

Nonverbal Signals

OBJECTIVE: To decide on some nonverbal signals to use in the classroom

NOTES

- *There are no nonverbal signals that have universal meaning. As you introduce and decide on nonverbal signals to be used in the classroom, it's important to be sensitive to your students' responses, which may be influenced by their cultural background. For further information, see *Do's and Taboos Around the World*, edited by Roger E. Axtell, a Benjamin Book published in 1993 by John Wiley and Sons, Inc.*
- *Begin to use nonverbal signals during the school day, so that they will become an established part of your classroom management. It is particularly helpful when children can be aware of a need for others to quiet down and can initiate the signals themselves.*

REVIEW

Share with students when you have observed good school listening looks, and compliment their use of the skill. Ask several students to share their families' rules for listening.

INTRODUCE

Place your fingers to your lips in the "sh" position and ask students what they think this signal means. (Be quiet.) Tell them that this is a **nonverbal signal**. A nonverbal signal is a way of communicating without words. Ask them if they can think of any other common nonverbal signals that they use at school. (*Time out, speak up, etc.*)

Ask students why it might be helpful to have some nonverbal signals that everyone agrees to and is clear about instead of using words. Agree on three or four nonverbal signals that might be helpful in the classroom.

PRACTICE/APPLY

Tell students that there are times when you will need to get their attention quickly. Ask students to think of a way that you might be able to do that without using words. (*Turn the lights on and off, clap your hands, make a "sh" sign, close the door, ring a bell, etc.*) Ask students which signal might be most effective. Tell students that you would like to practice to see if the signal is going to work. Ask them to whisper loudly to others in the circle, and at some point you will try out the signal. Congratulate students for responding to the signal. Try it again, this time asking students to fidget in their seats. Congratulate students for responding quickly.

Ask students if there are times when they have the same idea as someone who has been called on to share his/her idea. Ask students to raise their hands if they sometimes find it hard to wait to share their ideas. Have students decide on a nonverbal signal they can use when this happens. After they decide on a nonverbal signal, have them role-play how it might work.

Ask students if they can think of a time when the class was unruly or too noisy or not listening. Ask students how the class became calm again. Ask students what would happen if they were very noisy and you just stood there and yelled at them, saying, "Stop that!" Help students work together to agree on a nonverbal signal to bring the class back into control. Tell students that when things are getting out of control, you will stop what you are doing and use the signal that they have all agreed upon and practiced.

HOMEWORK/EXTEND

Ask each student to draw one picture of a nonverbal signal and to label it. Or, they can cut out a picture of a nonverbal signal from a magazine, paste it on a sheet of paper, and label it. (*Additional ideas for nonverbal signals can be taken from American Sign Language.*)

Make and display a visual of the nonverbal signals the class agreed on.

Take photos of students using the nonverbal signals the class agreed on, label them, and display them in the classroom.

LITERATURE CONNECTIONS

Millman, Isaac. *Moses Goes to School*. Frances Foster Books, 2000.

Moses and his friends are children with hearing losses, so they communicate with American Sign Language. (*If necessary, point out that ASL is a language of hand signals that stand for words and ideas.*)

Discussion Prompts: How do Moses and his friends communicate with each other? What is the signal that Mr. Samuels uses to greet children in his classroom? Find other examples of nonverbal signals in the book. What are some nonverbal signals that you use? Name other people who use nonverbal signals, and demonstrate some of the signals they use. (*Examples: an orchestra conductor, a baseball umpire, people who direct traffic.*)

SUPPLEMENTARY LESSONS

The following supplementary lessons can be used after this lesson:

Signaling the Teacher

Nonverbal Signal for "Out of Control"

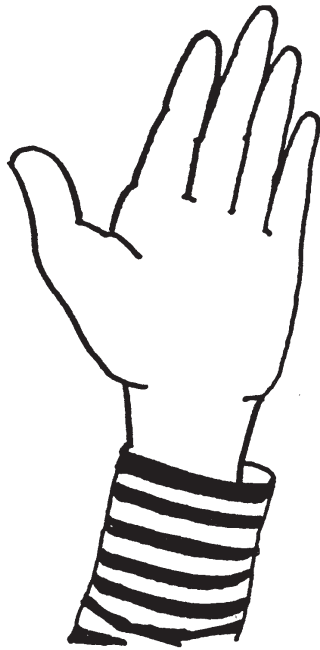
Nonverbal Signal

A way of communicating
without words

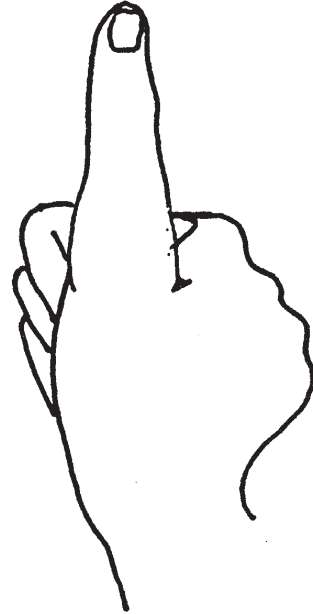


Nonverbal Signals

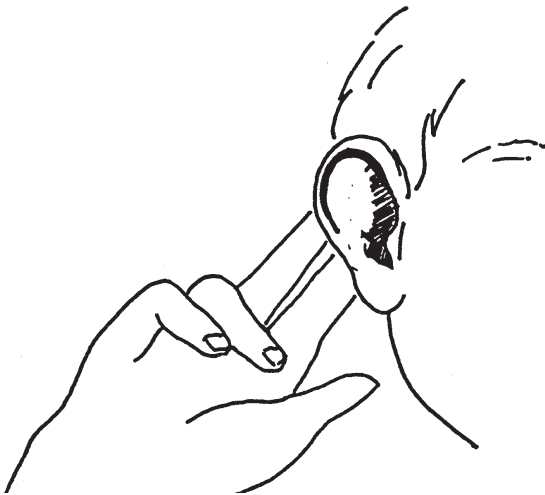
CALL ON ME



GOOD EFFORT



SAY IT LOUDER



BE QUIET

