

Rolling the Dice

Rolling the Dice is an effective method of calling on a student when no one seems interested in volunteering an answer. It also cuts down dramatically on the *stage hog* in your class by randomly selecting the cadet when a question arises.

There are several reasons to use dice but I started for only one. I wanted more student participation. I wanted to avoid creating passive students who were afraid to volunteer or answer a question. I originally started with the idea of using just one, but I now have a polyhedral 7 dice set. It sounds impressive, but it only costs five dollars from Amazon. The dice set normally comes with 10-, 12-, and 20-sided dice. They will cover the size of most classes, but 30-sided dice are available as well for another two dollars.

When a question is posed during your presentation, leave it to chance to see who will be answering. Assign a number to each student, and if the dice lands on that number, they are chosen – it's that simple. It takes away the *over-eager* student who wants to answer everything as well as the student who avoids eye contact at all costs. It creates anticipation (I did not originally foresee) for the class, and to add some fun and drama, I have the students take turns rolling the dice. They have the fate of their classmates in their hands, and they like it.

You can add another component to the activity when a cadet answers incorrectly. Let them roll one of the dice to determine how many pushups, sit-ups, or leg scissors they have to do for missing the question. The one who answered wrong and the student who rolled the dice that chose them are in it together. Everyone is more attentive when their classmates can be affected by their participation in the class.

The random selection is unique and it keeps their attention on the presentation. Cadets like anything that keeps discussions from being dominated by a few students, and I find students are now looking forward to the dice coming out of my backpack. I do not have any research to tell you why it works so well – but it does.

The technique will solicit more wrong answers from the class at first, but you will find the wrong answers lead to better discussions and uncover confusion about your topic that might not have been volunteered otherwise. This is a winning combination for a police instructor.

You can use the dice for other decisions as well – be creative. If you are using a group exercise, have each of them roll the dice to see who will be in charge. That way it always changes, and the same *stage hog* will not take over each time they are in a group. The dice are also available in 100-sided if you find the need and are a cheap investment for such an effective learning tool.

