4 Group Management Tools
for Teachers, Trainers, Instructors, Facilitators

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Group management, or the lack of it, can make or break a class or training. Fortunately, effective group management can be simple, easy, and efficient.
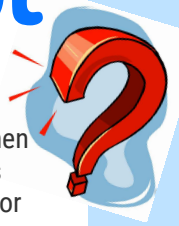
Signals

The purpose of a signal is to get learners' attention before, during, or after an activity. A signal can be visual (a raised hand), auditory (music), kinesthetic (a repeated clap). It is important to *explain and demonstrate* the signal at the beginning of the class so that everyone knows what it is and what is expected of them when the signal is used.

Parking Lot

The Parking Lot is a wall chart on which learners can "park" their questions. It is especially useful when questions come up during the class that either merit further discussion or that do not directly relate to the content. Suggest that the learner write the question on a sticky note and then "park" the written question on the Parking Lot for later discussion.

Signs

Make one or two signs before the class. Use large-sized paper with really big, bold black print. On one sign, print: "3 minutes left for discussion." On another, print: "1 minute to wrap up." Towards the end of table group discussions, walk around the room holding up one sign. You only have to make sure one person at each table reads the sign – that person will tell the others in his/her group what the sign says.

Timer

Many trainers use a timer app on their digital devices to time each activity and to signal when the activity is over. it helps if the digital device used is large enough for the class to see. You can also ask for a volunteer to be the "timekeeper" for a whole class activity. Or you can ask table groups to choose their own "table-timekeeper" when different activities are assigned to different table groups.

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From: *"The Ten-Minute Trainer"* by Sharon Bowman