The Transitioning Dilemmas:  
Implementing Strategies for a Smoother Route of Classroom Transitions

Christina Caldwell  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Intern  
Park Forest Elementary School  
State College Area School District  
cwc5033@psu.edu

Penn State Professional Development School  
Teacher Inquiry – April 2009
Table of Contents

Description of Teaching Context .......................................................... 3
Main Wondering and Sub-Questions .................................................... 5
Data Collection and Analysis ................................................................. 5
Data Analysis ........................................................................................ 9
Explanation of Findings ......................................................................... 13
Reflections and Implications for Future Practice ................................. 19

Appendices:
A. Inquiry Brief .................................................................................... 22
B. Annotated Bibliography ..................................................................... 27
C. Student Survey Round One ................................................................. 31
D. Examples of Anecdotal Notes ............................................................... 32
E. Record of Class Meeting ................................................................... 37
F. Teacher Surveys ................................................................................ 38
G. Student Survey Round Two ................................................................. 42
H. Student Survey Round Three ............................................................... 43
I. Reflection on Implemented Strategies ............................................... 44
J. Strategy List and Descriptions ............................................................. 46
K. Totals of Student Survey Results ....................................................... 48
L. Tables of Student Survey Results ....................................................... 51
As an intern in the Professional Development School through Penn State University, I have worked in a third grade self-contained classroom at Park Forest Elementary School in the State College Area School District (SCASD), during the 2008-2009 school year. This third grade class consists of twenty-three students, ten males and thirteen females. Two of the students are of Asian decent, while the rest are Caucasian. Within all of my students, each student has his or her own individual strengths, needs, and academic ability levels. Some students also receive special learning support for their academic needs in addition to the classroom setting.

Five students, two boys and three girls, attend math enrichment one day each week. These students also produce high quality work and submit assignments on time. Two other students have in-class support from their own dedicated paraprofessional. These students receive learning support in math, language arts, and writing and do not take part of many of our in-class transitions since they spend most of their time in learning support. These students also receive support in speech and occupational therapy in which they are provided support to develop their writing skills, fine motor skills, and learning to work with manipulatives. Through assessments and observations, there are three students who have demonstrated, basic, or below grade level, ability. All of these three students are Title 1 students. One student goes for reading support, one student goes for math support, and the other student goes for both math and reading support. Two other students receive speech and language support.

Some students also have a variety of behavioral, social, and emotional needs. My learning support students have difficulties with all of these needs. During the situations when
they are feeling upset or frustrated, their behavior and emotions often fluctuate. These students have difficulty interacting academically and socially at a level that would be expected for a third grader during structured learning times. Each student maintains his or her own goals in which to progress over the entire school year. The majority of my students are a group of children who strive to build an effective learning environment, a circle of friendship, a circle of trust and respect, and a community.

Transitions are very important to use in the elementary classroom, for students and teachers alike. They set the tone of the classroom and can also affect the success of the school day. Transitions help organize the day, set structure in the classroom, remind the students of what is next in the schedule, and provide an effective way to end one discussion or lesson and begin a new one. Using transitions in the classroom help students to know what is expected of them, what they are supposed to do next, and the amount of time they have to do the next task. Transitions can be quick and effective, quick and ineffective, slow and effective, or slow and ineffective causing a decrease in time for instructional learning.

My inquiry pursues an interest that focuses on implementing effective transition strategies to make transition time smoother, facilitate more instructional learning time, and gain an understanding of my own management style. In my classroom, the students are very chatty but are able to transition in a timely manner when they are asked. However, at times we lose a few minutes of instructional learning time when students are left to transition at their own pace. A few of the off task behaviors that the students engage in include: throwing trash away, getting a quick drink, talking to friends, wandering around the room trying to determine what to do, and fidgeting at their desk.
Before implementing any strategies for this inquiry, the transitioning time from one activity or lesson to another is very slow at times, averaging 1 minute and 18 seconds, causing a few minutes loss of instructional learning time throughout each school day. Since the beginning of the school year, I have been using transitions in the classroom often and continue to implement a variety of strategies. I wondered how much more instructional learning time would be gained in the classroom if the students transitioned smoother and more effectively into activities. The purpose of this inquiry is to use different strategies for more efficient transitions and also to gain a better understanding of my tone and style of classroom management. (See Appendix A for full Inquiry Brief)

**Wonderings and Questions**

**Main Wondering**

*Which strategies are most effective to make transition time smoother, facilitate more effective instructional learning time, and gain an understanding of my own classroom management style?*

**Sub-Questions**

- How would students assess themselves as to how they transition within the three categories of morning, afternoon, and dismissal?
- Which strategies do I feel more comfortable implementing into my classroom?
- Which strategies do the students respond to best?
- What are the effects of allowing students to take ownership of transitioning?
- What are specific times each day that students are able to transition smoother?
- Which specific times of the day do the students transition in a smoother manner?

**Data Collection**

**Clear Description of Data Collection**
I collected five different types of data in order to fully explore the advantages, drawbacks, and the overall success of implementing various transition strategies into my third grade classroom. Data collection was conducted before, during, and after the implementation of the strategies. These five ways include: literature review, observational/anecdotal notes, class meeting, teacher surveys, and student self-assessment surveys.

**BEFORE**

**Student Self-Assessment Survey**

Prior to implementing my inquiry, I designed and conducted a student survey. The survey questions focused on a self-assessment of students’ feelings of how they would rate themselves on transitioning throughout the day. My intention in conducting this survey was to obtain a perception of how students would rate themselves using a scale of a happy face, middle face, and sad face. The happy face represented the feeling of; *I am really good at following through with this transition.* The middle face represented the feeling of, *I do a decent job of following through with this transition but I can work harder to improve my behavior.* Lastly, the sad face represented the feeling of; *I really need to improve my behavior while following through with this transition because I do not feel I do so well.* Before administering the survey, I explained the meaning of the facial expressions to the students so they could evaluate themselves using the description. *(See Appendix C for Student Survey Round One)*

**DURING**

The majority of my data was collected during my inquiry project while I was determining the most effective strategies to implement while attempting to improve students’ attitudes towards transitioning. Throughout the entire inquiry process of implementing various strategies, I was able to collect sufficient data to support my inquiry wondering. The majority of the data
came from the teachers’ transition surveys and anecdotal notes as the most informative and revealing data.

**Literature Review**

To prepare for my inquiry, I conducted research on transitioning and classroom management. My research consisted of website articles, several informational books, a former PDS intern’s inquiry paper, and a lecture article. The motivation to conduct this extensive research was to learn about different strategies and techniques to implement and various philosophies of discipline and management. After the research, I created a description of each resource and explained how and why I believe it would benefit my inquiry. (See Appendix B for Annotated Bibliography)

**Observational/Anecdotal Notes**

Throughout the course of my inquiry, I collected anecdotal notes as I observed and recorded transition times. I focused on recording observations during the transitions. The notes included the time and date, the type of transition (from activity A to activity B), the length of time the transition took, the strategy used, specific behavior that stood out, and other additional notes. I collected these anecdotal notes to observe the transitions, make note of specific behavior that occurred from any of the students, and to gain an awareness of measured changes as I implemented different strategies. (See Appendix D for Anecdotal Notes)

**Class Meeting**

I conducted a class meeting to gain an understanding of students’ awareness of transitions, both in the classroom and in the hallway. On a large sheet on construction paper, I recorded the key points that were addressed during the meeting. I explained to the students that I
was going to be focusing on the transition times in the classroom as an assignment for class so that students are aware that they will be assessed on their behavior during transitions. First, I asked the students to brainstorm what they think a transition is and then compiled the students’ ideas into a simple definition that they were able to understand. My intention was to enable each of the students to understand what the term transition means, which would benefit the overall understanding of the significance held on transitioning. Then I asked for student volunteers to share their ideas about different transitions that they experience each day and created a list.

Lastly, I asked for student volunteers to share suggestions of possible strategies that could be used to improve the transition times. The purpose of this was to help students gain ownership of the strategies to promote students’ positive attitudes and willingness to follow through with all of the expectations during each of our transitions. I felt that if I provided students with the opportunity of student choice and ownership, this would promote student-centered management and building a community in the classroom. (See Appendix E for Record of Class Meeting)

Teacher Surveys

As part of my data collection, I developed a survey for the teachers at Park Forest Elementary inquiring about their use of transitions in the classroom. I asked them to specify the grade level or special that they taught, the strategies that work best for them and why, difficult times of day that are harder for students to transition, the average length of their classroom transition, certain times that are more difficult for students to transition, and any additional thoughts or information on transitions that would be helpful. (See Appendix F for Teacher Surveys)

Student Self-Assessment Survey
About halfway through the course of my inquiry, I had each student that was present on that given day to take the second round of the student survey (as mentioned in the before section of data collection.) The intension of this round of the student self-assessment survey was to gain understanding of the students’ perception of how well they felt they followed through with the transitions given specific expectations. The purpose of finding out how the students would assess themselves was to gain an understanding of their overall thoughts about transitioning and to see if their feelings have increased or decreased as compared to the overall flow of transitions. (See Appendix G for Student Survey Round Two)

AFTER

Student Self-Assessment Survey

At the conclusion of implementing the strategies based off of research and the teachers’ surveys, as well as recording anecdotal notes, I gave my students the third round of the same self-assessment survey. Again, I wanted to gain understanding of the students’ perception of how well they feel they follow through with the transitions given specific expectations. From all three rounds of the student self-assessment survey, I intend to observe and measure any change based on the overall results of each of the surveys. (See Appendix H for Student Survey Round Three)

Reflection

Then, I also wrote a brief reflection on the strategies I had implemented throughout the course of my inquiry. I included information such as what worked, what I needed to improve on, and which strategies I felt most comfortable and confident using with enthusiasm and motivation. The purpose of this reflection was to support my main question of which strategies
are effective to use to gain an understanding of my own classroom management style. (See Appendix I for Reflection)

Data Analysis

Steps Taken to Analyze the Data

Literature Review

From these resources I obtained an understanding of what stage my eight and nine year olds are developmentally and provided me with suggestions of how to make transitions smoother and more effective by implementing strategies and techniques that are age level appropriate for my third grade students. The resources provided a more in-depth reasoning on physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive characteristics for all age levels. This information was crucial to research and gain a more in depth understanding to support my main question of what strategies are best to use to facilitate more instructional learning time. After finding many strategies to use, I compiled a list of strategies that I planned on using throughout my inquiry. Once I implemented each strategy, I decided whether I was going to continue using the strategy or if I was going to make any modifications or discontinue using the specific strategy. (See Appendix J for Strategy List and Descriptions – Literature Suggested Strategies)

Observational/Anecdotal Notes

The first step I took in analyzing my observational notes was reviewing all of the notes I recorded. I separated the data into two piles centralized around the themes: morning (8:30 a.m. – 11:59 am) and afternoon (12:00 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.). Then I looked for any emerging patterns or student behavior that stood out regarding the time of day, the transition that was taking place, and the expectations to meet during the implementation of a specific strategy. I was able to analyze the patterns and trends that I found. Next, I recorded a list of the time of day and lengths
of transitions to look for more patterns and the results of specific strategies that I used. The purpose of this analysis was to see what was working to support my main question of which strategies work best to obtain effective transitions and facilitate more instructional learning time. *(See Appendix K for Analysis of Anecdotal Notes)*

**Class Meeting**

I conducted the class meetings as a way to informally assess and analyze the students’ perceptions and understanding of transitions. One of my goals through this inquiry process was to provide the students with an opportunity to gain ownership over their transitioning. Through the conversations in this meeting and giving students the opportunity to share their suggestions and questions with the class, I was able to promote student-centered management of transitions, both inside and outside the classroom setting. *(See Appendix J for Strategy List and Descriptions – Student Suggested Strategies)*

**Teacher Surveys**

I contacted all twenty-four teachers in the building and I only received five surveys. Even though I did not receive as many as I hoped, I was still able to gain useful information and insights to transitioning. The surveys I received were from the music teacher, a first and second multi-aged classroom teacher, two third and fourth multi-age classroom teachers, and one from a fifth grade classroom teacher. I found this information very useful in adding to my list of strategies to try in my own classroom. *(See Appendix J for Strategy List and Descriptions – Teacher Suggested Strategies)*

The comments and additional thoughts on transitions that each teacher provided was very useful because I was able to get a better idea of other teachers’ beliefs, expectations, and effective implications regarding transitions. As part of my data collection, I decided to include

two of the five surveys. The first one is from the first and second grade multi-age classroom teacher. It was necessary to include this survey response because these transitions might be ones that my students accustomed to, taking their appropriate developmental age level since they have just come from second grade. The second survey response I included was one from a third and fourth grade multi-age classroom teacher. I decided to include this survey in my appendices because I believe it is necessary to include a survey response from a teacher who teaches the same age level students as myself. This survey response has given me substantial insight that this teacher valued regarding transitioning. After I reviewed the survey, I implemented this teacher’s suggested strategies and analyzed them to determine my underlying question of what strategies are most effective. (See Appendix F for Teacher Surveys)

**Student Self-Assessment Surveys**

I began to analyze the data from these surveys by creating a table to organize and display the students’ before, during and after responses; indicating the surveys by round 1, round 2, and round 3. I decided not to ask the students to write their name on the surveys because I wanted to look at perceptions of the class as a whole rather than of different students. Through analyzing the results, I wanted to see how well the students felt they have improved in general regarding transitions and analyze patterns and trends within the three rounds and the three themes: morning, afternoon, and dismissal. To do this, I counted up the number of happy faces, middle faces, and sad faces the students chose for transitioning in general before, during, and after my inquiry process. Then, I calculated the percentage by taking the total number of each face and divided this number into the total number of responses that could be given by the students. For example, the afternoon section of the survey included five questions. I calculated the total amount of happy faces for the first round, which totaled 53. Then, I multiplied the total number
of students, 21 total, who participated by 5, since there were five questions \(21 \times 5 = 105\). Then, I divided 53 into 105 and got 55. The total of 55 represents the percentage of students who feel they are doing really well with transitioning in general. (See Appendices K-L for Totals and Tables of Student Survey Results)

Reflection

Within my reflections, I determined which strategies I felt most comfortable using and were most effective to use suitable to my confidence and enthusiasm. To analyze my reflections, I included various strategies that I used and a brief description of how comfortable and confident I felt while using a specific strategy. I have gained a sense of awareness of my own classroom management style through implementing the various strategies. (See Appendix I for Reflection)

Explanation of Findings: Claims and Evidence

CLAIM 1: When students are involved in the decision making process of which strategies to use, the transitions are more effective due to students’ positive attitude and eagerness.

I began to notice a significant difference in the students’ willingness to transition quickly and effectively once I involved the students in the decision making process. During the class meeting, I explained to my students that I would be recording the length of time it takes them to transition as a part of an assignment for my class. The students became very excited and even commented at the end of the meeting that they were excited to help me with my assignment. When the students shared possible strategies to use, we talked about what would be involved in each specific strategy. This included the explanation of how the strategy would be used, how we should decide the amount of transition time, and what they will need to do during the transitions. I made sure the students knew and understood that I would tell them the
expectations and what they had to do before the transition took place. This information was necessary to share with the students so that they knew to carefully listen to directions and fulfill the expectations.

Strategy suggested by teachers:

Date: February 24, 2009  Time: 8:55 a.m.
Type of Transition: writing discussion on the rug to desk to work independently
Length of time transition took: 90 seconds
Strategy Used: called back by category (if you have on…blue, yellow, pink, red, stripes, black)
Any specific behavior that stuck out: Two of the students were talking about the color of their clothing; redirected some of the students who were talking and who didn’t get their writing materials out; reminded students what they needed to do if they weren’t following directions.

Strategy suggested by teachers and students:

Date: March 26, 2009  Time: 10:40 a.m.
Type of Transition: math warm-up to carpet for math discussion
Length of time transition took: 24 seconds
Strategy Used: countdown by 10
Any specific behavior that stuck out: One student, was delayed, did not follow directions and did not make it to the carpet in time.

Providing students with the opportunity of being a part of the role in decision making and determining ways to control their behavior minimized the amount of time for the to and from the carpet routine from 90 seconds to 24 seconds. Alfie Kohn (2006) supports this claim when he says that “students learn how to make good choices by making good choices, not by following directions… Students will have little opportunity to do that kind of learning if teachers and administrators try to control or manage their behavior” (78). I wanted to promote a student-centered classroom in which the students have a say pertaining how we do certain tasks or activities in the class. In this situation, students were given the full opportunity to suggest strategies they chose would work best.

The amount of time it took for the students to transition when they had a choice on how to carry out the transition, the length of time decreased by 73%. This analysis supports that students
made a good choice by transitioning quickly after they made a good choice when choosing this specific strategy to use. Kohn believes an advantage of allowing students to make decisions is “giving them some say will make it more likely that they will do essentially what we want. Choice promotes compliance and minimizes misbehavior” (81). Minimizing the amount of misbehavior and including the students in the decision-making process supports a community of learners within a classroom.

**CLAIM 2: When students are aware of the amount of time they have to complete a transition task through verbal cues given by a teacher, they are more likely to fulfill the expectations in a timely manner.**

During the strategies that indicate a specific amount of time, I have observed that the students fulfilled the expectations in a quicker amount of time than the strategies in which unit related materials were being named. When students know they have to follow through with the expectations by the time you count to a certain number, students can count along and know when the transition will end. However, when different things, categories or unit related items, are called out students do not follow with the expectations as efficient as using a countdown or counting to a certain number. The following are two pieces of evidence to support this claim:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: February 26, 2009</th>
<th>Time: 12:52 p.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Transition:</td>
<td>Word Study lesson to Carpet for discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time transition took:</td>
<td>32 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Used:</td>
<td>skip counting by 5’s to 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any specific behavior that stuck out:</td>
<td>One student was not following directions and barely made it to the carpet in time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: March 26, 2009</th>
<th>Time: 11:30 a.m.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of Transition:</td>
<td>math discussion on rug to lining up for recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of time transition took:</td>
<td>40 seconds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy Used:</td>
<td>naming all of the continents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any specific behavior that stuck out:</td>
<td>Four students moved very slow and were off task. All the other students rushed to get everything done to be called to line up for recess.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional Notes: Students had to move their desks back into place and then sit quietly at their desks to be dismissed for recess.

The amount of time the students took to transition when they had an awareness of when the counting was going to stop, decreased from 40 seconds to 32 seconds. I believe this is because students may not know all of the continents, simple machines, planets, etc. and therefore they are not sure when the transition is going to end.

CLAIM 3: Even though the students’ perceptions on how they pursued the expectation of transitioning smoother and more effectively did not fluctuate much throughout the process, I believe that the transitions have become smoother and more instructional learning time was gained. This belief is based on my perception and level of comfort throughout the implementation of various strategies.

At the beginning of the inquiry process, the transition time ranged anywhere from 47 seconds to 168 seconds from one activity or task to another. During the course of the inquiry process, the students had made successful improvements while transitioning. They turned the long, ineffective transitions into shorter, more effective transitions. From this positive behavior from the majority of the students, this demonstrates the students making good choices to transition smoother. I began to notice an increase in students’ behavior and willingness to follow through with the expectations and a decrease in misbehavior and off task time. Most of the students became more aware of their behavior transitioning and often reminded each other to move quicker or of what to do because the time was being recorded.

Although the above information explains my perception of how well the students transitioned throughout the inquiry process, the students’ perception of how well they transitioned did not change much throughout the data collection process. After analyzing all
three rounds of the students’ self-assessment survey, I noticed the students felt they were doing well with transitioning in the beginning, but a few students felt that they could improve their behavior to feel better about transitioning. This range of data remained consistent throughout the entire data collection process. The following example of the students’ self-assessment survey results supports this claim.

### Student Survey Results: The Morning Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Arrival -&gt; Morning Meeting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Arrival -&gt; Morning Meeting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Arrival -&gt; Morning Meeting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See Appendices K-L for additional Totals and Tables of Student Survey Results)

The data does not show much fluctuation in students’ perceptions throughout the inquiry process. Round 2 of the surveys consisted of a change in variance because there was twenty-two students present while there were only twenty-one students present during the first and third
round. The first and third round results are exactly the same, which shows no change in students’ perceptions. Through conversations with my mentor and PDA, the transitions are smoother overall. However, the students have not seen the difference in the transitions, I believe the transitions are much smoother and more effective since the beginning of this inquiry process. The core of my perception is based on my comfort level and confidence I have gained throughout the implementation of various strategies.

As mentioned in Appendix I: Reflection on Implemented Strategies, I felt most comfortable using a variety of strategies including: countdowns, counting to a specific number, using a timer and bell, calling out student attributes to get them to line up a few at a time or return to the carpet or desk. The strategy that I did not feel comfortable or confident using was chanting a tune or a catch phrase to grasp students’ attention and transition quickly. I tend to have a monotone voice, but at times I have a loud and stern tone. I found that the few times when I chanted to obtain students’ attention or to begin transitioning, my voice became very low key and the students were most likely not even able to hear me that well. From my own perception, I feel that I did not appear to be too enthused while chanting and this showed a decrease in students’ motivation and willingness to transition quickly.

When students are able to sense that the adult in charge is not confident, children then become less eager to fulfill the expectations. I observed this during one of the transitions in which I chanted “Park” and the students had to answer with “Forest”. I started the chant in a low voice and the students barely heard me. Only few students responded with “Forest”, which made me aware that I needed to chant again. I repeated the process and gained more students’ attention this time, but not the whole class. I decided to modify my strategy to use the bell as a way to grasp students’ attention and had them freeze so that I can explain what they needed to do next.
Ever since this instance, I continued to use the bell as well as the above strategies that I feel most comfortable and confident using. I have gained the perception that my management style tends to be fairly stern with a semi-moderate high tone, but often consists of a low key tone in which the need for assistance of a bell comes in hand when trying to manage the students’ behavior and grasping their attention.

**Reflections and Implications for Future Practice**

In conducting this inquiry, I have become more aware of the importance of every minute that is included in a given school day. I have obtained an understanding of how challenging it may become if a few minutes were lost here and there. Then there is less time to complete what was planned. As previously mentioned, transitions are very important to use in the elementary classroom, for students and teachers alike. Throughout this inquiry, I have obtained the feeling of what wasted time feels like, sounds like, and how much of an impact it has on the success of the school day. The accomplishment of transitions can depend on the following variables: students’ moods, attitudes, and perceptions; a teacher’s mood, attitude, perception, confidence, comfort and what needs to occur during each transition.

I believe the key component to determine the successfulness of strategies is what I have become more aware of within this inquiry, setting expectations. When expectations are set and students are made aware what is happening next, how much time they have to transition, and what they need to do sets in with the understanding of expectations. During transitions, students are often asked to put materials away, gather new materials, clean up scraps and supplies from crafts, walk quietly in the hallway to and from the classroom, and get everything done within a
certain amount of time. Everything can get done, but it may not meet the effectiveness that should be achieved. This is where the setting and practicing of expectations is very crucial.

Through research, surveys, and my own practice, I have become more aware of the fact that students must have an understanding of exactly what they are supposed to do and how much time they have to do the expected tasks before beginning a new task. Setting the expectations from the beginning of the school year helps facilitate students’ success. In my classroom, the students were made aware of the expectations on the first few days of school. These expectations have been practiced each day and are developing into more instructional learning time, students’ willingness to learn, and a positive learning environment within a community of learners in the classroom. As within the implementations of different strategies chosen by students, students were given the opportunity to create a list of rules, expectations to be more specific. This opportunity fosters students’ choice, creating a student-centered management and building a community in the classroom.

In my future classroom, I plan to set the tone of the classroom starting from the first day of school by making students aware of how I plan on having the most success in the classroom. The students will be given opportunities to transition successfully by setting up expectations with the students to gain smooth, quick, and effective transitions. In my current classroom, I will continue to involve students in the decision making process of expectations so that students gain ownership of expectations by developing routines and procedures.

Also, I plan on conducting follow up interviews after giving students the self-assessment surveys. The interviews will focus on how individual students feel towards transitioning. The students I choose to interview will be students I feel that transition well, students that transition somewhat well, and students who often tend to struggle with transitioning. From the interviews, I
would plan on gaining an understanding of specific students’ perceptions. I would also have students reflect and make goals to transition more effectively and quicker. I am a firm believer in giving students choices and following through with expectations once they are set. In a whole-class discussion, students will be able to understand the importance of fulfilling all of the expectations in the classroom to be successful and be apart of classroom community if everyone works together.

I feel confident with being able to provide the opportunity for success and the maximum amount of instructional learning time in my future classrooms. Through this inquiry, I have gained a sense of awareness of my own management style, as mentioned in Appendix I. As I continue to grow professionally, I hope I will start to feel more comfortable using other strategies with practicing implemented various transition strategies. Although this inquiry has provided me with a significant amount of insight and practices to carry through, there are a few wonderings that surfaced during the inquiry process. The following wonderings are still lingering in my mind:

- Which specific times of the day do the students transition in a smoother manner?
- Would the strategies that I found to be most effective work for younger or older students?
- How can students be intrinsically motivated to transition more effectively?

As a professional, I plan on engaging in more teacher inquiries to continue growing as a lifelong learner. There are many reasons and ways to go about how to do things in the classroom, but there are many opportunities to continue researching and inquiring to learn how to become the most successful and effective teacher. Even though I have gained an awareness of my own teaching voice and style in classroom management, I still plan on trying new strategies to implement during routines and practices to improve my classroom as a beginning teacher.
Appendices

Appendix A: Inquiry Brief

Context:

In my third grade class at Park Forest Elementary, there are twenty-three students, ten of which are males and thirteen that are females. Two of the students are of Asian decent, while the rest are Caucasian. Within all of my students, each student has his or her own individual strengths, needs, and academic ability levels. Some students also receive special learning support for their academic needs in addition to the classroom setting.

Five students, two boys and three girls, attend math enrichment one day each week. These students also produce high quality work and submit assignments on time. Two other students have in-class support from their own dedicated paraprofessional. These students receive learning support in math, language arts, and writing and do not take part of many of our in-class transitions since they spend most of their time in learning support. These students also receive support in speech and occupational therapy in which they are provided support to develop their writing skills, fine motor skills, and learning to work with manipulatives. There are three students who have demonstrated basic, or below grade level, ability. All of these three students are Title 1 students. One student goes for reading support, one student goes for math support, and the other student goes for both math and reading support. Two other students receive speech and language support.

Some students also share a variety of behavioral, social, and emotional needs. My learning support students have difficulties with all of these needs. During the situations when they are feeling upset or frustrated, their behavior and emotions often fluctuate greatly. These students have difficulty interacting academically and socially at a level that would be expected for a third grader during structured learning times. Each student maintains his or her own goals in which to progress over the entire school year. All of my students are a group of children who strives to build an effective learning environment, a circle of friendship, a circle of trust and respect, and a community.

Rationale:
Transitions are very important to use in the elementary classroom, for students and teachers alike. They set the tone of the classroom and can also affect the successfulness of the school day. Transitions help to organize the day, set structure in the classroom, remind the students of what is next in the schedule, and provide an effective way to end one discussion or lesson and begin a new one. Using transitions in the classroom helps students to know what is expected of them, what they are supposed to do next, and amount of time they have to do the next task. Transitions can be quick and effective, quick and ineffective, slow and effective, or slow and ineffective causing a decrease in time for instructional learning.

In my classroom, the students are very chatty but are able to transition quickly when they are asked. However, at times we lose a few minutes of instructional learning time when the specific demand of quickness is not given. Currently, the transitioning time from one activity or lesson to another is very slow at times, causing a few minutes loss of instructional learning time throughout each school day. Ever since the beginning of the school year, I have been using transitions in the classroom often and continue to implement a variety of strategies. I am pursuing an interest in implementing different strategies to make transition time smoother and to facilitate more effective instructional learning time. I also wonder how much more instructional learning time we could gain in the classroom if and when the students transition smoother and more effectively. I would like to use this inquiry to facilitate different strategies for smoother transitions and to gain a feel of my tone and style of classroom management. This inquiry could be of assistance to me in the future, as I will hopefully learn the best strategies to use to have smoother and quicker transitions in between every activity and lesson.

Main Wondering:

Which strategies are most effective to make transition time smoother, facilitate more effective instructional learning time, and gain an understanding of my own classroom management style?

Sub-questions:

- Which strategies do I feel more comfortable implementing into my classroom? (Self Reflection)
- Which strategies do I appear to feel more comfortable/confident while implementing? (Perception(s))
- Which strategies do the students feel more comfortable with? (Class meeting, Survey)
- Which strategies do the students respond best to? (Checklist, Anecdotal Notes, Studio Code)
- Does consistency of strategies affect students’ behavior (consistency of my mentor’s strategies and my own strategies)? (Observe my mentor’s strategies and use a Checklist, Anecdotal Notes, or Studio Code.)
- How can the use of different strategies affect different transitioning time throughout the day (i.e. morning meeting, lining up, switching activities, switching instructional lessons, hallway, dismissal, etc.)? (Checklist, Tally Marks, Anecdotal Notes, Field Notes)
• What affects will involving students in the process of developing different strategies have a positive impact on students’ behavior based on ownership of strategy(ies)? (Studio Code, Class meeting, Anecdotal notes. Checklist)

• What are specific times within each day that students are able to transition smoother? (Checklist, Tally Marks, Anecdotal Notes, Observation Notes)

• How are compliments motivational for getting students to transition quickly and appropriately? (Observation Notes)

• What affects does more talk from the teacher have during transitioning than less talk? (Anecdotal Notes)

• What affects does positive reinforcements place on facilitating more on-task time and engagement in a lesson/discussion? (Anecdotal Notes, Studio Code)

• How are nonverbal strategies effective to use when students are chatty and off-task? (Anecdotal Notes, Checklist)

• Do the students have any transitions/routines that they practice at home on a daily basis, and if so, what are they? (Compile results from the parent survey and take anecdotal notes)

Data Collection Ideas:

• Observation/field notes: My mentor and I will use a recording sheet to take notes and collect data on different strategies that I use while recording the time of day, which transition was used, the length of time the transition took, and any student behavior that stuck out.

• Observing other teachers and their classroom management styles and techniques.

• Survey other PFE teachers (What strategies work best for them and why?)

• Survey students to see what strategies they feel work best.

• Survey students at the beginning, middle, and end of this inquiry process by having them rate themselves at how well they feel they quickly and effectively accomplish transitioning.

• Conduct a class meeting at the end of the process and record students’ comments and responses to which strategies they liked best and were more apprehended to using.

• Have students create strategies that I can use so that they feel ownership to the strategies.

• Observe different strategies that I use within the given weeks and have my mentor use her own strategies one week. I will use students’ strategies one week and during the other weeks, I will be using my own strategies while making observations and collecting baseline data to measure which strategy(ies) work more effectively.

• Survey parents to determine if their child practices any daily transitions/routines from the moment the student leaves school until they arrive at school the next day?
Timeline:

February

February 16 – 20
- Develop student and teacher surveys
- Create a list of strategies I want to use the first two weeks.

February 23 – 27
- Implement countdown strategies and take notes/collection data
- Send out e-mail to ask teachers if they would participate in a transitioning survey and ask them to send it back or place in mailbox by Friday, March 6.

March

March 2 – 6
- Implement new strategies and take notes/collection data
- On Monday, give students self-assessment survey and compile results
- On Tuesday, conduct a class meeting at the beginning of the week and share results of self-assessment. Talk with students about what a transition is and explain that you are looking for ways to make the transition times quicker. Ask students if they would be willing to suggest a few strategies that I may use in the classroom. Audiotape this meeting and create a poster of the highlights of the class meeting and strategies that students suggest.
- Following the self-assessment, interview some students about what they think about the transitions we have in the classroom and ask if they have any suggestions on ways to improve our transitioning time. I will survey six students. The students I will survey will be two who rated themselves well, two students who rated themselves in the middle, and two students who rated themselves in the lower end of the spectrum
- Continue to time transitions and take observation notes

March 9 -13 (Spring Break)
- Continue to research different transition strategies
- Develop Parent Survey and obtain approval
- Compile notes of students and teachers interviews
- Organize data that has been collected so far
- Compile a list of student suggested strategies

March 16 – 20
- Begin to implement new strategies
- Continue to time transitions and take observation notes
• E-mail/send home parent surveys on Monday and ask for them back by Friday
• Begin to analyze collected data and start to develop claims
• Take self-reflection notes on my feelings about my management style
• On Friday, give students the same self-assessment survey from week two and compile results

March 23 – 27
• Start to use student suggested strategies
• Continue to time transitions and take observation notes
• Work with mentor to compile a list of strategies that she will use the next week
• Continue analyzing data and begin writing paper

April
March 30 – April 3
• Implementation of different strategies
• Continue to time transitions and take observation notes
• Continue writing and revising paper

April 6 – 10
• Implementation of different strategies
• Continue to time transitions and take observation notes
• On Friday, give students final self-assessment survey and compile results
• Conduct a class meeting at the end of the process and record students’ comments and responses to which strategies they liked best and which ones they felt worked best. Audiotape this meeting and create a class poster of highlights from the meeting.
• Draft of paper due April 11th

April 13 – 17
• Revise paper
• Begin preparing for presentation

April 20 – 24
• Finalize paper due April 22nd
• Prepare for presentation on April 25th
Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography


The two main reasons why this text is very important to my research and inquiry are first, it was done by a PDS alumni who has been in my shoes before and second, how well she enthusiastically sold me what she was trying to accomplish. I feel the knowledge that the writer has been in my shoes before is an interesting concept and has many positives in the writing of my inquiry. I can relate to her words and experiences, which will allow myself to better understand why she says certain things or how she words certain situations. She sold her article to me by the way she finished off the preview. She writes, “Join me on my journey into discovering how to use efficient transitions to maximize students’ attention and motivation, to maintain a positive classroom environment, and reduce time off-task.” In essence, this whole experience really is a personal journey for myself and the idea that the inquiry involves transitions and motivation, two key words in my inquiry, this article is one I just could not pass up.


From this book, I have read and learned many ways to provide discipline in a positive way in the classroom. This book will be a great resource to use and I became very interested in the text when I saw the back bulleted points because they matched with what
I am trying to accomplish with my inquiry research. In bold, the authors write: create classroom climate that enhances academic learning, use encouragement rather than praise and rewards, instill valuable social skills and positive behavior through the use of class meetings and understand the motivation behind students’ behavior instead of looking for causes. Out of these four, the most important point to me is the idea of encouragement to motivate students. Within my inquiry, I plan on placing this concept center stage to get my point across while answering key questions that I feel are vital to facilitate more effective, instructional learning time.


This book is a resourceful text that helps build a community within a classroom, a task that many educators struggle to accomplish within their first few years of teaching. Although short, Kohn focuses on eight important parts of creating a “classroom community” including: the children’s nature, punishment techniques, the handling of problems, student choice and ownership, problem solving, and how NOT to get control of the classroom. This interests me because showing me what NOT to do allows me to come up with techniques that apply to my particular situation. Compared to a book that says what to do, which is usually applied to the average classroom. The most important aspect of this text is that it shows a cynical view of children, in the way that we must tell them exactly how we expect them to behave and then offer “positive reinforcement,” a concept that holds true in my philosophy of education. This book focuses on student-centered management and building a community in the classroom. This source is relevant to my inquiry because I plan on holding class meetings, giving student surveys, and implementing strategies that students have suggested to give them ownership of the strategies.


One of the most underrated forms of communication there is in any type of social activity is non-verbal communication, which is something that any public speaker should not be without. Teachers are a prime example of this because in a well-prepared and organized classroom, the teacher should not talk the entire period. It is actually the time when the teacher does not speak that the students learn the most. By using non-verbal communication, students and their teacher really connect on levels that are invisible on day one, but progress as the days add on. This article can be an effective resource within my research because it lists examples of different non-verbal cues and strategies that can be easily applied to any elementary classroom or social setting that involves verbal interaction.
This book is an in-depth view of different classroom management concepts aimed towards behavior, relationships, applications and administrative tasks. Each part is very user-friendly, with each part broken up into topic specific chapters. This book will help me to interpret and react to possible student problems and behavior in a positive manner. Also, it provides a quick and easy-to-remember three step approach to effective discipline, one of the most important aspects of classroom management in and out of the classroom, including transitioning in the hallways.

The main reason why I like this article is because it offers a list of strategies to use for more effective transitioning organized by subject. The article provides different transitioning ideas for Math, Science, Social Studies, English, Reading, plus more. Not only this but it also lists the different roles that are important to a growing classroom community including the teacher, students and parents, respectively. Although parents are not present in the classroom throughout the day, I believe that their role is one of the utmost important roles in a young learner’s life. Learning occurs in the classroom yes, but once they leave the school, it is all up to the parents to continue their learning until they go to bed whether this is reminding their child to do their homework or communicating asking what they learned today in school. I believe that although it is a simple process of communication, a student can really learn more if he/she reflects on what they learned throughout the day through communicating it in their own words without a teacher to correct them. I suppose that going home is in essence a form of transitioning between school days and I am wondering if I can add it to my inquiry as I plan out my inquiry.

As stated earlier, I am an advocate of both management and behavior control of outside the classroom transitions, such as acting up in the hallways and the all-important lining up in elementary school. Although a simple concept, students struggle with lining up due to a variety of reasons, as mentioned on this informational website. Education World provides information to an educator that is very valuable and useful. I plan on using this
website for research on line-up techniques to implement in the classroom to anticipate smoother and quicker transitions in the hallways from point a to point b.


Rick Smith tackles a very interesting correlation between how great classroom management leads to great student participation and input throughout the day. The review writes the text to be very “practical and comprehensive,” and these two traits it sure is. Organized for a variety of experienced educators including veterans and first-year teachers, this book truly is a how-to guide using examples and sample lessons and strategies to not only bring the best out of the educator but the best out of the students. I plan on using this text very frequently within my inquiry because of Smith’s magnification and emphasis on the idea of preparation and how classroom management leads to higher productive learning.


Cleaning up is something that is important yet highly overlooked by today’s elementary students. In kindergarten, it is taught over and over again to clean up after yourself, yet students, mainly due to their attention spans, seem to begin to clean up and then not finish once something else grasps their attention. Students are usually more than willing to clean up after an activity, but the issue is how quick and effective the cleanup transition is before the next lesson. This fact is what makes cleaning up very important and why I’m using this article for my inquiry. The faster things get cleaned up, the faster we can begin our next activity and/or lesson. This article will be beneficial to use in my inquiry because it provides enjoyable strategies to use to maintain students’ behavior, motivation, attention, and participation.


This text is divided into age-specific sections allowing for quick reference to problems/solutions based on age. I feel this is important because as children get older, I believe that educational steps should change, especially in elementary school. The text also offers suggestions to management, instruction, and activities to use based on each age level of students. This text provides a more in-depth reasoning on physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive characteristics for all age levels. This will help me understand where my eight and nine year olds are developmentally and will help me during this inquiry by implementing strategies that are age level appropriate for my third grade students. Education seems to focus more on grade levels to develop methods, yet
age should be taken into more consideration. This book is very popular in the College of Education and because of this, it is highly recommended and highly researched by my colleagues and peers.

Appendix C: Student Survey Round One
Appendix D: Anecdotal Notes

Round One

Student Transition Survey Result

The Morning:
What grade would you give yourself for following directions when you come into the classroom in the morning? This includes reading the morning message, signing up for lunch, doing the math warm-up or D.O.L., following ALL of the directions in the morning message, and getting started on work right away?

In Between Activities:
What grade would you give yourself for coming to the carpet quickly and quietly to begin a new lesson or discussion?

What grade would you give yourself for going back to your seat after a discussion to work on an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for cleaning up quickly after an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for following directions and not talking to friends when I ask you to do something quietly?

What grade would you give yourself for lining up quietly at the door and staying quiet while walking through the hall?

The Afternoon:
What grade would you give yourself for putting your chair on your desk, getting your coat and backpack, and coming back into the classroom and having a seat on the carpet to get ready to go home?
Inquiry Transition Observation Notes

Time: 8:55  Date: 2/24/09

Type of Transition: rug to desk - writing

Length of time transition took: 90 seconds

Strategy Used: called back by category

Any specific behavior that stuck out: Talking about the color of their clothing.

Additional Notes: You reminded them what they needed to do if they weren't following directions.

Time: 12:45  Date: 2/24/09

Type of Transition: Lunch to classroom - Word study

Length of time transition took: 2:18

Strategy Used: Met students right at 12:45 - walked quickly from back of line to front of line. Told 6 to open books to a white page as you were waiting.

Any specific behavior that stuck out:

Additional Notes:
Time: 13:05  Date: 2/25/09
Type of Transition: Lunch → Work Study

Length of time transition took: 1 minute 18 seconds
Strategy Used: Procedural transition

Any specific behavior that stuck out: No significant behavior noted.

Additional Notes: Students followed directions and hurried to the carpet.

Time: 10:40  Date: 2/26/09
Type of Transition: Math warm up → Carpet for math

Length of time transition took: 24 seconds
Strategy Used: Countdown from 10

Any specific behavior that stuck out: #1 was delayed, didn't follow directions, didn't make it to the carpet in time.
Time: 12:57  Date: 3-2-09
Type of Transition: W.S. → Writing on Carpet
Length of time transition took: 30 seconds
Strategy Used: count by 5's to 50
Any specific behavior that stuck out: students transitioned quickly

Additional Notes:

Time: 11:47  Date: March 3, 2009
Type of Transition: Class meeting → lining up for Lab
Length of time transition took: 32 seconds
Strategy Used: You have 30 seconds to line up
Any specific behavior that stuck out: students very eager to line up quickly & quietly

Additional Notes: This was right after class meeting about transitions
Time: 11:30   Date: March 26, 2009

Type of Transition: Math -> Recess

Length of time transition took: 40 seconds

Strategy Used: naming all of the continents

Any specific behavior that stuck out: #1's really slow off task

All other students rushed to get everything done!

Additional Notes: Students had to move their desks back into place and then sit quietly at their desks to wait to be dismissed for recess!
Time: 10:43  Date: April 8, 2009
Type of Transition: math discussion on rug → seats for independent work
Length of time transition took: 17 seconds
Strategy Used: let's see how long it takes
Any specific behavior that stuck out: students were calm, expectations were set, went smooth

Additional Notes:

Time: 11:16  Date: April 8, 2009
Type of Transition: same as above
Length of time transition took: 15 seconds
Strategy Used: let's see if we can beat 17 seconds
Any specific behavior that stuck out: same as above

Additional Notes:
Appendix E: Record of Class Meeting

Inquiry Class Meeting:
March 3, 2009

What is a transition?
- When you change from lesson to another or one activity to another.

What are some examples?
- Writing to special
- Lunch to word study
- Special to classroom
- Math to recess
- Reading to science
- Science to dismissal

Strategies to use that the students suggested to improve transition times:
- Name/list something unit related (simple machines)
- Use a timer
- Counting to a specific number
- Keep track of transition times and we can try to beat the time
- Use a bell
- Charts
- Countdowns
- Giving each student a specific spot to stand in line
Appendix F: Teacher Surveys

First/Second Multi-age Classroom Teacher:

1. What grade level/special do you teach?

First and Second Grade Multi-age.

2. What are a few transition strategies that you use?

I use Harry Wong's “Give me five” to get students' attention.
I practice transitions the first week of school so that students know the expectations for the entire year.
I use a timer, when it beeps the students know to move to the appropriate center because we have practiced.
I have a postal worker that passes out paper, which is the ticket to go back to your seats.
I call out student attributes to help them line up a few at a time. (yellow shirts, first grade girls, etc.)

3. Which strategy(ies) work best for you and why?

Honestly, the practice at the beginning of the year is the most important thing. Getting the students trained to follow a certain procedure early in the year and then expecting them to follow it is key. I use the Give me five method the most. The students are expected to do five things when I say that. Eyes on the speaker, mouths closed, hands to yourselves, ears listening and bodies still.

4. Are there specific times of day that you notice are more difficult for students to transition? (i.e. morning, mid-morning, afternoon, end of day, etc.)

Coming back from our late special just before the end of the day. The day is almost over and the kids know that they will be leaving soon.

5. On average, how long does it take your students to transition?

A. Less than 1 minute
6. **Are there certain times when you notice that it is more difficult for students to transition?** (i.e. in between activities, from instructional time to another instructional time, from special time to instructional time, cleaning up, dismissal, etc.) If so, when?

   Special time to instructional time.

7. **Any additional thoughts or information on transitions would be helpful.**

   I firmly believe that transitions need to be practiced. A lot of people don’t think of this as something that might need to be practiced, but the more time spent at the beginning of the year practicing, the better my transitions have been. A reminder after winter break has also been effective for me.
Third/Fourth Multi-age Classroom Teacher:

1. **What grade level/special do you teach?** 3/4

2. **What are a few transition strategies that you use?**
   
   • Line up by the time I get to 0
   • When the bell rings, you move to the next station. When you get to the next station you wait in line to the side until it clears out. (takes training in the beginning)
   • "Freeze" when I say "unfreeze I expect....." "Unfreeze"
   • Echo singing/chanting I sing/chant "come to the carpet" they sing back "come to the carpet" I sing "nothing's in your hand" they sing "nothing's in our hand" etc...

3. **Which strategy(ies) work best for you and why?**
   
   • Countdown works well... if they don't get finished by countdown it's the "you take my time, I take yours" policy and for every extra min. I have to wait, I take a min. from their recess
   • Freeze works because expectations are clearly set
   • The singing/chanting works because they cannot be talking and they are reflecting on directions and what they should be doing.

4. **Are there specific times of day that you notice are more difficult for students to transition? (i.e. morning, mid-morning, afternoon, end of day, etc.)**
   
   • After lunch into math is the toughest transition. The kids are pretty wild. Doing a "chatterbox" where they can talk/mumble/sing/make weird
noises whatever for a 10 second countdown works well to get them settled.

5. **On average, how long does it take your students to transition?**

A. Less than 1 minute  
B. 1-2 minutes  
C. 3-4 minutes  
D. 5-6 minutes  
E. 7+ minutes

• This depends on the activities. Moving from math to unit time, A... moving from lunch to math, C, moving from reading to recess B, moving from recess to lunch D

6. **Are there certain times when you notice that it is more difficult for students to transition?** (i.e. in between activities, from instructional time to another instructional time, from special time to instructional time, cleaning up, dismissal, etc.) If so, when?

• From lunch to math  
• From recess to lunch

7. **Any additional thoughts or information on transitions would be helpful.**

The expectation setting is key. My students know how to respond to the different transitions. They know what I expect. We set the routine at the beginning of the year. How do we want to line up for lunch? How do we want to get ready for recess? It was a democratic decision that became an expectation once set. For example, they decided they wanted to line up for lunch by me simply saying lunchtime, they wash their hands and line up quietly using their fingers in the air to indicate where they are in line. This allows for an easy line up by them and a quick check by me. They know they get the “line up” call at 12:05 and have to be lined up by 12:09 because that is our lunchtime. There is no choice. They decided that at 11:30 we would clean up the classroom, then go to recess. I get to say when the class is cleaned up (they are waiting in line if they think it is) and then we go out. Usually we stay out until 12:03 so no instructional time is lost and if they made a huge mess and are not cooperating to clean up, it is their time lost.
I tend to use a louder voice too in order to give my direction in an “I Message” format...

I need you to - ________
I would appreciate if you ____________
I think it’s time that we ________________

Using this format makes directions more positive (easier to listen to from them) and it does not seem like a directive them for the students to defy or ignore. It hinges from the respect component of the classroom community.

Appendix G: Student Survey Round Two
Round Two

The Morning:
What grade would you give yourself for following directions when you come into the classroom in the morning? This includes reading the morning message, signing up for lunch, doing the math warm-up or D.O.L., following All of the directions in the morning message, and getting started on work right away?

In Between Activities:
What grade would you give yourself for coming to the carpet quickly and quietly to begin a new lesson or discussion?

What grade would you give yourself for going back to your seat after a discussion to work on an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for cleaning up quickly after an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for following directions and not talking to friends when I ask you to do something quietly?

What grade would you give yourself for lining up quietly at the door and staying quiet while walking through the hall?

The Afternoon:
What grade would you give yourself for putting your chair on your desk, getting your coat and backpack, and coming back into the classroom and having a seat on the carpet to get ready to go home?

Appendix H: Student Survey Round Three
Appendix I: Reflection on Implemented Strategies
As an intern through this professional development school, I am learning how to be a more effective teacher as I continue to grow professionally. One of the most crucial parts of becoming a teacher is learning how to be flexible and making various accommodations to fit the needs of students. There have been a variety of strategies and techniques I had to modify to developmentally fit the needs of the eight and nine year olds in my third grade class in reference to transitioning.

The majority of the accommodations that I focused on during my study were made during the implementations of various transition strategies throughout each day. Through my extensive research and surveys that I have collected, I have come across many strategies that can be used to gain more effective transitions and facilitate more instructional learning time. Every minute in the school day is valued. When minutes accumulate, which turns into wasted learning time, this is time that could be spent on instruction. Implementing the most effective strategies is important to gain more instructional learning time in the classroom. However, I believe the key component to implementing the most effective transition strategies depends on what the teacher feels most comfortable and confident using.

I felt most comfortable using a variety of strategies including: countdowns, counting to a specific number, using a timer and bell, calling out student attributes to get them to line up a few at a time or return to the carpet or desk. The strategy that I did not feel comfortable or confident using was chanting a tune or a catch phrase to grasp students’ attention and transition quickly. I tend to have a monotone voice, but at times I have a loud and stern tone. I found that the few times when I chanted to obtain students’ attention or to begin transitioning, my voice became very low key and the students were most likely not even able to hear me that well. From my own perception, I feel that I did not appear to be too enthused while chanting and this showed a
decrease in students’ motivation and willingness to transition quickly.

When students are able to sense that the adult in charge is not confident, children then become less eager to fulfill the expectations. I observed this during one of the transitions in which I chanted “Park” and the students had to answer with “Forest”. I started the chant in a low voice and the students barely heard me. Only few students responded with “Forest”, which made me aware that I needed to chant again. I repeated the process and gained more students’ attention this time, but not the whole class. I decided to modify my strategy to use the bell as a way to grasp students’ attention and had them freeze so that I can explain what they needed to do next. Ever since this instance, I continued to use the bell as well as the above strategies that I feel most comfortable and confident using. I have gained the perception that my management style tends to be fairly stern with a semi-moderate high tone, but often consists of a low key tone in which the need for assistance of a bell comes in hand when trying to manage the students’ behavior and grasping their attention.

Appendix J: Strategy List and Descriptions
Literature Suggested Strategies:

- “Play Beat the Clock! Set a timer and tell students they must finish cleanup before time is up. When the timer rings, everyone must “freeze.”” Starr (2004)
- “Before beginning cleanup, look around the room and pick out an item that needs to be put away. Announce to students that you have chosen a mystery item and that whoever puts it away will win a prize.” Starr (2004)
- “Select a class clean-up song.” Starr (2004)
- “Have students line up by rows or tables.” Shore (2004)
- “Have girls line up first and then boys, or vice versa.” Shore (2004)
- “Have students who are sitting quietly line up first.” Shore (2004)
- “Have students line up according to personal characteristics. For example, students whose names begin with a specific letter or whose birthday is in a particular month might line up first.” Shore (2004)
- “Assign students a day of the week, from Monday to Friday. On Mondays, students who are assigned that day would line up first, and so on.” Shore (2004)

Teacher Suggested Strategies:

- Harry Wong’s “Give me five” to get students’ attention.
- Practice transitions the first week of school so that students know the expectations for the entire year.
- Use a timer - when it beeps the students know to move to the appropriate center because we have practiced.
- Designate someone as a postal worker that passes out paper, which is the ticket to go back to your seats.
- Call out student attributes to help them line up a few at a time. (yellow shirts, first grade girls, etc.)
- Having a clear signal to get attention before moving on
- Setting expectations about what using that clear signal means
- Have materials organized for easy and quick clean ups
- Have student helpers collect materials and finish up set clean ups
- Setting a time/Giving a time warning – (in two minutes we will be moving on to the next activity) We need to be on the carpet, quiet, eyes facing front
- Giving a countdown to be on the carpet and done with the transition
- Line up by the time I get to 0
- “Freeze” when I say “unfreeze I expect…..” “Unfreeze”
- Echo singing/chanting I sing/chant “come to the carpet” they sing back “come to the carpet” I sing “nothing’s in your hand” they sing “nothing’s in our hand” etc…
- Short breaks between subjects
- Read aloud after returning from lunch
- “Freeze! (tell directions) I’ll give you 5 seconds to get there…5….4….3…..2…..1 done!”
- Don’t speak, just motion and act out what you want them to do. Motion for “follow me” and do. They will wonder what you are up to. Motion for no talking, too.
• If your birthday is in June, you may line up! Etc…
• Now choose a friend to play the part you were just playing. Choose a quiet hand! Teach the part to them.
• Hop to your place on the carpet,
• Draw a map of how you are going to get to lunch in 3 minutes – take your map with you,
• When I call your name, pretend to be an animal as you line up. We will guess what animal you were.
• Call the next person to line up by signing their first name in sign language.

**Student Suggested Strategies:**
• Name/list something (unit related – simple machines, continents, etc.)
• Use a timer – to know how much time we have
• Use a bell – ring it once to give a one minute warning, then ring it a second time for our signal to be where you need us
• Chant or sing something – we do that many times in music class while we are transitioning or asked to transition
• Count up to a number or down to zero
• Keep track of transition times – that way we can try to beat the time
• Give each student a specific spot to stand in line

Appendix K: Totals of Student Survey Results
First Round Analysis

Student Transition Survey

The Morning:
What grade would you give yourself for following directions when you come into the classroom in the morning? This includes reading the morning message, signing up for lunch, doing the math warm-up or D.O.L., following ALL of the directions in the morning message, and getting started on work right away?

In Between Activities:
What grade would you give yourself for coming to the carpet quickly and quietly to begin a new lesson or discussion?

What grade would you give yourself for going back to your seat after a discussion to work on an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for cleaning up quickly after an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for following directions and not talking to friends when I ask you to do something quietly?

What grade would you give yourself for lining up quietly at the door and staying quiet while walking through the hall?

The Afternoon:
What grade would you give yourself for putting your chair on your desk, getting your coat and backpack, and coming back into the classroom and having a seat on the carpet to get ready to go home?
Student Transition Survey

The Morning:
What grade would you give yourself for following directions when you come into the classroom in the morning? This includes reading the morning message, signing up for lunch, doing the math warm-up or D.O.L., following ALL of the directions in the morning message, and getting started on work right away?

19 3 0

In Between Activities:
What grade would you give yourself for coming to the carpet quickly and quietly to begin a new lesson or discussion?

14 8 0

What grade would you give yourself for going back to your seat after a discussion to work on an activity?

16 6 0

What grade would you give yourself for cleaning up quickly after an activity?

14 8 0

What grade would you give yourself for following directions and not talking to friends when I ask you to do something quietly?

4 16 2

What grade would you give yourself for lining up quietly at the door and staying quiet while walking through the hall?

7 15 0

The Afternoon:
What grade would you give yourself for putting your chair on your desk, getting your coat and backpack, and coming back into the classroom and having a seat on the carpet to get ready to go home?

17 5 0
Student Transition Survey

The Morning:
What grade would you give yourself for following directions when you come into the classroom in the morning? This includes reading the morning message, signing up for lunch, doing the math warm-up or D.O.L., following ALL of the directions in the morning message, and getting started on work right away?

In Between Activities:
What grade would you give yourself for coming to the carpet quickly and quietly to begin a new lesson or discussion?

What grade would you give yourself for going back to your seat after a discussion to work on an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for cleaning up quickly after an activity?

What grade would you give yourself for following directions and not talking to friends when I ask you to do something quietly?

What grade would you give yourself for lining up quietly at the door and staying quiet while walking through the hall?

The Afternoon:
What grade would you give yourself for putting your chair on your desk, getting your coat and backpack, and coming back into the classroom and having a seat on the carpet to get ready to go home?
# Appendix L: Tables of Student Survey Results

## Student Survey Results: The Morning Theme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☠</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Arrival -&gt; Morning Meeting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☠</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Arrival -&gt; Morning Meeting</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☠</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning Arrival -&gt; Morning Meeting</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Survey Results:**

**In Between Activities Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☻☻</th>
<th>☻☻☻</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk → Rug for Discussion</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on Rug → Desk to Work</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning Up → Begin New Activity</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Directions/Working Quietly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning Quietly in Hallway</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☻☻</th>
<th>☻☻☻</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk → Rug for Discussion</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on Rug → Desk to Work</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning Up → Begin New Activity</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Directions/Working Quietly</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning Quietly in Hallway</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th>☻</th>
<th>☻☻</th>
<th>☻☻☻</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desk → Rug for Discussion</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion on Rug → Desk to Work</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning Up → Begin New Activity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Directions/Working Quietly</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitioning Quietly in Hallway</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Survey Results:**

**The Dismissal Theme**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😐</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last Lesson/Activity - &gt; Dismissal</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 2</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😐</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last Lesson/Activity - &gt; Dismissal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th>😊</th>
<th>😐</th>
<th>😞</th>
<th>Total # of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Last Lesson/Activity - &gt; Dismissal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Lesson/Activity - &gt; Dismissal</th>
<th>17</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total of Each Choice in Percentages (Rounded to Nearest Whole Number)</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>