

Example of practice

Focused classrooms

Examples of practice demonstrate effective practice in different education settings. You can use them to think about how to apply the practice in your own context.

Lesson context

This example of practice comes from a Year 2 classroom. My classroom has established routines that allow me to reinforce behavioural expectations to my students. I embed these expectations from day one, when my students and I talk about how we will uphold the 3 classroom responsibilities— ‘be safe’, ‘be kind’, ‘do your best’. These are displayed on the wall for the rest of the year. Each of my routines help to support students to display these behaviours and minimise time off task.

We start by each sharing an answer to a simple question – what is one thing you noticed on the way to school today? If you were a bird, what kind would you be? – This activity helps us get ready to engage with others and participate in the day.

A day in routines

Circle time in the morning

At the start of the day, my students know to come into the classroom and put their bags away. When the bell rings, it is their signal to sit in a circle. We start by each sharing an answer to a simple question – what is one thing you noticed on the way to school today? If you were a bird, what kind would you be? – This activity helps us get ready to engage with others and participate in the day. It is also a way to explicitly teach and reinforce listening and discussion skills. I do this every single day, and this is how they start their learning.

Consulting the class calendar

After circle time, we look at the calendar of learning activities planned for the day. I have this displayed on the board with pictures, so that all students know the sequence of learning and what they will need to be prepared for. The pictures help differentiate for my students who are not proficient readers, so no one feels left out.

Brain breaks

To signal the transition between activities, we always have a brain break that involves movements such as dance, or a listening activity such as 'Simon Says'. This helps minimise the time off task during activities, as students know a fun movement break is coming, and the calendar on the board tells them when to expect it.

After lunch meditation

To refocus students once they come in from playing outside, we go through a guided meditation exercise. We call it 'resetting our heads for learning'.

The class knows that each day we have 2 "master meditators". These are 2 students who were excellent at engaging with the meditation the day before. Their responsibility is to pick the next 2 students who are the most mindful. This helps students live the rules and reinforce them without me needing to intervene.

End of the day routine

We reset the classroom at the end of the day. Each student has a job (floor police, pencil sharpeners, chair monitors), which rotate throughout the year. This helps build a sense of shared responsibility for our learning environment. The students know that when the music comes on, they have one song to do their job and reset for the next day.

Back to the circle

We always end the day the way it started. We each share one thing that went well in the day, or one thing that we are proud of – leaving on a positive and ready for the next day.

Why these routines?

These routines support learning in my classroom by minimising time spent off task or time wasting between activities. I make sure to always be consistent in how I draw attention to off-task behaviour. I simply ask the student which classroom responsibility they are not showing, and then ask them what they can do to show that they are back on track. This means that students see everything being dealt with consistently and fairly.

As students grow through the year, they take more ownership over the routines, helping them develop their self-regulation and monitor their own behaviour.

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Reflection questions

- How do routines support on task learning?
- How are these routines supported by visual, verbal and non-verbal cues?
- What routines do you use in your classroom to reinforce the behavioural expectations of your students?