



Geordie Theatre School Teacher Toolbox

September 12th 2025

Topic: Containers and Reframe the Behaviour

Teacher meeting planned attendance: Casey, Lamia, Noah, Brooklyn, Emily, Ian, Jackson, Seamus, Louna, Joy, Lizzie, Jess, Daniel, Bevin, Lila, Natalie (12 + 4 GTS Staff and Interns)

Teacher Toolbox Planned attendance: Ian R, Alery, Saya, ien P, Casey, Lamia, Maria, Noah, Milo, Brooklyn, Laurie, Laura, Jackson, Alery, Lizzie, Jess, Daniel, Bevin (14 + 4 GTS Staff and Interns)

Agenda:

1. **(DANIEL TALKS) Brief overview:** this year at GTS, we have tried to more actively lay out what our approach to classroom management is. In this session, we want to talk a little bit about that philosophy and about how we can bring that philosophy to life in our classroom rituals, routines and containers.
2. **(DANIEL TALKS) Background:** reframe the behaviour. In my teaching practice, one of the most helpful systems of thought that I have come across for classroom management is this one: [03 Reframe the Behavior - Can_t Do Won_t Do.pdf](#)
 - a. The basic idea here is that we need to reframe behaviours. Kids behave in the ways we are looking for them to behave if they can. So, lets help them! And let's help them first of all by changing our mindset as teachers

- b. As teachers, we want to be stress detectives and routine creatives. By creating routines and detecting stressors, we can go A LONG WAY towards having the kinds of theatrical experiences with kids that we all are hoping for.
- 3. **(DANIEL TALKS) Day 1 Routines:** I think introducing routines on Day 1 is a crucial first step. Sometimes as artistic creators, we think we need to give kids space to share their ideas – aka, no structure! Or, something I’ve heard myself and other teachers say is, “I’m going to meet the kids and see what they give me. And then respond to that.” But! I think if we set up the structure from Day 1, then that gives kids a clear idea of WHAT THE HECK WE ARE DOING HERE! Then they feel safe. Then they can create.
- 4. **(STICKY NOTE BRAIN STORM) Sharing Day 1 Routines:** A routine is anything you do in a classroom more than once. That you teach the kids how to do. And then you do it again and again. This could be as simple as an attention getter. It could be as complicated as a team building dance (do I want to show that sequence from the cheerling documentary here?)
 - a. [Attention-Getters](#)
 - b. [Teacher Has Personalized Handshakes With Every Single One of His Students](#)
 - c. Write down one day 1 routine that you have ever been a part of, led as a teacher, or wanted to try:
 - i. Put your belongings in one spot
 - ii. Starting the class in a circle on the floor
 - iii. Questions of the day (asking how we are feeling, name a color, favorite song, etc)
 - iv. Having a buddy system for various activities + daily tasks
 - v. Walk in handshakes
 - vi. Room zones (having a break area or a spot to communicate if you’re not feeling great)
 - vii. Physical class contract
 - viii. Establishing consent practice
 - ix. Attention getters (if you can hear me do x, waterfall, etc)
 - x. Show and tell
 - xi. Games (werewolf, bippity bippity bop, captain’s coming, counting to 20, etc)
 - xii. Stretching
 - xiii. Taking a moment to collectively breathe
 - xiv. Shakedown
 - xv. Tongue twisters

- d. Stick it on our brainstorm wall together
 - e. Go around and hear them all
5. **(DANIEL TALKS) Common stressors and how to remove them:** in the framework I shared before, one thing we are doing as stress detectives is detecting stressors and trying to remove/lower them. Obviously teaching brings a lot of unknowns. But, there are some super common stressors that come up again and again.
- a. The following are categories of stressors that might come up in your classroom:
 - i. [Biological Domain Example Stressors.jpeg](#)
 - ii. [cognitive domain example stressors.png](#)
 - iii. [emotion domain example stressors.png](#)
 - iv. [Social domain example stressors.png](#)
6. **(SMALL GROUP WORK) Removing stressors in advance:** In groups of 3, I'd like you to choose a stressor that you think comes up often. That is predictable. That probably affects more than one kid in your group.
- a. Draw the stressor together on a piece of paper
 - b. Tell us how you could lessen/address the stressor IN ADVANCE OF YOUR CLASS!!! What can you do to lower the stressors that you have control over.
 - i. Cognitive overwhelm -> Lilypads + giving more time to think
 - ii. Hunger -> Scheduling snacktime
 - iii. Fear of trying something new/embarrassment -> Small groups before performing
 - iv. Fear of speaking in front of others -> Giving a physical task
 - c. Share with everyone.
7. **(BIG GROUP TALKING POPCORN STYLE) Lets talk about a few case studies:**
- a. Explain the case study
 - b. Explain what we did
 - c. Explain what went well and where this model of thinking didn't fully succeed.
 - d. Case studies - #1 – Lily at FACE and running away [**was planned but we didn't get to it in this session**]
 - e. Case studies - #2 – Lucious at Camp and fighting
 - i. Why the sudden behavior change?
 - 1. Theatre overload
 - 2. Overwhelmed, emotional coping
 - 3. Feeling left out, teasing/bullying
 - 4. Routine Change
 - 5. Invasion of personal space
 - 6. Sense of injustice

- 7. Conflict buildup
- 8. Feeling above the rules (perhaps due to familiarity with the camp)
- 9. Afraid to disappoint parents/be punished
- f. Case studies - #3 – students everywhere - constant low level talking from everyone [**was planned but we didn't get to it in this session**]
- g. Case studies from the room:
 - i. Verbal/Language barriers- needing to reexplain in French, 2 students alienated, group divide
 - 1. Ask biligual kids to help translate
 - 2. Allies + student pairing
 - 3. Non verbal activities
 - 4. Randomize groups
 - ii. Overwhelmed by disappointment- shoes unavailable to student, parent unreachable, messed up their makeup by crying
 - 1. Give options
 - 2. Teach coping strategies
 - 3. Limited costumes/props prior to showtime
 - 4. Validate their feelings
 - iii. Sharing the spotlight- distracted, wanting to be picked, upset when not picked
 - 1. Let them release emotions
 - 2. Take a walk
 - 3. Re-center
 - iv. Embarrassment- new to theatre, not participating
 - 1. Accommodate participation
 - 2. Make them feel safe
 - v. Difficulty apologizing- hurt someone else, wouldn't apologize because they didn't mean to
 - 1. Explain why apology was necessary
 - 2. Communicate with parents for strategies
- 8. **(MIX AND MATCH GAME – was planned but we didn't get to it in this session) -**
How to bring this all into your teaching practice
 - a. There are the games and activities that we do in classes
 - b. There are the containers, structures and routines that we can bring into class with us.
 - c. Mix and match game where we bring both of these aspects in with us.

9. THATS IT!