“Hello! Is Anybody Listening?”
How To Maximize Instructional Time in Fifth Grade

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Teaching Context

I am currently an intern in a fifth grade classroom at Houserville Elementary School. Houserville is one of ten elementary schools in the State College Area School District, a large district located in central Pennsylvania. This small school, housing grades three through five, contains nine classes, three of each grade.

My fifth grade class consists of 21 students, 11 males and 10 females. In terms of behavior patterns, the majority of my students are cooperative and compliant. I have three male students who have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which at times makes it difficult for them to control their impulses and focus on the current task. I will refer to these students as Students A, B and C. Student A spends significant time in the Learning Support room, therefore is not in the classroom with us for much of the day. We have not had any major issues with Students B and C. Their ADHD does not negatively influence their behavior often. For the first two-thirds of the school year, a fourth student in my class whom we will call Student D, often seemed distracted and inattentive, which seriously affected his success in the fifth grade. Student D was evaluated and diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, one of the conditions found on the autism spectrum. At the end of March, he began going to the Learning Support room to receive assistance in writing, math and organization.

In my classroom, there is a rather interesting distribution of social relationships. Eight of my students would be considered leaders and nine considered followers. The remaining four students are pleasers. They look to do what they can to satisfy other students, as well as adults.

This particular group of students is very talkative, especially during transition times. They generally use the time in the morning, during activities, and at the end of the day to socialize with peers.
Rationale

As I began to teach more in my classroom, I found that a great deal of time was being wasted at the beginning of transitional times when I was trying to get my class’ attention. My students seemed to view transitions as a time to socialize. When told to switch from one activity to another, they would start talking to friends, which was not what I had directed them to do. Often, this increased the amount of time required to transition from one activity to another, resulting in a significant loss of instructional time. Many students took a long time to begin working after the directions were given and often asked questions about the directions.

I felt that the lack of an effective attention-getting strategy was impacting our productivity during transitions. I had tried telling the students to freeze or to stop and look at me; however, I was not getting their attention the first time. I had to repeat myself as many as five times until I had the class’ attention. I did not believe that the strategies I used were as effective as they could be. This made me wonder what type of attention-getters would be effective and age-appropriate to make transition times more efficient and maximize instructional time. It seemed like most of the attention-getting strategies that our instructors have been using have been geared towards the primary grades. Therefore, the goal of this inquiry was to find the most effective attention-getting strategies that my fifth grade class responds to the first time.

Main Wondering and Sub-Questions

Main Wondering

How can the use of positive, age-appropriate attention-getting techniques maximize instructional time?

Sub-Questions

- What signals work to get the attention of fifth graders?
- What signals do other teachers use?
- How do more structured attention-getters impact the atmosphere and expectations during transitions?
• What are my students’ perceptions of transition times?

Data Collection and Analysis

Literature As Data Collection

At the very beginning of my inquiry, I conducted research on transitions, attention-getters and overall classroom management. I found several books and articles containing suggestions and ideas that I figured would be helpful throughout this process. Many of the pieces of literature speak to transition times, activity flow, positive learning environments and time loss. These books and articles can be found in my annotated bibliography (Appendix A). I made notes on which attention-getting techniques I would like to try in my classroom and any other relevant information that might be useful. Many of the techniques that came from this literature can be found in my observation chart (Appendix G).

Analysis

Once I collected data from the literature, I looked over the list of attention-getting techniques I had compiled. I narrowed down the list to those that I believed would be most effective in my classroom, and would best meet the needs of my students. I even left a few techniques on the list that I was hesitant to try in my fifth grade classroom. As I tried a new technique, I noted the student response and the effect it had on the transition time and decided whether to continue or discontinue implementation of that technique.

Teacher Survey Collection

In order to learn about transition times in other intermediate and upper intermediate classrooms, I designed a survey that I distributed to all of the teachers in my school. The survey
(Appendix B) asked general questions about transition times and attention-getters. I designed this survey with the intention of gaining insight and ideas to try in my own classroom.

**Analysis**

The response to my survey was positive. All but one teacher completed and returned it. Once I had received the majority of the surveys back, I began to look through them and look for patterns. I made notes about the responses I received, but found that in order to draw more concrete conclusions, I needed to tally and record the number of responses associated with each multiple-choice question. I also compiled lists of the open-ended responses and looked for patterns. These responses can be found in blue on the teacher survey (Appendix B). I found that the teachers in my school use a multitude of signals to get their class’ attention. My final step was to create a list of signals that I planned to try in my classroom.

**Student Surveys**

**Collection**

In order to get my students’ perceptions of transition times at different points during my inquiry, I designed and administered three surveys to my class. These surveys told the students to rate the degree to which they agreed with several statements on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 meaning they disagree, 4 meaning they agree). They took the first survey (Appendix C) at the beginning of my inquiry, before I had done any experimentation. This gave me a baseline to which I could compare their thoughts and feelings about transition times later. Perhaps the most important question on this survey asked the students how they would like the teacher to get their attention. You can see the responses they provided in blue on my master survey (Appendix C).

I gave my class the second survey (Appendix D) midway through my experimentation
with new attention-getting techniques, to see how they felt about the changes I had implemented.
The students took my final survey (Appendix E) at the end of my inquiry, sharing with me their current thoughts and perceptions about attention-getters and transition times. The students shared which attention-getter they think works best and which one they like most. They also expressed how they feel about transition times now, as compared to earlier in the year.

**Analysis**

I analyzed all three of my student surveys in the same way. For every question that asked the students to rate the degree to which they agree with a statement, I re-sorted the pile of surveys, creating a pile for response 1, response 2, response 3 and response 4. Next, I totaled how many of each response I received for each question. I recorded the total on my master copy, so I could compare the students’ responses. The totals can be seen in blue on each of the three surveys. One of the key things I learned while analyzing my first survey was that all my students know what is expected of them during transition times, which meant that I would only need to reinforce my expectations, not reintroduce them.

To analyze the open-ended questions, I made a list of the responses the students gave. Each time I received a duplicate response, I put an asterisk (*) next to the response. At the end of my analysis, I counted how many times each of these responses was provided. By keeping track of how many duplicate answers were provided, I was able to determine which attention-getters the students like most and which they think work the best in our classroom.

Once I had a quantitative way to compare my students’ responses, I studied my data for gaps and patterns, unanimous or almost unanimous responses. I also looked for contradictions within surveys and also from survey to survey. I described one such contradiction in a reflective journal on March 22, 2008 (Appendix F).
Observations

Collection

I created an observation chart (Appendix G), on which I recorded the date, context, attention-getter used, number of attempts and total time it took to get the class’ attention, and any pertinent notes about each transition. I collected baseline data before beginning to try new ideas, in order to have something with which to compare my experimental data.

Note: Total time to get the class’ attention refers to the time it took to get the class quiet and most students focused and looking the right direction. There are factors associated with a few students, which prevent me from always being able to redirect their attention. Such students are Students A, B, C and D. Oftentimes, Student D is quiet or may be talking to himself quietly, appearing not to be listening at all, yet knows exactly what is going on.

Analysis

I analyzed the data I collected in my observation chart by looking at it and comparing my baseline data to my experimental data. It is obvious that since implementing new attention-getting strategies, the number of attempts it takes to get my class’ attention has drastically changed, as has the total time. Whereas it used to take anywhere from one to four attempts to get the class’ attention, it now takes one attempt. I also used my observation chart to compare transitions in the morning to those in the afternoon.

Explanation of Findings

Claim A. Utilizing attention-getters increases the amount of instructional time.

Evidence 1A. The amount of unproductive time that existed during my baseline observations was much more than the amount once I began implementing new attention-getters. On average,
it was taking me 19.63 seconds and 2.3 attempts to get my class’ attention during my baseline measurements. Now that I’m using new attention-getters, it takes an average of 7.21 seconds and 1.1 attempts. The total time and number of attempts have decreased by more than fifty percent. By decreasing time lost, I gained an average of 12.42 seconds of instructional time back for every transition.

**Evidence 2A.** In an article titled “Teacher Transitions Can Disrupt Time Flow in Classrooms,” Marshall Arlin explains, “Transitions can be structured, without much effort, to minimize disruptive behavior. If pupils know what they are expected to do during the change from one activity to another, they often will do it, in an on-task manner. Frequently, however, the signals are clear for activity A and for activity B, but the transition from A to B is left to ‘happen’” (1979). By adding more structure—attention-getters—to my transitions, I have done away with a great deal of downtime during which students engage in off-task behaviors. I can quickly get my class’ attention and give directions, moving from one activity to another, and eliminating wasted time, therefore gaining instructional time.

**Claim B. It is more difficult to get and keep the attention of fifth graders during afternoon transition times.**

**Evidence 1B.** Based on my observations (Appendix G), it takes more time and effort to get my students’ attention in the afternoon. On average, it now takes me 7.2 seconds to get my class’ attention in the morning, and 7.9 seconds in the afternoon, using the same techniques. While there does not seem to be an extremely significant difference between these two averages, my perception of how long it takes seems drastically different in the afternoon versus the morning. Not only do I find myself having to remind my class of my expectations more in the afternoons,
but once I have their attention, it is difficult to keep it for long. It seems they have trouble focusing and they get distracted more easily.

**Evidence 2B.** As part of the teacher survey I distributed (Appendix B), one of the questions that I asked the Houserville teachers was, “Does it seem to take longer or be more difficult to get your class’ attention during certain parts of the day?” 9 out of 10 teachers who returned the completed survey affirmed that it seemed to take longer and/or be more difficult to get their class’ attention in the afternoon.

**Claim C. Fifth graders still respond positively to clapping patterns.**

**Evidence 1C.** The reason that I decided to conduct this inquiry was because I believed many of the attention getting strategies that our instructors have used in class have been geared more towards the primary grades. I chose this inquiry to see what worked with upper intermediate students, only to discover that the signals to get the attention of fifth graders are very much like, if not the same as, those that work in the primary grades. After analyzing the amount of time and the number of attempts it takes to get my class’ attention, I am able to see that clapping patterns are just as effective, if not more effective, as any of the other strategies I tried (Appendix G). In all but one instance, any time I used a clapping pattern, I was able to get my class’ attention on the first attempt. The average total time it took to get the class’ attention using clapping patterns was 6.55 seconds, as compared to the average of all the other techniques combined, 8.04 seconds.

**Evidence 2C.** When I administered my third student survey (Appendix E), I asked the students which attention-getting strategy they like the best. 10 out of 21 students stated that they like the

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1 Throughout this inquiry, “clapping pattern(s)” refers to the teacher clapping a pattern and the students repeating the same pattern.
clapping patterns the best. Clapping patterns received the most overwhelming response. The remaining 11 students’ votes were spread out over six other responses. No response, other than clapping patterns, received more than four votes.

**Evidence 3C.** In the same student survey (Appendix E), 11 out of 21 students asserted that the strategy that works best in our classroom is the clapping pattern. Even though I told them that their response for which strategy works the best and which they like the most did not have to be the same, “clapping pattern” received the most votes by a landslide.

**Claim D. Clapping patterns, turning off the lights, and counting down work best to get the attention of fifth graders.**

**Evidence 1D.** In both my second and third student surveys (Appendices D and E, respectively) I asked the students which strategy they think works best in our classroom. Midway through my inquiry, on survey two, the students favored the clapping pattern (8 votes), turning off the lights (6 votes), counting down (6 votes) and saying “If you can hear me touch your nose. If you can hear me touch your head…”(1 vote). I continued to use those attention-getters, since the students responded positively, and I also implemented a few new strategies. By the time the inquiry was winding down, and it came time for the students to fill out my third and final survey, their feelings about which attention-getters work best in our classroom were quite concrete. Their responses to the same question in survey three, with some of the same options and a few new ones, were very similar to their responses on survey two. The students were clearly able to recognize which signals work the best in our classroom. The response breakdown on survey three was the following: clapping pattern—11 votes, turning off the lights—8 votes, and counting down—2 votes.
Evidence 2D. Authors agree that clapping patterns, turning off the lights, and counting down do work to get the attention of older students, in addition to younger students. McHugh (2007) asserts, “Engage students in rhythmic clapping and/or stamping. This allows students who are sitting and ready to immediately engage in an activity that combines motor activity with listening and thinking skills…This step also motivates students who were straggling behind to join the group more quickly and try to figure out and catch up with what everyone else is doing.” He explains that this activity is suitable for children through fifth grade, agreeing that this is an acceptable and often effective strategy even in the upper intermediate grades.

In his book titled “The Practical Guide To Primary2 Classroom Management,” Barnes (2006) explains that one of the first steps to getting your students’ attention is to give a clear, well-established visual signal. Turning off the lights in a room is a signal that many children have seen before. It seems that some children associate the darkness with a calming and relaxing feeling, therefore it signals to them that they need to stop talking.

Buck (1999) emphasizes, “Time cues are effective because they provide needed predictability and stability in the learning environment.” Knowing that my students seek and thrive on predictability and stability, I selected counting down, a time cue with which I thought they would be familiar and one to which I thought they would respond.

Claim E. Using attention-getters creates a more positive classroom atmosphere.

Evidence 1E. In my third student survey, I asked the students how they feel about transition times now, as compared to earlier in the year (Appendix E). I offered several options from which the students could choose, circling as many responses as they liked. The majority of my

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2 In this instance, “primary” means “elementary.” Rob Barnes is an education in the United Kingdom, where elementary school is referred to as primary school.
students responded in a very positive way. The five positive choices received many more votes than the five negative choices. Several students circled all five of the positive responses, indicating that experimenting with transition times has improved our classroom atmosphere, making it more calm and organized, and has helped them to better understand my expectations. For the breakdown of the students’ responses, please see Appendix E.

I also left space at the bottom of the page for students to share any other comments they had about transition times. Two students made further remarks in this space. One wrote, “Transition times are helping us more.” Another shared, “Transition times are great because they make the day better and they make it better for the class.”

**Evidence 2E.** I have found that the students respond more positively to my getting their attention now, as compared to how they responded to my technique prior to this inquiry. Whereas before I had to call out many individual students for talking when I needed their attention, now I have to call out very few names. I also see more positive facial expressions as I signal that I need the attention of the class. As I scan the room, I often see students smiling in response to the clapping pattern I am using.

**Evidence 3E.** It seems that my students like when I do not stick to one attention-getter for very long, but instead, use a variety of strategies. It keeps the students alert and makes transition times predictable, while still keeping them interesting by using a variety of strategies. In an article titled “Classroom Idea-Sparkers,” McHugh (2007) explains, “Students will welcome any attempt you make to add transition activities into your daily routines, especially if they involve a little movement or a challenge. You will be surprised at how these activities change your classroom environment. If you periodically change the activities, you will keep their interest piqued as they wonder what you will do next.”
Reflection and Implications for Future Practice

I find it ironic that the main reason I chose to conduct my inquiry on attention-getting techniques was because I thought that clapping patterns were too “young” for fifth graders. I originally set out to find more age-appropriate attention getters because I envisioned my students refusing to partake in clapping patterns because they would say they are “babyish.” Little did I know, the very signal that I said my students would never respond well too, is the one that they responded to the best, as well as the one which they enjoy most.

I learned that even though students in the upper intermediate grades are getting older, they still respond to and enjoy the same attention-getting techniques that worked well when they were younger. It seems that by bringing back a signal that primary teachers used, I am reminding the students that they like to have fun. It is important to talk to these children as adults at times, but they are children and we cannot forget that they need to be treated as such. In essence, I now believe that any of the attention-getters that I used during this inquiry could be used in all elementary grades, kindergarten through sixth grade.

I always knew that there was unproductive time in my classroom, however I did not realize just how much time was wasted until I began to collect and analyze my data. Once I saw the numbers, I knew there had to be a way to decrease the total time and the number of attempts it took to get my class’ attention. By working through this inquiry, I successfully found ways to decrease how much time we lose, therefore increasing instructional time and benefiting from the byproduct of a more positive classroom atmosphere.

Having carried out the inquiry process, I can clearly see that it is a valuable tool. The steps in the process are things that many teachers do everyday in the classroom, often without even realizing. Carrying out this process has helped me to see the importance of each step, and
how without all of these steps, I would not have been able to construct the same claims, and it might not have been a true inquiry.

I am certain that I will use everything I have learned about attention-getters and transition times in my future teaching. I realize that every group of students I have is going to respond to each of the techniques differently; however I now have so many strategies that I feel confident I can find an effective method to get the attention of students at any grade level.

Future Wonderings
- Should I keep introducing different clapping patterns?
- Is it worth trying yet more attention-getters?
- Will students tire of attention-getters? Should they be phased in and out through the year?
- Why is it that all students think they are giving the teacher their attention more quickly than they had before we experimented with this issue, yet very few students think that the entire class has been giving their attention more quickly? Where does the problem lie?
- At what age will the students stop responding positively to clapping patterns?
Appendix A

Susan Feinstein
Annotated Bibliography


This article addresses disruptive student behavior during transitions and also during nontransitional time. Arlin talks about classroom activity flow and classroom time flow, in terms of smoothness, momentum and continuity of signals. He uses data to prove that transitions disrupt time flow and disruptive student behavior increases during unstructured transitions. He offers ideas for structuring transitions to increase time on-task and to maintain momentum. This source will be helpful as I begin to experiment with signals and more structured transition activities. I can also use it to support my thinking that there is always room for improvement and since transition time is often where disruptions occur and time is lost, examining how much daily time is spent on transitions is a practical starting point.


This book covers information on many aspects of classroom management. From effective classrooms, power struggles and routines, to noise, praise and organization, Barnes offers explanations and suggestions to establish a positive learning environment. I may use this source for its information on persisting until you have your students’ attention, as well as noise and transitions, and coded messages.


In this article, Buck talks about how for many young students, transitions between activities and lessons are problematic. He goes on to state why these times are so challenging for children and how they’re especially difficult for students with learning and attention-related disabilities. He offers general guidelines for planning and implementing transitions, as well as information about time and music cues and physical transitions. I plan on using this source for information on why transitions can be so difficult for students to handle and for the guidelines Buck offers for planning and implementing transitions.


This book is full of advice on behavior management, including what the author calls “the
basics,” as well as tips and ideas. She discusses control techniques, teaching styles, misbehavior and the wider environment—the school as a whole, instead of only the classroom. It contains strategies that have worked for the author, which she recommends to others. Some sections are aimed solely toward primary, middle or secondary teachers. This source will provide me with information about how and why to wait for silence in the classroom, the importance of time management, how to help students focus at the end of lessons into transition time. The end of the book contains what some students have said about particular aspects of classroom management. I may use some of these same questions that the author asked in her interviews as I design my student surveys. I will also take into consideration the responses of the students as I brainstorm attention getters and creative transitions.


This book talks extensively about the compromise of giving students the support and options that they need while simultaneously doing what the teacher needs and wants to do. It touches on topics such as establishing the classroom, the five basic human needs, alternatives to punishment, settling down the class, and incorporating fun in the classroom in a practical and appropriate way. I will use this book to learn about how to quiet a class, how to integrate music into the classroom (perhaps during transition times), how to use mind games and lateral thinking puzzles, possibly during transitions, as well.


In this article, Jones explains the role of the teacher and the role of the student in terms of being responsible with time in the classroom. He provides detailed information about how much time to allow for transitions in the classroom, how to wrap up transitions and time loss. This article will be helpful to me as I set goals for how long certain transitions should take and to learn about how to handle time loss.


This article talks about the need for teachers to guide and support their students as they transition from one activity or place to another. McHugh explains that when teachers support their students in this way, the entire class benefits. The author also includes thoughts on why transition activities can be considered “indirect guidance” tools, and offers several suggestions for transitions throughout the day. This article will provide me with the reasons that transitions are such vital times during the day and also how positive transitions can improve the classroom environment. I will also use this source for the author’s transition suggestions for use at different times during the day. Together with
these ideas are the grade level ranges that the particular suggestion is geared toward.


Smith’s article covers the basic definition of transitions, as well as why it is important to study them. He talks about the clear signals that more effective teachers use as they transition their students, as compared to the ways of less successful classroom managers, and the effects on the classroom atmosphere. Smith introduces the term “the marking of transitions” to readers, as he refers to teachers’ use of markers to designate the boundaries of the transitions. *Markers* refer to the specific verbal or nonverbal behavior that signals the beginning or ending of a transition. The article describes the transitions and how they are achieved by three effective French as a Second Language teachers at the junior high school level. I will use this article as I begin to think of new attention getters and transitions, to examine whether I am using *markers* in my practices.


This book begins with classroom management in the beginning of the year, then moves to longer term issues, such as gaining students’ cooperation, using time wisely, and managing various subsettings of the classroom. The book goes on to examine issues that extend beyond the classroom environment. As the authors explain concepts and principles, they illustrate their points with examples from their classroom experiences. I will use this source for the authors’ thoughts and suggestions on making the most of classroom time, maintaining activity flow and minimizing transition times.


Young’s book is a very practical, concise, easy-to-read guide to classroom management. It is divided into sections, and within each section each page has a new idea. Many ideas are related to those that have been previously mentioned. The sections of the book include getting to know your students, how to keep cool, keeping things on track, dealing with common problems, sanctions and rewards, the school as a whole and managing yourself. The sections of this book that will be most useful to me are those that include tips and ideas on not raising your voice, reducing the general noise level, and spicing up routines. I will also use this source as I consider new attention getters and transition activities, using the author’s thoughts on bridging activities, changing activities and how to use signals.
Appendix B

Transitions in the Classroom
(Blue=Number of responses)

Dear Teachers,

I am conducting an inquiry project on transitions in the classroom. I would appreciate if you could please take a few minutes to fill out this brief survey regarding your own teaching practices and beliefs on classroom transitions. Please return this anonymous survey to Linda Andrews’ mailbox. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,
Susan Feinstein
Room 16 Intern
srf13@scasd.org

1. What grade level or special do you teach? _______________

2. What signals do you use to get your class’ attention? (i.e. ringing a bell, clapping, turning lights off)
   - Whistle
   - ringing a bell
   - Use a loud voice
   - I stop
   - Whispering asking, “Who can hear my voice? Raise your hand”
   - “Eyes on me”
   - “Listen up!”
   - “I need eyes on me by 3”
   - wait
   - eye contact
   - a little clapping
   - countdown
   - I say “Hey! Pay attention!”
   - Lights off

3. On the average, how long does it take you to get your class’ attention either during an activity or at a transition time?

   a. 0-5 seconds (4)       d. 16-20 seconds
   b. 6-10 seconds (4)      e. 20+ seconds
   c. 11-15 seconds         depends on the day, time, activity (2)

4. Do you explicitly tell your students of your expectations for these times when you need to get their attention?

   a. yes (8)       b. no (1)
   sometimes (1)
5. On the average, how long does it take for students to transition from one activity to another in your classroom?

a. less than 1 minute (3)  
b. 1-2 minutes (5)  
c. 2-3 minutes (2)  
d. 3-4 minutes  
e. 5+ minutes

6. How talkative are your students typically during transitions?

a. extremely talkative  
b. somewhat talkative (10)  
c. not very talkative

7. Does it seem to take longer or be more difficult to get your class’ attention during certain parts of the day? (i.e. morning transitions versus afternoon) If so, which parts of the day?
(The number in parentheses after each suggestion represents the number of students who gave that response)

- Afternoons (9)  
- After snow days and vacations (1)  
- Depends on the day’s activities (2)  
- Returning from lunch  
- Returning from recess (1)  
- Before lunch (1)  
- After lunch (2)  
- Before holidays (1)  
- Fridays (1)  
- End of the day (2)  
- Depends on the weather (1)
Appendix C

Transition Survey #1
(Blue=Number of responses)

On a scale of 1 to 4, (1 meaning you disagree, 4 meaning you agree) rate yourself on the following statements. Please circle the number.

1. When the teacher needs my attention, I always give it to her right away.
   
   1 2 3 4
   0 2 16 3

2. I have to ask other students around me to be quiet when the teacher is trying to get our attention.

   1 2 3 4
   1 9 7 4

3. Other students have to ask me to be quiet when the teacher is trying to get our attention.

   1 2 3 4
   8 8 5 0

4. I have to ask other students around me to be quiet when the teacher is giving directions.

   1 2 3 4
   0 9 10 2

5. Other students have to ask me to be quiet when the teacher is giving directions.

   1 2 3 4
   11 7 3 0

6. When I am finished with a task, I always return to my seat as soon as possible and stop talking.

   1 2 3 4
   0 6 13 2

7. When I come into school, I always read the morning letter without being asked and get started on my morning duties right away.

   1 2 3 4
   1 3 9 8

8. When it is time to start a new activity, I immediately gather my supplies and go to where I am told to go.

   1 2 3 4
   0 2 11 8

9. At the end of the day, I always gather my belongings without distractions and return to my seat to wait for my bus to be called.

   1 2 3 4
   0 7 12 2

10. Between activities, I talk/socialize with classmates.

    1 2 3 4
    1 7 11 2

11. After receiving directions, I always return to my desk and follow those directions without talking.
12. I know what is expected of me during transition times (between activities).

13. Transition times between and during activities go smoothly in our classroom and most of the class cooperates with the teacher and listens on the first try.

14. Imagine you are working on a group project in the classroom and the teacher needs to stop the class to make an announcement. Please tell me what signals you would like the teacher to use to get your attention. (Think back to signals your previous teachers have used to get your attention. Would any of these work in 5th grade?)

(The number in parentheses after each suggestion represents the number of students who gave that response)

- clap to a beat, then we repeat it (10)
- yell “Hey!” (3)
- clapping (5)
- whistle (1)
- turn all the lights off (3)
- snap until it’s quiet (1)
- wait- for every 5 sec it takes the class to listen, 1 min off recess (1)
- count on your fingers until we quiet down (1)
- yelling (1)
- “Be quiet” (2)
- “1,2,3, Eyes on me” (2)
- shower candy all over us
- ring a doorbell (2)
Appendix D

Transition Survey #2
(Blue=number of responses)

On a scale of 1 to 4, (1 meaning you disagree, 4 meaning you agree) rate yourself on the following statements. Please circle the number.

1. I have been giving the teacher my attention more quickly than I had before.
   
   disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | agree
   0 | 0 | 13 | 8

2. Everyone in our class has been giving the teacher their attention more quickly than they had before.
   
   disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | agree
   2 | 6 | 11 | 2

3. I have to ask other students around me to be quiet when the teacher is trying to get our attention.
   
   disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | agree
   4 | 12 | 4 | 1

4. Other students have to ask me to be quiet when the teacher is trying to get our attention.
   
   disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | agree
   11 | 9 | 1 | 0

5. The teacher has been trying new ways to get our attention.
   
   disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | agree
   0 | 2 | 7 | 12

6. I know what I need to do when the teacher signals that she needs my attention.
   
   disagree | 2 | 3 | 4 | agree
   0 | 0 | 7 | 14
7. I like when the teacher claps to get our attention and we have to repeat the pattern.

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<th>1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. I like when the teacher counts down to get our attention.

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<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I like when the teacher turns out the lights to get our attention.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. I like when the teacher says “snap once if you can hear me, snap twice if you can hear me…” to get our attention.

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<tr>
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<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. I like when the teacher says “If you can hear me touch your nose, If you can hear me touch your shoulders, If you can hear me touch your head…” to get our attention.

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Please tell me which of these strategies (mentioned in numbers 5-9) you think works the best in our classroom

(The number in parentheses after each suggestion represents the number of students who gave that response)

-Clap a pattern, we repeat (8)
-Turn off the lights (6)
-Count down (6)
-If you can hear me touch your nose... (1)
Appendix E

Transition Survey #3
(Blue=Number of responses)

Thank you for completing this survey. No one will know which responses belong to you.

On a scale of 1 to 4, (1 meaning you disagree, 4 meaning you agree,) rate yourself on the following statements. Please circle the number. YOU MAY NOT CIRCLE IN BETWEEN TWO NUMBERS. Please choose the one that best describes your response.

1. I have been giving the teacher my attention more quickly than I had before we experimented with this issue.
   
   
   disagree 2 3 4
   agree 0 8 12

2. Everyone in our class has been giving the teacher their attention more quickly than they had before we experimented with this issue.

   
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4
   agree 1 5 14 1

3. The teacher has been trying new ways to get our attention.

   
   
   disagree 0 2 5 14
   agree

4. I think clapping works well in our class to get our attention

   
   
   disagree 2 3 6 10
   agree

5. I think counting down works well in our class to get our attention.

   
   
   disagree 3 10 7 1
   agree

6. I think turning the lights out works well in our class to get our attention.

   
   
   disagree 4 3 5 9
   agree

7. I think the teacher waiting quietly without saying anything works well in our class to get our attention.

   
   
   disagree 1 2 3 4
   agree
8. I think the teacher talking quietly so everyone has to be quiet to hear the directions works well in our class to get our attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9. I think the teacher putting her hand in the air and waiting works well in our class to get our attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. Which of these strategies do you think works BEST in our classroom? Name the strategy below.

(The number in parentheses after each suggestion represents the number of students who gave that response)

- clapping a pattern (11)
- turning the lights out (8)
- counting down (2)

11. Which strategy do you most like? (This MIGHT NOT BE the one that you think works best!)

(The number in parentheses after each suggestion represents the number of students who gave that response)

- clapping a pattern (10)
- sitting quietly waiting for our attention (3)
- turning the lights out (4)
- counting down (1)
- talking quietly so students must be quiet to hear directions (1)
- “If you can hear me, touch your nose…” (option from last survey) (1)
- when the teacher just yells “Hey!” (this was never an option on a survey) (1)

12. How do you feel about transitions times now, as compared to earlier in the year?
You MAY circle more than one, if you’d like.

(The number in parentheses represents the total number of students who circled each response, whether in combination with other responses or not)

- a) More organized (17)
- b) Less organized (1)
- c) More calm (15)
- d) Less calm (1)
e) I understand the expectations better (15)
f) I don’t understand the expectations now (1)
g) I like transition times better (10)
h) I dislike transition times now (3)
i) They make our day go more smoothly (14)
j) They make our day go less smoothly (1)

Other(s):
- “They make me feel like you don’t trust us”

If you have any other comments about transition times in our classroom, please share them in the space below:
- “They are still a little hectic”
- “Transition times are great because they make the day better and they make it better for the class”
- “Transition times are helping us more”
My inquiry project has been going quite well the last few weeks. I’ve given the other teachers in my school a survey asking about transition times in their classrooms and how they get their students’ attention. The feedback that I got was fairly helpful, especially the attention-getter ideas that they use. From those surveys, I’ve compiled a list of techniques to try, in addition to the ones I already had.

I’ve also given my student two surveys. I gave the first one before I even started trying new techniques, to get their impression of how transition times in our classroom were going before I started experimenting. I was sure to tell the students that the reason I didn’t want them to write their names on the paper was because I wanted them to be able to be completely honest, knowing that I wouldn’t know whose paper was whose. The last question of the first survey asks the students what they would like the teacher to do to get their attention. Some suggestions were very reasonable, however there were some that would not be appropriate in a fifth grade classroom.

I administered the second survey this week, after I’ve been trying new attention-getting techniques. All of the questions on the surveys have been statements that the students need to rate on a scale of 1 to 4, where if they circle 1, they disagree, and if they circle 4, they agree. I asked the students to rate a few of the same statements that were on the first survey, to see if their feelings had changed. Two of the statements they had to rate on both surveys were “I have been giving the teacher my attention more quickly than I had before” and “Everyone in our class has been giving the teacher their attention more quickly than they had before.” I find it
interesting to see that on the second survey, all of the students circled either a 3 or a 4 for the statement that said “I have been giving the teacher my attention more quickly than I had before,” which I do not necessarily agree with. I have noticed that some of the students have, but there are still a few who do not. They’d rather finish their own conversation and then give me their attention. Coincidentally, not every student agreed with the next statement, which was the one saying “Everyone in our class has been giving the teacher their attention more quickly than they had before.” What I’m seeing is that every student says that they are responding more quickly, however only about half the class thinks that the whole class has been responding more quickly. Does every student think that it’s everyone else who is the problem? This contradiction is throwing a curveball in my inquiry. It may be something that is too big to tackle during this inquiry because it is a whole separate issue.

Next, I asked the students to rate how much they like each of the new techniques I’ve tried. The students were honest and they did tell me when they didn’t like any of them. I am appreciative because if most of the class didn’t like any of the strategies, I will stop using those. The point is to find strategies that they like and would like me to use in the classroom. The very last question of the second survey asked the students to name the technique that I’ve tried that they liked the best. Three of the five new techniques were favored—clapping pattern, turning off the lights and counting down. One student said that he/she thinks the clap works the best, but “it’s too first grade.” My feeling is, if it works well in our class, and most of the students like it, I will keep using it at least for now. I plan to continue these three techniques, while also trying several new ones to see what the students prefer and what works best.

Overall, looking around the room when I try new techniques, it seems like the students are enjoying trying something different. I see smiles and laughter—even if it’s just that they like
the novelty of the new ideas. I have been pleased that the number of attempts it has been taking
to get my class’ attention has gone down. Where it used to take me 2,3, even four tries, it has
been taking only 1. The total time has also decreased significantly.

One thing that I’ve found from both of my surveys, as well as from experiences in my
classroom, is that the students really do know what my expectations are, they just choose not to
make them their priority all the time. They would rather finish what they are doing or saying
before giving me their attention. The first time I tried the clap x5 pattern, (where the students
repeat it after me), I didn’t give them any warning, I just did it. The class responded
appropriately and became almost silent afterwards. This impressed me. I decided at that point to
review my expectations, just as a reminder, so that there was no one who could say later that they
didn’t know what they were supposed to do. I may need to figure out a way to make them
realize that while I do care what they’re saying and doing at their seats, when I need their
attention, I need it right away. I do think they are getting better at responding, and my data
proves this to be true also, however there are still times when there are a few little conversations
that continue once I’ve signaled that I need their attention. What might be a good way to do this?
# Appendix G

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Attention-Getters</th>
<th># of Attempts</th>
<th>Total Time (including the attention-getter)</th>
<th>Notes / Impact on Transition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASELINE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/19/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for quiet between calendar math and next activity</td>
<td>&quot;I'll wait for quiet&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30.51 sec</td>
<td>Students continue to talk, some catch on that I'm waiting to begin and tell others to be quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for quiet before reading the lunch count</td>
<td>&quot;I'll wait until it's quiet&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.12 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/08 PM</td>
<td>Wrapping up one activity and preparing to begin another</td>
<td>&quot;I'm waiting for quiet&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12.28 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for the line to get quiet so we can leave for lunch</td>
<td>Stop and Wait; silently count on fingers how long it takes class to get quiet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.54 sec</td>
<td>Some noticed and told others to stop talking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/21/08 PM</td>
<td>End of the day, trying to get all students back to their seats after packing up</td>
<td>&quot;I'm waiting for everyone to be IN their seat&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25/08 PM</td>
<td>Waiting for quiet on the rug to begin a lesson</td>
<td>&quot;I'm ready to begin&quot; then stopped and waited</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15.26 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25/08 PM</td>
<td>Standing in line, waiting for quiet so we can leave the room</td>
<td>Stop and wait; silently count on fingers how long it's taking class to get quiet</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26/08 PM</td>
<td>Waiting for attention during a whole class activity; students in their seats</td>
<td>&quot;Freeze and look at me&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Context</td>
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<td># of Attempts</td>
<td>Total Time (including the attention-getter)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/26/08 PM</td>
<td>Getting student attention to tell them to meet me on the rug</td>
<td>&quot;Please stop what you're doing now and meet me on the rug&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25 sec</td>
<td>Had to call specific names of students who continued to do things at their desks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/27/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for quiet before reading the lunch count</td>
<td>&quot;Our morning crew is ready to read lunch count&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.30 sec</td>
<td>But had to call specific names to stop talking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/27/08 PM</td>
<td>Returned from library, waiting for students to be in their seats and quiet</td>
<td>&quot;I need everyone in their seat and quiet so we can begin&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26.47 sec</td>
<td>Students who were ready asked what I was adding to the homework and I said I was waiting so I could tell everyone at once, rather than say it 21 times. Those students told other students to be quiet. Impact: Several students did not complete the assignment because they hadn't written it down. It took so long to get their attention, that the announcement was so close to the time they call buses, and students didn't write it down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/27/08 PM</td>
<td>Waiting for students to be in their seats and quiet to announce an addition to their homework</td>
<td>&quot;When you're in your seats and quiet I will tell you what you need to do for tomorrow&quot;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for quiet before reading the lunch count</td>
<td>&quot;We'll wait until it's quiet to read lunch count&quot;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.19 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/28/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for quiet on the rug to begin calendar math</td>
<td>&quot;I'm waiting&quot;: counted silently on fingers to show students how long it was taking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.01 sec</td>
<td>Lots of side conversation, many students tell other students to be quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/29/08 AM</td>
<td>Returning from math class, waiting for quiet to make an announcement about recess</td>
<td>&quot;When it's quiet I'll tell you what we're doing for recess. This is your own time you're taking up&quot;</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>30.24 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Attention-Getters</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/29/08 AM</td>
<td>Waiting for students to meet me on the rug for calendar</td>
<td>Please stop what you’re doing now and meet me on the rug. I’m waiting for you to follow my directions.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>28.17 sec</td>
<td>“Wait the students to meet me on the rug. Please stop what you’re doing now and meet me on the rug. I’m waiting for you to follow my directions.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4/08 AM</td>
<td>To tell class to come to rug for social studies</td>
<td>&quot;Freeze!&quot; &quot;10, 9, 8,7,...0&quot; Freeze x2; Count x1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13 sec</td>
<td>Tried clap x5 pattern. Students repeated my clap without even being told what to do or what was expected of them. Then, I went over my expectations (stop what you’re doing, eyes on me). We tried it again and everyone was silent- not a word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4/08 AM</td>
<td>Getting ready for lunch; returning to seats for a riddle</td>
<td>Clapping pattern (5 beat pattern, students repeat)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 sec</td>
<td>Quiet immediately; students smiling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4/08 AM</td>
<td>Before lining up for lunch</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.38 sec</td>
<td>Lights went out. One student initiated my clap x5 pattern, trying to be funny, and the rest of the class responded. Not sure whether they knew it was a student who started it or if they thought it was me. I announced that nobody except me may start that clap. Probably should have stated that when we went over expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/08 PM</td>
<td>Before lining up for Writers Express</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 sec</td>
<td>Once I get their attention, difficult to hold it for more than a few seconds by this time of day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/08 AM</td>
<td>During science, to come back together from an activity</td>
<td>“If you can hear me, snap once. If you can hear me, snap twice.”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.87 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/08 PM</td>
<td>End of the day, to get students to their seats</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.68 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Context</td>
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<td>Notes / Impact on Transition</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/5/08 AM</td>
<td>Coming back from computer lab, sitting on rug before calendar math</td>
<td>“If you can hear me, touch your head. If you can hear me touch your nose, etc”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.06 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/6/08 PM</td>
<td>Returning from lunch; to get quiet to tell students to come to the rug</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9 sec</td>
<td>Took a very long time, but it is the first day back after spring break and we had a guest teacher in the afternoon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/17/08 PM</td>
<td>To announce that students need to get to their seats until buses are called</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54.37 sec</td>
<td><strong>Took a very long time, but it is the first day back after spring break and we had a guest teacher in the afternoon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19/08 PM</td>
<td>While students were working on their social studies journals</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.44 sec</td>
<td>Most students chimed in on claps. Quick response. There was silence afterward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/19/08 AM</td>
<td>Between math and recess</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.97 sec</td>
<td>Students responded immediately, all quiet. Most eyes on me. I made my announcement, no one spoke while I was speaking. Very positive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/24/08 AM</td>
<td>Before spelling preview</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.19 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/24/08 PM</td>
<td>To get kids to meet me on the rug</td>
<td>Countdown</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/24/08 AM</td>
<td>To clean up art project</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/24/08 AM</td>
<td>Before recess</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16 sec.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/25/08 AM</td>
<td>To make morning work announcement</td>
<td>“I need eyes on me by 3--1, 2, 3”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 sec</td>
<td>A few kids continued to talk back by the animals, &quot;I need quiet now,&quot; they stop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/25/08 AM</td>
<td>Before reading lunch count</td>
<td>“I need quiet 5, 4, 3, 2, 1”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 sec</td>
<td>Got quiet, one student kept talking, Made eye contact and said &quot;Excuse me&quot; and he stopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/27/08 AM</td>
<td>Before reading lunch count</td>
<td>“I need quiet in 5, 4, 3, 2, 1”</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 sec</td>
<td>Had to call 1 student by name to stop talking after countdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/27/08 PM</td>
<td>While students are packing up</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9 sec</td>
<td>Not all eyes on me, but quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Context</td>
<td>Attention-Getters</td>
<td># of Attempts</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/27/08 PM</td>
<td>To get class' attention after returning from lunch</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7 sec</td>
<td>It seems to become more difficult to hold their attention after lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1/08 PM</td>
<td>During social studies, to stop give a time warning during an activity</td>
<td>Clapping pattern</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1/08 AM</td>
<td>Students talking on rug; to get their attention to begin social studies lesson</td>
<td>Hand in air and wait</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.47 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/1/08 PM</td>
<td>While students are packing up</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10 sec</td>
<td>My mentor and I reminded students what lights out means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/8/08 PM</td>
<td>After lunch to get class' attention to back of room to begin lesson</td>
<td>Lights out</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 sec</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

Inquiry Brief
Susan Feinstein

Teaching Context
I am currently an intern in a fifth grade classroom at Houserville Elementary School. Houserville is one of ten elementary schools in the State College Area School District, a large district located in central Pennsylvania. This small school, housing grades three through five, contains nine classes, three of each grade.

My fifth grade class consists of 21 students, 11 males and 10 females. In terms of behavior patterns, the majority of my students are cooperative and compliant. I have three male students who have been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), which at times makes it difficult for them to control their impulses and focus on the current task. I will refer to these students as Students A, B and C. Student A spends significant time in the Learning Support room, therefore is not in the classroom with us for much of the day. We have not had any major issues with Students B and C. Their ADHD does not negatively influence their behavior often. For the first two-thirds of the school year, a fourth student in my class whom we will call Student D, often seemed distracted and inattentive, which seriously affected his success in the fifth grade. Student D was evaluated and diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome, one of the conditions found on the autism spectrum. At the end of March, he began going to the Learning Support room to receive assistance in writing, math and organization.

In my classroom, there is a rather interesting distribution of social relationships. Eight of my students would be considered leaders and nine considered followers. The remaining four students are pleasers. They look to do what they can to satisfy other students, as well as adults.

This particular group of students is very talkative, especially during transition times. They generally use the time in the morning, during activities, and at the end of the day to socialize with peers.

Rationale
As I began to teach more in my classroom, I found that a great deal of time was being wasted at the beginning of transitional times when I was trying to get my class’ attention. My students seemed to view transitions as a time to socialize. When told to switch from one activity to another, they would start talking to friends, which was not what I had directed them to do. Often, this increased the amount of time required to transition from one activity to another, resulting in a significant loss of instructional time. Many students took a long time to begin working after the directions were given and often asked questions about the directions.

I felt that the lack of an effective attention-getting strategy was impacting our productivity during transitions. I had tried telling the students to freeze or to stop and look at me; however, I was not getting their attention the first time. I had to repeat myself as many as five times, until I had the class’ attention. I didn’t believe that the strategies I used were as effective as they could be. This made me wonder what type of attention-getters would be effective and age-appropriate to make transition times more efficient and maximize instructional time. It seems like most of the attention-getting strategies that our instructors have used have been geared towards the primary grades. Therefore, the goal of this inquiry is to find the most effective attention-getting strategies that my fifth grade class responds to the first time.
Wondering
How can the use of positive, age-appropriate attention-getting techniques maximize instructional time?

Sub-Wonderings
- What signals work to get the attention of fifth graders?
  - Data Collection: student surveys, teacher surveys, observation chart, reflective journals
- What signals do other teachers use?
  - Data Collection: Teacher survey
- How do more structured attention-getters impact the atmosphere and expectations during transitions?
  - Observation chart
- What are my students’ perceptions of transition times?
  - Data Collection: student surveys

Data Collection Ideas
- Teacher survey
  - What types of attention getting and transition strategies do you use?
- Student surveys
  - Baseline—how they feel about attention getting and transition times now.
    Questions/Topics to Include:
    - Do you ever have to ask other students to be quiet?
    - Do other students ever have to ask you to be quiet?
    - Do you ever have to ask other students to be quiet when the teacher is trying to get the class’ attention?
    - Do other students ever have to ask you to be quiet when the teacher is trying to get the class’ attention?
    - How would you like the teacher to get your attention?
  - During experimentation—after trying new strategies, ask students how they feel about the new strategies and whether or not they think they improve our classroom atmosphere
    - Try different attention-getters (then ask my students which they liked best, why, etc)
  - After experimentation—how do you feel about the new strategies at this point (Strategies that worked the best during experimentation and had best student response.) Do you still think they’re effective? Have they become less effective because they are not new anymore?
- Observations
  - Attention getting: context, number of attempts, technique, time it took to get class’ attention, notes on that attention getting technique
- Literature as Data
Projected Timeline

February
- Feb. 21-29
  - Collect baseline data
    - Observation chart
    - Student survey (attention getting and transitions)
    - Teacher survey

March
- Mar. 3-6
  - Begin collecting experimental data
    - Try attention getters
      - Student Survey
      - Observation chart
      - Reflective Journals

- Mar. 10-14
  - Continue to research attention-getting strategies

- Mar. 17-21
  - Continue collecting experimental data
    - Student survey
    - Observation chart
    - Reflective journals

- Mar. 24-28
  - Continue collecting experimental data
    - Student survey
    - Observation chart
    - Reflective journals

April
- Mar. 31-Apr. 4
  - Begin data analysis
    - Compare experimental data to baseline data

- Apr. 7-11
  - Complete data analysis
  - Draft paper

- Apr. 14-22
  - Edit and revise paper
  - Prepare presentation