

## What Is It?

*Transitioning* is a skill that needs to be defined and taught to students. Transitions occur within the classroom--such as moving between activities--and outside the classroom, when students move to different classes.

Actively planning for transitions helps teachers prepare students for changes throughout the school day and increases predictability. It also helps maximize their instructional time and time spent engaging with students in academic content. Students who are prepared for transitions between activities can show increased independence and organization.

## When to Use It

Transitions are used throughout the day:

- To prepare students to stop one academic activity and start another.
- To prepare students to physically move from one classroom to another.
- To prepare students to begin independent work.
- To promote student independence and self-organization skills.
- To increase student awareness of classroom routines and expectations.

## Steps to Implementation / How to Do It

	1. Create a clear set of classroom routines (i.e., beginning of class, during instruction, end of day/class period).
	2. Create a visual schedule that details classroom activities and times (Math from 10:00-10:35 a.m.). The visual can include pictures, words, clocks, etc.
	3. Include a timing system (digital timer projected on the board, clock that the entire class can easily see).
	4. Establish a signal to indicate an upcoming transition (music, verbal warnings, transition bell, dimming classroom lights, etc.).
	5. After announcing or signaling a transition, provide students with contingent reinforcement and behavior specific praise for engaging in expected behaviors. Prompt students to correct off-task behaviors.
	6. Keep track of the time or duration between transitions from one activity to another and record progress.

## Example

*Mrs. Rodriguez, a 6th grade biology teacher, is planning to introduce classroom routines at the beginning of the school year. In the past, students tended to understand her expectations in the classroom, but when she attempted to introduce her students to weekly labs she found that they were often confused about what to do.*

*As a result, Mrs. Rodriguez found herself reprimanding students for playing with lab instruments and taking points from students for not completing lab assignments on time. This confusion about what to do during weekly labs also caused several students with specific learning needs to become agitated and show signs of frustration in class. Mrs. Rodriguez decided to introduce her students to lab routines and prepare them for transitions early in the school year in order to minimize confusion and maximize instructional time during labs.*

*Mrs. Rodriguez first determined a set of classroom expectations and rules to follow when conducting a lab assignment. She then created a visual support of lab expectations and put a schedule on the board indicating transition times from one lab activity to the next. She discussed the lab routine with her class and provided examples of what to do during each activity.*

*Mrs. Rodriguez projected a digital timer on the front board and explained that she would ring a bell to indicate the change from one activity to the next. She said she would tell them about any upcoming changes in activities. She also explained that lab groups who successfully transitioned between activities together on time without off-task behaviors would receive tokens. During each lab, Mrs. Rodriguez collected data on the time it took each of her classes to transition between activities (i.e., putting away materials, cleaning designated lab areas, and preparing for the end of class), and she recorded class progress weekly.*

## How to Increase Effectiveness

- Keep classroom routines clear and expectations easy to follow.
- Provide students with individual visual supports of classroom routines and transition times that they may keep on their desks.
- Discuss daily routines and classroom expectations at the beginning of each class. Provide examples of completed work and monitor student's progress in completing assignments on time.
- Determine a transition signal and timing system that works best for the classroom (e.g., music that signals it's time to put away materials).
- Create a group contingency system and record the time it takes the class to transition from one activity to another. Announce a timed goal and reinforce the class for meeting the goal (i.e., a point towards a Friday afternoon activity).
- Create individual goals for students needing additional support. Provide individual students with reinforcement and give behavior specific praise for effectively transitioning between activities and being on-task.

## Resources

Hine, J. F. (2015). Decreasing transition time in elementary school classrooms: Using computer-assisted instruction to automate intervention components. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 48(3), 495-510.