Joe Law  
Observation Date: 3 December 200X  
La Cumbre JHS

1:15 Bell rings. “Everyone listen up, please.” Some students approach ST to speak to him.
1:16 Noticing empty desks, ST: “Where is everyone?” Then, “I'm handing out a sheet; you'll have to listen to the instructions, but it's pretty easy.”
1:17 ST waits in silence for attention. “I need you to quiet down. I know it's Monday and you're tired.” Proceeds to explain the layout of the graphic organizer. He asks for a volunteer for the first box; student offers “president” without raising a hand. The class continues to fill in the rest; sometimes students raise hands, at other times, they do not.
1:25 ST underlines that the important concepts are federalism and checks and balances. He points out branches and levels and used transportation of an example of federalism: NTSB, DMV, and local CalTrans.
1:26 ST: “I’m going to wait for your attention for the next set of instructions.” After some seconds pass, “I want you to take three minutes to draw a picture representing check and balances. Some people learn better when they draw.”
1:27 ST: “Let’s think of some ideas together.” However, students immediately ask some clarifying questions and no group brainstorming follows.
1:29 ST circulates and works with individual students. Students discuss a weekend part from different points in the room.
1:32 Student: “Will you please draw a tree for me?” ST: “I’d be happy to draw you a tree.” A girl gets out of her seat and another moves her seat; the ST asks her to return and then notices others and asks everyone to return to their own seats.
1:34 ST: “I need everyone’s eyes up here.” He then corrects individual students.
1:38 The same process with “federalism.” ST asks for possible ideas, tells students they are to stay in their seats. Immediately students begin talking. ST circulates.
1:40 A girl gets out of her seat to visit another.
1:42 ST asks student to help in handing out material (flashcard sheets). The students are talking among themselves about various topics.
1:46 ST: “Please sit down; were going to move on. Put the flashcards in your binders.”
1:47 “Go ahead and get the flash cards ready.”
1:51 Student yells out “Oliva” to request help; ST goes over to assist.
1:53 ST turns class over to cooperating teacher.

Commendations:
1. Using silence after "I need you to quiet down" can be very effective, far more effective than actually raising your voice. Your patient waiting for compliance with the request paid off: they became very quiet.
2. Very nice job regarding the graphic organizer, Joe. Your using transportation as an example of federalism was very good, too.
3. You learned from the checks and balances activity and modified how you introduced the next one: When you moved to having them draw something to represent federalism you made certain you did some brainstorming together beforehand and then communicated to the students that there was to be no talking as they worked on the drawing.

Recommendations
1. This follows on the last commendation. You communicated your expectation but did nothing when the students immediately began talking. My principal recommendation is that you make certain you are consistent. If you want students to raise their hands, then make sure they raise their hands (I could not tell the custom in this class); if you expect them to work silently, hold them accountable for that, etc. Your expectations relative to their behavior were confusing, Joe.
2. Do not allow a student to address you without your proper title; it is a quick way to blur boundaries and lose your authority as a teacher.

Joe, it's a challenging class: that's obvious. Given what a difficulty group it is, I think you did well. Even so, I think you would serve yourself and them better by having more structure.

Please share a copy of this with your site supervisor. Thanks for having me in your class.

Only good things to you,

M.T. Connell, SJ