

## Tips for Implementing Number Talks

### Primary Grades

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- ◆ **Keep it short (5-15 minutes).**
- ◆ **Do it every day.**
- ◆ **Give the students a lot of practice with the same kinds of problems.**
- ◆ **Encourage sharing and clarify students' thinking by asking:**
  - How did you see it?
  - Who would like to share their thinking?
  - How did you figure it out?
  - What did you do next?
  - How did you think about that?
  - Who else used this strategy to solve the problem?
  - What strategies do you see being used?
  - Which strategies seem to be efficient for this problem?
- ◆ **Teach intentionally:**
  - Choose related sequences of cards/problems.
  - Focus students' thinking:
    - See if you can . . . ?
    - How many will there be if . . . ?
    - What if . . . ?
    - Can you use what you know about the last card/problem to help you think about . . . ?
  - Encourage students to "think first" and then check with models, if needed.
  - Chart the students' thinking.
  - Keep it interesting by not always being predictable.
- ◆ **Create a safe and supportive environment.**
  - Accept answers without praise or criticism.
  - Allow students to ask questions of each other.
  - Encourage students to listen to each other.
  - Encourage students to self-correct.

- ◆ **Name/label the strategies that students use.**
  - Counting
  - Counting on
  - Counting by . . .
  - Making a "10"
  - Breaking apart numbers
  - Using what they already know
  - Starting with the 10s
  - Using doubles and doubles + or –
  - Using a model
  - Using landmark numbers
  - Relating to money
  
- ◆ **Vary the Number Talk to meet the range of needs.**
  - Vary the setting of the Number Talk.
    - Whole group
    - Small group
  - Vary the sharing strategies used.
    - Share whole group
    - Share with neighbors
  - Vary the materials within a Number Talk.
    - Dot cards
    - Toothpick cards
    - Pattern Block Cards
    - Tile Cards
    - Number Shape cards
    - Unifix Towers
    - Ten Frames
  - Vary the level of difficulty within a Number Talk.
    - Use "meaningful flashcards."
    - Use written problems.
    - Use smaller numbers.
    - Relate to larger numbers.
  
- ◆ **When planning or implementing a Number Talk, consider the following:**
  - Do the students have facility with numbers to 6? To 10? To 20?
  - How do they get their answers?
  - Can they use what they know for related problems?
  - How well can they verbalize their thinking?
  - Are their errors way off, or are they reasonable?
  
- ◆ **The goal of Number Talks is "computational fluency" (accuracy, efficiency and flexibility). We want to focus students' attention so they will move from:**
  - figuring out the answers any way they can to . . .
  - becoming more efficient at figuring out answers to . . .
  - just knowing or using efficient strategies.