

# Cold Calling

Promote active participation, accountability and thinking from all students.

**C**old calling (developed by Doug Lemov in 'Teach Like a Champion') is used to engage students and encourage active participation from everyone. It involves the teacher randomly 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. Cold calling is a way to ensure that all students are actively involved in retrieval practice and that they are held accountable for their understanding and participation. It can be a valuable tool for promoting thinking, encouraging all students to be prepared to contribute, and preventing a small group of students from dominating classroom interactions.

## How do I introduce cold calling?

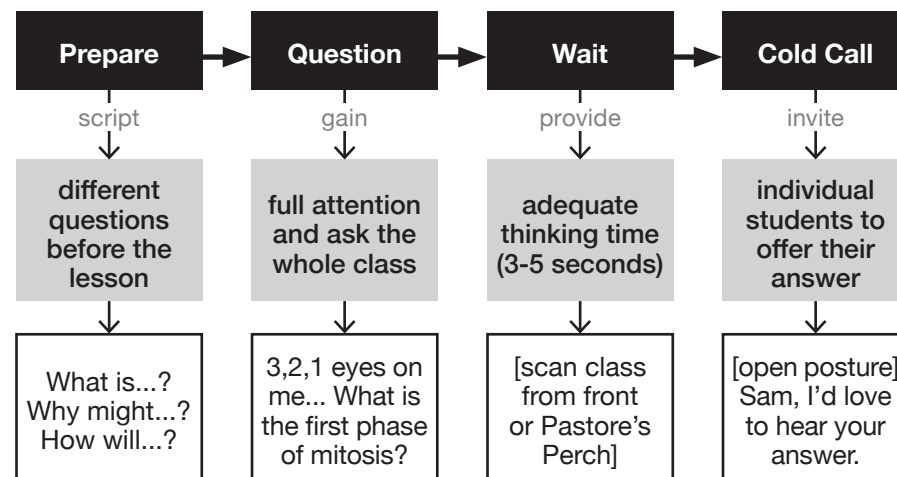
- 1 Explain the rationale for cold calling to the class before implementing it and rehearse the process so that students become familiar with it.
- 2 Lemov explains cold calling is not about catching students out. It is about encouraging participation from all students and should be friendly, warm and 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.



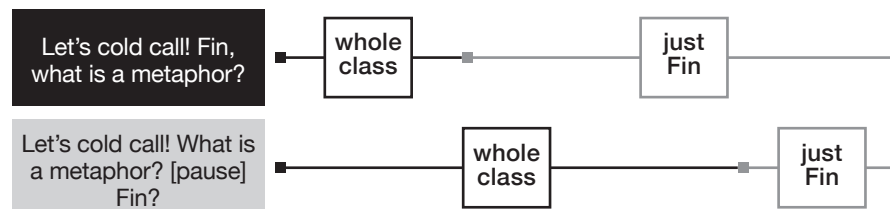
Doug Lemov

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

## How do I implement cold calling?



## How do I make sure everyone is thinking?



## What are some effective adaptations?

**Written Responses:** Extend thinking time and get students to write down their answer to the question in their books or on mini whiteboards before sharing with the class. This helps to reduce anxiety of being called upon.

**Tip-Off:** Before asking a question, tip off which student (or group of students) you'd like to answer. For example, "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. Cold calling pairs is less intimidating than asking individual students.



Tom Sherrington

*"As we know from Willingham, 'memory is the residue of thought'. If students don't think, they can't learn. Cold calling as a routine is the most effective way to maximise thinking."*

### Read More:

'Teach Like a Champion' by Doug Lemov  
Cold Calling Blogs by Tom Sherrington  
Diagram by Luke Tayle