

## Teach Like a Champion 2.0 – Doug Lemov

### Planning for Success

The four techniques below are implemented *before* you walk through the classroom door because they focus on *planning*. Without thoughtful and focused planning, it is almost impossible to consistently teach at the highest levels.

**1: BEGIN WITH THE END** – Start with unit planning and then progress to lesson planning by first defining the objective and deciding how you’ll assess and only *then* choose appropriate lesson activities. When Lemov started teaching he admits that he frequently spent the night before a lesson asking, “What am I going to do tomorrow?” This was a flawed approach. First, he focused on the lessons, the lesson *activities*, not the *objective*. In addition, he found himself planning each lesson individually rather than seeing as part of a carefully planned unit that drove students, a day at a time, toward mastery of larger concepts. Great teachers:

- ✓ Progress *from* unit planning to lesson planning.
- ✓ Refine and perfect the lesson objective based on the degree of mastery from the day before. Plan a short daily assessment to determine whether the objective was mastered.
- ✓ Plan the sequence of activities that lead to mastery of the objective.

**2: 4 Ms** – Use four criteria for an effective objective: make it manageable, measurable, made first, and most important. It is vital to design effective objectives. To do so, use the criteria below to determine if your objective is effective:

1. *Manageable*: An objective can’t be effective if you can’t teach it in a single lesson. Of course you want your students to master larger skills, but this can take weeks so you need to break them into steps your students can master in one period.
2. *Measurable*: Effective objectives can be measured. This is often done at the end of the period with an exit ticket.
3. *Made first*: An objective should guide the activities you use in the lesson and not simply be an afterthought.
4. *Most important*: Choose an objective based on what is most important for students to learn on the path to college.

**3: POST IT** – Display your lesson objective where everyone can see it and know your purpose. Because the objective is so important and drives instruction, you should post it. Use language that students understand so they know what they’re trying to do. Posting it also helps visitors and administrators give more effective and tailored feedback.

**4: DOUBLE PLAN** –As you plan a lesson, plan what *students* will be doing at each point. Most lessons focus on what you, the teacher, will be doing – what you will say, do, collect, and assign. Teachers often forget to plan what the students will be doing. What will students do while you review the causes of the Civil War? Will they take notes on a graphic organizer? Will they review those notes in a one-sentence summary? To help you see the lesson through the students’ eyes, try creating a T-chart listing what you will do on one side and what the students will do on the other. Another idea is to create a carefully designed set of student handouts that is called a *lesson packet*. While students work directly in the packets, the teacher has additional notes in the margins of her copy. This packet reduces time in handing out more papers during the lesson, provides constant written accountability from student responses in the packet throughout the lesson, it *STANDARDIZES THE FORMAT* so teachers can easily check for understanding, and allows a teacher to skip ahead when students quickly master the material or go back if students need more help.

### Lesson Structure

Often, the lesson structure of the teachers who informed this book, fell into a pattern of what has been described as “I/We/You” activities or *direct instruction*, *guided practice*, and *independent practice*. The five techniques below help the progression of your to lesson run more smoothly.

**1: DO NOW** -- A short activity on the board or waiting at students’ desks gets students to be productive right away if it is quick, can be done independently, includes writing to hold students accountable, and previews the lesson or reviews a recent lesson.

**2: NAME THE STEPS** – Break down tasks into steps that show students the path toward mastery. Champion teachers help their students learn complex skills by breaking them down into steps and often naming those steps. Giving the steps a name helps students recall those steps. For example, to help younger students remember the elements of a story,

one school uses the acronym STORY (**S** – the **setting** is where the story takes place, **T** – **talking** characters are who the story revolves around, **O** – **Oops**, there's a problem in the story, **R** – the characters' attempts to **resolve** the problem, and **Y** – **Yes!** A solution!

## Building Ratio Through Questioning

This section is about shifting the balance of *who* is doing the cognitive work in the classroom from the teacher to the students. Lemov included ratio as a single technique in his first book, until he spent a year studying it and realized how important it was. Now ratio encompasses fifteen techniques in this version of the book. Furthermore, ratio involves more than the frequency with which students participate in class, it also involves increasing the level of rigor of that engagement. The next strategies outline three main ways to increase ratio: through questioning, writing, and discussion.

**1: WAIT TIME** – Allow students time to think before answering. In this technique you wait a few seconds before calling on students to answer. Typically, teachers wait only about a second after asking a question – a method unlikely to lead to the most thoughtful answer. By waiting longer, you are more likely to improve the quality of answers *and* the number of students who volunteer to answer. You can do this by narrating hands (“One hand. Two hands, now three.”), providing prompts to use the wait time well (“I’m seeing people go back to the chapter to see if they can find the scene.”), and also by simply stopping talking!

**2: COLD CALL** Call on students regardless of whether they’ve got their hands raised. Ask a question, pause, and then call on a student, “Tell us one cause of WW I, please, [slight pause here] Darren.” While this sounds simple, if done correctly, Lemov believes it is the single most powerful technique to improve rigor, ratio, and expectations. First, it lets you check for understanding because you choose the student you want to check for mastery. Second, you don’t waste time waiting and cajoling students to answer questions. Third, it allows you to include more students, not just those raising their hands. People often mistakenly assume that this is a stressful technique for students, but teachers who use it consistently, normalize it so it becomes a regular part of class. Also, it is a powerful way to reach students who want to speak but aren’t hand raisers. Finally, it increases engagement because students don’t know when they will be called on, so they do the work to be prepared for every question.

While it seems simple, you can do it wrong. Make sure you use it preventatively to keep students from drifting off. It is not a discipline strategy for once they are already off task. Cold calling should become a *predictable* part of every day so students know to pay attention. Cold calling is also *systematic* – the questions should be for everyone, not for singling out students not paying attention. It is simply how we do business here. Furthermore, cold calling is *positive* because it engages students in rigorous work. Students will surprise themselves with what they know and can do if we give them the chance to answer. Finally, cold calling is particularly effective when it is *scaffolded*, that is, when you start with simple questions and progress to harder ones. In the new version of the book, there is a variation called *Cold Call 2.0* or *Slow Call*. **COLD CALL** does not need to be a set of rapid-fire questions. Instead, teachers can combine it with **WAIT TIME** as a way for students have time for deeper thinking, “Think of one way an intended utopia [such as in *The Giver*], turned out to be dystopian. I will give you think time then *Cold Call* a few of you to share your thinking.”

**3: CALL AND RESPONSE** Ask your class to answer questions in unison from time to time. In this technique you ask a question and the whole class calls out the response in unison. It sounds simple, but it can be an effective way to engage students. Rather than one student responding, everyone responds. It’s also a lively and spirited way to energize your students. It can be used to simply report an answer to a completed problem (“On three, tell me your answer to number four.”) or it can be used to have students solve a more rigorous problem (“Class, see if you can find 40 percent of eighty. Take five seconds to get it in your head. One, two! (Twenty-four!).” As long as all students know that they are to respond, and they all know *when* to respond based on your cue (“Class?” “One, two, three!”), it will be effective. You can use several types of cues: the countdown, the group prompt (“Everybody” or “Class”), a shift in tone, or a nonverbal gesture (using a hand or a finger).

**4: BREAK IT DOWN** – When students don’t understand, break down the material into its parts to focus on the problematic area. Champion teachers don’t simply repeat the question, they think about the part of the material that most likely caused the confusion and ask smaller, simpler questions about this part. The goal is to provide the smallest hint possible and do it quickly. However, you need to be aware of *rigor collapse* – breaking down the answer so much that the question is no longer rigorous. For this reason, this is a challenging technique. It is best to prepare for it during *planning* by considering possible wrong answers and cues to use for those errors. There are many ways to break down the material, such as the suggestions below:

- **Provide an example.** If asking for the definition of a prime number, provide an example, “7 is one, but 8 is not.”
- **Provide context.** To help a student who does not understand *ancient*, “I hope nobody ever calls me ancient.”
- **Provide a rule.** If a student incorrectly categorized *indiscriminate* as a verb, you could give the student the rule, or definition of what a verb is, “A verb is an action or a state of being. Is *indiscriminate* an action?”
- **Provide the missing (or first) step.** “What do we always do when the numerator is larger than the denominator?”
- **Roll back.** Sometimes we instantly recognize our mistakes when we hear them again. Simply restate the student’s

error, perhaps with an emphasis on the error, “So you said to *multiply* six and fifteen?”

• **Eliminate false choices.** “If it were a verb, it would be an action. Is *owner* an action?”

5: **PEPPER** Pepper is a fast-paced game to reinforce and review skills. The teacher tosses a question out to a student and if the student gets it right, the teacher moves to the next question. If the student is wrong, the teacher calls on someone else to answer. There is no discussion of an answer because it’s a fast-paced review. Students can stand to play the game.

### Building Ratio Through Writing

Writing is one of the most valuable skills students learn in school. These techniques help you increase the amount of writing – especially high-quality writing – students will do in your class.

1: **EVERYBODY WRITES** – Students engage more rigorously by reflecting in writing *before* they discuss. Writing gives all students a chance to reflect on and clarify their thinking to prepare for more rigorous thinking and discussion. Writing not only engages students, but it helps them to process and refine their thinking. Consider the difference between the answer from a student who shoots her hand up immediately and the student who first writes and clarifies her ideas. Furthermore, students *remember more* of what they are learning if they write it down.

2: **ART OF THE SENTENCE** Students synthesize a complex idea in a single, well-crafted sentence. In teaching students to write, we often spend more time on paragraph formation than on crafting effective sentences. By helping students develop more complex, subtle, and nuanced sentences, we help them further develop and refine their ideas. Furthermore, asking students to summarize a reading or a discussion in one single, well-crafted sentence, forces them to clarify their understanding of the topic. This is no easy task. To help them, we can provide sentence starters (e.g., “The relationship between...” “In the long run...” “Over time...”) Another approach is to provide sentence *parameters* (e.g., “Explain in one well-crafted sentence what Swift says we should do with children *and* how you know he is being satiric.”) An ideal place to use this technique is at the end of the lesson (perhaps as an **EXIT TICKET**) to summarize and synthesize what students have learned.

3: **SHOW CALL** Like **COLD CALL**, but with student writing, choose student writing to display and revise on the spot. There are two potential problems with increasing the amount of writing in the classroom. First, there is too much for teachers to grade every piece. Second, if students know this, there is less incentive for them to produce high-quality writing. **SHOW CALL** addresses both concerns. After students write, walk to a student’s desk, take his paper, and using a document camera, project it for everyone. By doing this regularly, and making it positive, students know they will be held accountable and have an incentive to do their best writing. Then, since you don’t have time to read every piece of writing, you can use **SHOW CALL** to model quality work or share a common error. “Let’s see your ideas and how we can make them better.” You might conduct a discussion about what is effective in the student’s thesis statement. “I like Martina’s thesis statement, but it would be even better if she put it in the active voice. Who can show us how to do that?” Then the class makes the correction. “Great, now everyone go through your *own* sentences, note the ones in the active voice, and revise any in the passive voice.” After this, students get to work editing their paragraphs and have a clear model of how. To keep this technique positive, either use an unemotional approach when taking a student’s writing or ask, “Do you mind if I share your work so we can revise it a little bit?” You could also keep the student anonymous. If you don’t have a document camera, copy a student’s writing and distribute it the next day.

4: **BUILD STAMINA** [\* Clip 40] – Gradually increase writing time to help students develop the habit of writing for sustained periods. Student writing improves when students can write for longer periods of time. To help students accomplish this goal, start small (write for a minute the first time, and a minute and a half the next), ensure students keep their pencils moving, make sure they have enough ideas to write about before they start, and valorize student writing by reading it aloud publicly afterward.

*Technique 41: FRONT THE WRITING* Put writing earlier in your lesson plan to ensure writing is the result of rigorous student thinking. Teachers often use writing as a culminating activity. Common lesson sequences are RDW (read-discuss- write) or ADW (activity-discuss-write). The problem with these approaches is that students often write their own papers based on the ideas *other students* have generated during class discussions. To more accurately assess our students’ ability to generate and reflect on ideas independently, writing needs to come earlier in the sequence. This will help students learn to make sense of a text on their own. The simplest way to up the rigor of student writing is to change the lesson order to RWD or AWD (read/activity-write-discuss).

### Build Ratio Through Discussion

Lemov purposefully includes discussion as the last method to build ratio for a reason. When teachers think about increasing student involvement, they often think of discussion first. However, discussions are not always implemented in ways that ensure student participation is *rigorous*. To implement them in a much more rigorous way, it helps to know what an effective discussion *is*. It is *not* a series of student comments that have little to no connection to what was previously said. It *is*, “a mutual endeavor by a group of people to develop, refine, or contextualize an idea or a set of

ideas.” This involves responding to and building on the ideas of others. Because this does not necessarily come naturally to students, the techniques below help to build effective discussion skills.

**1: HABITS OF DISCUSSION** Normalize a set of ground rules or “habits” to make discussions more efficient, cohesive, and connected. People who converse effectively not only listen carefully, but they make a point to *show* that they are listening and connect the point they are making with what someone else said, “Yeah, Susan, that’s interesting, but…” To do this, we need to teach students some discussion fundamentals: speak loud enough to be heard, look at people, and use people’s names. Next, students need to connect their ideas to the ideas of others. The teacher can use a directive prompt, “Skylar, do you agree with Markus?” or a nondirective one, “Add on, Carlton.” Teachers can also introduce and post a set of sentence starters to help students connect their comments, “I understand why you’d say that, but…” “I want to build on what you said…” “I’d like to build on \_\_\_\_’s idea…” It’s the teacher’s job not only to shape the *content* of the conversation, but the *structure* of it, that is, how to participate productively (or “manage the meta”). For example, when a student makes an unrelated comment, the teacher might get the conversation back on track, “That’s interesting, but I’d like to hear someone respond to Sara’s comment before we move on.”

**2: TURN AND TALK** Have students better formulate their thoughts with short discussions in pairs. While teachers in thousands of classrooms use the **TURN AND TALK** discussion technique, not all result in discussions that are efficient, accountable, and rigorous. Here are some suggestions to improve this technique. First, to avoid wasting time, prearrange who should partner with whom, and make sure students know. Next, have a cue so students start discussing right away, “Turn and talk to your partner. Go!” To make it even more explicit, you can let them know who speaks first, “Window to wall” means the student closer to the window goes first. And then to bring the group together, use another clear cue, “Bring it back in three, in two, in one.” To keep the momentum, don’t allow discussions to continue for too long. In fact, provide precise time limits so students know how to pace themselves, “Turn and talk to your neighbor for the next two and a half minutes.” You can even insert a cue midpoint to manage the transition, “Switch!” Then, to hold students accountable and to make sure they *listen*, you can let them know you will **COLD CALL** a few people to share afterwards or ask students to write a summary of their partner’s key points. Finally, because teachers never fully know what their students are saying during **TURN AND TALK**, it should never be a *culminating* activity. Instead, plan a whole-class activity (analysis, discussion, note taking, writing) for *after* the **TURN AND TALK** to add rigor and accountability.

**3: BATCH PROCESS** – Plan a discussion *without* teacher mediation for increased student ownership and autonomy. This type of discussion looks more like volleyball than tennis. Some call this a Socratic discussion or seminar. Done well, it is an important practice students will need for college – to independently respond to and build on one another’s ideas without a teacher prompting. Unfortunately, peer-to-peer conversations can easily become unproductive. For this reason, it is best done infrequently – as a capstone for a month-long unit on the Civil War – or, just a few minutes a day. One champion teacher sets his clock to conduct **BATCH PROCESS** for just two minutes a day and reports that it’s plenty of time for discussion.