

COLD CALLING EXPLAINED

ACTIVELY ENGAGE ALL STUDENTS IN THE THINKING PROCESS

WHAT IS COLD CALLING?

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. Cold calling ensures that all students are actively involved in retrieval practice, **A** which is when information is effortfully pulled back into working memory (WM), strengthening retention and reinforcing learning. It can be a valuable tool for promoting thinking, preparing all students to contribute, and preventing groups of students from dominating in class.

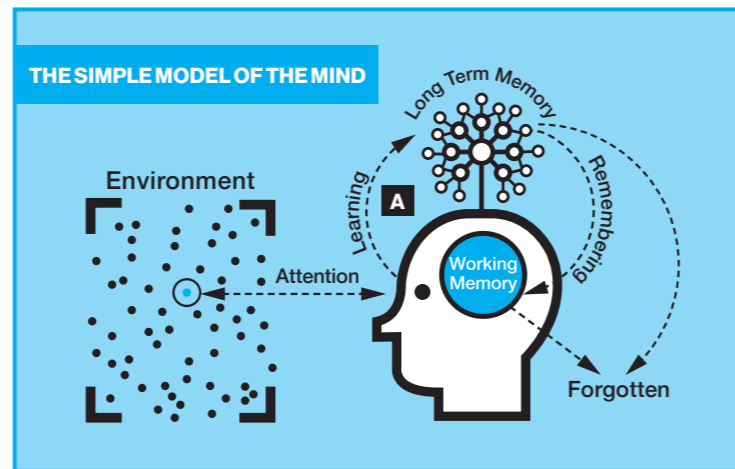


DIAGRAM INTERPRETED AND CREATED BY OLIVER CAVIGLIOLI



DOUG LEMOV

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.



TOM SHERRINGTON

Cold calling is just one of a whole repertoire of techniques that weave together. Whilst it's really important to keep the core idea tightly defined - to avoid lethal mutation where it morphs into whatever anyone wants it to define it as - these variations help to adapt the core strategy to work effectively in a particular context.

HOW DO I INTRODUCE IT?

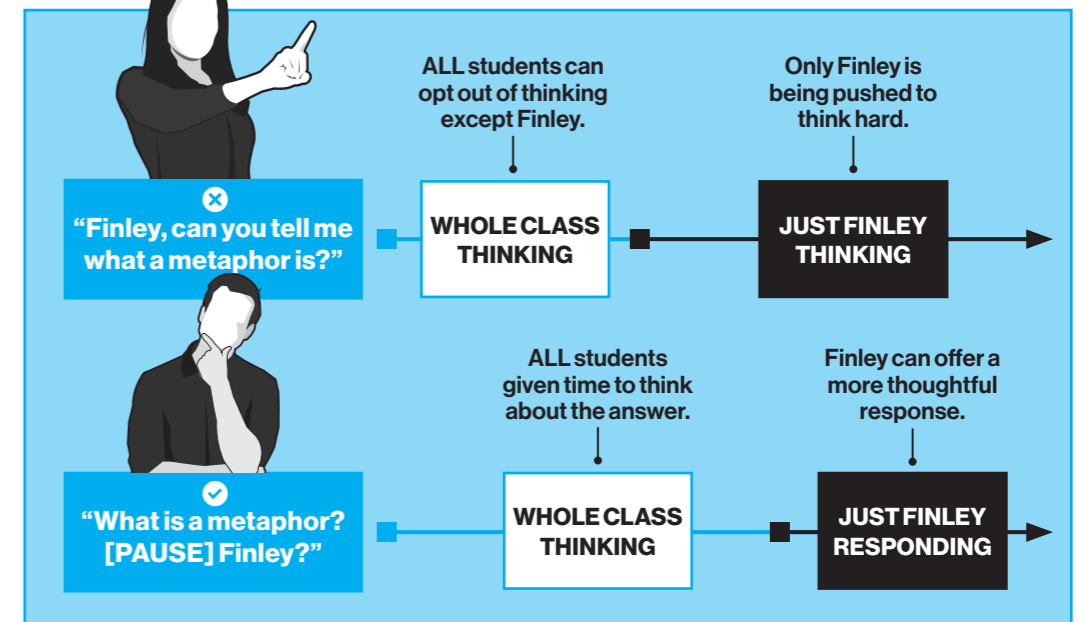
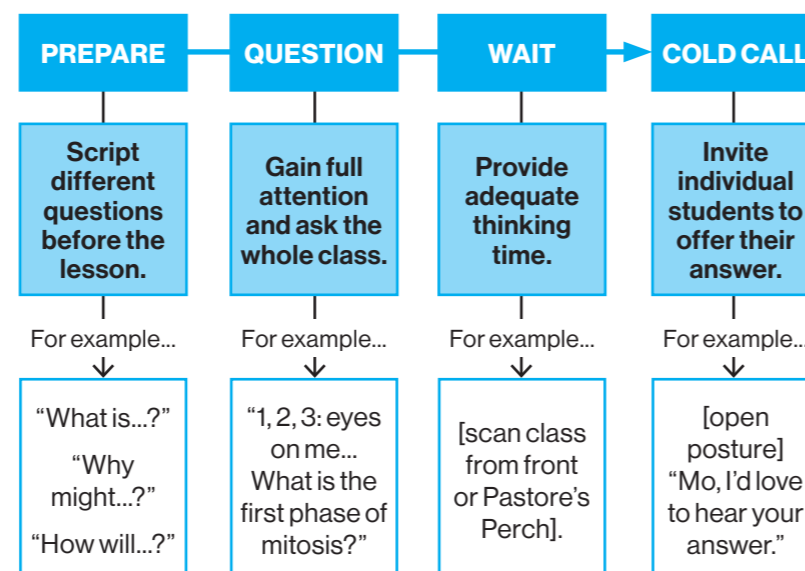
When introducing cold calling to a class, it's essential to adhere to the core principles of the strategy. Explain the strategy to the class and ensure students know the purpose and rationale behind it - that it's meant to engage everyone in the learning process, not to single anyone out. The following principles help ensure cold calling is implemented effectively to ensure all students can think and participate.



- 1 CLEARLY EXPLAIN RATIONALE FIRST
- 2 CONSISTENTLY USE ADEQUATE WAIT TIME
- 3 KEEP THE COLD CALLING PROCESS 'WARM'
- 4 MIX UP THE VARIATIONS OF THE STRATEGY
- 5 SCRIPT QUESTIONS BEFORE THE LESSON

HOW DO I IMPLEMENT COLD CALLING?

When implementing cold calling, it takes practice and intentional planning. Start by preparing a range of questions before the lesson, ensuring they cover a spectrum from short recall questions to higher-order questions that require deeper thinking on the material. Use a familiar signal to get students' attention and ensure they are actively listening. After posing the question make sure you provide enough time for students to think (this depends on the complexity of the question). Finally, warmly invite selected students to share their answers.



A GRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF TIMING IN COLD CALLING INSPIRED BY LUKE TAYLER

HOW DO I ENSURE ALL STUDENTS ARE THINKING?

Giving adequate thinking time after posing a question is crucial to ensure students can engage in active retrieval and respond effectively. Research indicates that allowing students 3 to 5 seconds to think before responding significantly enhances the quality of their answers. However, there is no magic number, as the optimal wait time depends on the complexity of the task and the students' background knowledge.

HOW CAN I VARY THE USE OF COLD CALLING?

Choose the cold calling variation that best suits your class and content by considering the needs of your students and the complexity of the material. Tom Sherrington outlines several effective variations of the strategy, each designed to maximise thinking from all students.

1 PAIRED TALK: The Pair-share method is a highly productive approach before cold calling individual students. As Tom Sherrington explains, it gives students time to talk through their ideas, rehearsing explanations and the use of key terminology, airing any doubts or uncertainties. This can be done through Turn and Talk or even Think, Pair, Share strategies to ensure students have a safe space to discuss before sharing publicly.

2 PEER-REVIEW CALL: After a student answers a question, cold call another student to provide feedback or to elaborate on the first student's response. This encourages active listening and hard thinking, as students must evaluate their peer's answer before giving their own. Furthermore, it can also be a way to get students to connect ideas or build on their knowledge of concepts. Use phrases like: "What else could Sam say here, Evie?"

3 WRITTEN PREPARATION: This involves having students write down their answers before sharing them verbally. This can boost confidence, especially for students who may be hesitant to speak up. By giving them time to organise their thoughts and jot down responses, you keep the stakes low so students feel more safe. This method ensures that all students, including those who might need extra time, can participate in the lesson.

4 PRE-CALL A STUDENT: This involves notifying a student in advance that they'll be invited to answer a question. This gives them time to prepare mentally before sharing. By reducing the element of surprise, Pre-Call helps build confidence, especially for students who might be anxious about being put on the spot. This approach also encourages deeper thinking, as the selected student is more likely to pay close attention to their answer.