



**DEVELOPMENTAL
DESIGNS®**

Advancing social, emotional,
and academic growth in adolescents

What if a few students start to ignore the signal?

Here are some suggestions from educators who are implementing Developmental Designs...

Kandace Logan, Instructional Leader for Minneapolis Public Schools and former *Developmental Designs* consultant

Give a clear reminder. Before students begin a work session, restate how long the signal response should take: "The last few times I've given the signal, the response has been slower than usual. We all know you can respond in five seconds. I will time how long it takes you to respond to the signal, and we can record the times. If necessary, we can look at why the response isn't quicker." Then try it again, and time them. Chances are the response time will improve right away!

Another approach is to simply say, "That was too slow; let's try it again," or "I will hold it firm to my commitment to using the signal, and I expect you to consistently do your part, too."

Barbara Forshag, former Assistant Principal at Harry Hurst Middle School, Luling, Louisiana and *Developmental Designs* workshop facilitator

First, ask yourself if you are using the signal appropriately:

- "Am I overusing it?"
- "Was it really necessary the last several times I used it, or have I gone a little signal happy?"
- "Have I been forgetting to use it, and I have been trying to get attention by talking loudly?"

This type of self-analysis often leads to a good idea about how to use the signal better. If it was becoming ineffective because the students were simply getting lazy about responding, then it's time to stop and have students remind each other why we need it, and/or ask them to think about their part in its success or failure. Practice it once or a few times, and go forward from there.

Steve Hasti, 8th grade teacher, Minneapolis, Minnesota, and *Developmental Designs* workshop facilitator

There are several possibilities.

- Add an audible component, like a special clap.
- Remind students that after the signal for attention, the next and only person to speak is the person who gave the signal.
- Give the students a heads-up before the signal: "You'll need your attention up front in 30 seconds." Then give the signal.

I remodel by practicing with a little playfulness: "I'll give the signal soon. Let's see how quickly we can have eyes forward, mouths closed." Then I ask for predictions about how long it will take and challenge them to beat the time.

I use a Y-chart (graphic recording of how responding to the signal for attention should look, sound, and feel) to get endorsement. I post it and refer to it before a lesson that may require unexpected signals.

Jitendrapal Kundan, Executive Director, *The Origins Program* and *Developmental Designs* consultant

What if students start to ignore the signal or ignore it altogether?

In order to breathe life back into any underperforming protocol, I would examine my teacher practices. Here are some things I'd consider.

- **My class hour structure and my approach to lesson delivery:** Am I overusing the signal? Using the signal too much can result in students' tuning it out.
- **My expectations for student responses to the signal:** Am I consistent? Do I proactively remind each group on a regular basis about the expectations for responding to the signal? Do I remind students that the allotted time is winding down, and consistently redirect students who do not meet the expectation?
- **Our relationships and community-building practices:** Lack of cooperation (not responding well to the signal) could mean I haven't built enough fun, recognition, and challenges into our time together. If we respond well to the signal during a class period, we should sometimes end that period with a group cheer. Or we could challenge ourselves to respond consistently in three seconds or less, and then monitor our response times. We can record our results and try to better the time.
- **My use of reinforcing language:** Am I using enough reinforcing language? It's no good to only notice when they make mistakes. If I balance my redirecting language by reinforcing positive behaviors, my relationship with them is more positive.