

Making Number Talks Matter

Getting Number Talks Started – Routines for Number Talks

1. Students put paper and pencils away (they may need reminding) and put their fists unobtrusively on their chests to show the teacher they are ready.
2. The teacher writes a problem on the board or document camera.
3. The teacher watches while students solve the problem mentally and put up their thumbs when they have had enough time to think.
4. When most thumbs are up, the teacher asks if anyone is willing to share what they think the answer is. She noncommittally records *just the answer* on the board and asks if anyone got a different answer, continuing to record each answer that is given.
5. When the teacher is satisfied there are no other answers, she asks if anyone can explain how he or she figured the problem out.
6. When volunteers begin to share their strategies, they first identify which answer (assuming different answers have been offered) they are defending.
7. After a student shares a strategy, there are several things a teacher might ask in order to work with that student's thinking.
8. Number talks don't naturally end after 15 minutes; often they can go much longer if you let them – and sometimes you may want to let them.