Games to Help Students Learn Basic Addition Facts in Meaningful Ways

Simon Says
(adapted from Whitenack et al. 2002)

When your students are waiting in line for lunch, recess, and so on, you can ask them to use their fingers to show a number less than 10. For example, you could say, "Show me 6," and then have them look around at how their peers respond (4 + 2, 5 + 1, and 3 + 3). This is a quick, easy way for them to practice different combinations of numbers and to recognize the importance of seeing the various ways their classmates think.

How Many Am I Hiding?
(adapted from TERC 2008, *Solving Story Problems*).

Partners work with a fixed number of small objects (Unifix® cubes, chips, etc.) and take turns hiding a portion of the group from the other partner, who has to determine how many objects are hidden on the basis of knowing the total number of objects and the number of objects that are shown. This game can be played with any fixed number, but using 10 in particular will help students practice their combinations of 10. So, for example, if there are 10 objects and a student leaves 3 on the desk, her partner would determine the hidden number to be 7. Play continues for several rounds; each time, partners record the combinations of hidden and shown objects.

Double It
(from TERC 2008, *Counting, Coins, and Combinations*)

Students begin with a table of 19 columns, each labeled with a number 2–20. Each column has 8 rows (see left for a partial table).

Working with a partner, students take turns drawing a card from a deck of cards containing the numbers 0–10. Each student doubles whatever number he or she draws and records the sum in the appropriate column on his or her sheet. Play continues until a column is filled completely.

Doubles Arrays
(from TERC 2008, *Counting, Coins, and Combinations*)

Working with a partner, students take turns drawing a card from a deck of cards containing the numbers 0–10. For whichever number is drawn, students use a piece of grid paper to color in a row with that number of squares. Then they double the number by coloring in the row just below that. So, for example, if a student draws a 6, she would color in a 6 x 2 rectangle on her grid paper. She would then record the equation 6 + 6 = 12 below the array. The game is over when each player has had five turns.