



Improving Boys' Engagement

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Crowther Centre

Routine 1: Entry Routine

Goal: Strong Start

Why and What

An entry routine captures the way in which we want students to enter the classroom and begin their first task. Establishing an entry routine ensures that students start learning and working from the minute that they enter the classroom. It shows to them that we value the time we have together and that it's important that we use this time well. A focussed start also sets the tone for the rest of the lesson. It is recommended that you rehearse your starting routine with another teacher before your first class.

How? – The Routine:

Entry Routine		
Tool	<i>Teacher talk and action</i>	Notes
Prime	<i>Everyone listening, eyes on me thanks (wait for attention), thank you. Good morning class. I'm looking forward to seeing a focussed and productive entry to make the most of our learning time today.</i>	Delivered before students enter the class. This sentence tunes students in and lets them know what is coming next.
Make Expectations Explicit	<i>Three expectations: 1. Enter silently. 2. Sit in your assigned seat. 3. Begin the starter activity in under 60 seconds.</i>	Hold up three fingers to indicate the three requirements. Adapt to your context, including substituting 'silently' for 'calmly' or another descriptive word of your choice.
CFBU (Check for Behavioural Understanding)	<i>What's the first expectation [pause], Harry? What's the second expectation [pause], Amal? [etc]</i>	Important: Questions come before names to ensure that all students are listening. Repeat as required if students are struggling to recall the routine.
Threshold	<i>Enter, silently thank you.</i>	Stand at the doorway. Use a quiet voice to greet students by name on their way in. You can control the flow of students by ensuring they enter one at a time, use your arm like a 'boom gate'.
Positive Narration	<i>Harry is silent, thank you. Frances has begun the starter. Tracey is already on question 2... etc.</i>	You can also accentuate positive narration with 'Strong starters' written on the board.

#WAW (What about when...):

#WAW: Students' don't follow the entry routine		
Tool	Teacher talk and action	Notes
Do it again (individual)	<i>Harry, you forgot the 'silent' part, let's try that again. Please head out and practise coming in silently. You aren't in trouble, I just know you can do it better. Thanks.</i>	This is the first opportunity for students to see that you mean what you say. Be prepared to uphold your standards. If you don't, behaviour can begin to slip very quickly. End with 'thanks', not 'please', to communicate your implicit expectation that they will comply with your request.
Or: Do it again (whole class)	<i>Eyes and ears this way thanks. We had three expectations on entering: 1. Enter silently. 2. Sit in your assigned seat. 3. Begin the starter activity in under 60 seconds. That was very good, but we can make it excellent. We forgot to enter silently, so we now have a chance to practise that again. Leave your books, but let's move calmly and respectfully out of the classroom now to give it another go. Thank you.</i>	Deliver with a positive, enthusiastic tone... Frame it as you're excited to give the students an opportunity to practise entering the class again.

#WAW: Consistent challenge to entry routine		
Tool	Teacher talk and action	Notes
Seating plan	<p>Script to introduce seating plan: <i>Starting class in a focussed way is absolutely key because it ensures that we make the most of our valuable learning time. To help us with this we have a seating plan, you can see it on the board. [Continue with the usual entry routine, as above].</i></p> <p>If a student asks, 'Will we have this seating plan every lesson?' reply, 'Our focus at the moment is a strong start John, I want you 100% focussed on that. Thank you.'</p>	<p>Display the seating plan on the board at the start of each lesson until students are used to it. The map of class should be from students' perspective with the front of class/teacher's desk at top of screen.</p> <p>You may like to have a second version of the seating plan from your own perspective (front of class at the bottom of the page) on your desk. This also helps you learn names quickly.</p>

#WAW: Students are late		
Make expectations explicit	<p>We need to teach students how to be late.</p> <p><i>If you are late, arrive at the door and wait quietly. I'll wave you in and you come in silently. Take your seat as quickly as possible and copy what everyone else is doing.</i></p> <p><i>Give non-example 'Don't slam the door, shout out 'sorry miss, I had to get drink' then bang your books down'. You are late, sneak in like a burglar. When I'm done instructing, I'll come speak to you.</i></p>	Being late is a behaviour and we need to explicitly teach students the behaviours

Routine 2: Defusing Debate

Goal: Minimise disruption

Why and What

One of the primary patterns of interaction that undermines effective classroom management is the student-teacher debate. You've likely experienced this yourself. Perhaps you make a simple request like,

'Please put your headphones away', and the student replies with something like,

'But Mr. Jones lets me listen to music in class!'

You rebut, 'Put them away, they're distracting',

To which the student replies, 'No, they help me concentrate.'

'They are a distraction and if I let you use them then other people will want to too.'...

and the debate goes on...

Even if students do have a valid reason to debate a ruling that you've made in the classroom, the time and place for that discussion is not whilst you're trying to teach the whole class, or when the class is supposed to be working in a quiet and focussed way. Expert teachers expect and plan for these scenarios. The role of the teacher in this situation is to defuse the debate, uphold the standards and refocus the student on learning.

How ? – The Routine:

<i>Defuse Debate</i>		
Tool	<i>Teacher talk and action</i>	Notes
Partial Agreement	<p>Teacher: <i>Neha, I know you don't mean to, but you're talking a bit loudly. Quietly focus on your work, thanks.</i></p> <p>Student: <i>Other students are talking too ...</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>'Maybe so (partial agreement), but we're talking about you and your work, back to it, thanks.</i></p>	<p>Expect a counter response from students and respond in a way that doesn't escalate the discussion.</p> <p>Other partial agreement phrases (in addition to 'Maybe so') include, 'Even so', 'Even if', 'That may be true' and 'that may be the case'. Avoid saying '<i>I don't care what other students are doing</i>', it is negative and an ineffective response.</p>
Primary, not secondary behaviour	[teacher doesn't react]	<p>A student may roll their eyes, mutter under their breath, or move in an exaggerated way whilst they comply with your request. Avoid saying '<i>Don't you roll your eyes at me</i>'. Tactically ignore these secondary behaviours and focus on the primary behaviour, whether or not they are acting in line with your request.</p>

Directed choice	<i>Neha, your voice is still too loud and disrupting the class. You can choose to either stop talking or you can move to another seat so you can focus. Its up to you?</i>	Clearly link the student behaviour to the outcome and show that they have a choice in what happens.
Restate calmly	<p>Teacher: <i>'Neha, you chose to keep talking. Move to the seat at the front so you can get some work done, thank you'</i></p> <p>Student <i>'No, I'll be good now, give me one more chance'</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>'Move to the front of the room, thanks.'</i></p> <p>Student <i>'It wasn't even me, someone else was doing it'</i></p> <p>Teacher (with hand out in front to say, stop) <i>'Neha, this isn't a debate. Move to the front of the room, thank you.'</i></p>	Expect to repeat instructions. Do so with a calm, but firm voice. Expecting compliance and not being frustrated when it doesn't occur.
Take up time	<i>I'll be back in 20 seconds and I expect you to be sitting in that chair [points to front row chair]. Thank you.</i>	<p>Don't stand over a student creating a power battle. Give them time to save face and move during the take up time.</p> <p>End with 'thanks', not 'please', to communicate your implicit expectation that they will comply with your request.</p>

#WAW (What about when...):

<i>Student asks 'This is boring, when am I ever going to use this?'</i>		
Tool	<i>Teacher talk and action</i>	Notes
Partial agreement	<p>Student: <i>'This is so boring'</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>'Maybe it is, but it's the work we are doing now. Get back to it. Do you need my help or you got this?'</i></p> <p>Student: <i>'When am I ever going to use this?'</i></p> <p>Teacher: <i>'I can't predict the future but it's the work we are doing now. Get back to it. Can I help you with it?'</i> or</p> <p>Teacher: <i>'You'll need this knowledge for next year, back to it'</i></p>	<p>Students often make this comment when they don't understand the work. Rather than give an elaborate explanation, aim to redirect and help them learn the content.</p> <p>See Principle 7: Success is the greatest motivator.</p>

Routine 3: Gaining Attention

Goal: Maximise Attention

Why and What

Students remember what they attend to. If all students are listening to your explanations and thinking about the concepts, there is a greater likelihood they will learn them. If they're thinking about flicking another kid with a rubber band, then that's what they'll remember. Quickly and efficiently gaining students' attention both minimises the time wasted, and ensures 100% of the class are focused during the instructional phase of the lesson.

How? – The Routine:

Gaining Attention		
Tool	Teacher talk and action	Notes
Prime	<i>You have two minutes left to complete the starter. When you finish, open your books, write the learning intention, the date, and wait silently</i>	Move around the room. Also, give clear instructions for those who finish early. You can even put these instructions on the starter to help to reinforce the expected routine.
Narrated count/Attentional cue	<i>All listening in 3, Pens down in 2, All eyes on me in... 1</i>	Be descriptive with your narrated count 'Listen up' is not specific enough. Or Teacher: 1, 2, 3, eyes on me Students: 1, 2, eyes on you
Positive Narration, Proximity and Non-Verbals	<i>Positive narration: Angela has her pen down, Simon's eyes are on me, Shuqi is sitting up straight.</i> Proximity: [Move closer to more disruptive or less settled students] Non-verbals: [Finger to lips to quieten students, mime putting a pen down to remind a student to put their pen down, etc]	Positive narration raises students' awareness to the desired behaviours without having to use corrective language. Proximity is another great way to nip disruptions in the bud without explicitly correcting students. Non-verbals keep the overall noise level low whilst correcting students.

<p>Waiting on # and getting 100%</p>	<p><i>Waiting on two more students, now one more. Great. Let's get started.</i></p> <p><i>We learn what we pay attention to. Listen to and think about what I am saying.</i></p>	<p>As the last student engages, wait 5-10 seconds for silence to draw the energy out of the room. Then start speaking in a quieter voice.</p> <p>Many students have learnt that they don't need to pay attention. Teach them that in your class – they do!</p>
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#WAW (What about when...):

<p>#WAW: Students forget equipment / ask to be excused during the transition to instructional phase</p>		
<p>Tool</p>	<p>Teacher talk and action</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Reiterate how important the instructional phase of the lesson is.</p>	<p><i>'Put your hand up if you've forgotten a pen or paper, I'll let you borrow some from me for today only'</i></p> <p><i>'Yes, you can go to the bathroom/get a drink, but it will need to wait until after I give this explanation. It's important you hear this. Once you've answered a couple of questions, then you can go.'</i></p> <p><i>'A few people are still talking, I will wait for quiet so we can all focus on these explanations. Thank you.'</i></p>	<p>It's useful to always have spare pens and paper to loan students. Make a note to get them back at the end of the lesson.</p> <p>Highlight the importance of attention during the instructional phase. Also, don't let students leave the room until they have demonstrated the skills or have started the work.</p>

<p>#WAW: The whole class is too loud</p>		
<p>Draw a noise meter on the board</p>	<p>Drawing a simple graph of noise level over time on the board. The scale could be from library noise, to conversation, to restaurant to playground. The aim is for students to see where the noise level is and adjust accordingly.</p>	<p>This gives instant feedback to the class about their noise level.</p>
<p>Reset</p>	<p>Set a timer for 2 minutes and show it on the board. The use your gaining attention routine to keep the class quiet. Then go through an example on the board, or correct some work. Then set the class back to work with clear instructions about noise level. <i>'I know you don't mean to, but it's a little loud for us to concentrate and learn, when we get back to independent work, *talk in whisper*, we will talk in a whisper from here on'</i></p>	<p>The timer works as a primer</p>
<p>Waterfall 'shh'</p>	<p>As soon as it starts to get loud, beginning a loud 'shh' then trailing off can keep the class quiet</p>	<p>The sooner the better, don't wait until it's too loud. Make your comment early.</p>

