



Using an Appropriate Voice Tone

Many times students get into trouble because of *how* they say things rather than *what* they say. Other times, students continue to use loud “outside” voices inside the classroom or building or when working in groups rather than speaking in softer voices that should be used indoors. Helping students “read the cues” of a situation can help them learn how to adjust their voice tone so that it is appropriate for what is happening.

The objectives of the lesson for students include:

- learning the steps of the skill of “Using an Appropriate Voice Tone.”
- practicing the skill.
- generalizing the use of the skill to different places and different people.

Introduce the Skill

As you begin the lesson, show the steps to the skill of “Using an Appropriate Voice Tone” on the overhead. Stand by one student, and in a loud voice, begin the lesson by reviewing the steps.

Ask the student how he or she felt when you came over and spoke in such a loud voice tone. Ask the other students how they might have felt in the same situation.

Ask students to share times when they have used a voice tone that was either too loud or too soft for a specific situation.

NOTE: Responses might include whispering when talking to someone in class, yelling at friends down the hallway as they were coming into

the classroom, or talking loudly in a group when they were supposed to be working quietly.

Describe the Appropriate Behavior

Provide students with the behavioral steps for the skill of “Using an Appropriate Voice Tone.”

NOTE: Steps can be posted on a bulletin board or shown on an overhead, etc. Adapt the steps to fit your expectations and the needs of your students.

SAY: “Here are the steps of the skill of ‘Using an Appropriate Voice Tone.’”

1. **Listen to the level of the voices around you.**
2. **Change your voice to match.**
3. **Watch and listen for visual and verbal cues and adjust your voice as needed.**

SAY: “These are the steps we are going to use for the skill of ‘Using an Appropriate Voice Tone’ in this class and building.”

Give a Reason

Ask the students to provide reasons for why they think it might be important to use an appropriate voice tone, following these steps. Here are some examples of reasons to use in case students have difficulty thinking of ones on their own:

- People are more likely to listen to what you have to say.
- You don’t disturb the other students while they are trying to work.
- People can hear you when you are talking to them.

Practice

Choose one or more of the following activities to complete your lesson by allowing the students to practice the skill.

1. Have students tell their partner the steps of the skill.
2. **Journaling ideas**
 - Ask students to write about a time when they used an inappropriate voice tone (e.g., used a loud voice in the movie theater or the library). Have students include how they felt at the time and how other people in the situation responded.

- Ask students to write about a time when they “read the cues” of a situation and used an appropriate voice tone (e.g., the classroom stayed quiet when a student came in late or they spoke up loud enough for people to hear during a class discussion). Have students include how they felt at the time and how other people in the situation responded.
3. **Role-play:** Ask students to pair up and practice using an appropriate voice tone in the following scenarios.
- You enter the classroom late and the other students are taking a test.
 - You are on the playground when someone falls off the swings. You need the teacher to come over and help you.
 - The teacher asks students to work in groups to complete an assignment.
 - You are at one end of the hallway when you see a friend you want to talk to at the other end.
 - You are at a school basketball game and the cheerleaders are trying to get everyone to cheer for your team.
 - You are at work and a customer asks you for some information about an item.

SAY: “Thank you for completing the practice activity. We will continue to discuss the skill of ‘Using an Appropriate Voice Tone’ for the rest of the week.”

NOTE: Each day of the week, review the steps of the skill, discuss why it is important to use the skill, and practice when possible.

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