



Is Your **CLASSROOM** [Predictable?]

TRISHA KATKIN
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Predictable?

This workbook was made especially for Special Educators in mind. It was designed to help special educators analyze their classroom for effectiveness as a Predictable atmosphere.

It includes actionable strategies for immediate implementation.

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PREDICTABLE?



A predictable classroom entails have the following predictable experiences:



1. Predictable Routines
2. Predictable Expectations
3. Predictable Interactions



When a classroom has these three aspects set in a predictable and consistent fashion, student anxiety and stress is decreased. Having a predictable classroom fosters independence, time on task, and overall learning.



Predictable routines require practice, planning and prep on your part. In order to have a predictable routine, you must follow these steps:

1. Pick the routine.
2. Plan the steps.
3. Create the routine.
4. Teach the routine.
5. Reinforce the routine.

PICK THE ROUTINE

First decide on the routine that you want to become automatic. Special education is about teaching skills for eventual independence, so choose a routine that a student could follow through with without the assistance of an adult.

Some examples of good routines to start with are:

1. Arrival
2. Morning Work
3. Group/center work
4. Bathroom routines
5. Rules for areas of the classroom
6. Rules for work times
7. Meal time routines
8. End of day activities

PLAN THE STEPS

Once you have a routine in mind, you must decide on the steps. Deciding on the steps can be difficult as each student is different and each student will be able to tolerate routines differently. Some students will enjoy having a picture schedule of several items to accomplish, while other student may only be able to tolerate a few items at a time.

Use the follow pages provided to decide on the steps for the routine.

Consider:

1. The student's ability to follow a schedule.
2. The student's general compliance with following routines.
3. The likelihood that the student will ultimately be able to conduct this routine independently.
4. The student's general ability to stay focused on a multi-step process.



ROUTINE STEPS:



Routine:
Student(s):
Steps:

1.



2.



3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

12.

13.

14.

15.





ROUTINE STEPS:



Routine:
Student(s):
Steps:

1.



2.



3.

4.

5.

6.

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14.

15.





ROUTINE STEPS:



Once you have the steps listed for the routine, combine or cross out extraneous steps. You may find for some students you will need to add steps in.

For example, if you are writing out a routine for arrival, you may have separate steps for hanging up backpack, hanging up coat, etc. For some students, you may need separate steps for each item. For other students, you will not. Add what you need and take out what you will not.



CREATE THE ROUTINE

Now that you have picked a routine and decided on the number of steps, it is time to create it! Depending on the age, ability and appropriateness for your student, your routine may look different.

For example, a student in high school should have a routine schedule that is appropriate to their age. This means that it may not be appropriate to have a PEC picture schedule for a student in high that can read. For students that are older and cannot read, try adapting a traditional PEC picture schedule with something that their "typical" peers may have. An older student on the spectrum that cannot read may have their picture schedule on a small electronic device as to not call attention to their disability.

CREATE THE ROUTINE

For a younger student on the spectrum, I thoroughly suggest a vertical PEC picture schedule. Studies have shown that a vertical picture schedule is more efficient and easier for a student to follow through with than a horizontal one. If you have BoardMaker available to you, I suggest using it to create a PEC for each step in the overall process. If you do not have the BoardMaker software, that's okay. Use pictures you take or images off the internet. The important thing here is that the student has a visual of the step they should be doing.



A VERTICAL ROUTINE



A vertical routine should look like this:



Cubby Routine



TO DO:

DONE:



Hang up Back pack



Hang up coat



Go to class



TEACH THE ROUTINE



As a student completes a step in the process, they can move it over to the "done" side.



An important note here is that make sure your routines make sense. If your ultimate goal is to make a student independent, ensure that your scheduled routines roll into the next routine.



For example, in the cubby routine, I ended the routine with, "go to class." This is because I want to build in the transition. This way I will not have a student standing in the hall way wondering what to do next. When creating routines and schedules, think about the next step. At the end of a cubby routine, a student will enter my classroom where they are greeted by the next routine, "morning work." When the morning work routine is done, students are directed to the "bathroom routine, and so on and so on.



TEACH THE ROUTINE



So get smart about how the flow of your day will go. Think about all of the routines that could be eventually automatic and build scheduled routines in.

When creating routines, it is important to have a PEC that generalizes all of the steps in the process. In my example, the hanger represents the entire cubby routine.

As students becomes more well versed in the process, you can gradually fade away the steps and only leave the hanger symbol as a reminder of what the student needs to do.

Once the student has demonstrated mastery of the process, you can fade away the hanger symbol reminder as the student has now made the steps in the process automatic.



[REINFORCE THE ROUTINE]

This process does not happen overnight!

Teaching a new routine can take days, weeks, or even years before mastery is acquired.

Do not give up. Students with autism require constant support, reinforcement and praise.

Take it a little at a time and celebrate each mini win.

It's important to reinforce along the way. Make sure you are praising and rewarding the student each time they attempt to follow through with the schedule. Practice the routines as often as possible.

Remember, they want to please you. If they are confused as to what they should be doing at any given time, it is because you have not given them something to do. You need to make routines clear and expectations realistic.

[YOU CAN DO THIS!]

PREDICTABLE EXPECTATIONS



Students with autism typically aim to please. They want to do well, they want to make people happy, and as their teacher, they want your acceptance. Without predictable expectations, students with autism may become withdrawn, act out, become frustrated, angry or even violent.

The fear of the unknown expectation can send some students with autism over the edge. Anxiety and stress may build up if they are unaware of what is expected of them.

So, save them (and you) the stress of upsetting your students and set clear, concise, classroom expectations.

When thinking about classroom expectations, consider these:

1. Location
2. Motivation of students
3. Feasibility



LOCATION



People in real estate will tell you, "location is everything!" And they are right. When setting predictable expectations, you should consider where you are in the classroom.



Your classroom is likely to have various sections or areas of the room where the expectations may be different.

Consider the work space area. If a student desk is for working, then the expectations would probably be something like, "Be safe, Be responsible, and Be kind," or some variation of a PBIS model that many schools have now adopted. Where "safe," "responsible," and "kind," have been spelled out in the student handbook. If at a working space, a student may also be expected to comply with the teachers directions, stay in their seat, and accomplish the task at hand.

Now, over arching PBIS models should be consistent no matter where the student is in the school.



LOCATION



Now imagine that it is pouring rain outside and you must have indoor recess in the gym. Indoor recess may come with a different set of expectations. The student may be allowed to wonder the gym during this "free time." They may be allowed to move a little faster or play with games that they do not usually get to play with.

As you can see, location can play a role in setting expectations. Students with autism enjoy consistent expectations, so make sure that they understand what the rules are depending on where they are.

Use the following pages to brainstorm the various places within the classroom or school that your student may have different expectations.



LOCATION



I'll get you started:

1. Independent work areas

2. Reading areas



3. Group work areas



4. Meal time areas

5. Gym class

6. General education classrooms

- 7.

- 8.

- 9.

- 10.



Remember, students with autism can get overwhelmed, so don't go crazy with having differing expectations everywhere. If the expectations can be the overall PBIS model, then leave it at that.



LOCATION



Location:
Expectations:

1.



2.



3.

4.

5.

Location:
Expectations:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.





LOCATION



Once you have a handle on the locational expectations for your students, put it into action! Create small signs with visual representations of what is expected of them in that area.

Hopefully, your area is easily defined, but if not, use painter's tape to define a section so a student can easily see where the boundaries are.

Laminate your expectations and hang them in a spot where the students will be able to see them while they are utilizing the area.





MOTIVATION



Everyone's motivation is different, and what may make sense to you, may not to someone else. Be open to this idea. When writing expectations, consider the motivation (or lack there of) that a student may have.

Try to understand what makes a student "tick."

Set expectation based on this.





FEASIBILITY



Okay, let's face it. Even if you have the most well thought out plan for having predictable expectations, if it is not reasonable, it is not going to happen.

We are all human. Your students with autism, included.

I know... What a NEWSFLASH...

Seriously, though, if you are going to set expectations, they better make sense and be reasonable.

If you are asking that the autistic student with ADHD in your class sit still for 30 minutes while they work on a non-preferred task, well, I wish you luck.

Because the truth is, none of us are going to work for unrealistic expectations.

We all want goals that can be **OBTAINABLE!**





FEASIBILITY



So, when writing expectations, consider the ability of your students to comply with them. Set high expectations, but they need to be able to be achieved.

To high, and you are bound for frustration.

To low, and you are bound for boredom, misbehavior, and mischief.

Find a balance, and work from there.

And remember, it is not set in stone. You can always tweak the expectations higher if needed, as your students soar toward independence!



EXPECTED INTERACTIONS



One of the main reasons predictability is important is because it can foster a feeling of trust and safety.

Your students trust you. And if they don't, they want to, but you haven't proven yourself as a trustworthy source, YET.



Having expected interactions with students and fostering safe interactions among peers helps teach students that they can trust you and that you can offer a safe environment for them.

You want your students to know, sense and feel that you are unconditionally on their side and that you are working everyday to help them reach their highest potential.

EXPECTED INTERACTIONS

Here are a few ways that you can foster safe interactions between peers:

1. Create a lunch-bunch group.

2. Teach students how to appropriately get a friend's attention.

3. Teach a student how to share.

4. Teach salutations.

5. Have more group activities.

6. Collaborate with the school's Speech Language Pathologist.

7. Provide collaborative play options at recess.

8. Teach a student a game that they can teach someone else.

9. Find students with similar interests and introduce them.

10. Teach a student how to give a compliment.

11. Teach rules for interacting with peers.



Phew! THAT WAS [A LOT!]

Creating a predictable classroom is possible. It takes time, planning, prep, and implementation. You will need to be consistent, emphasize important facts, and help guide your students through the process. It takes a concerted effort on the front lines for an indeterminate amount of time, but once implemented, the return on your investment will be well worth it!

GOOD LUCK!

I KNOW you can do it!

XO,
Trisha