Feb. 15: Journal #1
At the end of last semester, I vowed to tackle the issue of class participation. In my sophomore reading class, it can only be described as chaotic. Students were not raising their hands. Three or four students would talk at once. A comment made by student A would provoke a counterresponse by student B and then degenerate into a shouting match. This might have lasted less than a minute but distracted everyone’s attention from the topic—whether it was the challenges of being a single mom or having a mixed race background. A

About two weeks ago, I distributed a float chart explaining procedures for participating in class to my sophomore reading class and one of my British Literature classes. I opened the lesson asking students why it is important for them to raise their hands during class discussions. I wrote their responses on the board. Many of the responses covered what negative behavior looks like. They worked in pairs to come up with two examples of negative class participation and two examples of positive class participation.

Feb. 16: Journal #2
Today is another class discussion day. I ask students to take out their float charts so they have a written reminder of appropriate behavior during these discussions. I’m surprised because about 50 percent of the class has these charts. The discussion begins but some students are just blurtning out their answers without raising their hands. I ask for the entire class to take a time out from the discussion. I ask the entire class what they need to do before talking. One student raises his hand which in and of itself provides the answer. I notice some students about to start blurtning out an answer and other students correcting them, sort of whispering, “You need to raise your hand.” I breathe a sigh of relief because at least they are starting to get it. The discussion is an important one because we are reading the first story in a unit on selected war readings.

Even at the beginning of this semester, a few students expressed frustration about my response to these chaotic discussions. They said they really enjoy the discussions and don’t want me to completely abandon the idea of having them. I’m still worried though about students remembering to raise their hands. I decide to make a transparency of the float chart just in case. If I use the overhead with the transparency, this is a large, highly visible reminder of my expectations during class discussions. It’s sort of a signal that they need to switch gears.

Feb. 24: Journal #3
Today, I have asked one of the classes that received the classroom procedure float chart to create posters with inspirational messages or slogans about positive/appropriate class participation in class. Before I ask students to begin working, we brainstorm as a whole class again about what positive class participation looks like. Then I ask them for some slogan ideas. These included:

- Pay Attention or You’ll Get a Detention
- Take Responsibility Consult a Dictionary!
- Think Before You Speak

I passed out an assignment sheet explaining that each poster should have a slogan and a related image/illustration and some samples of education posters with inspirational messages. I gave students the choice to work in pairs or independently on this project. The students actually seemed to really enjoy this activity because it provides a creative outlet. A few students finished posters during the same class period; others opted to take them home.
BUILDING EXPECTATIONS

Sample Lesson Plan

Expectation: Be appropriate during whole class discussions

Location: Classroom setting with teacher and peers

Activity:
1. Independent brainstorming on positive and negative ways to participate
2. View/Review flow chart for classroom participation procedures

Why this is important: Ask, "Why should students raise their hands when a class of 25 is discussing a topic or reviewing for a quiz?" Response: Too many people will be talking at once. It would be very difficult to teach.

Negative Example:
Ask, "What does it look like when too many people are talking/shouting at once?"

Positive Example:
Ask, "What does it look like when a student raises his or her hand and waits for the teacher to call on him or her?"

Practice: Students practice negative example first then positive. Tell the students, "Remember not to do anything that will get you sent to the office. Also remember when I raise my hand you are to stop what you are doing! When I raise my hand what are you to do?"

Discussion on short story. Students will receive extra points for raising their hands and waiting to be called on.

How will you know they have learned the skill?
(Short term and long term) The students raising their hands during that day's class discussion of short story about a disabled Vietnam vet. Long term: the students reverting to old, negative behavior patterns during class discussions? They should be able to catch themselves as they are about to blurt out an answer—self-police.

Next Steps:
Have students create posters with inspirational messages or slogans about positive/appropriate classroom participation.
PARR in the Classroom

Be Productive
Take notes in class using AVID or other format.

Be Appropriate
Raise your hand during class discussions.

Be Respectful
Provide positive, constructive feedback to classmates during discussions.

Be Responsible
Come to class prepared with a pen or pencil, a notebook, handouts and books.
## Procedures for Speaking in Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does your question/comment relate to everyone or just you?</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>NO</strong>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Save it for later! <em>(After Class)</em>&lt;br&gt;&amp; Step 3a</td>
<td><strong>NO</strong>&lt;br&gt;Does your question/comment help us accomplish our objective?&lt;br&gt;<strong>Yes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Save it for later! <em>(After Class)</em>&lt;br&gt;&amp; Step 3a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 3**
- Raise your hand and wait to be called on.

**Step 3a**
- If so many people have their hands raised that the wait may cause you to forget your question/comment, jot down a brief reminder.