



EPHS Teaching and Learning Blog

Questioning - Cold Call



WHAT'S THE IDEA?

- Cold Calling is a technique that creates an expectation that all students are ready to answer every question. This promotes attention, engagement and participation.



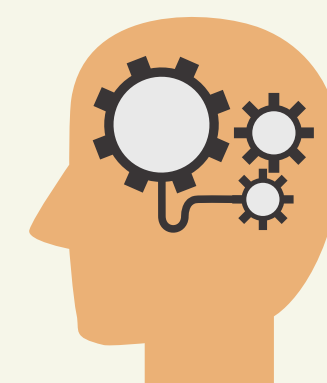
WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

- Developed by Doug Lemov in *Teach Like A Champion*, Cold Calling is designed to promote active thinking during whole-class questioning. Rather than asking for a volunteer, the teacher poses a question, pauses (allowing all students to think and answer in their heads) and then calls on a particular student to respond. The benefits of this technique include: increased thinking and participation in learning; improved momentum and pace; more strategic checking of mastery; and greater inclusion. Lemov explores a range of variables for this strategy, which all yield different results. These include lengthening the pause and thinking time, alternating between 'hands-up' and 'handsdown', and experimenting with when to name the student who will answer.



WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS?

- Lemov suggests that the question teachers should ask themselves is: 'How can I adapt my decisions about which students I call on to help all my students pay better attention?' Use Cold Calling little and often – it should become a habit for teachers and students. Try using it at the beginning of a lesson to set the tone and expectation that everyone will get involved. Deliver cold calls in a calm, measured manner, demonstrating the expectation that everyone is prepared to answer. Follow this through too: make sure all students are called on periodically, using a tracking system where appropriate. You can scaffold students' responses by starting with simple questions and developing the level of challenge with increasingly harder ones. Consider 'Show Calling', where students are ready to show their work at any time, encouraging them to follow-on from – and develop – their peers' answers. Try mixing this with other techniques, such as 'Call and Response', where the teacher asks a question and the class all call out the answer.



TOP TIP

- Formulate question sequences in advance, as part of lesson planning. Think carefully about what wording will provide the most understanding and challenge.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

LEMOV, D. 2015. *TEACH LIKE A CHAMPION 2.0 : 62 TECHNIQUES THAT PUT STUDENTS ON THE PATH TO COLLEGE*. JOSSEY-BASS. SAN FRANCISCO, USA.