

Calling On Students

Overview

Focusing on student access to the classroom discourse so **ALL students** have a regular opportunity to talk in class is a foundational part of building an equitable classroom culture. Every student should have an equitable opportunity to engage in classroom discussions. How teachers call on students influences equitable engagement. Careful observations of classroom discourse can provide specific and useful evidence of what this looks like in the classroom.

The purpose of this document is to provide background information on calling on strategies and provide an observation tool for observation use. To fully understand Calling On as an observational tool, follow these steps:

- **Step One:** This is a refresher of the calling on strategies teachers use in the classroom. Specifically, we provide resources for calling on students in the classroom. This section can be reviewed at any time before or after your observations.
- **Step Two:** The template in Step 2 provides a tool for the observer to record calling on strategies used in classrooms. There is a space to sketch the classroom layout to assist in collecting evidence.
- **Step Three:** After you feel comfortable with the observations (step 2), use the table to tabulate and analyze the calling on strategies used. This will provide you with the evidence necessary for a meaningful, data-driven, conversation with the teacher.
- **Step Four:** We provide a guide for the observer to have conversations with the teacher. Teachers will want “feedback” from your observations and we would like you to move from the traditions of “feedback” to evidence-based conversations.

Step One: What You Need to Know

In many classes, the focus for all student responses (teacher-facilitated or student-facilitated) tends to be the “right” answer instead of adopting the disposition toward learning that mistakes are just as useful for sorting out misconceptions. Right answers often do not lead to uncovering student thinking, sense-making, or developing concepts. Even in classrooms in which students are presenting or facilitating discussions (for an example, about a math problem), they are often replicating the teacher talk moves of calling on raised hands, selecting only some students, and focusing on right answers.

The problem is: **Teachers’ primary way of soliciting access/engagement is through hand raising** (Hamilton, 2019). It is the single least effective way to offer equitable access and fully engage students and motivate students to fully engage in the class. Yet, there are times when calling on hands is appropriate.

Cold calling is useful if used intentionally. Teachers, however, are at different stages of feeling comfortable with other types of calling on strategies, typically used in full group instruction. For example, this routine for cold calling is useful: stating the question, using appropriate wait/think time (3-8 seconds depending on cognitive level of question), and naming a student to respond. However, cold calling on students without think time or because the student is not engaged and the teacher is using the calling on as a disciplinary signal is not useful.

Cold calling by naming the student name before asking the questions signals to other students that they are “off the hook” for responding. Blurt out or “popcorn” is possible if the teacher is intentional about its use; often the teacher just accepts call-outs or blurt-outs. The teacher may use Think-Pair-Share (TPS) or “turn and talk” to have partner talk (useful!); however, in the sharing stage, teachers often recognize raised hands. Instead, the teacher can listen in on student conversations during TPS and support a student to “rehearse” a response and start the group discussion with that student’s response.

The charts on the next two pages may be helpful to the principal and the teacher in preparation or in post-conversations. **Note the difference between teacher revoicing and effective repetition.** A teacher’s simple repetition of what was said by the student is not typically effective. Revoicing, on the other hand, is paraphrasing and followed by a question to a student to see if that is what the student means is a way of checking for understanding (CFU).

The hyperlinks to resources may be helpful to the principal and the teacher in preparation or in post-conversations. TWO RESOURCES: [TEACHER ACTIONS](#) (for calling on) and [LEVELS OF CLASSROOM DISCOURSE](#)

Questions for consideration

- How can we better design **calling on strategies** for whole class instruction (used often by the teacher, but increasingly by students who present math problems to the whole class) so the questions are more about student thinking (even misconceptions or “wrong” answer) than right answers?
- How can we move from the teacher **repeating** student responses to students speaking loud enough with full attention from peers so that other students are listening and then responding to the student?
- How can teachers use **revoicing** to fully engage the learners in thinking? How can they revoice and model for students who may revoice/paraphrase what they heard from a classmate?
- How can we use “turn and talk” **systematically** to think, then pair, and then share equitably?
- How can we develop systems for student-to-student interaction that happens automatically.

ACADEMIC DISCOURSE (AD)					
Teacher-Generated		Teacher Initiated and Facilitated		Student Generated	
Academic Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designer: Teacher-designed, directed & controlled • Cognitive Demand: Typically low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designer: Teacher-initiated & facilitated • Cognitive Demand: Medium to high, teacher-facilitated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designer: Teacher and student collaboratively-designed & facilitated • Cognitive Demand: High cognitive demand 		
Protocols and Questioning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Role: Teacher-designed questions; teacher-controlled protocols • Underlying focus: Often compliance & behavior-driven; concerned with pacing & fidelity • Primary interaction relationship: Teacher-to-student; often pseudo-discourse • Calling on strategies: Typically raised hands; limited use of strategies for equitable access • Level of questions: Often recall and the application questioning levels with few questions at higher cognitive levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Role: Teacher-initiated, including encouraging student-to-student dialogue • Underlying focus: Student understanding and teacher use of student experiences • Primary interaction relationship: Teacher-to-student, with teacher encouragement of student-to-student & small groups • Calling-on strategies: Designed for equitable access of all students • Level of questions: Attention to higher cognitive level questions, including synthesis and creativity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Role: Coaching students as facilitators; warm demander & strong student relationships • Underlying focus: Encouraging more student-facilitated groups • Primary interaction relationship: Student-to-student • Calling on strategies: Primarily student-generated questions & student-to-student interaction • Level of questions: Higher level questions that elicit creative responses & authentic problem-solving 		
Dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher role in questioning: All questions by teacher; posed for short responses; teacher often looking for right answers • Teacher-to-student dialogue: Typically one-way dialogue and with a subset of students • Student responses: Inaudible and short; often repeated by teacher or ignored if “wrong answer”; teacher often repeats student responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher role in questioning: Most questions generated by teacher; questions range: recall to analysis • Teacher-to-student dialogue: Focusing on extensions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teacher asking for elaboration & clarification ▪ Teacher requesting support for ideas ▪ Student paraphrasing encouraged ▪ Student questions encouraged • Student responses: Often recorded by students or teachers; equitable access for student responses; complex thinking and interactions in teacher-student interchanges; multiple student ideas or solutions considered; paraphrasing of student responses encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher role in questioning: Collaboratively generated • Teacher-to-student dialogue: Primarily coaching; focusing on probing questions for deeper learning • Student responses: Student-to-student dialogue, often initiated by students; student-driven conversations; built on and challenging ideas of other students; ideas supported with evidence, often co-generated 		

Where would you rate the teaching in your school regarding academic tasks and dialogue?

- Is your rating differentiated by any demographic groupings?
- What evidence do you have to support this?

Step Two: What You Need to Do in the Observation

Observation Tool Calling-On Tool

The tool is designed to collect basic information for the teacher to see how the teacher (or a student leading a discussion of a math problem) is generally calling-on students in classroom setting. **Two types of information are useful: seating chart and selective verbatim of the teacher actions and student responses.** Using one is useful; gaining proficiency at using both at the same time is even better.

Type One of Calling On: Make a seating chart.

Using a seating chart to determine equitable calling on is critical. Too often, some students are totally overlooked – they may not raise their hands, or, if they do, teachers ignore them. If possible, write student names if you know them. Either use STUDENT NAME or identity (F/M or race/ethnicity): AA= African American; L= Latinx; W=White; AsA= Asian American. This classroom map is of one table of 6 persons.

Make a slash mark (/) for every instance of the items in the tool. Try to indicate with short abbreviation of the type of calling on or teacher response that was used (after the slash mark). It will take a bit of practice to get used to the names of calling on (chart below), but this offers precise data with which to have the conversation with the teacher

St 1 (F/AA) /R/CC	St 2 (M/L) /B-I/TR
St 3 (F/W) /R/R/R/R/R	St 4 (M/AsA) /R/TR
St 5 (M/L)	St 6 (F/L)

NOTE: Raised hands are not always ineffective. See Chapter 1. However, if primary mode of interacting, this reduces equitable student access.

NOTE: Cold calling is not incorrect or ineffective if used in ways that support student thinking and full access (wait/think time) and student name at end of question after think time.

NOTE: difference between simple repetition, effective repetition, and revoicing on charts

Please use this blank page to draw the seating arrangement of the class you are observing and identify students in each place. Mark the slash and abbreviation for each calling on instance.

CALLING ON CODES (NAMES OF PRACTICE)

CODE	Full CODE NAME	Explanation
R	R aising hand	teacher calls on a student who raises his or her hand
CC	C old C all	teacher cold calls on a student who did not volunteer
CCD	C old C all D iscipline	teacher cold calls on a student for discipline
B-A	B lurt-out: A ccept	teacher accepts an answer that is blurted out by a student or students
B-I	B lurt-out: I gnore	teacher ignores a student who blurts out an answer
C&R	C all & R esponse	teacher intentionally prompts students to answer together in unison to a known question
ES	E quity S trategy	teacher uses an equity strategy such as pulling a name at random to determine which student to call on
TR	T eacher R epeats	teacher repeats student response verbatim
TRV	T eacher R e V oices	Teacher revoices, which means that the teacher uses a student response to paraphrase and perhaps ask other questions. (Notice difference between simple repeat and revoicing)
TPS	T hink- P air- S hare	teacher asks students to think for appropriate think time, pair, and then share

After the observation using selective verbatim, tabulate the number of instances of each type of calling on.

Teacher	Observer	Date
Duration of Observation _____	to _____	

CALLING ON CODES (NAMES OF PRACTICE)

CODE	Full CODE NAME	Number
R	Raising hand	
CC	Cold Call	
CCD	Cold Call Discipline	
B-A	Blurt-out: Accept	
B-I	Blurt-out: Ignore	
C&R	Call & Response	
ES	Equity Strategy	
TR	Teacher Repeats	
TRV	Teacher ReVoices	
TPS	Think-Pair-Share	

What are statements of factual evidence from the observation?

Use the evidence categories from the data to record to make 5-6 factual statements about the data.

Examples of Evidence

Of the 27, students in the class:

- ___ students who were called on after **raising hand** (CO: R)
- ___ students called out answers and teacher **accepted call-outs** (CO: B-A)
- ___ students called out answers after direction from teacher to use C&R (Call & Response)
- ___ students were asked to repeat/paraphrase another student's response
- ___ students answered more than once
- ___ students who responded are ___ male/boys and ___ female/girls

OR

Teacher asked ___ questions and called on ___ students whose hands were raised.
 Teacher cold-called on ___ students.
 Teacher revoiced ___ times.

Step 4: Having a Conversation with the Teacher

We will have much practice in effective conversations (notice we do not use feedback!), but this is a brief primer.

In this section, although you will have ideas about what to do, **engage the teacher in problem solving**. Keep in mind: “Telling people what we think of their performance doesn’t help them thrive and excel and telling people how we think they should improve actually hinders learning” (Buckingham & Goodall, 2019, p. 2).

1. **Introduction:** *I was in your class for ___ minutes while the lesson was focused on _____. As you know, I was particularly concentrating on the ways you called on students and perhaps used opportunities to have student-to-student dialogue*
2. **These are the data from that observation: (present factual analysis to teacher).**
3. **Let’s talk about what you are observing about these data?** *Continue to ask probing questions, but engage the teacher in making a decision about what specific action to take and how s/he will know there is improvement.*
4. **As a result of this data, what areas of strength do you observe? What is a practice that you want to change?**
5. **What do you want me to observe and when?**

RESOURCE: TEACHER ACTIONS TO IMPROVE CALLING ON

TEACHER ACTION	EXPLANATION
REVOICING	Teacher repeats some or all of what a student has said and then <u>asks the student to respond and verify</u> whether or not the teacher's statement is correct. <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Involve student in clarifying their own thinking· Help other students follow along with conversation· Make student's ideas available to others
REPEATING/ RESTATING	Teacher extends to another student to repeat or rephrase, in their own words, what first student has said and follow up with the first student. <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Another rendition of first student's contribution without interpreting, evaluating, or critiquing· Provide evidence other students hear what was said· Student thinking is important and worth emphasizing
ADDING ON	Teacher increases participation by asking for further commentary, either adding to other comments or agreeing / disagreeing with previous comments. <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Extend in open-ended manner near closure· Extend in strategic manner to produce more detailed explanations
WAITING	Teacher gives students time to compose their responses. <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Signals value that deliberative thinking takes time· Create respectful, patient environment for digesting important findings and raising any lingering questions· Diversify participation
REASONING	Teacher asks another student to respond to previous student's statement by eliciting respectful discussion of ideas (agree / disagree). <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Students provide explanation of their reasoning to someone else's contribution· Compare one's reasoning with someone else