

# Responding to Students' Comments, Questions and Behavior

Here are some suggestions in responding to students during the lesson introduction, demonstration and discussions that lead to valuable conversations and developmental growth. We want students to contribute in meaningful ways and acknowledge these contributions in an art class that is really pressed for time.

## Setting the Ground Rules

The ground rules are set in place at the beginning of the year, and we teach the correct ways to listen and speak in the art room. For young learners you can review these ground rules in the form of a song, "Students in the Art Room, sit right down, students in the art room, sit right down... now it's time to learn." "Fold your hands, cross your feet..."

- Take turns talking.
- Sitting safely.
- Listen carefully and eyes up front.
- Keeping hands to self.
- Using a voice level of a butterfly or mouse.

## Routines

- Students wear a smock/large t-shirt with their name written on a piece of tape on the front and back to art class every week, no matter the project.
- Students know to enter the room and sit on the carpet. This provides valuable time to transition and connect with the teacher, and quietly chat about what's on their mind.
- Begin the lesson with a concrete object, something to spark their curiosity, imagination and activate prior learning (from previous lessons or in their lives).
- Read a book to link with the curricular theme and the project.
- Students are dismissed to their tables first – they need repetition to remember where they sit, and this transition serves to further their readiness for class.
- Once students are in their assigned seats, call quiet tables to the demonstration table one at a time.
- Provide age-appropriate tools: using sponges instead of a brayer to add ink to a leaf print, or use sponges to apply glue rather than a glue bottle.
- Clean-up: Children rarely use the sink at Midvale since they tend to play in the water and waste water. Provide damp rags for them to wipe hands and tables, instead.

## Nonverbal Management of Student Behavior

- Place your pointer finger on your lips to show a quiet sign.
- Close your eyes
- Shake your head
- Raise your hand to model
- Nod your head when you are talking to show you like that they are listening or when someone puts their hand down to wait
- Signal to speak by raising your hand
- Look away if there is a persistent interrupter
- Redirect student's attention by looking to the book or focus point
- Quiet pause without words.
- Wave your hand and point to indicate that a child should sit down where you are pointing

### **Verbal Redirection**

- Nod and say quietly, "Not a good idea."
- "Help our group by working together."
- "Help us by being a leader, and show everyone what they should be doing."
- "Let's use the voice level of a mouse! Or a butterfly."
- "Yes, I see you are tired but let me continue giving directions so we can start."
- "I will pick someone who has their hand raised."
- "Oh, I see this hand is raised."
- "Remember, we take turns."
- "Bodies ready, eyes up front."

### **Acknowledging Student Contributions**

- Refrain from cutting off students or barring them from contributing ideas.
- Listen CAREFULLY to students and then respond.
- "I see you (or many) want to say something. Let's stop here and take turns."
- "We would like to hear what you have to say. Everyone, let's hear what \_\_\_\_\_ is going to share."
- Respond by saying, "Yes, it can be...Yes, you have a great idea...Yes, that is a possibility. Yes, that is an interesting thought."
- When the discussion goes off track, redirect by saying, "Yes, thanks, but let's refocus and think about this or... Remember we are talking about \_\_\_\_\_."
- "We need to change the channel." (Pretend to use a channel changer).
- "Keep your ideas/stories and share them with your tablemates later."
- "Yes, that is a wonderful prediction... let's find out what happens."
- "Let's see what's going to happen next."
- "Good connections."

### **During Demonstrations**

- How do you think I made this? Do you wonder how I made this?
- What would I do first? What will come next?
- What could this be? Is there another way I could do this?
- Listen to students' suggestions and welcome comments on the process
- Verbalize your thinking and artistic choices, "I like this long leaf – it makes a good leg for my leaf man, don't you think?"
- Watch/look what I'm doing now...

### **Positive Reinforcement**

- Use an upward inflection of the voice.
- I see you are working hard.
- Wow, I saw that you are participating well today. Look how your work looks!
- This table works well together.
- I see students being good friends to each other.
- I see so many students ready to learn.
- Oh great, I see (students' names) are showing me they are ready.
- Great, we can start.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (Student's name) is showing she is a leader because she is sitting flat on her bottom and hands are folded and looking at me.
- I know others can be ready too.
- We like it when our art class is quiet. It helps us focus.
- I see so many students ready to learn.
- Oh great, I see (students' names) are showing me they are ready.
- Great, we can start.
- Thanks for sharing.
- Give yourself a pat on the back for....

**Call and Response to Getting Attention** (consider connecting the call/response with the content of your lesson)

- When I say Mona, you say Lisa.
- When I say Action, you say Figure. When I say Super, you say Power.
- When I say Waterfall, you say....shhhhhhhh.
- When I say Listen, you say UP! Listen, UP!
- Or ask students to respond to your tone/volume of voice. For example, in a deep, gruff voice, say, "Caaaasss." They respond in a gruff deep voice, "Yeeesss."

**Troubleshooting**

- When a student shuts down - Ask: "How can I help you?"
- Keep it upbeat. "Oh dear, you are missing out."
- Need to take a belly breath?
- Come on... join us.
- Distract them and.... move on.