

Calling Cards

Calling out is rude. In the polite social circles of your classroom, calling cards are much more civilised.

HOW?

1. This simple idea allows students to signal a response by holding up, or placing out on the desk, a card.
2. Make cards, A5 or A6 size, and distribute to each student. For most purposes it's useful for students to have three cards each, in different colours (red, green and amber are useful) or with different symbols (such as a tick, a cross, a question mark).
3. The only rule is to be honest.

APPLICATIONS

- They can be used to indicate **responses to questions** - 'I know I know the answer' (tick or green), 'I know I don't know' (cross or red), 'I'm not sure whether I know or not' (question mark or amber).
- They can be used to signal **confusion** - hold up the amber card when you're beginning to lose the thread of what I'm saying, hold up the amber card when you've completely lost it! A good example is in **Modern Foreign Languages** when the teacher is giving instructions or explaining a concept in target language, or is reading a comprehension piece. It is an excellent diagnostic tool.
- They can be used signal that a student **wants to ask** a question, wants clarification or wants to make a statement - more grown up than putting their hand up. This is good for discussions and debates and is a more interactive way of listening to guest speakers.
- They can be used to make a **spot check on understanding** - at any point the teacher can stop and ask for a show of cards: completely understand everything so far; half understand; haven't got a clue.

WHY DO IT?

- The technique encourages participation. The cards create the expectation that everyone will take an active part in proceedings. They beg to be used.
- The cards invite questioning. The fact that *everyone* has been issued with them suggests that it's OK not to understand everything. Likewise they invite students to add comments and details. In other words, they encourage thinking.
- Consequently, they strengthen the idea of personal responsibility for learning.

This resource by Paul Ginnis was found free at <http://www.english-teaching.co.uk>

Providing copyright is acknowledged, the resource may copied for use in the classroom. Any other use is strictly forbidden. Copyright © 2001 Paul Ginnis. All rights reserved.



- This is a fundamentally democratic procedure and therefore contributes to Citizenship.

VARIATIONS

1. If you don't have card, use three different hand signals.
2. Or three different facial expressions!