

S.H.I.N.E.

CHALLENGES IN THE CLASSROOM: ADDING TO YOUR TOOLBOX



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This is a simple guide put together to provide you things to think about as you plan for your first year of teaching. The truth is, there are some things you just can't plan for until you get to know the students in the classroom. However, there are some things you can already think about and plan for that will save you much time and energy when the year begins. Being proactive as possible is the key to a successful first year. Remember the 5 P's general rule-Proper preparation prevents poor performance.

Right now, it is hard to know what you do not know. This guide was created based on the work, insight and feedback back of many years of beginning teachers' experiences at all grade levels. Each of your grade levels, buildings and subject areas will have their own special set of circumstances, procedures and expectations. This is not meant to be an exclusive guide, but does encompass the most important points shared that have been characteristic from year to year of a beginning teacher's experiences and challenges. It is not uncommon for a beginning teacher to think, "this won't apply to me." While the grade levels, content and student personalities do vary, you can count on encountering these issues.

While an old cliché, it is tried and true for all grade levels-Students don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. It will be important for you to get to know your students and let them get to know you. You are the professional and adult and must maintain this role and boundary at all times. However, students need you to understand where they are coming from-their strengths and struggles, their dreams and concerns. They need you to provide a physical and emotionally safe environment at all times. Then, learning and magic can happen.

The guide includes "Top Tips for Classroom Management," a list of the most common classroom disruptions in the different grade levels, and some ideas and suggestions for preventing and dealing with the disruptions.



The Spartan Way-Excellence for All!

Most Common Behavior Challenges

High School

1. Off task-talking/not doing work/unmotivated
2. Completing assignments
3. Attendance
5. Cell phones/texting
6. Coming to class prepared/being organized

Middle School

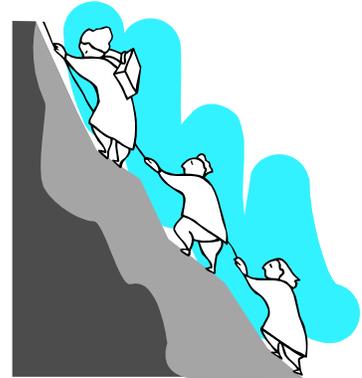
1. Talking/side conversations/off-task
2. Coming to class prepared/being organized/time management
3. Keeping hands, feet, objects to self
4. Following/listening to directions
5. Disrespect/defiance

Elementary 3-5

1. Talking/disrupting/blurting
2. Defiance/disrespect
3. Keeping hands/feet to self
4. Getting along with others
5. Following Directions

Elementary K-2

1. Talking/blurting out/interrupting
2. Being off task (playing in desk/not focusing/staying in seat)
3. Keeping hands/feet to self/bothering others
4. Following directions
5. Respectful to others/getting along



Talking (at the wrong times)

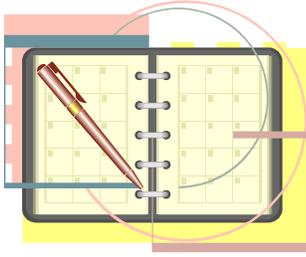


1. Have clear and practiced attention signals.
2. Provide a time frame for the current activity. “Hang in with me for about 4 more minutes keeping your focus here and then we will be moving on to the next part.” Anytime you provide a time frame or use a clock, this reduces the likelihood of talking.
3. Catch them early and often meeting the expectation. “Thank you for keeping your voices off. I appreciate you choosing to listen instead of talking.” Recognize times it might be very tempting for students to talk and be proactive in discussing self-control. “I know when you are done with this; you might be tempted to want to talk with your neighbor. What might you do to have self-control and not talk when tempted? What if you have a question or get distracted when reading your book?”
4. Post the directions visually on the board or in pictures so students don’t have to ask their neighbor what to do.
5. Limit teacher talking to no more than the number of minutes of the students’ age. For example, for 7 year olds, the teacher shouldn’t talk more than 7 minutes before student have a chance to talk.
6. Toss or pass a stuffed animal, soft kind of ball or bean bag to visually indicate who the speaker should be. You can do this with the classroom microphones if your room has a sound amplifier system or use talking chips.
7. Use nonverbal interventions to address the issue such as proximity, “the look”, a secret signal, pausing, a predetermined sound, or placing a word on the board and erasing letters one at a time to indicate a problem.
8. Quietly ask a student to move to another area of the classroom to help them be a better listener and less distracted.
9. Post your daily agenda or daily schedule and the estimated time for each. Review this every day.
10. Teach and practice testing scenarios. What do I do if I have a question and the teacher doesn’t see me?
11. Use Brain Breaks, movement, and cooperative structures to provide structured movement and talking.
12. Have the student track on a sticky note the number of blurts and work to reduce the number each day.

Ask yourself...

- Were my directions specific & clear? How do you know?
- Did I plan for the transition time?
- Do I have positive expectations in what I say and do?
- Did I plan for students who finish early/late?
- Do I have a plan for addressing issues in the least public way possible?
- Is the lesson engaging/relevant?

Coming to Class Prepared/Being Organized/Time Management



1. Post visible signs of items needed for class outside the door or on the board. Ask students to write it down for the next day.
2. Send an email to parents to have them help remind their student.
3. Post a picture of what an organized desk, notebook, or locker should look like. Literally draw a diagram of how to organize the books, materials, tabs, notes, whatever needs a place.
4. TAKE THE TIME regularly to help them get organized. This will include a slow, step by step procedure that you will cringe at thinking you should have to do. For example, if you hand back work and want it to go in a notebook, ask students to hold the paper in the air (make sure everyone is doing it). Next, ask students to click open the rings (pause). Tell them exactly where to place the paper. This sounds very elementary or too time consuming, but what you spend time on is what you value-no matter how simple it should seem. Many kids need this step by step process.
5. Specifically teach them how to take notes-model repeatedly. This is a skill usually not taught, but expected. (See TCMB pgs. 184-187)
6. Use a timer-always and in all grades.
7. Help students estimate the amount of time they need to do a project or complete an assignment.
8. Decide-is it worth your time and energy to make an issue of pencils and paper? Yes, you will go through a lot. Learn to scavenge them wherever you can.
9. Not all students are disorganized or lack planning. Focus strategies on those that need it. This is a life-long skill. Praise them when they are showing improvement. Get to know the student and find out what they need. A relationship goes a long way.



Following Directions



1. Post the directions visually or a place to refer to if there are questions.
2. Limit the number of directions at one time.
3. Provide models of examples and non-examples. The more visual you can be the better.
4. Use the attention signal and ensure everyone's attention before providing directions.
5. Have check-in partners to help each other remember and provide accountability.
6. Have students verbally tell a partner the directions/expectations. Make sure both partners give and get the information.
7. Develop, plan, and explicitly discuss strategies for what a student might do if they get confused or forget.
8. Positive praise-“Thank you for those who have remembered to.....” “I see 7 students following directions by ...- thank you.”



9. Explain & discuss the importance of the skill as a lifelong skill and safety concern.
10. Provide strategies for helping students to read directions and remember multi-steps. Circling, highlighting, underlining and using rubrics to guide their work and thinking are important. You have to explicitly teach and practice these strategies repeatedly.
11. Ask you students that struggle with directions to help your remind the class.



Keeping hands, feet, objects to self

Usually lack of self-control , impulsiveness, seeking attention and/or power are at hand for these behaviors. Knowing which of these (or all) may be the reason behind the behavior can help determine the best intervention.

1. Proactive approaches can include:

- Discussing times it might be tempting and awareness of self-control options (ongoing conversation)
- Reminders ahead of time “Thank you for remembering to keep your hands & feet to yourself.” This is not just an elementary school statement!
- Positively greeting students as they come into the room and saying their name.
- Using proximity-both visual and where you are standing/moving
- Strategic placing of the student in desks and standing in line
- Keeping desks organized or item removed that could cause a problem
- Know the areas & times where this is most likely to occur-walking down the hall when the teacher is at the front of the line or out of sight, when the teacher is distracted talking to a student individually or another adult, recess, assemblies, when students are sitting close to one another (on the carpet), any time students can run, during transitions, the bathroom..BE PRESENT & AWARE-it eliminates 90% of problems
- Use PBS language and protocols
- Positive reinforcement and recognition of when the right choices are made!
- For elementary-Discussing and doing the hallway chant, having a reminder phrase for how to sit safely and where hands and feet should be



2. Reactive approaches might include:

- Immediately removing the location of the student(s) and addressing the issue-this might include having them stand with a teacher during passing time in the hallway or not allowing them to transition with others.
- PBS procedures and language/KAHFOOTY reminders (MMS)
- Practice the scenario privately with positive solutions.
- It is important for the student and you to recognize situations and reasons why the behavior might occur and plan for next time. Even reducing the number of incidents, places and time spans for which it occurs can be improvement. Consult with your principal and counselor for specific student need and information.
- Physical items such as stress balls, putting Velcro under desks for the student to rub, placing rubber bands on chair legs for bouncing feet off, textured seat cushions, special chairs, etc. can help. Ask about these. If playing with desk objects, turn the desk around so the opening is on the other side.



Defiance and Disrespect

This again is a multifaceted issue for which the reasons they occur are as important as what to do about defiance and disrespect issues. Sometimes students struggle because they lack the skills and responses appropriate for the school setting, an event has hijacked their self-control mechanisms, they feel inadequate or various other factors contribute to their behavior. This is a limited list of ideas that are generalized, but critical to dealing with students and this issue, no matter what their age or grade. Your PBS team will have other great suggestions that have worked in your building, too.

1. Proactive:

- Get to know your students beyond being a student. Choose the students that need s extra attention early, so you can find the positives quickly to start a good relationship. Work to establish a good relationship with parents, too.
- Create a safe, consistent and positive learning environment. Genuinely greet students EVERY DAY as they enter. A student at any age can detect a lack of sincerity in your words and actions. Start every class with a positive statement. If you have a classroom that is unpredictable regarding what is and isn't acceptable, if your correction procedures are always public and emotional safety is threatened, disrespect will soon follow.
- Students want to know what to expect. The same procedures for the previous issues are just as important for this issue, too. (An agenda, using a timer, attention signals, procedures clearly in place, explicit modeling, etc.)
- Be present and aware. Learn to notice students' look of frustration when they are working. Be available for assistance by walking around the room.
- Provide the language and even stems, if needed, for students to let you know when they are frustrated. Have signals in place for when students need help. You can use colored cups, flags, hand signals, frustration cards, or cool off zones for students to indicate frustration is building.
- Be positive, smile, use humor (**not** sarcasm).
- Provide choices for work that allows students to demonstrate their learning and talents.
- Provide opportunities for students to give you feedback about what is and isn't working for them.

2. Reactive:

- Have the student do a job for you or create a bogus job. Make an arrangement with another staff member for the student to deliver or pick up materials that you may or may not actually need. Be intentional about positive interactions from all the adults involved. Moving around and the positive interaction can change a students' attitude.
- 2 x10 strategy-Make a point to speak with a struggling students every day 2 minutes for 10 days about non-school related things. The little bit of extra attention will go a long way.
- DO NOT engage them in an argument. Calmly give them a choice. Discuss other options for handling the behavior later. It takes at least 20 minutes for student to recover from an emotional event for which their fight or flight response has been activated.
- Strategic seating, your proximity both visually and physically, precorrections.
- Provide language stems to help students know the correct words to use when frustrated, angry, insulted, etc.
- Conference privately with the student and the parents to determine the issues.





Getting Along with Others

Just like with the previous situation, all of the components listed for classroom management will be preventative in nature for many issues. The reasons behind the issues are important to understand. It is also important to recognize that as educators, we will spend a lot of time and energy teaching students the skills necessary for appropriate ways to work with others and coping strategies for different situations. These are true life skills. The number one employability skill is the ability to work with others. For many student, this will be well developed and come naturally. For other students, it is critical we help provide them the tools and strategies they are lacking to be able to do this. Again, this is a generalized list of some of the most important things to consider.

1. Proactive:

- Classbuilding activities are planned throughout the year. Students need to learn about one another and how to value and respect similarities and differences.
- Explicitly teach interactive skills. This is just like any other classroom procedure. Time invested up front will pay dividends the rest of the year. This will include how to work with one partner and how to work in a group of 3-4. What should it sound like? What should it look like? How do we solve disagreements? How do make sure everyone has a voice and participates?
- Provide the language and modeling needed to interact in a positive way. Literally, model the statement above-yes, even in high school. See Tara for ideas of how this has been done.
- Use cooperative learning structures which are very explicit and designed for all student accountability. See Tara for suggestions.
- Be proactive teaching problem solving skills for students who have a disagreement. For elementary, this is to include telling vs. tattling. PBS lessons will have some strategies and ideas for this.
- Be intentional about highlighting student's strengths to one another.
- Class meetings at the beginning or end of each day or every few days to discuss celebrations and challenges.
- Present scenarios for student to discuss-what would /should I do?

2. Reactive:

- It will be important to determine what has prompted the issues and activate a plan for the next possible occurrence.
- Seating/environment change
- Proactive strategies can also serve helpful here, too.
- Frustration plan/strategies (see disrespect/defiance)-help students to determine the level of the issue-is it a red light, yellow light or green light issue?



Cell Phones/Texting

Be present-know what is going on in your class at all times. Watch body language. Move around.

Have student place their phones on the corner of their desk. They should stay there.

Walk around-students sitting in the back of the room and sides have great opportunities to use them when the teacher stands at the front of the room or is sitting at their desk.

Use backchannels so they have legitimate reasons for using the technology.

Consistently follow the school policy-every time.



Completing Assignments

1. Proactive:

- Know the daily learning targets and how they fit into the larger learning goal for the unit. Post them, discuss them every day and make sure students understand how the learning fits together. Can your students explain (not parrot) what they are learning and why?
- Make sure the assignments align to learning targets and goals and students understand the relevance and see the connection.
- Provide quality feedback, so students know that what they are doing is valued and will receive feedback. Teach students to give peer feedback and self-feedback before you look at it. This requires explicit teaching and practice of how to do this. It's huge-takes time, but really effective. Rubrics can help with this, but again, must be explicitly taught.
- The "why" is critical for the student to understand. We do not learn something just to pass a test or do well on the MAP. There has to be a bigger purpose.
- Have student track their progress on assignments using a chart or graph. Self-assessment strategies are very effective. Ask about how these work.
- Explicitly teach studying, using text book/notes for resources and time management strategies.

2. Reactive:

- Find out why-really take the time to understand the student's situation. This requires a relationship to get results. Is the student a non-intentional learner who can do the work, but is not or is it because the work is too difficult? There is a big difference. Mine for the answers to both. Struggling students often live in a world hard for teachers to understand. Being supportive is the only way you will make progress. It will be frustrating and mind-boggling. Remember, parents didn't go to school to be a teacher-you did.
 - Reduce the requirements-something turned in is better than nothing
 - Does the student know how to recognize when they need help or how to ask for help? This is a skill for which some students are not equipped. This is the same for organization of materials.
 - Make contact with home-sooner is better than later. Be persistent.
 - If you allow a student to not turn in the work, this means it really wasn't important anyway. Do you get to just not pay your phone bill if it is late?
 - Focus on the positives-look for them. Let the student know them-often.

TOP CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TIPS FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS



Have a clear idea of your procedures and routines BEFORE school starts. You might have to adjust or change some, but that is okay. It is better to have a plan and adjust than to not have a plan.

Be explicit-about everything. This is the biggest learning curve for beginning teachers at all levels. You will assume students know or able to do things that you never thought you would have to be intentional about explaining or showing. It will get you every time if you are not careful.

Model, model, model and practice, practice, practice-visuals are key to supporting the modeling in all levels.

Be proactive-it's hard to plan for what you don't know. However, think ahead, step by step, each part of your lesson or day. What materials are needed? Are they easy to get to? How will students systematically get to them? Where is chaos likely to occur? What will I do if.....? There will be many experiences for which you will just have learn and adjust to on the fly. That's okay and part of the beginning teacher experience. However, you can prevent many things by learning from those experiences or following the guidelines presented through your S.H.I.N.E. orientation.

Make "to-do" list. If you are not a list maker already-become one. It is an ongoing list, but will save you time and energy in the long run.

Organization-everyone has to develop their own system. Know that you will have many papers to shuffle. Have a plan for:

- student work to grade
- student work to hand back
- parent communication-that comes from home for the teacher & for the office
- paperwork from the school office
- paperwork to send home to students for parents to keep/some will be need to be returned signed
- paperwork to go with your grade level or department
- email reminders of to do's or important information
- worksheets to copy
- recordkeeping notes/grades
- lesson ideas
- sticky notes
- student work to keep and file
- Friday folders (grade 6 and below)
- Reading documentation-literacy folders, running records, DRA's
- Math documentation
- Assessment folders (some buildings) or Summative/formative assessments
- Papers that have great ideas/information, but you can't look at right now.
- Paperwork that needs your attention TODAY
- Paperwork that needs your attention within the next 5 days.



You need to post your class expectations and your class discipline plan. There is a difference between classroom management and classroom discipline. Your class discipline plan will be posted, but what you allow or don't allow will be what your true plan is for students. This is hard your first year navigating these situations for which you may not be aware of yet. Be willing to ask questions and learn from your colleagues. If you are starting sense an area for which you are struggling-quickly ask for help. This is not a sign of weakness, but is actually valued and demonstrates a willingness to improve and grow. Going in to watch other teachers who have been

teaching awhile and watching their classroom management styles is one of the best opportunities for professional development and very welcomed. Do not let your pride get in the way of helping you to grow. This is very much a part of the process and you will gain knowledge and respect for seeking solutions to your challenges.

A strong lesson is your best form of classroom management. It's about the student learning and not your teaching. When students are engaged, feel like the learning is relevant, know where they are headed and what they need to do to get there, many uncertainties are eliminated. Students will enjoy learning and disruptions are greatly reduced. That is not to say that every day will be a perfect day or that every moment has to be entertaining and high energy. Providing students the opportunity often to learn and work together in a structured way will create a community atmosphere and make those times when they work independently and quietly, easier to do. Students thrive on a mixture of both.

Ask questions.



Look at the day from a kid's perspective.