer to get back to classroom. Give yourself grace. If you had a problem bringing all students back to whole group after giving them time in collaborative groups, give yourself grace. Working with children is unpredictable and challenging. However, if this is an issue every day, there may be a need to tighten up your classroom procedures and routines.

Most schools have a set amount of time to teach core subjects. Keep those in mind as you create your classroom schedule. For example, in the school district in which I taught, we had a mandated ninety-minute reading block and sixty-minute math block. Since they were mandated, I budgeted those minutes first and then all the other blocks. It is important to comply with the school, district, and/or state mandates.

Some administrators also require teachers to post their classroom schedules outside their doors. This helps them see which subjects

the teacher is teaching at which times. It aids them when they are conducting observations or walk-throughs and want to observe a particular subject. When this happens, it may be beneficial to post a schedule outside and inside of the classroom; one for the administrator and one for the students. This way, the students can also be aware of the classroom routine and daily learning expectation(s).

Cell Phones and Other Technology

As previously stated, we are teaching a generation of students who do not know any other way of living except with technology. Telling students to put away their cell phones is equivalent to telling the previous generation to put away their paper and pencils. The issue is not that the students have cell phones or other devices. Instead, the issue is what they are doing (or not doing) during class time. We do not want the devices to distract students from learning, so allow students to use them! Still, have procedures in place to prevent any distractions.

Most schools will have a technology plan. Your mentor or principal will know where you can access a copy. It will be important for you to know and understand it. If students must have parent permission to use technology, this will be important for you to know. Establish your classroom technology plan around the school's technology plan.

As far as cell phones, I have seen teachers have a designated place in their classrooms where students could put their cell phones upon coming into class. It may be a basket, a plastic shoe rack (probably the most common), or the teacher's desk (not recommended). The teacher may have several confidential items on their desk. Students should not see graded papers, signed information, parent contact information, etc. Maybe that was just me, but still, I would recommend minimizing student traffic around the teacher's desk.

On the contrary, how do you make sure all students put their cell phones in one place? If this is a hassle you would rather not deal with, you can always find a way to incorporate cell phone usage into instruction. For instance, cell phones can be a good resource to use when looking up vocabulary words or claim evidence. It will totally be

up to you whether you want students to use them or lose them. It simply boils down to your personality and the personality of your students.

From One Teacher to Another Teacher:

*Like any classroom resource, the teacher has to make it their own. Feel free to tweak these recommendations to fit the needs of your students. Like clothing, one size does not fit all, and if it did, would you really wear them?

*Do not attempt to implement every single strategy in this book at once. Creating classroom procedures and routines is another instructional strategy, which must be carefully taught and implemented.

* You will chunk academic standards into digestible learning bites that enable students to process the content. The same goes with establishing classroom procedures. It is better to do a few things well, rather than several things poorly.

Remember: A classroom lacking classroom management results in an overworked teacher. Outlining procedures and routines will release the work to the students.

On the first day of school, you will have several children stepping into your classroom. Each student will come with their own agenda; their own goals; their own will; and, their own personality. It will be up to you to establish and maintain order and structure. It will be up to you to ensure those personalities live and work in harmony. It will be up to you to support those wills while creating a positive classroom culture. It will be up to you to build on their strengths. Most of all, it will be up to you to SAVE THE PENCILS!



**“You’re off to great places! Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting, So... get on your way!”**

Dr. Seuss