

TEACHING TIPS

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Teaching Tip 7: Stopping an Activity

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How:

1. If you have a small enough group that you can be heard by everyone, just say something like 'OK, you can stop there. Well done everyone. Thank you, you can stop now. Yes, that includes you, Giovanni!' Then give the students a few seconds to finish their sentences until the room falls quiet. Let them finish what they were saying.
2. If you have a big group so you won't be heard if you try talk over everyone then don't bother to shout yourself hoarse, simply have a certain place in the classroom where you go and stand when you want everyone's attention and go and stand in it. The students will stop talking very soon. (I stand in front of the board, facing the class which gets their attention because for the previous ten minutes or so I've been cruising round the room monitoring). You can explain to students at the beginning of the course, 'when I want your attention I will stand here and you will stop what you are doing and listen to me because I don't like shouting for your attention. Is that clear?'

When:

1. It's not important if the students have finished the activity - it's the taking part that counts, as they say.
2. It's a good idea to stop things while they are going swingingly because it means you never hit the students' boredom threshold. Leave them wanting more and enthusiasm will remain high. On the other hand, don't stop it too soon because not everyone will have had a chance to speak or guess the answers yet so they'll feel cheated.

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