

Routines, Tools and Strategies

The first part of the day can be the most important. It sets the tone for the rest of the day and allows the students to adjust to being at school. I am going to incorporate my first hour of classroom time as one routine - although many smaller routines take place during this time. During this routine I also incorporated a couple tools that will be essential for my classroom management.

To begin the day I will greet each student as they walk into the classroom. After that they will put their bags and coats away and proceed to the lunch board where they will mark their lunch for the day. The lunch board is a tool that consists of a large square magnet with four boxes and small pictures of the students attached to magnets. The magnets will start in the fourth box at the beginning of each day. From there the students will move their magnets to either, 1st choice, 2nd choice or bag lunch. This system will also help me take roll because the magnets left on the fourth square will be absent students.

Students will then proceed to their desks where they will do morning journal. There will always be a fun writing prompt, story problem, brain teaser or anything else we may be working on in class. They will always have 15 minutes to complete this. As they are working, I will take care of roll and other morning duties and then take the rest of the time to go around the room and talk personally to students. This is a great time to pull students aside who may have had a rough day the previous day, have things going on at home or maybe I just need to connect with. This helps us come together as a class and be ready to learn for the rest of the

day. As a teacher I am going to work incredibly hard to keep this teaching strategy consistent because it may be the most important part of the day for some students.

After the 15 minutes is up, I will signal the students using my rain maker. The rain maker is going to be my tool to let students know we are transitioning into the next activity. They know that when they hear the rain maker it is time to put journals away and meet on the class rug for morning meeting.

Transitions can be a difficult time in a 3rd grade class, or any class for that matter. Students can get sidetracked as they start talking to friends and transition time can become wasted time. For this reason, I will put a silent rule for after the students hear the rain maker and we are completely ready for the next activity. This transition method will take practice and need to be consistent for it to be successful, but I believe with enough routines in place it can be done. To get students to follow the silent rule - at the beginning of the year I will start by using a timer after each time I sound the rain maker. Students will know after I have given clear, calm directions as to what to do they cannot speak until the timer goes off. By the time the timer goes off they will already be where they need to be. I will use the timer for at least the first month and longer if I need to. The consequences for talking before the timer goes off are to go back to desks and restart timer.

We are going to have morning meeting everyday - so they will be different each day depending on what is going on. Some days will be share days. On these days we will pick 3 names out of the name cup and those students will have one minute to share something with the class. They will always have the option to pass if they want. Other days we may just talk as a class about what is going on in the classroom and if there are any concerns, suggestions or

questions. However, every morning meeting will end with me discussing each step of the day as I write the schedule on the board. I think this helps students mentally prepare for what is expected of them. We will then end the meeting with some kind of cheer, such as "Go Team" or "We are Awesome!", "Let's Learn". The class will decide on this at the beginning of the year. Morning meetings are to take anywhere from 10 minutes to 15 minutes.

After morning meeting we are already about 40 minutes into our day. I feel like students will feel ready to conquer the schedule on the board and are alert and awake. Because of morning meeting, students will know exactly what to do next and can get ready to learn. It is my hope that having a very calm, personal morning with strong routines in place, students will be in a "learning" mindset and be excited to be at school.