

Cold Calling

Actively engage all students in the thinking process



DOUGLEMOV

A cold call is an invitation to a student to join a conversation. We want students to be constantly thinking and feel accountable. If we socialise them to think they'll be more likely to learn.¹

What is it and why is it effective?

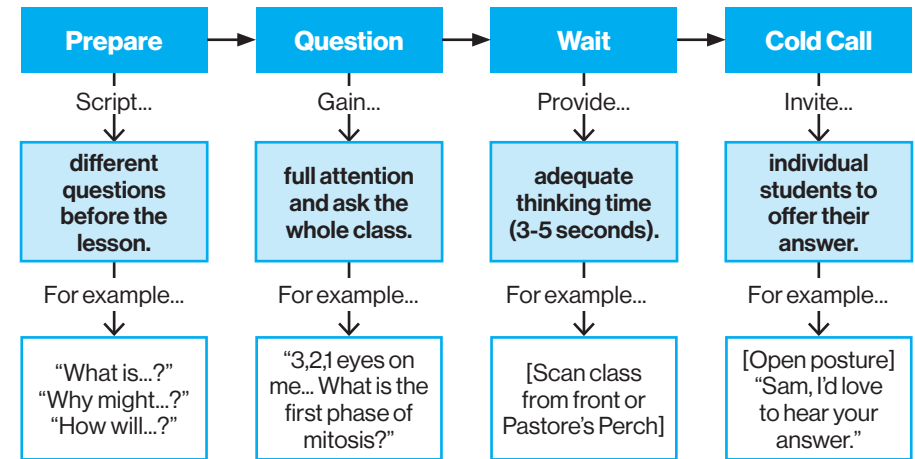
Cold calling (a strategy developed by Doug Lemov in *Teach Like a Champion*) is used to engage students and encourage active participation from everyone in the class. It involves the teacher strategically selecting students to answer questions or provide responses, rather than relying on volunteers or students who raise their hands. The teacher “calls” on students without advance notice, which creates a more inclusive and participatory learning environment as students know they could be asked to participate at any time. Cold calling ensures that all students are actively involved in retrieval practice and that they are held accountable for their participation. It can be a valuable tool for promoting thinking, preparing all students to contribute, and preventing a small group of students from dominating classroom interactions.

How do I introduce cold calling?

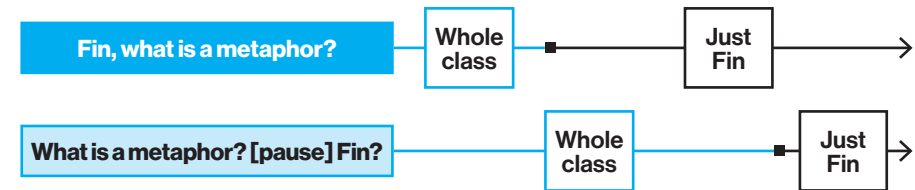
- 1 Explain the rationale for cold calling to the class before implementing it and rehearse the process so that students become familiar with it.
- 2 Lemov explains cold calling is not about catching students out. It is about encouraging participation from all students and should be friendly, warm and inviting.
- 3 Plan and script key questions to make them desirably difficult. Decide the modes of participation (think, pair, share / show-me boards) you will use in advance.



How do I implement it?



How do I make sure everyone is thinking?²



What are some effective adaptations?

Written Responses: To reduce anxiety of being called upon, encourage students to jot down their answers to the question in their books or on mini-whiteboards before sharing with the class.

Tip-Off: Before asking a question, tip off which student (or group of students) you’d like to answer. For instance, “John and Amir, and Emily and Kiara; I’m going to ask both pairs about the faces on 3D shapes. Watch this example...”

Think, Pair, Share: Create a safe, low-stakes space for students to make mistakes before you cold call. TPS allows students to rehearse an idea before sharing and reduces students’ anxiety.



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If students don’t think, they can’t learn. Cold calling as a routine is the most effective way to maximise thinking.³

References

1. **Lemov, D. (2010).** *Teach Like A Champion: 49 Techniques That Put Students On The Path To College (K-12)*. John Wiley & Sons.
2. **Taylor, L. (2021).** 'A Graphic Representation of Timing the Name In Cold Call'. Retrieved from: <https://teachlikeachampion.org/blog/a-graphic-representation-of-timing-the-name-in-cold-call/>
3. **Sherrington, T. (2021).** 'Cold Calling: The #1 strategy for inclusive classrooms – remote and in person.' Blog. Retrieved from: <https://teacherhead.com/2021/02/07/cold-calling-the-1-strategy-for-inclusive-classrooms-remote-and-in-person/#:~:text=What%27s%20the%20key%20to%20cold,a%20warm%20invitation%20to%20participate.>