

Small Steps, Big Gains

Effective Use of Attention Signals

Chapter 1

Understanding the Context

At first, effective use of responsive attention signals is not as easily done as it appears. What most teachers miss are the necessary nuances as well as the intentional and strategic use of responsive attention signals. Without considering these important subtleties in or during lesson planning, the desired outcome—increased student engagement—will remain elusive. Remember, small steps can produce big gains. In this chapter, you will discover a set of readiness questions and a checklist to determine your willingness and ability to use Call and Response attention signals. Under each readiness question are suggestions or things to think about for moving forward and possible hindrances that may keep you stagnate. Following the readiness questions is a list of successfully used attention signals put in the appropriate methodologies. Finally, the chapter ends with a post survey for your reflection.

Considering the Research

Current research supports the use of Call and Response attention signals as an effective method for utilizing culturally responsive teaching techniques in the classroom. The following studies represent a sample of relevant research supporting the use of Call and Response attention signals to enhance classroom management techniques and to create a culturally responsive classroom.

- ▶ The advantages of Call and Response have been linked to neuroscience and learning process in three ways: attention activation, firing and wiring, and mirroring neurons (Hammond 2013).
- ▶ Call and Response has been shown to improve literacy and language skills (Foster 2001).
- ▶ Call and Response is connected to teachers demonstrating that they know who their students are (Toney and Rodgers 2011).

Pre-Reading Assessment

Before reading this chapter, survey your use of attention signals using the chart in Figure 1.1. As you rate yourself, begin the reflective process. Ask yourself:

- ▶ Do I understand why attention signals are important for my classroom management?
- ▶ Do I believe that some students may respond better if I use them more effectively?

Figure 1.1 Effective Uses of Attention Signals Survey: Before Infusing the CLR Principles

| | 0 Never Emerging | 1 Rarely Splashing | 2 Sometimes Floating | 3 Mostly Kicking | 4 Always Free Styling |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I use responsive attention signals | | | | | |
| consistently and strategically. | | | | | |
| for clarification/ further instruction. | | | | | |
| for transitioning. | | | | | |
| for ending the lesson. | | | | | |
| for other purposes: praising, shout-outs, check-ins. | | | | | |

Beginning the Reflective Process

Learning happens when we reflect upon what we have experienced. “Critical learning *generates* learning (articulating questions, confronting bias, examining causality, contrasting theory with practice, pointing to systemic issues), *deepens* learning (challenging simplistic conclusions, inviting alternative perspectives, asking ‘why’ iteratively), and *documents* learning (producing tangible expressions of new understandings for evaluation)” (Ash, Clayton, and Moses 2009a, 2009b, 27). So, are you ready to respond and use attention signals in your classroom?

Use the following checklist to gauge your readiness and ability to effectively integrate attention signals into your teaching. Each item represents an important aspect of understanding and using attention signals in a culturally responsive classroom. After completing the checklist, read the detailed descriptions of each item and reflect on how you plan to implement or increase your use of responsive attention signals in the classroom.

The Use of Attention Signals Reflection Checklist

- ☐ Yes ☐ No **Item 1:** Do I know the technical definition and the purpose of an attention signal?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No **Item 2:** Do I have something that is worthy and meaningful to bring students back into focus?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No **Item 3:** Do I use the attention signals for instructional value and not for classroom management purposes only?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No **Item 4:** Do I acknowledge that responsive attention signals are not just about getting students quiet?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No **Item 5:** Do I have at least one signal in each of the instructional range categories (traditional, responsive, culturally responsive)?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No **Item 6:** Do I have a Stop on a Dime signal for classroom management purposes that I have procedurally contrasted from the other attention signals?

Item 1: Do I know the technical definition and the purpose of an attention signal?

An *attention signal* is an agreed upon verbal or non-verbal cue used to bring the students back to focus when they are engaged. A special emphasis is placed on the word engaged as opposed to when they are sleeping, when they are working individually, or when they are off-task. The definition of an attention signal cannot be assumed or taken for granted, especially from a classroom management perspective. Unfortunately, many teachers miss the importance of the attention signal and do not realize that the skill of using an attention signal is a small step that can yield huge results. These cues are only to be used during three specific contexts:

- ▶ To clarify directions already given or to give further direct instruction
- ▶ To transition during the lesson from step one to step two and so on
- ▶ To bring the lesson, activity, or class time to a close

Understanding the definition and purpose of the attention signal should assist in its strategic and frequent use—increasing student engagement, and decreasing classroom management issues.

Reflective Thought: Break down your current use (purpose) of attention signals by percentage (numbers must add up to 100 percent):

Clarifications _____ Transitions _____ Terminations _____ Other _____



Thought-Provokers: A Mindset for Moving Forward

- 1 Attention signals are conceptually social cues. I value using them to give students the opportunity to learn a necessary life skill for success in the world beyond the classroom.
- 2 I value validating and affirming students' culture by using Call and Response cues. Call and Response is a cultural norm for many cultures with deep relevance. Call and Response is defined as the mandated response to a call in a social or cultural setting, like in church where *amen* can be said anytime during the service as an affirmation.

Engagement exists when students and the teacher equally feel the need for a cue to come together and refocus.



Thought-Blockers: A Mindset for Staying Stagnant

- 1 I use the responsive attention signals when my students are *not* engaged, expecting them to work successfully. I do not believe that engaged students respond best to attention signals.
- 2 I do not believe that students need to be validated and affirmed culturally with Call and Response. I believe that students are in school to comply with the school's cultural norms.

Item 2: Do I have something that is worthy and meaningful to bring students back into focus?

Over time, students lose confidence in “what comes next” if the teacher repeatedly brings them back to focus without a good reason. Students assume the attitude of *why should we focus for nothing* compared to *we are not being focused* or *we are being off-task*. The teacher blames the students for the latter, which becomes a classroom management issue.

Three Reasons to Use Responsive Signals:

- To clarify directions already given or to give further direct instruction
- To transition during the lesson from step one, to step two, and so on
- To bring the lesson, activity, or class time to a close

Reflective Thought: Remember a time when you brought your class back to order for no “good” reason. How did the students respond?



Thought-Provokers: A Mindset for Moving Forward

- 1 I check the validity of my reason to bring the students back together.
- 2 I remind myself of the three reasons to use responsive attention signals, and I hold myself to those.



Thought-Blockers: A Mindset for Staying Stagnant

- 1 I believe that students should come to focus regardless of the reason.
- 2 I do not consider it instructionally valuable to strategically plan for use of the responsive attention signals.

Item 3: Do I use the attention signals for instructional value and not for classroom management purposes only?

When using responsive attention signals, there should not be an expectation that the students will be completely quiet all at once and at a given moment. The purpose of the attention signal is the acknowledgement that the students will eventually quiet down but not instantly. Waiting for all the students to be quiet at once defeats the purpose. If done correctly and with student buy-in, once you start redirecting or giving the instruction, all should quiet down, within three to five seconds. If you want all the students totally quiet at once, then use your Stop on a Dime or traditional attention signal.

Reflective Thought: Which of the following classroom management schools of thought would you be more likely to subscribe to using attention signals for instructional value?

- A. Authoritarian: Teacher is an authority figure, is in control, and bases discipline around stimulus-consequence.
- B. Permissive: Not based on stimulus-consequence model; students are given more autonomy.
- C. Collaborative: Teacher facilitates a process for management in collaboration with students; students have more choice and freedom.

Note: The collaborative classroom management school of thought supports CLR.



Thought-Provokers: A Mindset for Moving Forward

- 1 I trust using attention signals will add instructional value and positively add a layer to my classroom management. I ask myself, “When do I want my students to be totally quiet? When I am okay with a little noise?”
- 2 I acknowledge that it teaches me patience, which is key not only in cultural responsiveness but also in effective classroom management.
- 3 I find myself “managing less” over time and assuming more energy for instruction.



Thought-Blockers: A Mindset for Staying Stagnant

- 1 I instruct by managing, while responsiveness calls for collaboration.
- 2 I am impatient. I want it quiet now.

Item 4: Do I acknowledge that responsive attention signals are not just about getting students quiet?

The use of responsive attention signals goes far beyond quietness and your students simply listening to you. They signal community, harmony, vibe, energy, rhythm, and unity. They signal meaningfulness for those cultures that depend on Call and Response for connecting (validation and affirmation). They signal that you are with your students and your students are with you.

Reflective Thought: How would you rate the importance of Call and Response in your home (ethnic) culture?

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| A. Very important | B. Important |
| C. Not so important | D. Not important at all |



Thought-Provokers: A Mindset for Moving Forward

- 1 Ask yourself, “What do I believe about the culture and the community of my students?”
- 2 Check your filter by asking yourself, “What has informed me to make me believe that way?” Make sure that you are listening to your deficit monitor, which should signal whether you are looking through a negative lens or a cultural lens.



Thought-Blockers: A Mindset for Staying Stagnant

- 1 I do not believe that Call and Response is connected to culture and community.
- 2 I do not believe that there is a link between Call and Response and validation and affirmation, mental stimulation, and lifted energy in the room and student success.

Item 5: Do I have at least one signal in each of the instructional range categories?

The Introduction, explained the three general methodologies that are prescribed for all instruction: traditional, responsive, and culturally responsive. Remember that having instruction in all three categories is what makes you culturally responsive. The point here is that you have at least one attention signal in each category and that you use them interchangeably.

To just use your traditional attention signal, such as give me five, over and over will bore the students (and you). However, the same is true for your culturally responsive signal, such as Whoop!/Dere it is! (page 33) To be engaging, you must change it up.

Reflective Thought: Create a list of signals for each category here:

- Traditional
- Responsive
- Culturally Responsive



Thought-Provokers: A Mindset for Moving Forward

- 1 I see the advantage in variety. I not only believe that it is important to have different signals, but I also believe it is important that students understand the differences between them and why I am using one type of signal versus another.
- 2 I allow my students to make suggestions and contributions, and I change up my signals regularly. Once I have a set of successful signals, I rotate them every month or so.



Thought-Blockers: A Mindset for Staying Stagnant

- 1 I have one or two signals that work, and use those exclusively each time.
- 2 I expect every signal to work every time because they have worked in the past. I am not willing to step out of my comfort zone and try new signals.

Item 6: Do I have a Stop on a Dime signal for classroom management purposes that I have procedurally contrasted from the other attention signals?

When all else fails, you can always use your Stop on a Dime signal. A Stop on a Dime signal is when the students know to come to complete quiet. What is key is that the students understand that your Stop on a Dime signal is for urgent times and when you need it absolutely quiet for whatever reason.

Reflective Thought: What are some of your Stop on a Dime signals?



Thought-Provoker: A Mindset for Moving Forward

- 1 Before I deem responsive attention signals ineffective, I acknowledge that I use some type of attention signal and assess whether it is working.
- 2 I acknowledge that responsive attention signals are different from Stop on a Dime signals.



Thought-Blocker: A Mindset for Staying Stagnant

- 1 I simply do not have a Stop on a Dime signal, or I have used it in place of an attention signal.
- 2 I am using one signal for all signals. As a result, I am missing an opportunity to teach social cues and situational appropriateness.

Summary

Regardless if you checked all six items in The Use of Attention Signals Reflection Checklist on page 26, the biggest challenge for most teachers is not having attention signals at all. Remember that our formula for infusing CLR into your teaching is Quantity + Quality + Strategy. The first step to successful attention signals is to have enough choices (Quantity) to work with at the onset. The second step is Quality. This step is the fine-tuning process, and it takes time, practice, and patience. Like teaching in general, it is trial and error initially. The last step is Strategy. This step takes place when you are able to strategically use an attention signal with a specific purpose for an instructional advantage for your students. The Use of Attention Signals Reflection Checklist acts as a guideline for implementing Quality and Strategy. What follows is the Quantity, a sampling of successful attention signals from classrooms all over the United States. This list is a combination of responsive and culturally responsive signals. As you are reading through the following list, mark the ones that are culturally responsive with a C. Another important consideration is the purpose of the signal. The signal should tell the students what exact behavior or next action is expected. Looking at it this way keeps the attention signals from being random or without intention.

Top 50 Call and Response Attention Signals

The following example illustrates how to use an attention signal to refocus the students' attention on the teacher after a discussion or activity.

Example: When I say listen, you say up

Teacher: When I say 'listen,' you say 'up.' Listen

Students: up!

Teacher: Listen

Students: up!

No asterisk = Come to quiet, show praise or agreement, fun

* = Ending the lesson or activity

** = Transitioning

*** = Beginning the lesson

**** = Focusing

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 When I say listen, you say up**** | 17 When I say _____/ You say _____ | 34 I got that boom boom/ Pow |
| 2 Time for/Lunch* | 18 Let's get it started/In here*** | 35 Yeah buddy/Rollin' like a big shot |
| 3 Time to/End* | 19 Learn it up kids/I'm about to; Learn it up kids/'Cause that's what I was born to do | 36 Whoop!/Dere it is! |
| 4 A little bit softer now/ Shout; A little bit louder now/Shout** | 20 Bring it back now/I'll show you how*** | 37 It's gettin'/Smart in here |
| 5 Do your work/I know (To the tune of "You're a Jerk" by New Boyz)*** | 21 What's/Up? **** | 38 You know you're a firework/We make 'em go aye, aye, aye |
| 6 Teach me how to/Teach me how to multiply (To the tune of "Teach Me How to Dougie" by Cali Swag District) | 22 Chicka-Chicka/Boom-Boom | 39 1, 2, 3, eyes on me/4, 3, 2, looking at you* |
| 7 Are you ready/Yes I'm ready, to learn*** | 23 When I say holla/You say back | 40 Math is/Cash |
| 8 Se puede/Si, se puede | 24 You are smart/And we know it; You are smart/ So let's show it*** | 41 Take it to the bank/ Cha-ching |
| 9 Hocus/Pocus, Everybody focus**** | 25 When I move you move/ Just like that** | 42 Readers are/Leaders |
| 10 Macaroni and cheese/ Everybody freeze**** | 26 Tell me when to go/Go, go, go, go** | 43 Do your best and/Forget the rest |
| 11 Hawthorne (school name)/Eagles (mascot) | 27 I like to move it, move it/ Move it** | 44 The more you do/The better you get |
| 12 My turn/Your turn** | 28 Bottoms up, bottoms up/ Get your bottoms up** | 45 Can I get whoop, whoop?/Whoop, whoop! |
| 13 Peace/Quiet; Clapping/ Clap back**** | 29 Get up, stand up/Stand up for your rights** | 46 If you can hear me clap once...clap twice...**** |
| 14 R.E.S.P.E.C.T./Find out what it means to me, Shhh! | 30 Lean wit it/Rock wit it | 47 Call me/Maybe; Call me/ Maybe |
| 15 Aye go/Aye may | 31 Aloha!/Aloha!**** | 48 Red Robin (or any restaurant)/Yum |
| 16 The title of a book/ Repeat or complete the title | 32 Don't just stand there/ Bust a move** | 49 Power to the/People |
| | 33 It's like that/And that's the way it is | 50 Who's got it better than us?/Nobody |

The list goes on. If you have a successful responsive signal, post it on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CulturallyResponsive.

Now that you have your quantity of attention signals, create your instructional range. Use Figure 1.2 to add in your signals. Aim for at least three in each category. I gave you one to start, so you will have a total of at least four.

Figure 1.2 Creating Instructional Range with Attention Signals

| Traditional | Responsive | Culturally Responsive |
|---|--------------------|---|
| High Five | School name/Mascot | When I say peace, you say quiet (with rhythm) |
| Add Stop on a Dime Signals Here: | | |
| | | |

Other Uses for Call and Response

Once you have mastered the use of attention signals in general, you can begin Free Styling. Free Styling shows how CLR can be applied beyond its original parameters. There are many teachers who Free Style. However, Free Styling is only recommended after you have conquered the Strategy component of the CLR formula. Here are three other possible uses:

1 Check-Ins For Understandings/Active Listening

There are times when you want to know that your students are with you in the lesson. Instead of asking the traditional, “Do you understand?” you can now use Call and Response. For example, say, “Are you with me? Let me hear you say, I got it!” “If you understand, thumbs up, thumbs down if you do not understand.” “Tell your face that you understand by making an expression that shows you understand or by making an expression that you do not understand.”

2 Praise and Affirmations

These are best used for whole group praising when students have been exceptionally well-behaved or working hard. Examples include:

- ▶ Throw your hands in the air and wave them like you just don't care
- ▶ Give me a high five from afar
- ▶ Pat yourself on the back
- ▶ Tell your neighbor, "Great job!" or "You are awesome!"
- ▶ Show yourself some love

3 Rallying or Pumping It Up

Sometimes the energy is low in the room or you need to get the juices flowing before the lesson starts. Call and Responses work well for these moments, too. Calls like:

- ▶ Are you ready to throw down?/Yes we are!
- ▶ Let's get it started/In here
- ▶ When I say ready, you say let's go

Chapter Exercises

These scenarios and exercises assist you in processing, practicing, and applying the concepts for the chapter.

“I Am” Call and Response

The class is working in cooperative groups to complete an assignment. While working with one group, the teacher believes she hears adult voices rising outside of the classroom. The teacher assertively calls out, “I am!” The students respond, “Ready!” and immediately get quiet. Their eyes find the teacher and wait for further direction. During the silence, the teacher is able to assess the situation with the rising voices outside of the classroom in order to determine the actions that need to be taken.

The Call and Response protocol employed by the teacher was used:

- a. to clarify directions already given.
- b. to give further directions.
- c. to transition during the lesson.
- d. as a Stop on a Dime attention signal.

Answer: d. as a Stop on a Dime attention signal.

This teacher’s Stop on a Dime attention signal is a much-abbreviated version of a Call and Response attention signal used during instruction. When the teacher assertively calls out “I am” just once as opposed to repeating it two or three times, her students understand the difference and immediately respond, “Ready!” They come to attention because they understand that there will be no second call. They understand that they need to get quiet to allow the teacher time to assess the situation, and their eyes need to find the teacher to wait for further directions.

Classroom Applications

Think about your own classroom and teaching practices. Use the following prompts to reflect on your past experiences, and consider how you can effectively use a Stop on a Dime attention signal with your students.

- 1 List some situations in the past where you needed to immediately call the students’ attention. What did you try in those situations? Was that use of a Stop on a Dime attention signal appropriate in those situations?

- 2 Choose a Stop on a Dime attention signal you would like to use in your classroom. Describe how you plan to implement the use of this signal with your students.

Sample Lesson—Introducing an Attention Signal

Attention signals can only be used successfully if they are taught well and used appropriately. Before attempting to use an attention signal for an instructional purpose, be sure to take the time to deliberately introduce the attention signal to the class and practice the desired response. The following lesson provides one method for introducing a Stop on a Dime attention signal.

Procedure

- 1 Before beginning the lesson, choose a Call and Response that you plan to use as your Stop on a Dime attention signal. Since the students need to respond to the signal immediately, the Call and Response should not involve multiple repetitions. You may also want to choose an attention signal that reminds students to stop moving as they focus their attention on the teacher.
- 2 Say, “There are times when I need your attention immediately, such as when a fire alarm goes off, when the principal needs to make an announcement, or when the daily news is being announced over the loudspeaker. I am going to use the ‘Macaroni and cheese/ Everybody freeze!’ signal to let you know when I need your attention immediately. Let’s practice what that would look and sound like. When I say ‘Macaroni and cheese’ you immediately stop what you are doing, freeze your body, turn your eyes to me, and reply ‘Everybody freeze!’ Now, let’s try it.”
- 3 Practice calling the attention signal and having the students respond several times. If students get distracted or begin to lose focus, remind them about the importance of the Stop on a Dime signal and reinforce your expectations that they immediately give you their full attention when they hear it.
- 4 Role-play different scenarios from the situations when you might use the Stop on a Dime attention signal with the class. For instance, have students move around the room and converse with each other. Imitate the sound of the fire alarm going off and practice using the attention signal to get the students’ attention.
- 5 Throughout the rest of the day, practice using the attention signal to call the students’ attention at random times. Once they have mastered the designated Call and Response, only use the Stop on a Dime when it is imperative to get the students’ complete attention immediately.

Ineffective Use of Attention Signals

A middle school teacher is conducting a lesson. While the content has the potential to be the basis of a great lesson, the teacher’s delivery of the content does not have the students’ attention, or buy-in. On the other hand, the students are very interested in their own personal conversations.

Determined to make it to the end of the lesson, the teacher presses forward as planned. Throughout the lesson, the teacher uses a variety of attention signals to bring the students back to focus. The teacher rings a bell to quiet students down, uses a rain stick to signal that they are talking too loudly, and even uses a variety of Call and Responses. The lesson comes to a close, the class period is over, and the students move on to their next class.

In this scenario, the teacher *did not* use attention signals:

- a. to stop students from engaging in off-task behavior.
- b. to encourage students to pay attention during the delivery of the lesson's content.
- c. to have the students engage in instructional activities designed to help them access the content.
- d. to “get the kids quiet.”

Answer: c. to have the students engage in instructional activities designed to help them access the content.

The teacher receives kudos for using both responsive (use of the rain stick) and culturally responsive (use of Call and Response) attention signals (see list on page 33) in addition to the more traditional one (ringing the bell). The use of attention signals in this scenario does, however, demonstrate a misunderstanding of how to strategically use these pedagogical tools. As answers a, b, and d suggest, the attention signals were being used as classroom management tools. This is not their intended use and can lead to overuse of the protocols. Attention signals can be effectively used when students are working in collaboration or in discussion (Hollie 2012); both of these could have helped increase the students' engagement with the lesson.

Classroom Applications

Think about your own classroom and teaching practices. Use the following prompts to reflect on how you have used attention signals in the past and the types of changes you would like to make in your classroom.

- 1 Reflect on a lesson that did not go as planned. What strategies did you use to refocus the students' attention? Were they effective? Why?

- 2 If you were the teacher in the example above, what could you have done in order to avoid the overuse of the attention signal protocol?

Sample Lesson—Using Attention Signals to Increase Collaboration

The following lesson demonstrates how a teacher can use attention signals as an effective tool to engage students in instructional material. In this lesson, the teacher uses the “The more you do/ The better you get” attention signal to facilitate collaborative group learning and transitions.

Procedure

- 1 Before beginning the lesson, select an array of instructional artifacts related to a current area of study, such as the Great Depression. For example, artifacts related to the Great Depression might include newspaper articles, photographs, postcards, and letters. Divide the artifacts into four groups and place them at centers around the classroom.
- 2 Separate students into four groups. Assign each group to one of the artifact centers, such as reviewing primary sources.
- 3 Say, “I am going to use a Call and Response signal to let you know when it is time to rotate artifact centers. When I say ‘The more you do,’ you reply ‘The better you get!’ When you hear the attention signal, you will have 30 seconds to finish what you are doing. After 30 seconds, I will repeat the signal, and you will need to have your complete attention on me. I will know that I have your attention when your eyes are on me, your hands are folded on your desk, and your mouth is quiet. When I have everyone’s attention, I will tell you how we are going to rotate to the next center.”
- 4 Practice calling the attention signal and having the students respond several times.
- 5 Have students examine the artifacts in their groups. Ask the class before small-group discussions begin, “How are the artifacts related to each other? How do they relate to the concepts we have been studying?” If appropriate, provide students with a graphic organizer, so they can take notes on the various artifacts at each station.
- 6 After the allotted amount of time, use the attention signal to notify students that it is time to rotate centers. Direct them in how to move to the next artifact center.
- 7 Instruct students to repeat the process of examining and discussing the artifacts at the new center.
- 8 Continue rotating until all four groups have been to all of the artifact centers.
- 9 Ask students to return to their seats. Have volunteers share their ideas and notes about the artifacts with the rest of the class. Discuss the similarities and differences between the groups of artifacts.

Math Lesson

Students are engaged in a math lesson in which they are learning how to use multiplication to evaluate exponential expressions. The teacher observes several students who have confused the meaning of the exponent when using multiplication to calculate the value of exponential expressions.

For example, students were computing 3^3 as (3×3) instead of $(3 \times 3 \times 3)$ and 5^3 as (5×3) instead of $(5 \times 5 \times 5)$. The teacher should use an attention signal to:

- a. clarify directions already given to the students
- b. give further directions
- c. transition from one step to another during the lesson
- d. close out the lesson and prepare to transition into another activity

Answer: Although all of these are valid reasons to use attention signals in a lesson, the answer is: **a.** clarify directions already given to the students.

Classroom Applications

Think about your own classroom and teaching practices. Use the following prompts to brainstorm different ways to integrate the use of attention signals into your instruction.

- 1 Think about the specific students in your classroom. What type of culturally responsive attention signals might work best with them?

- 2 List three different purposes for using attention signals in the classroom. Which of these purposes do you see as being most relevant to your classroom? Why?

Sample Lesson—Using Attention Signals to Explain and Clarify

The following lesson demonstrates how a teacher in the math scenario could use an attention signal to aid the students' comprehension.

Procedure

- 1 When you realize that some students are having difficulty with the new math concept, use a pre-taught attention signal, such as hand-clapping repetitions, to call the students' attention to you.
- 2 To use the hand-clapping attention signal, clap your hands in a pattern, such as *clap, clap, clap-clap-clap*. Students should respond to the signal by repeating the same clapping pattern. In order to do this, they must refocus their attention (to remember the clapping pattern) and put down their pencils, so they can use their hands to clap.
- 3 If necessary, repeat the Call and Response signal using a different clapping pattern to ensure that you have all students' attention. It is up to the individual teacher to define what it means to have students come to attention. For some teachers, it is acceptable for students to finish up their work after an attention signal is given as long as their mouths are quiet. Be sure to clearly define your expectations and consistently reinforce them when using an attention signal with your students.
- 4 Once the students stop working, say, "I stopped you because I noticed that some of you are having difficulty understanding the difference between multiplication and exponents. Let's review this difference again as a class, so we can make sure that everyone understands how to use exponents." Address the students' confusion by reviewing the new concept and demonstrating how to solve several practice problems on the board.

- 5 After engaging in guided practice with the new concept, have students return to their independent work and continue to monitor their progress and comprehension. You can restart the students with another signal, such as Time to/Start.

Reading Comprehension Lesson

In a reading comprehension lesson, students conduct a close read of a text to determine why the author included particular facts and details. First, students are allotted a certain amount of time to read the text silently, annotating it to find support for their ideas about the text. When time is up, the teacher calls out, “When I move, you move” (“When I Move” by Dag Nasty 1987). The students respond, “Just like that” and move to meet up with a partner or group to compare notes and discuss their ideas. After a predetermined amount of time, the teacher repeats the same Call and Response protocol two times, allowing students to move into different partnerships as they discuss their ideas about the text with one another.

In this scenario, the teacher used a Call and Response attention signal to:

- a. integrate movement into a reading comprehension lesson.
- b. facilitate small-group discussions in the class.
- c. transition from one step to another during the lesson.
- d. All of the above

Answer: d. All of the above

This scenario demonstrates how attention signals can be used to facilitate the use of movement and discussion in a classroom lesson. The students were allowed to engage in collaborative discussions to compare the information they collected from their reading of a text. The teacher’s use of the Call and Response attention signal incorporating a song (“When I Move” by Dag Nasty 1987) that was responsive to youth culture provided the students with something they could relate to while bringing them to attention before moving on to the next step within the lesson.

Classroom Applications

Think about your own classroom and teaching style. Use the following prompts to examine different ways to integrate attention signals into your daily classroom practices.

- 1 Reflect on your daily classroom schedule. How can you use attention signals to add movement to your daily routine in a way that would benefit instruction and comprehension?

- 2 Think about problems that arise during times of transition in your classroom. How can you utilize attention signals to help students move more smoothly from one activity to the next?

Sample Lesson—Adding Movement with Attention Signals

While most teachers find it relatively easy to integrate movement into their instruction (“Everyone stand up and give me five jumping jacks”), adding movement that deliberately benefits the instructional objectives of the lesson can be more challenging. Teachers often worry that students will “get out of hand” while doing movement activities and that they will not be able to refocus their students’ attention when necessary. The following lesson illustrates one way to use attention signals to ensure that a movement activity (Inner-Outer Circle, page 91) about the elements on the Periodic Table occurs responsively.

Procedure

- 1 As a whole class, discuss the elements on the Periodic Table that the students will be reviewing using the Inner-Outer Circle activity. Either provide the students with review questions about the content material or have them develop their own series of questions before beginning the activity.
- 2 Divide the class in half. Have half of the students form a circle in the middle of the room facing outwards. Help the remaining students form another circle around the outside facing inwards. With both circles in place, each student on the inner circle should be facing one student in the outer circle.
- 3 Say, “To start this activity, those of you in the outer circle are going to be asking review questions to those of you in the inner circle. After each question, the students in the outer circle will rotate one person to the right. I am going to use the ‘Whoop!/Dere it is!’ attention signal to tell you when it is time to rotate. When I say, ‘Whoop!’ you respond with ‘Dere it is!’ When you hear the attention signal, stop talking, freeze your body, and turn your eyes to me so we can make sure to rotate at the same time.”
- 4 Begin the activity by having the students in the outer circle ask their partners in the inner circle a review question about the content material. For example, one student might ask, “What type of metal is copper?” Provide time for the students on the inner circle to try to answer the question.
- 5 Call out the attention signal, wait for students to respond, and then have students in the outer circle rotate one person to the right. After rotating, have students in the outer circle ask a question to their new partners in the inner circle.
- 6 Continue to have the students in the outer circle rotate and ask questions until a full rotation is complete.
- 7 Switch roles and give the students in the inner circle the opportunity to rotate and ask review questions while the students in the outer circle remain still and respond to the questions.

Post-Reading Assessment

Now it is your turn to start “swimming” or infusing these activities into your practice. Start now. As you plan your next lesson, look for times and ways that you can use responsive attention signals. Be intentional and strategic. Allow yourself the time and space to fail, to make mistakes, and to be uncomfortable. After a couple of weeks of implementing CLR, come back to this chapter and complete the survey (Figure 1.3) on your use of attention signals.

Figure 1.3 Effective Uses of Attention Signals Survey: After Infusing the CLR Principles

| | 0 Never Emerging | 1 Rarely Splashing | 2 Sometimes Floating | 3 Mostly Kicking | 4 Always Free Styling |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| I use responsive attention signals | | | | | |
| consistently and strategically. | | | | | |
| for clarification/ further instruction. | | | | | |
| for transitioning. | | | | | |
| for ending the lesson. | | | | | |
| for other purposes: praising, shout-outs, check-ins. | | | | | |

