

Number Talks

By Sherry Parrish, Math Solutions Publishing

Number talks are a 5-15 minute daily routine in classrooms. The goals of number talks are computational fluency, development of strategies and communication of mathematical thinking.

The resource has both a book and DVD components. The book contains rationale for and explanations of the role of number talks within a mathematics program along with pages of sequences of number talks in all four operations for grades K-7. The DVD includes classroom clips of number talks at various grade levels as well as teacher and author clips.

The Elements of Successful Number Talks

- Classroom environment and community – *cohesive, safe, acceptance, students willing to take risks*
- Classroom discussions – *sharing, discussion and justification of strategies*
- Teachers' role – *facilitator, help students make connections and see relationships, provide frames or structures for discussion, listener*
- The role of mental math – *mental computation that focuses on number relationships instead of memorization, builds efficiency, horizontal presentation helps develop place value understanding*
- Purposeful computation problems – *problems selected to focus students on relationships between numbers, intentionally chosen*

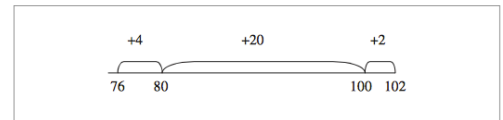


Figure 1-1 Adding-Up Strategy for $102 - 76$

Purposeful number talks help students to:

- 1) make sense of mathematics
- 2) develop efficient computation strategies
- 3) communicate mathematically
- 4) reason and prove solutions

"I got twenty-six, too, but I did it another way. I added on four to each number to change the problem to one hundred six minus eighty, and I knew that one hundred six minus eighty was twenty-six. And that was easy to solve in my head!" shares Brendan.

$$\begin{array}{r} 102 + 4 = 106 \\ - 76 + 4 = - 80 \\ \hline 26 \end{array}$$

"Do you follow Brendan's strategy? Can we prove it using the number line?" asks Ms. Morton.

"I do," offers Carla. "I think it will always work, because you're keeping the space between the numbers the same."

Some blog posts describing Number Talks sequences can be found here:

Using Number Talks to Support Computational Fluency (grades K-7 examples)

<http://blogs.sd38.bc.ca/sd38mathandscience/2014/05/22/computational-fluency-at-byng/>

Introducing Number Talks in Late Primary Classrooms (grades 2-3 examples)

<http://blogs.sd38.bc.ca/sd38mathandscience/2014/10/06/thinking-about-math-in-september/>

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