

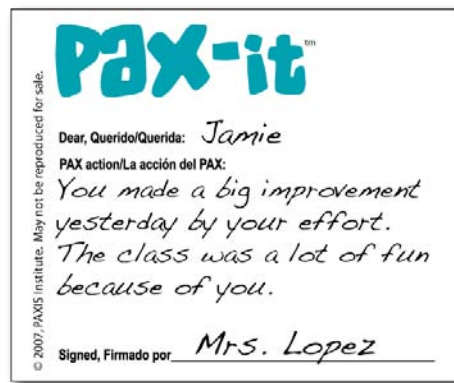
Adult Initiated Random PAX-IT Notes



Figure 7: Introduce spontaneous notes for PAX on student seats or other places

The idea of “random PAX-IT or Tootle Notes” emerged from giving a workshop in the little town in Idaho—a town of about 2,500 and three schools: an elementary, a middle school and a high-school. An 8th-grade teacher, Louise, heard me speak about writing notes of praise for difficulty students. She decided to start with an 8th grader who was basically failing everything, and had a horrible home situation. Apparently, the boy and his disabled mother lived in a decrepit 1950s trailer. They survived on disability payments, and his mother suffered from progressive diabetes that had already resulted in the amputation both her legs. The boy was an outcast and headed big trouble.

Louise struggled to find anything that the boy did as result of any effort. One day, she noticed that he came in with cleaned up shoes, and she left him a sticky note to the effect. He tore up the note. This not stop Louise. She kept finding small things of effort the boy did to write praise on a sticky note. After a few attempts, he stopped tearing them up.



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A few weeks later, there was a big snowstorm in Wendell. The snowplow ran down the street, heaping up a big barrier across her driveway. She could not get out. She was alone, because her

husband had past away. She was about to do her best to clear her drive, though recent illnesses made that unwise. She checked out the window, and there was the boy shoveling out her driveway. She was moved to tears, and so were the school staff when she retold the story.

Soon, the boy made improvements at school, and Louise who taught English sent him up to the principal's office to get praise for his effort on an essay. The principal put the essay in his special display case for students showing good work or improvement. The boy brought up his grades, graduated to the ninth grade and later high school. He came back often to help Louise. Nothing changed at home for the boy, yet he did learn all about PAX that lived in the hearts of others and in his own heart. All this was accomplished by mindfulness of Louise writing praise for effort in sticky notes.

Here is the recipe for creating a buzz about PAX with PAX-IT sticky notes in your own classroom.

In a later chapter, the way of promoting PAX-IT notes by students to each other and adults will be introduced.



Random PAX-IT or Tootle Note Recipe

1. Copy the PAX-IT or Tootle Notes. (Or, you can order specialty ones)
2. Keep some handy in the room or convenient place
3. Notice one child in each class period that made an effort to do something better that period or day.
4. Write a simple note to that child about their effort.
5. Put the note on their desk that day or next day.
6. Repeat each class period if possible.
7. Repeat each day, noticing a different child if possible,
8. Keep this up for a couple of weeks, then thin it down.
9. If students ask, just be very matter of fact that you are noticing actions that increase PAX in people and the class.

PAX-ittm

Give PAX-IT's when somebody does something to promote peace, productivity, health or happiness.

Dear, Querido/Querida:

PAX action/La acción del PAX:

Signed, Firmado por _____

PAX-ittm

Give PAX-IT's when somebody does something to promote peace, productivity, health or happiness.

Dear, Querido/Querida:

PAX action/La acción del PAX:

Signed, Firmado por _____

Basic Simple Gift Recipe

Here are the basic steps for this evidence-based kernel or Simple Gift:

- ⊗ **Make** or purchase pads of PAX-type notes. (Using NCR—no carbon copy type 2-3 duplicates is best).
- ⊗ **Write**, as an adult, three PAX Notes per week...
 - One to an adult in the building who did something good to help you or the school
 - One to some other adult who was helpful to you.
 - One to a child or youth who did something that was good or helpful.
 - Write a note to a child who improved. Often children working on improvement are never notice for their improvement.
 - Write a note to child who was steady. Often children who are steady do not get noticed.
- ⊗ **Give** the original to the recipient.
- ⊗ **Post** one copy on a PAX board in the school for others to see. This will cause others to say something to the recipient.

Share another copy with someone else who might appreciate the positive act, such as the building administrator, a supervisor or a parent. This will increase recognition by folks in the position of supervision or monitoring

Measuring Change

Adult-to-children or adult-to-adult PAX-IT or Tootle Notes do not change behavior permanently overnight. The adult who you write a note to will not likely have a blinding flash of insight and behavior change, and the students will not suddenly change for the better overnight forever.

Such notes produce some quick changes you might miss, though. For example, adults you give them to are a bit more likely to be helpful and friendly, engage in pleasantries with you and even do favors for you.

Children you write notes to are often quicker to change, especially younger children who may start to “fish” for such positive attention. Such “fishing” is actually a good sign, not a bad one. The “fishing” for your attention means that you have perceived safety and respect by the younger child.

Teens you write notes to might reject them at first, but they almost always start to warm up in a bit. They are more likely to be pleasant, great you, maintain eye contact, and respond to your requests.

No, these notes are not like a brain or heart transplant, and it is unwise to assume that a single note will transform others. Rather, it is the pattern of these notes that establishes you as a person who conveys and lives PAX. When that happens, others will alter their behavior toward you and the things you do.

Typically, the studies show significant improvements in behavior in a month or so—about the time that it takes medications to work. And these notes are less expensive and certainly more long lasting—based on common sense and good science.

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Simple Gift 4 - Use PAX Signals for Transitions

The most basic signal in a school is stop, be quiet, and listen to the instruction from teacher or adult. An average teacher will make at least 50 such transition requests per day.

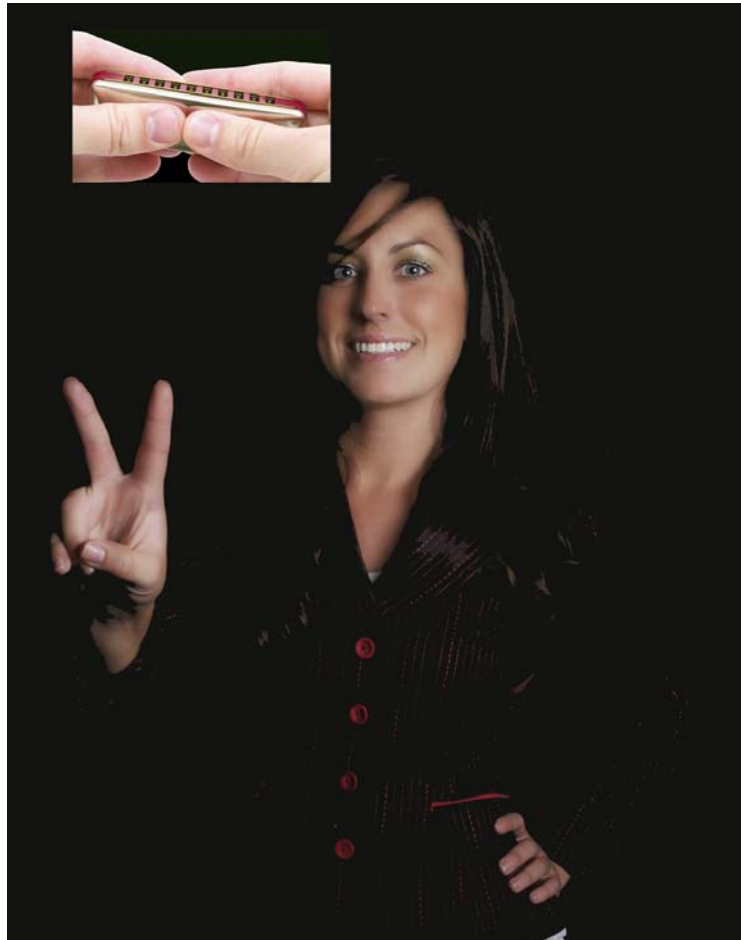
In most schools today those transition requests will take the young people a couple of minutes to do. Often, this annoys the adult, who may then be rather cranky in tone. Some students will then deliberately NOT comply—because they’ve learned a way delay the class and get attention. The adult may become further irritated as important tasks are delayed.

Time is valuable in schools. If each teacher makes 50 transitions and those each take minutes, about 100 minutes per are lost—or 300 hours of instruction for the whole year. Since it is small loss at a time, the enormity of the loss may be missed.

Is this a loss of productivity? Yes. Is there a loss of peace during these transitions? Yes. Is there a collective loss of happiness? Yes. PAX is not present, then during those 300 hours are of non-productive, non-peaceful and non-happy times.

For over 15 years, I have been sharing with teachers a simple gift for increasing PAX during these transitions: a visual signal for quiet and eyes on you and a melodic sound (via a harmonica) to cue to stop and look at the teacher based on where the sound is coming from. The adult quickly praises and recognizes quick response.

In virtually every classroom I’ve been in—including my workshops with teachers and other adults, the effect on PAX is quick. Very soon, transitions take a few seconds. More productivity, peace, happiness and even health happen since folks—especially the adult—is no longer facing 300 hours of raised blood pressure and stress.

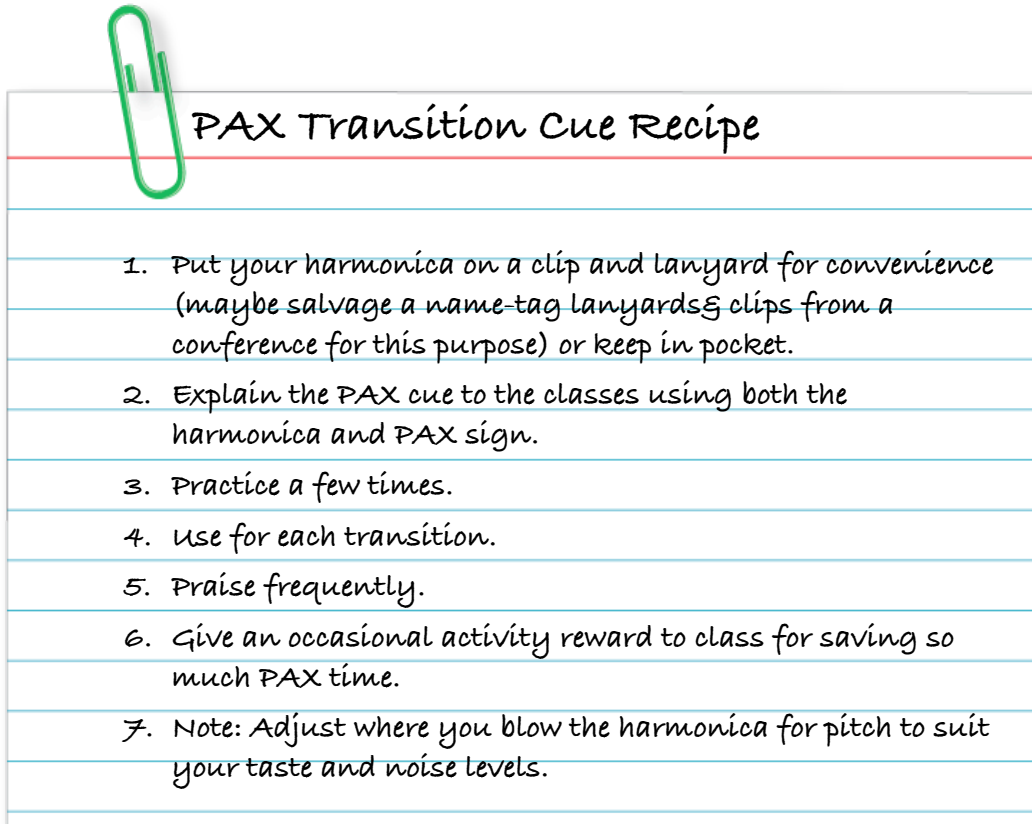


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The fact that adults use this cue will also reduce the perception of teens that the adults are mean, threatening or arbitrary. This means that they will be more likely to comply with instructions, instead of flip off the adults.



PAX Transition Cue Recipe

1. Put your harmonica on a clip and lanyard for convenience (maybe salvage a name-tag lanyards & clips from a conference for this purpose) or keep in pocket.
2. Explain the PAX cue to the classes using both the harmonica and PAX sign.
3. Practice a few times.
4. Use for each transition.
5. Praise frequently.
6. Give an occasional activity reward to class for saving so much PAX time.
7. Note: Adjust where you blow the harmonica for pitch to suit your taste and noise levels.

Extended PAX Transition Cue Recipe

Here are the basic steps for this evidence-based kernel:

- ⊙ **Buy** a harmonica. They are not expensive, about \$6.00 or so. Do not use the very cheap plastic ones, as they make a terrible sound and break.
- ⊙ **Put** a lanyard on it for convenience.
- ⊙ **Practice** blowing it to find the sound that is pleasing to you.
- ⊙ **Teach** students how to respond to the sound and your visual cue (peace or feather sign).
- ⊙ **Use** ever hour for almost all transitions.
- ⊙ **Remember** to give instructions ONLY after students are looking at your mouth, and don't turn your back unless you want students NOT to follow through.
- ⊙ **Praise** quick compliance and follow through.

Measuring Change



You will see reduced disruptive behavior, and decreased time in transitions.

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Simple Gift 5 - Use the Timer to Create PAX Time

Have you ever notice that children and teens do much better playing computer or video games? Children or teens who normally dawdle, fidget, delay or even fail to participate in other activities, riveting attention to a computer game. Why is that?

One of the reasons is the use of “reduced allocated time,” or “beat the timer” in street-language. Reducing the amount of time for task completion tends to increase attention, reduce disruption and increase accuracy and quality of responding in multiple studies. Master teachers know that “beat the timer” is a life-saver in the classroom, and it even helps children or youth overcome their fear of standardized achievement tests that often have reduced time allocations.



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Teachers or others set a timer and challenge students to complete transitions, tasks, quizzes, and even seatwork before the timer goes off. Using the timer helps the students monitor their own behavior and stay focused on the task at hand. Because the timer is set for short amounts of time, the students are able to achieve success and are thus motivated to use it more.

Using “Beat the Timer” reduces accidental attention to negative behavior by the adults and children, and dramatically reduces angry faces, looks and voices that tend to trigger negative behavior or withdrawal among youth who have been exposed to trauma and trouble.

For Beat the Timer to be an effective kernel, the attitude of the adult is key. The adult needs to project to the young people that 1) the timer is fun, 2) a desire to participate in the challenge, and 3) belief in the young people’s capability to rise to the challenge. In maintaining the playful atmosphere, the adult can challenge the young people by suggesting that “no this is too hard, you won’t be able to do it,” but the adult’s body language and tone always suggest positive belief and respect for the young people.

As with any challenge it is important that the teacher set the challenge high enough that it turns on the student’s brain for participation and learning, but not so high that it turns off the brain with a goal that is unreachable.

If Beat the Timer is used in a way where students are not set up to succeed and are criticized for their efforts, or is played in a punitive way, the desired benefits will not be seen.



Beat the Timer Recipe

1. Select an activity the young people do that often involves dawdling.
2. Let the students know you will be timing the activity.
3. Do this a couple of times to learn how long the activity normally takes; this is your baseline.
4. In a playful, "shocked" way, let the students know how long this activity normally takes them and engage them in a challenge.
5. Continue the challenge with a playful doubting response, such as "No, no, I don't think we can. That is too much to get done that fast."
6. As they again reply that yes, they can, then say, "Okay, I will set the timer for _ minutes. Ready. Go."
7. As the students are engaged in the activity, make comments that imply amazement at how quickly and efficiently they are getting things done.
8. Celebrate and provide occasional surprise reward for the group.

Extended Beat-the-Timer Recipe

Here are the basic steps for this evidence-based kernel:

- ⊙ Select an activity the young people do that often involves dawdling or stragglers or nagging occurs.
- ⊙ Let the students know you will be timing how long it takes to complete the activity.
- ⊙ Set the Timer at the start of this activity and note the time when the task is completed. Do this a couple of times to learn how long the activity normally takes; this is your baseline.
- ⊙ In a playful, "shocked" way, let the students know how long this activity normally takes them and engage them in the challenge. "Wow, it takes us 7 minutes to put our papers away and get ready for recess/lunch or whatever. No wonder we are always late for recess. I don't know, getting everything done is hard, but I wonder if we could get done in 5 minutes and get out to recess on time."
- ⊙ Students are likely to reply, "Yes, yes we can."
- ⊙ Continue the challenge with a playful doubting response, such as "No, no, I don't think we can. That is too much to get done that fast."
- ⊙ As they again reply that yes, they can, then say, "Okay, I will set the timer for 5 minutes. Ready. Go."

- ⊗ As the students are engaged in the activity, make comments that imply amazement at how quickly and efficiently they are getting things done.
- ⊗ The students are likely to achieve the challenge.
- ⊗ Celebrate and provide occasional surprise reward for the group (e.g., go out to recess early, etc.)

[Note: Considerable variation exists in timers—ease of use, sound, etc. You may need to try a couple to find one just right for you. Electronic ones offer more flexibility than wind-up ones. A timer, called the Triple Bel Timer, that vibrates, flashes, or dings for use by students with hearing loss can be found at Harris Communications. <http://www.harriscomm.com> A visual timer for students who need a more tangible image of time passing can be found at <http://www.timetimer.com>.]

Measuring Change



With beat the timer, you will be able to see transitions shrink from about 2-5 minutes to seconds. You will see improved cooperation and compliance to instructions. And, you will see more time for instruction with less ADHD and disruptive behavior.

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Simple Gift 6 - Use Random Calling to Create PAX

Have you ever noticed the attention of youth playing a computer game? Chances are, the most difficult student in your classroom will pay attention to computer game like an obsessed zombie. You wish could get this little devil to pay such attention to you the lesson.

Why does your classroom devil, or any student for that matter, pay rapt attention to computer games? One of key reasons is something called “random calling.”

The targets or wins for the game come at random times and places. That “glues” attention.

Attention Biology

All human beings are hardwired to pay attention to random stimuli like this. Some humans—about 30% of population—have one or more genes that make these novel stimuli even more attention grabbing. These the “explorers” and “hunters” in our midst, whose ability to absorb intense novel stimuli gave them evolutionary success. These genes in human follow human migration patterns and are rather recent—only about 10,000 to 40,000 years old. You see, every time your little hunters and explores get one of the random targets on the screen, the win creates a hit in brain of dopamine—the brain’s goal and reward molecule. And, yes scientists like me (well, not *exactly* who have brain scan machines have shown that our little classroom devils get a nice big fat hit of dopamine when they score on those video games. Imagine you could make the classroom as rewarding as video game.

You’ve got “wired” explorers and hunters—mostly boys manifest these genes interacting with testosterone and Y-gene—in your classroom. And you can give them a fix by mimicking random calling with popsicle sticks bought at the art supply store. In workshops, I call this strategy, “Ritalin on a Stick”.

Mimicking the Explorer or Hunters’ Environment

This kernel or simple gift of “Ritalin on a Stick” explicitly uses the scientific studies on random calling by putting the names of all the students in the classroom on separate sticks. Every few minutes, the teacher (or task leader) picks a stick randomly to call on student to answer a



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question, to help or to do something that maintains attention, generates motor behavior and creates a response. Typically, the stick is put back into the container so that might drawn again, randomly at any given time.


Reducing Trauma Symptoms with Sticks

For students exposed to trauma or with internal high stress—which can include highly anxious children, the sticks can help such children overcome the fear of novelty or arousal. Students with these symptoms often become paralyzed when new or stressful events happened in the class. The sticks help heal, shape and desensitize such students to cope with unpredictability in a rather predictable place, your classroom. For many children, the raising of the internalized stress chemicals (from any source) causes more psychiatric disturbances.



Random Calling or PAX Stick Recipe

1. Use sticks supplied or buy them (any size that works for you).
2. Write names of students on sticks, but don't let them decorate sticks).
3. Organize sticks in cups by period.
4. Make sure easily available for teaching.
5. Explain to students how you are going to use sticks, and mention this just like a video game works—randomly and helps make the class more exciting.
6. Use sticks in different ways for types of instruction described in the book.



Extended Recipe

Here are the basic steps for this evidence-based kernel or strategy to create more PAX:

- **Draw** a stick approximately every five minutes for teacher-directed instruction (lectures, demonstrations, etc.) (Generally, put the stick back).
- **Check** for understanding for something just learned with simple factual questions.
- **Request** students to buzz with each other for 30 seconds and make a 10-word summary of the central idea, then call someone to “shrink the main point.”

- **Ask** a synthesis, review or relational question about integrating what was just learned with prior knowledge or lessons.
- **Pose** a request for hypothesis about the implications of this new fact or information.
- **Request** a prediction as to what might happen next in a story, video, or experiment.
- Ⓢ **Countdown** the class for their summary or other more sophisticated point that may involve multiple perspectives, values, connections or insights. With a class countdown, each student is drawn randomly until the cup or container is empty and the last participant answers.
- Ⓢ **Give Lifeline or Come Back** options as needed. Occasionally, a question may be too hard intellectually or emotionally. Using your judgment, give student the option of a lifeline (ask the class or another student) then repeat the answer, or a comeback if it is a matter of being in an emotional state. Come back means that you return to that student in a bit. With the countdown, I pick the first stick, then let that student pick the next stick after participation, and so forth. It enhances the perceived fairness.
- Ⓢ **Rehearse** with shy or developmentally delayed children the stick procedure. Practice in a small group, perhaps with you taking turns drawing a stick with just two sticks—yourself and the child, playing some game like tic-tac-toe. Then, try a verbal game. You might also try having the child be your assistant, as the PAX Stix drawer. Shy or developmental delayed children need to have practice with public verbal behavior to succeed better in school academically and socially.
- Ⓢ **Pick** a stick for students to help you with tasks.
- Ⓢ **Use** the sticks anytime the class gets a bit wobbly.
- Ⓢ **(Optional) Transport** sticks with your class when going to other parts of the building or different settings.

Measuring Change



The effects of using random calling sticks can be easily perceived. First, there will be more equality in participation. Second, more attention will be paid to the lesson. Third, there will be less hot-dogging by some students. Fourth, you will find your classroom is less disruptive. Fifth, quality of learning will increase a bit.

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