



A Signal to Return to Attention

By Marilyn Winter

Unwanted classroom behavior often develops because students do not know what is expected of them. Classroom procedures and protocol need to be taught just as you teach academic concepts. We, as teachers, need to teach, practice, reteach if necessary, and reinforce expected classroom behaviors. Telling is not enough. One of the essential components of movement activities with children is the establishment of a signal to return to attention. The following lesson plan is one way of teaching that skill.

Possible teacher signals:

- **Raise one hand.** Encourage the students to raise one hand, also. If some are not facing you, they will see other's hands and come to attention.
- **Raise your hand and count 5,4,3,2,1.** When you reach 1 the students should be quiet, facing you. The advantage of speaking is that those not facing you can hear the signal.
- **Display the hand signs and sing a descending scale. SO, FA, MI, RE, DO.** As the students hear or see the signal they can join in singing. Advantage, the singing voice is more readily heard over speaking and the scale is practiced over and over.
- **A bell or other classroom instrument may be sounded.** Disadvantage, you may not always have the instrument within reach.

Lesson Plan

Objective

When the signal is displayed, students will stop what they are doing and come to attention.

Rationale

Time to explore and create in small groups within the class setting is important.

For the class to operate without chaos, students must know when to start and when to stop activities.

Anticipatory Set

- *When you hear the word 'signal' what comes to your mind?*
- *What kinds of signals do we find in our daily lives?*
- *What do those signals mean?*

Share Objective

When we do movement activities in groups, it is important for you to know when to return to attention. Then we can share what we have learned and listen for instructions.

Input

This is our signal for coming to attention. (Display the signal)

When the signal is given, stop what you are doing, discontinue talking and face me.

Check for Understanding

Show the signal for stopping.

Show what you will do when the signal is given.

Continued Practice

Challenge students to come to attention in successively less amounts of time. *That took ten seconds, can come to attention in five seconds? Oh, shall we go for 2 seconds?* Divide the class into teams and see which team can come to attention in the least amount of time. Classroom competition should be friendly and brief. Give individual students turns to signal the stop. Give individual students turns to check the time required for coming to attention.

Evaluation

Teacher observation: As the above activities are accomplished, watch to see if each student understands when to stop and where to place the recorder. Student self-evaluation: *"This time watch the clock. See how long it takes you to come to attention."* After the timing, *"If you were under three seconds give yourself 50 extra points for the day."*

Student Descriptions

Divide the class in half. One half watches the other and describes what they notice. An important rule is that names cannot be used in the description. For example: *"I noticed 16 people who came to attention within five seconds after the signal started."* *"I noticed that one person continued to talk for 10 seconds."*