Strategy #2 – Computation Strategies – Using facts

No matter which computational method you are learning, knowing the basic facts in the four operations is crucial to increasing the speed and accuracy with which you can solve problems using larger numbers. It used to be that the only way to learn facts was through memorization, but now, there are many different strategies to assist you. Most math programs in use today make memorizing facts much less important than it once was, and some simply don’t include it at all. However, I maintain that no matter the strategy or strategies you use to learn the facts, you should still strive to come as close as you are able to memorizing them over time.

I also believe, however, that there are countless ways to learn the facts, as well as strategies you can use to assist you with computation. As with most lists I will give you, this is not complete – you can use one or more of these suggestions along with or in addition to what you are learning in class, and you can also add your own ideas and methods to this list.

* Reciting fact tables – hearing them is better than simply reading them
* Skip counting – reciting and or writing just the answers, especially for multiplication tables
* Using manipulatives (this doesn’t just have to be for younger students!)
* Drawing pictures when manipulatives are not available
* Using computer programs and apps for practice
* Learning a program like Touch Math – this was not my preferred method to learn or to teach because it does not match my learning style, but I saw students who learned it from other teachers become pretty fast and accurate with it!
* Using a hundred chart to recognize patterns (again, this doesn’t just have to be for younger students!)
* Using flashcards
* Fact families

As I said before, this is not a complete list. I will go into some of these in more detail in future strategy posts. Hopefully, you will find some of them useful, or be inspired to come up with your own ideas!