

The Modified Hero Procedure

The Hero procedure offers an incentive to an entire group based upon the behavior or performance of one or more of its members. It can be a powerful tool to teach routines, set a positive tone and create community.

Standard Procedure

1. Put all the students' names in a jar (use popsicle sticks with names on them, poker chips, etc).
2. Tell the students that you are going to teach them a new game: "The Hero Game."
3. Explain that you will pick the "hero" who will earn an incentive for the entire group (say, 15 minutes of extra recess – which is coming up immediately after this activity). You do not have to use the word "Hero," but many students do like it.
4. Introduce an academic task and with the students, review the requirements of the activity. Be sure to include academic as well as behavioral expectations such as voice volume, in-seat/out of seat expectations, what "being done" looks like, routines to do when finished etc. It is usually best for the students to be involved in reviewing these expectations, as they will typically be more stringent in their expectations than you would be! Remember, the goal of this procedure is to teach routines and build community. Academic rigor, while important, should not be your focus during this procedure.
5. Tell the students that when the activity is completed, you will pick a name out of the jar and if that chosen student has completed the task to criteria, then the entire class – even those who did not follow all of the rules or complete the task – will get the incentive.
6. Set the timer for the time allotted for the task and tell the students to begin.
7. While the task is being completed, monitor all the students, utilizing any redirections or classroom management systems that you have in place.
8. When the timer goes off, tell everyone to stop what they are doing and to attend to you.
9. Pick up the jar and pull a student's name out of the jar. If that student has completed the task to criteria, the entire class – everyone – gets the incentive. (I suggest you make this a rather dramatic moment.....).
10. After the "Hero" is chosen, make a big deal about this, have students clap/thank the hero, etc.
11. Immediately provide access to the incentive for the entire class.
12. Keep public data on the "Hero's" that have been chosen over time (great opportunity for data lessons/graphing).

13. **Here is the intervention: You must ALWAYS pick a student who has completed the task to criteria!!! You must be a little sneaky so you don't get caught because I assure you, some students will begin to suspect that the game is rigged. No one ever loses at the Hero Game.....**

14. If you've done the intervention correctly, you will typically find that students will ask you to "Play the Hero Game" all the time – and you will see most, if not all students reaching criteria almost 100% of the time.

15. If a student typically has behavioral issues and happens to complete the task to criteria, be sure to pick their name as much as seems reasonable.

16. As things move forward, you can change the game to include "Teams of Heroes" by picking two (or even three students) as the Heroes.....

Common Mistakes:

1. Making the initial task/criteria too difficult for the entire group (differentiate!)
2. Neglecting to review all of the criteria before starting (behavioral and academic)
3. Not altering the incentives. Recess or a "Brain Break" may not be that exciting for your particular cohort. You must find activities that can act as incentives.
4. Not providing the incentive immediately following the completion of the task
5. Not using a timer
6. ***Choosing to not give the incentive to students who are not the hero because of their behavior.** For example: John is the hero and reaches criteria, but Carol didn't do her work, so Carol doesn't receive the incentive. Remember, if the Hero reaches criteria, everyone gets the incentive (unless issues of safety are of concern).
7. Poor marketing/implementation. If done correctly, you will have students clamoring to be the next hero. The Hero procedure should be exciting and fun for the students. If you don't find this, you should have someone evaluate how you are implementing the program.
8. The Hero procedure may sound simple, but if done incorrectly, it can exacerbate behavior problems in the classroom. If you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to email me for more information or to set up a consultation.

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