

Dear Parents,

CCT Strategy: Plus, Minus, Interesting.

- provides educators with a valuable tool when leading classroom discussions about difficult decisions, issues or situations
- encourages students to examine ideas and concepts from different perspectives
- was developed by Dr. Edward de Bono, who also created the Six Thinking Hats.

PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting): Being a Pediatrician
Plus + 😊 What would be the good parts about being a pediatrician?
Minus - 😞 What would be the challenges about being a pediatrician?
Interesting 😲 What would be some interesting things about being a pediatrician?
Draw a picture of a pediatrician in the space below:

In addition, students have been taught games that extend their math thinking. Once students learn these games, they are available as “may do” activities. One math game that students used to extend their thinking is the game “Dominating Doubles.” This allows students to apply their doubling skills, but go beyond doubling to “halving” the number. Students also have to strategize in order to either look to get specific numbers in a row or block their partner.



Math Exemplars:

In addition to promoting problem-solving skills, Math Exemplars provide students with an opportunity to refine their ability to effectively communicate their mathematical thinking through their writing. As a student learning extension opportunity over the last few weeks, students engaged another Exemplar called Farmer Brown. Some students even found all the possible ways to solve this problem. See below for an example of student work.

Farmer Brown

Farmer Brown has cows, pigs and sheep. He has 10 animals.
Show how many animals are in each of 3 pens.

Farmer Brown
Copyright 2007, Exemplars, Inc. All rights reserved.

$8 + 1 + 1 = 10$

$7 + 2 + 1 = 10$

$6 + 2 + 2$

$5 + 3 + 2 = 10$

$4 + 4 + 2 = 10$

$3 + 5 + 2 = 10$

$2 + 6 + 2 = 10$

$1 + 7 + 2 = 10$

Sincerely,
Ashley Burt
Advanced Academics Coach
Taylor Elementary School

Advanced Academics Update

Date: October 3, 2025

Dear Parents,

Here are some highlights of extension opportunities for students as well as the Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) strategies used in the classroom over the past few weeks.

Math Exemplars:

In addition to promoting problem-solving skills, Math Exemplars provide students with an opportunity to refine their ability to effectively communicate their mathematical thinking through their writing. As a student learning extension opportunity over the last few weeks, students engaged in two different Math Exemplars. See below for some student examples.

Skip Counting Math Exemplar Examples:

Skip Counting

Jose is skip counting and says the number 30.
What could Jose be skip counting by and what number could he have started with?
Explain your thinking using pictures, words, and symbols.

Skip Counting

Jose is skip counting and says the number 30.
What could Jose be skip counting by and what number could he have started with?
Explain your thinking using pictures, words, and symbols.

skip
count by
6

6, 12, 18, 24, 30

100 Chart

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

Toy Cars Math Exemplar Examples:

Toy Cars

Sam and Ellie were playing with toy cars.

- Sam has some toy cars.
- Ellie has two more cars than Sam.

How many cars could they each have?
How do you know your answer makes sense?
What other answers can you find?

Sam could have 8 toy cars.

Ellie could have 10 toy cars.

My answer makes sense for the problem because it has two more

$$8 + 2 = 10$$

Possible Sentence Frames for supporting learners.

Sam could have 125 toy cars.

Ellie could have 127 toy cars.

My answer makes sense for the problem because 125 + 2 = 127

Sam 125

Ellie 127

125 + 2 = 127

Sam 1

Ellie 3

1 + 2 = 3

Sam 2

Ellie 4

2 + 2 = 4

e = 4

In Language Arts, students in 1st grade began a new nonfiction unit on the Human Body. Students engaged in a Harvard Project Zero Thinking Routine: Imagine If as a Launch Task for the unit (see more below). Additionally, throughout this unit students will be exploring an overarching concept - Systems.

What is a thinking routine?

A thinking routine is a set of questions or a brief sequence of steps used to scaffold and support student thinking. Project Zero (PZ) researchers designed thinking routines to deepen students' thinking and to help make that thinking "visible." Thinking routines help to reveal students' thinking.

Project Zero Thinking Routine: Imagine If...

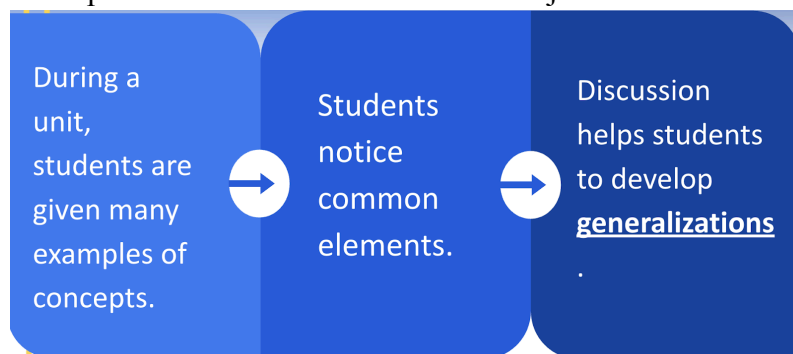
- *What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?*
 - This routine helps students investigate objects and systems and how they might be redesigned by identifying new ideas and inviting divergent and convergent thinking.

Overarching Concepts: Systems

A concept is an idea that is timeless, abstract, broad, and can be shown through a variety of examples.

- Examples include:
 - Change
 - Systems
 - Patterns
 - Cycles
 - Cause/Effect
 - Perspectives

Concepts lead students to learn more than just facts.



So throughout this language arts unit, students will be working to notice common elements of a System, such as the various systems in the human body to develop generalizations by the end of the unit.

Fall Parent Information Night

To learn more about Advanced Academics and Talent Development, there will be a Fall Parent Information Night during the PTA meeting on October 14 at 7 p.m. Please continue to look for PTA updates as we will let you know closer to the date if it will be a virtual meeting or in person.

Sincerely,
Ashley Burt
Advanced Academics Coach
Taylor Elementary School

Advanced Academics Update

Date:

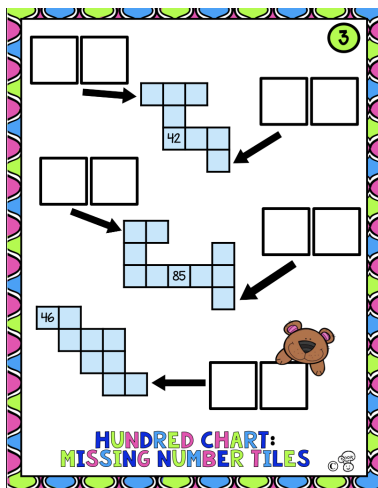
September 15 - 19

Dear Parents,

Here are some highlights of extension opportunities for students as well as the Critical and Creative Thinking (CCT) strategies used in the classroom over the past few weeks.

In math, students have been working on their number sense to count forwards and backwards. Students who showed a strong understanding of this concept were given an opportunity to play a strategic math game called “100 Chart Connect 4.” Additionally, students extended their learning using a math resource called “Marcy Cook Math Tiles.”

Math Resource: Marcy Cook Math Tiles



Who is Marcy Cook?

Marcy Cook is an experienced educator and math specialist. She's taught across grade levels and all over the world. She's created engaging, hands-on activities that challenge students and promote higher level thinking in math.

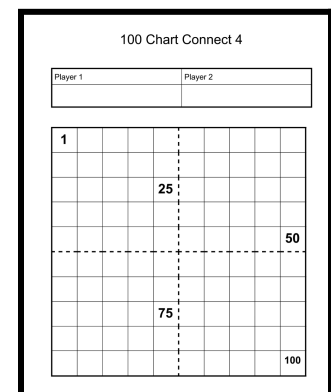
How does it work?

Students are given tiles with the digits 0 - 9. They use these tiles to solve open-ended problems, ranging from addition and subtraction to place value and algebra.

To the left is an example of the Marcy Cook tiles that students use to deepen their number sense and notice patterns.

Math Game Extension: 100 Chart Connect 4

Students extended their learning by playing the “100 Chart Connect 4.” They went beyond the standard of counting forwards and backwards within 30. They worked to think strategically about where to place their numbers. They also reinforced their understanding of one more, one less, ten more, ten less of a number, and began to see patterns within the 100 Chart.



In language arts, students engaged in a collaborative discussion of a debatable question, known as a Hands-Down Conversation as they reflected on their reading of the Half-Chick.

Hands - Down Conversations

A Hands-Down Conversation is a collaborative discussion that involves a thoughtful, open-ended dialogue in which students do not need to raise their hands. Participants share their ideas and listen respectfully to the views of others.

Half-Chick would not listen to his mother and he was often rude to his brothers and sisters, even though they were always extra nice to him.	
Was Half-Chick kind? Why or why not?	
	Half-Chick <u>was not kind</u> because _____.
	Half-Chick <u>was kind</u> because _____.

Sincerely,
Ms. Ashley Burt
Advanced Academics Coach
Taylor Elementary School

Date: September 2nd - 5th

Dear Parents,

In this first week of school, teachers have been working to engage students in creative and critical thinking skills, even as we begin the year by getting to know each other and learning routines.

Here's a highlight of some things I've seen teachers do this week to extend learning by engaging in Creative and Critical Thinking.

Many grade levels this week used **Harvard's Project Zero Thinking Routines** to launch the language arts unit. In first grade, students engaged in the Thinking Routine called, See, Think, Wonder to examine a picture closely to connect this thinking to characters and setting, helping to tell a story.

What is a thinking routine?

A thinking routine is a set of questions or a brief sequence of steps used to scaffold and support

student thinking. Project Zero (PZ) researchers designed thinking routines to deepen students' thinking and to help make that thinking "visible." Thinking routines help to reveal students' thinking.

At the start of the Language Arts Unit on Mesoamerica, 5th graders engage in a Project Zero Thinking Routine called Creative Question Starts. Students observed several images closely and wrote down what they saw. Then after examining all the images, brainstormed questions.

Project Zero Thinking Routine: See, Think, Wonder

What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine encourages students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry.

Resources for More Information on Advanced Academics Talent & Development

Looking for more information about Advanced Academics, visit the following pages:

- Taylor's Advanced Academics:
<https://taylor.apsva.us/programsandservices/gifted-services/>
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):
<https://taylor.apsva.us/frequently-asked-questions-faqs/>

Sincerely,
Ms. Ashley Burt
Advanced Academics Coach
Taylor Elementary School