Welcome to the 20-day challenge to shift a teaching habit toward more inclusive pedagogy, using the All Learners Learning Every Day (ALL-ED) framework. This month we will implement Domino Discover, an alternate habit to calling on hands after asking a question. Instead of recognizing a few learners, Domino Discover efficiently gathers responses collectively from every learner in the classroom. In this way, Domino Discover fosters an equitable classroom culture and increases thinking as students are required to discuss responses leading to more durable learning for all students. Welcome to Week 1 in our 4 week challenge.
Let’s take a moment to set a goal to accomplish by watching this video. Through thinking along with this video you should be able to explain to a colleague why Domino Discover fosters an equitable culture and your plan for implementing Domino Discover this week. So, as we move through the steps to implementing Domino Discover be thinking about your students, upcoming lessons, and the configuration of your own classroom.
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To address our first goal, let’s think about why should teachers make this shift in their practice. Why use Domino Discover before calling on hands? Domino Discover is an inclusive pedagogy because teachers ensure that all students have an equal opportunity for their voice to be heard. Because every student knows that they will have a turn, engagement increases. Even better, thinking increases, because all students are accountable to think about a response to the question. This gives students more opportunities in class to purposefully use academic vocabulary and to gain immediate feedback on their ideas. Finally, Domino Discover provides an efficient means to collect and organize formative assessment data from the class that teachers can use to tailor instruction to better meet the needs of students.
Let’s take a look at how Domino Discover works — in this first week, you will focus on teaching the students the roles and action pattern for the routine. Think of a group learning routine like a play in a football game. On a football team each player has a specific position or role for an action pattern or play that is practiced — during game the player focus on the events occurring in the game because the actions of the play are known — the actions are a routine. We want the same ease in the classroom. We want students and teachers to be able to pay attention to the learning that is unfolding — not focusing so much on what they should be doing, rather paying attention to what is happening. To gain this focus and ease, we use learning routines, like Domino Discover, for activities that occur often, in every lesson. In this case, we are focused on a routine for gathering student responses after the teacher asks a question. In this first week, we will focus on roles and action — striving in 20 days to build an efficient and effective routine that leads to durable learning for students and formative assessment data that enables teachers to tailor instruction on their feet during a lesson.
There are two roles in Domino Discover – a reporter from each group, who will share out a response. The reporters speak out one after another like Dominos lined-up falling one at a time without any interruption. While reporters take turn speaking out, everyone else are listeners, paying attention to listen for the goal assigned by the teacher. It is important to note that the teacher is also a listener.
So students, as well as the teacher, are listeners with a goal or purpose for thinking about the responses that they hear. The purpose for the listeners is the same as the teacher’s instructional purpose for how the teacher wants to sort the responses to the question to tailor the next steps of instruction. So, for example, if a question to review or summarize is asked then listeners are looking for patterns and surprises to see what students know and where more instruction is needed. However, if the teacher asks a question to further a close reading of a text, then listeners are looking for responses that justify and idea with evidence. Listeners may be on the lookout for reporters who use certain vocabulary or Buzz Words in their responses.
To begin Domino Discover, first, the teacher asks a question.
Then the students at each table discuss possible responses. It is helpful if the teacher reminds students of what the listeners will be listening for – so that it is included in responses – for example the word because or specific vocabulary words.
Then, instead of calling on hands to gather responses from students, try Domino Discover to engage every student.
Prepare all students to be the reporter by asking tables to jot down a response and two back-ups. You might have a recorder at the table jot down the responses or ask all students to jot down in their notes the responses so that they are prepared to be the reporter.
Now begin the action pattern, by calling on one reporter from each group to share out. Tell students that the reporters will share their group’s response.
Tell them we will have the Rule: “Confirm or Contribute” – so if another group has already shared the same response – then the reporter can repeat the response, saying we confirm (name of the group/reporter) or the reporter can contribute a back-up idea.
Call on one person from each table to be the reporter.
Be sure to call on any student, so that all students must be prepared.
Encourage students to, “call a huddle”, or ask their table mates for help, explain that sometimes reports may forget the table’s response or may not know if they should share the response or a back-up. No, problem, reporters can take a moment to confer about contributing a back-up response. The rest of the listeners will be glad to have a moment to think about what they have heard.
Invite reporters to get help through a quick huddle. Table mates can help with the response, but the called reporter will share out.
Gather just one response from each table.
Continue until each table reporter has shared. If a reporter shares something that has already been said be sure to require them to confirm, and say the name of the reporter or table that the response is repeating.
Pay attention for patterns, vocabulary use, or using evidence – the listening goal as responses are heard.
Following Domino Discover, call on hands for additional responses to contribute ideas that came up in discussion that we haven’t heard yet – and also ask for confirmations – ideas that we should note are important because they are patterns or something that many groups talked about.
Let’s review the process of Domino Discover – once you get the routine going it should take about the same amount of time as calling on a few hands – however, distinctly different than calling on hands – through Domino Discover you have engaged all students and have class level formative assessment data to use for tailoring instruction.
Step one is to ask a question.
Step Two is to think about a response and to discuss their ideas at their table. Then to tell students that we will hear a response from each table from one reporter, everyone else will be listening for __________(patterns, vocabulary words, text evidence, or whatever the teacher needs to know for tailoring instruction). Tell everyone to prepare to be the reporter, jotting down one response and two back-up ideas. Then call on one reporter from each group, enforcing the rule that responses can confirm something that was already said, but they have to acknowledge who said it or responses can contribute a new idea. Pay attention to the listening goal can help you talk about and organize responses.
Now call on hands for additional responses.
Let’s take a look at a high school math class, where the playbook Domino Discover is being used for students to explain how they solved problems during independent practice.
A few criteria will support high quality implementation of Domino Discover. For this first week, Must Haves include stating a purpose or reason for listening (remember this is also your formative assessment goal as the teacher) and be sure that each table has an opportunity to respond. Amazing qualities that you can strive for, but might not get every time in this first week, include a moment where you as the teacher notice out loud for students responses that met the listening goal – you might notice patterns or compliment the use of vocabulary words in a response. You might also compliment students who explicitly stated that they were building on the response of another group, showing that they were listening and making connections.
Here are a few teaching tips for this first week.
Domino Discover can be used at any point in the lesson, any time you ask a question use Domino Discover to gather responses. So, when is it worth the time? Domino Discover is worth the time when you want all students to think about and answer your question.
You may want to use a small group variation with some classes.
For the small group variation, the teacher asks the whole class a question, and then each small group does a Domino Discover within the group before the table discussions. A quick small group Domino Discover ensures that every student shares at least one idea with their small group.
So, the first Domino Discover, will be a round each small group.
Be sure to start this process by assigning or asking for a volunteer to be the reporter first at each group. You don’t want students to waste time choosing where to start.
After you know, who is going first then have the student point so that you know the direction of the sharing or direction that dominos will fall in – or the order that reporters will speak out.
After the small group Domino – ask students to have a short discussion about what they heard – did they notice patterns or whatever the learning goal was. Ask them to work together, given everyone’s ideas to formulate one response and two back-ups. Then you are ready for the domino discover around the room with one reporter from every table.
Be sure to remind the students of the goal of sharing out – the reason why they are listening.
Then call on reporters for the whole class Domino Discovery where one person from each group responds.
You can create rules to ensure that everyone in the small group can participate— for example, confirm and contribute, but you can also have instead of the response being only answers, a question that comes up could be a response, or if you have English Language Learners or many students who were absent or are not finished with an assignment, then they could point to a person that they agree with and then that person can repeat their response.
It is good to ask reporters to always say the name of who they are confirming if they are repeating a response. This helps everyone to listen so that they know if they are repeating.
Make sure that everyone or every group has an opportunity to be heard. This is how Domino Discover begins to establish a culture of equity in the classroom. Then the rules ensure that the sharing is accessible for all students to participate in the routine.
Don’t forget to ask for additional contributions after the routine.
We’d like to hear about how you have used Domino Discover with students. Take a cell phone picture of the class agenda, quotes from students either from the routine or reflections on how they like it, or lesson plan with the routine. Along with your submission include a brief description of what you noticed about student learning from their responses in Domino Discover. Be sure to save it with your name.
Continue Domino Discover at least once a day for a full week. Domino Discover is an inclusive teaching habit, the goal is to replace calling on hands as a first response to gathering student responses with the habit of Domino Discover and then calling on hands. So, you will still call on hands, but not as a first response, especially when the responses are needed to make instructional decisions about what students need next instructionally. For questions used as formative assessment Domino Discovery should be the first teacher move, then calling on hands. Habits are built with repetition over time – so be sure to use Domino Discover every day.