

Lesson 7.2

NOTICING PROBLEMS AND USING STRATEGIES TO SOLVE THEM

Kids can be incredibly observant. There have been many times where I make a small tweak to something in the classroom and completely forget about it, only to have a student immediately notice it upon walking in the next day. In that same way, kids are quick to notice problems. The glue spilled, it's too crowded in the play area, I can't find my jacket. Noticing problems is an important first step. Next, we can build the confidence and skills to not only notice problems, but take action to resolve them.

What Are We Teaching and Why?

Today we're going to learn how we can notice problems around us and think of strategies to help solve them. We can follow the steps of noticing the problem, thinking of ways to try and solve them, and put them into action.



One Way We Might Teach It...

Explicit Instruction with Steps or Strategies

1. **Notice the problem.** The first step we take is to notice when we have or see a problem. Maybe you noticed someone was forgetting to flush the toilet in our class bathroom or you notice that every day you are forgetting to bring your jacket home. Noticing problems is an important skill. Slowing down when we notice a problem helps us make sure we are clear on what the problem is so we can find a solution that matches.
2. **Think of strategies to solve the problem.** Next, we want to think of some ways we could solve the problem.

Solving Problems

① Notice the problem

② Think of strategies

③ Pick a strategy

④ Try it out

For example, with forgetting to flush the toilet, we could tell the teacher, but that wouldn't really be us trying to solve the problem. What are some strategies that you can think of to help solve that problem? Have the students turn and talk and share some of their ideas. Some examples might be:

- Put up a sign by the bathroom door to remind people to flush.
- Talk to the class about why we flush the toilet.
- Have a class job be a bathroom checker.

3. Pick a strategy. Now that we have a few ideas for strategies to help solve our problem, we want to pick one that we feel comfortable trying out. Let's think through some of the options. Talk as a class about which one they think would be a good place to start. Okay, it sounds like we want to start by making a sign.

4. Try your strategy. Now that we've come up with our idea for a strategy, it's time to put it in action. Model making a sign or having kids create a sign for the bathroom.



One Way We Might Practice It Together...

Role Play and Scenarios

Let's try out some new strategies for noticing problems and using strategies to solve them. Read some of the below scenarios (or even better if you create ones from common problems that come up in your own class) and have students turn and talk then share out what strategy they might use:

- It's too noisy in the classroom and hard to focus.
- People are leaving the caps off glue and markers and they're all drying out.
- People are getting into fights during recess.
- People are leaving trash on the floor.



One Way We Might Support Transfer...

Coaching

When you notice kids are coming to you about a problem, you might say something like, *You've already done the first step! You noticed the problem. Now, let's look at the chart and see if we can do the next steps and come up with some strategies to solve the problem together.* Encourage the student to remain in the position of the strategy

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NOTICING PROBLEMS AND USING STRATEGIES TO SOLVE THEM (Cont.)

finder. Use coaching questions like, *What might help?* or *How have you solved problems before?* Could those strategies work here?



REWIND

What to do when you realize teaching another skill first makes sense.



- Naming the Problem
- Ways to Solve Problems



FAST FORWARD

What to do when you want to add in more layers.



- Ways to Know If Your Problem Feels Solved (Lesson 7.3)
- Ways to Think Flexibly (Lesson 5.7)