[Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20) helps support my theories. It talks about how most people view math as a set of rules and procedure to memorize in order to solve an equation. In reality, math is much more than that. It is the relationship between numbers that provide a solution and there are many different ways to create and build relationships.

There are three factors that students must have to be successful in math!

* Accuracy – the ability to produce an accurate answer
* Efficiency – the ability to choose an appropriate strategy
* Flexibility – the ability to use number relationships

What is a Number Talk?

[Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20) are discussions about a particular problem that has been crafted in such a way that the key foundational ideas of mathematics can be evaluated and demonstrated. These talks take about *5-15 minutes* and are typically held *3-5 times* a week. These talks allow students to share their thoughts and ideas about math. It can be taught in whole or small groups. This gives you flexibility to meet the varying needs of your students.

This video is designed as a comical introduction but it does provide a lot information about Number Talks including how it is aligned to the common core.

Designing a Number Talk

We will discuss this more in depth in chapter 2 but I love how this book uses the “silent thumb” to give students “think time.” I also like that no answer is wrong. Student “defend” or “dispute” a strategy. The students can agree or disagree with anyone in the class including themselves. Not only is this helpful for number talks but is a great life skill to teach students how to respectfully disagree with someone.

Open ended questions allow the students to clarify and provide additional ideas. By asking more than one student to share his/her thought process, we are seeing that there truly are multiple ways to solve a problem. Students get a chance to see the relationships and explore them.

The classroom environment and community is the key to success. The teacher is seen as a guide not the master. Students are asked to clarify their own thinking, consider and test strategies, investigate and apply relationships, and learn that making mistakes and taking risks can and does lead to success. Students don’t simply find the solution to a problem and then move on. They are challenged to see how many different ways they can solve the same problem.

[](http://thinkwonderteach.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2%2B2.jpg)

Let’s look at 2+2. I can count on my fingers (1), draw a picture (2), use the standard U.S. algorithm (3), can count on a number line (4), and I can double the number (5). I am sure there are other ways but I just listed 5 different ways to determine that 2+2 is 4. I can prove it and I can show it in a relationship.

This is what I love about Number Talks. There are a few challenges to implementing Number Talks.

First, the teacher must shift his/her thinking away from: What answer did you get? to How did you get that answer? Also, you have to teach your students to keep their comments on task or else your Number Talks will go on forever!

**Questions?**

Here are a few reflective questions to think about regarding this week’s chapter.

* How is math currently taught in your classroom?
* What are the strengths/weaknesses in this area?
* What is your philosophy of math? How is your classroom environment structured?
* Do you have an extra 10 minutes in your day that you can devote to math discussions?
* How can you keep students on task during discussions?

Preparing for Number Talks

Welcome to Chapter 2! Today, we are discussing how to set up our classrooms and preparing for [Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20).

Procedures & Expectations

One of my favorite parts about [Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20) is how little preparation their truly is! There are only 4 things to remember…

Designated a location in your classroom for number talks

Provide wait time

Accept, respect, and consider all answers

Encourage student communication

Now while these rules sound simple, if you are used to be the coach in your classroom rather than a member of the team, these maybe a little more tricky to implement than what it appears at first glance.

Choosing a location

I tried to hold a [Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20) with my students at their table groups. It was a complete disaster. There were too many distractions, the students were too far apart from one another, and it just didn’t have the comfy coziness of an intimate conversation that moving to the carpet did.

I believe that this is one of the key essentials to success with [Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20).

Wait Time

Students have been ingrained from childhood to raise their hand as quickly as possible with the answer. Wait time is necessary so students actually think through their answers instead of saying the first thing that pops into their minds.

. Do your students have this problem? What happens to the child who can’t raise his/her hand the fastest? They simply stop thinking and trying. Why bother? Some will raise her hand for some reason even to say I don’t know.

I love the silent thumb and the raising of a finger to demonstrate understanding. I love that those that think faster are challenged to keep thinking to discover how many ways they can answer the same question. I love that students are learning communication skills to better understand themselves and others. And I love that we are teaching students to accept other people’s perspectives of the same situation.

Discussion Time

Prompts help students formulate their answers in a respect matter. Just like we use sentence stems to scaffold writing, it is important that we use these same prompts when teaching our students how to explain their perspectives. Again, this is such an essential life skill and I love how it is incorporated into math!

Accountability

In order to be successful with anything in the classroom, you have to hold your students (and yourself!) accountable for what you teach

Questions

Below are a few questions to help you reflect upon Chapter 2.

What area will you designate in your classroom for [Number Talks](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1935099116/ref%3Das_li_tf_il?ie=UTF8&amp;camp=1789&amp;creative=9325&amp;creativeASIN=1935099116&amp;linkCode=as2&amp;tag=laulea-20)?

What signals will you use to allow for wait time?

How will you encourage/ensure all students to participate?

How will you scaffold conversations?

How will you hold the students accountable for the materials discussed?