

# THRESHOLD

## OVERVIEW

*Threshold* means meeting students at the door, setting your classroom culture expectations before they even enter the room. This is the single most important moment for setting those expectations. *Threshold* technique is part of establishing and maintaining strong positive, disciplined systems and routines in your classroom. These are the basic elements:

- *See both sides.* Stand where you can see the room and the hall.
- *Control the flow.* Stand where you control movement in and out as much as possible; it's your right and responsibility to control how quickly and when students enter.
- *Shake hands!* This builds a tone of civility and should cause each student to pause and make eye contact.
- *Reset expectations.* Use *Threshold* as an opportunity to remind and reset students who are in danger of slipping. A gentle reminder of your expectations will go a long way for students struggling to improve.
- *Use positive chatter.* Build positive rapport and connections to students with brief personalized comments—"Looking sharp, Devon!"

### 28 ENTRY ROUTINE

View your *Threshold* as part of your broader *Entry Routine*. If you don't already have a conscious, effective *Entry Routine*, visit that technique at least briefly before you tackle *Threshold*.

## WHERE AM I NOW?

		Proficiency			
		I am brand new to these ideas of <i>Threshold</i> ...	I'm in the planning and practice stage, though I haven't tried <i>Threshold</i> yet in class ...	I'm beginning to use <i>Threshold</i> ...	I use <i>Threshold</i> regularly ...
Comfort & Confidence	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ... and excited to try it.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... but know I can make it work.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... and love how it works.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... and add touches that my students love.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ... and undecided about my ability to pull it off.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... because I still have questions about how to do it right.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... with mixed results I need to evaluate.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... but I may be overdoing it or taking too long.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> ... and not sure it's for me.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ... because I still doubt its value for my classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... but it doesn't seem to work or suit me and my students.	<input type="checkbox"/> ... but at times I let it slide.	

Work from your strengths. If you find yourself in the bottom left portion, leaf through this technique to locate related ones you might prefer to work on right now.

## ANALYZE THE CHAMPIONS

View the video clip, ideally more than once, and answer the following questions.

### Clip 27. Teacher Shadell Noel, Grade K

1. What does Ms. Noel do and say in the course of each greeting?
2. How much do the greetings vary in tone or other respects?
3. What has Ms. Noel noticed in her greeting with the last student? How does she respond?

## EXPAND YOUR SKILLS AND REPERTOIRE

### Your Current Threshold Practice

1. Which of these have you already incorporated into a *Threshold* routine? For those you now incorporate, how well do they seem to work? What might do with improvement? For those you don't yet incorporate, what benefit might you derive from adopting them?

See both sides



Yes

No

helps to keep behavior

in check

Control the flow



Yes

No

Avoids chaos +

madness

Shake hands!



Yes

No

this helps to build

Mutual respect + perfecting life skills

Reset expectations



Yes

No

every day is a new

day, expectations can be modified

Use positive chatter



Yes

No

I believe this is beneficial

in order to establish a positive day in the classroom

2. Do you currently coordinate a *Threshold* routine with a broader *Entry Routine*? How so?

28 ENTRY ROUTINE

I do not because I don't have a classroom at this moment but it is a routine that I would want to implement.

3. Do you notice any problems of coordination between *Threshold* and your launch of the actual lesson?

Not available at this moment

### Observe Others

Notice the behaviors of students entering other classrooms where teachers have or don't have *Threshold* down. What do you notice about the students' behaviors and about the overall efficiency with which they enter?

I believe the behavior is more disjointed and random rather than consistent with the use of the *Threshold* technique

### *Threshold* Greetings

Here are various aims your greetings can serve. Which of these have you used? For each, write some wording of your own that you could use.

1. Remind students where they are or where they are going: "Ready for college today?"

Ready for College (subject) today? Did you have any issues with the review work.

2. Remind students what you expect of them: "I'm ready to see your best!"

-help you succeed, increase your knowledge in (subject/topic) today!

3. Build relationships and rapport with students: "Great shot in yesterday's game!"

Other details about the game/event, asking about how it went

4. Tell students what is coming next: "Are you ready for today's quiz?"

are you prepared, does anyone have any questions about the material in the Quizzes Chapter?

DO IT AGAIN

5. Correct behavior: "You can give a stronger handshake than that!"

try it like this, - Show -, OR try to do it (firmer, softer, etc)

6. Recognize good behavior: "Excellent patience from you yesterday."

Stacy, thank you for your excellent patience during class yesterday

7. Reinforce academic material: "What's 15 divided by 3?"

Jake, could you walk the class through the solution for (problem)?

## PRACTICE WITH STUDY GROUP OR PARTNERS

### Compare Notes

1. Discuss a *Threshold* routine you've used. What is it intended to accomplish? What do you do? How do students respond?
2. Discuss what's easy or more challenging for you in *seeing both sides, controlling the flow, shaking hands, resetting expectations, and using positive chatter*. What useful comments do you hear from the group?

A routine that has been used on me was reinforcing academic material. It helped maintain students focus as well as having them want to study / read the chapter

3. Share your ideas from "Threshold Greetings." Brainstorm others and write down new ones you could use.

following up with events that you know that are occurring in the students life, checking in for academics + life status

### Threshold Role Play

This role play can work with four participants; the more the merrier. In each round, one participant is the *Teacher* and the rest are *Students*.

*Facilitator*: Prepare labels like the ones shown that about half the *Students* will draw from a hat each round. Use sticky name labels or provide some way to clip the label to *Students'* clothing. The rest of the *Students* do not draw labels; they politely greet the *Teacher* and comply with any directions.

Optional for *Teachers*: Choose a specific time of year when your *Threshold* is taking place—for example,

- Opening day of the school year—the first time you have ever greeted your students
- First day back from Thanksgiving break
- A sunny day in the beginning of June

1. *Students* stand “outside” the classroom, *Teacher* at the “door.”
2. The *Teacher* initiates *Threshold* greetings with the idea of getting all students into the classroom quickly while at the same time building relationships, enforcing expectations, and setting the tone for the classroom. *Students*: Do *not* act out the role on your sticker. The information on the sticker is about behavior you have shown in the past. Just respond and pass on through.
3. When everyone has had a turn as *Teacher* (or periodically if the group is large), take a few minutes to reflect and take notes. Then debrief:

As *Teacher*:

- What went well for you in creating a *Threshold*? What was particularly challenging? For example, were some of the labels more challenging than others?
- What would you do differently in order to expedite your *Threshold*?
- What did students respond particularly well to?
- How did this prepare you as a teacher to create a classroom with strong academic and behavioral expectations?

As *Students*:

- What did the *Teacher* do that was effective?
- How did you feel when he or she built rapport with you?
- What messages were conveyed to you about the classroom that you were entering?
- What feedback do you have for the *Teacher* that could help him or her improve the *Threshold*?

Your takeaways:

N/A

---



---



---



---



---

## TRY THRESHOLD IN THE CLASSROOM

1. In your next lesson plan, incorporate a note about *Threshold* that can strengthen its usefulness as part of your overall *Entry Routine*.

2. Look over your work in *Threshold* greetings and mentally rehearse:  
Two greetings that relate back to the previous session:

- past work / yesterdays behavior

Two greetings that connect to some activity or expectation for today:

- Reinforcing academic material + Coming next for Quiz/test/etc

3. Are any students likely to slip into the room before you've posted yourself at the door? Will you include them in the greeting and make that less likely to happen next time?

can be possible by going to them once everyone has sat down + check in with them.

## TRUBLE-SHOOT

### Steady On

43 POSITIVE FRAMING  
45 WARM/STRICT

It's best to maintain a consistent positive tone. It can be tempting to greet some students with a smile and positive words and others with subtle verbal or nonverbal chastisements, or not to greet them at all. Are there any individuals you greet less supportively than others? What can you do to maintain a positive tone for everyone in the class?

### Other Challenges

Possible Challenge	Possible Solutions
A student... <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avoids eye contact</li><li>• Responds with a silly greeting</li><li>• Fails to respond to the greeting</li><li>• Offers a greeting that is barely audible</li><li>• Offers a weak handshake</li></ul>	<i>Do It Again.</i> Insist on (and model) desired behavior. Ensure that expectations are known and consistent.

39 DO IT AGAIN