Intasc 9: Calling on Students

*“While Milkman and colleagues were unable to distinguish the precise influence of implicit as opposed to explicit bases, they did note that unobtrusive approaches... are important for helping us come closer to understanding”*

This week Mrs. Jenkins observed me while I called on students and I'm grateful for the chance to be observed without my knowledge, in an *unobtrusive* way. It has helped me be more receptive to feedback. Instead of using the three racial categories (White, African American, and Asian American) she focused only on gender. She did this because she felt those categories were too limiting and it was hard to tell whether a students was specifically from one category or another. Gender was much easier to discern (though there are two students who were born as girls but identify as boys).

I had an inkling that I would call on more boys than girls since boys in general in my classes participate more and when a hand shoots up to answer something, I’m interested in rewarding them for desiring to participate on their own accord. However, it turns out that I called on boys almost twice as much as girls in one class, even when that same ratio does not reflect the amount of boys to girls in the classroom. For another class section I was doing a bit better but I still called on boys more. This is something I definitely want to fix.

It was suggested that I use these little sticks (*palitos)* that have the names of all of the students on them. Students get to do the *palitos* for the day and this is a fun task that everyone wants a chance to do. I already consistently use the *palitos* for every drill but I should start to use them more throughout the class. This would randomize the cold calling that I was doing using the seating chart and ensure that more females are being called on. I do wish that I was able to do it on my own, however. I have been paying attention to who I call on and how many times I call on them, but it seems I am not paying enough attention and perhaps there are too many things to pay attention to and to use a third party (the *palitos*) would ease my burden of trying to keep track of everyone who has already spoken as well as their gender and race.