

A Protocol for Teaching the Signal for Silence

Maintaining focus in the classroom

Establishing an easily recognizable attention signal is essential on the first day of school. This signal should be used to indicate your need for all students to stop and wait to receive directions from you. Because activities of the classroom take many forms, the signal for silence should also have two forms. A visual signal coupled with an audible signal ensures that all students will be aware that attention is needed.

Introducing the Signal for Silence

Explain to students that a signal is necessary to get the class's attention for directions and announcements. Tell the students that you will hold your hand in the air as the signal for all noise to stop and all eyes to be on you. Students are also to raise their hands as they see your hand in the air. Raise your hand as the example, but do not speak again until you lower your hand. Wait for all students to become quiet and raise their hands. Explain that this signal will be used when all students are looking in the teacher's direction. Now, explain that there will be times that the students may not be looking in the teacher's direction. In this case, you are going to use a verbal cue followed by the signal. Explain that you are going to slowly count down from three, and when you reach '0', your hand will go up.

- ***It is imperative that you not speak while your hand is in the air. If you need to speak to the class or to a particular student, lower your hand, and then speak. Put your hand back in the air to show the signal for silence again.***
- ***In the beginning, you will wait for all students to raise their hands, but as time goes by, not all students will need to raise their hands...some will always do it and some won't...remember that the goal is silence, not a hand being raised.***

ACTIVITY

Explain to students that they are going to learn the signal for silence through two activities.

- Activity One...explain that on your command, the students are to begin talking about what they did over the summer (everyone will be talking at once)...they are to just talk out loud for about 30 seconds and not to anyone in particular...tell them you are going to give the signal for silence



at some point during their talk...your hand will go up, and as they see it, they will get quiet and raise their hands...check in with a thumbs up and ask someone to explain what is about to happen...begin. Check in with the class to see how you did. Could it have been better? How?

- Activity Two...explain that this activity will take place in small groups...have the students quickly get with two to three other students next to them (no moving across the room or shopping for friends)...tell them that on your command, they are to form smaller circles with their group and discuss what they hope to accomplish this school year (grades, joining teams/clubs, friends, etc.)...explain that you are going to use the verbal cue this time before you give the signal for silence as some students will be unable to see the teacher in their circles...have a student check in with the directions...begin. Check in with the class to see how you did. Could it have been better? How?

