Count Around the Circle

Summarized from Number Sense Routines by Jessica F. Shumway, 2011

Count around the Circle is a whole-class routine that gives students practice with mental counting. Its purpose is helping students become more automatic and independent with counting patterns by getting/strengthening the sequences in their heads. Start the routine by counting from 1; for example, the first child would say "one", the second child "two", etc., until every child has said a number. Once children are comfortable with the routine, they can progress to other counting sequences. The author's sequence suggestion order is:

- Count by ones, tens, twos, threes, etc. starting at zero (0, 10, 20…).
- Count by ones, tens, fives, twos, threes, etc., starting at various points (320, 330, 340…).
- Count backwards by ones, tens, fives, and twos starting at various points (112, 102, 92…).
- Count by halves, fourths, eighths, thirds, sixths starting at zero or various points. (0, ½, 1, 1 ½…)
- Count by wholes, starting at a fractional number, or by hundreds, thousands, or millions, starting at various starting points.

Count around the Circle scaffolds students' learning by helping them see the visual pattern of sequences. Flexibility is necessary; children need time to think before answering, and if several students have difficulty with a sequence, the class may need to move into choral counting before moving back to counting around the circle. Teachers can offer comments to help students "see" what they are doing, like "how did you know what came next?" or "You just counted back from 92 by tens. Let's look at what you just did; do you see any patterns?" Through *Counting Around the Circle*, students will be building counting proficiency in solving problems; instead of just counting by ones they will learn more efficient strategies like skip-counting by tens, or counting backwards by tens, fives, etc., to subtract. For more information, see citation.

Shumway, J.F. (2011). *Number Sense Routines: Building Numerical Literacy Every Day in Grades K-3*. Stenhouse Publishers, Portland, ME