

Quiet Signal for High School

Vern B. Minor, Ed.D



The Quiet Signal is an important management tool we train at Kagan. When we set teams of students to work together, sometimes they get so involved in their projects or their discussions become so animated that it's difficult to get everyone's attention without a Quiet Signal. The Quiet Signal is an easy and effective method to quiet the class and focus their attention on the teacher.

Recently, a high school teacher voiced her concern that the Quiet Signal just wouldn't work with her students. Dr. Vern Minor, a Nationally Certified Kagan Trainer, offered a thoughtful response that we'd like to share.

Vern writes:

Here are a couple of ideas I share with high school teachers.

1. The bottom line is that kids will do whatever we ask them to do if we are consistent and it is important to us. Will kids raise their hands on the quiet signal? Absolutely...they already do when they want to ask a question. So, the question is not whether or not they will, but how the teacher approaches the task. If we model for them and the raising of the hand becomes a classroom routine/expectation, they will comply. It is like any other classroom rule...if you don't model and reinforce, it will not become routine.

2. I do not encourage them to call it the "quiet signal." That sounds too elementary. I encourage them to introduce it to kids as a "communication regulator." The raised hand will communicate to others that someone wants to speak. For example, when the teacher is talking, a student should raise his hand to indicate he wants to communicate. When that happens, the teacher will call on the student. On the other hand, when students are talking and the teacher wants to talk, the raised hand still communicates the inverse. Introduced in this manner brings logic to the process for kids. They can understand and accept the logic when explained from this angle.



3. I still encourage high school kids to raise their hands when the quiet signal is given by the teacher. Again, I use logic with the kids. Depending on where the teacher is standing, only half the kids will be able to see him or her when a structure is taking place. Explain to the kids the necessity of having five second transitions. Also, explain to them the need for positive social skills when it comes to getting people quiet. HS kids understand these issues and it will make logical sense to them



for students to signal other students. However, I do not get bent out of shape if everyone does not raise their hand. I want five second transition time. If that happens and only half the class has to signal others, no problem. We have to focus on the goal. With elementary kids I have a dual goal. I want five second transition time and I want each of them to learn how to signal. Not so with high school kids.

Vern B. Minor, Ed.D.

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Dan Kuzma, also a Nationally Certified Kagan Trainer, adds:

I agree with Vern. **Implementation** is the key to using the quiet signal in high school. I call it the "**attention signal**" and say, one time only, "May I see your eyes please." Thanking the students in a different and sincere way each time they choose to give you their attention and at the end of each class is very powerful and seems to draw each class together.

Daniel F. Kuzma

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