



Welcome fellow Recovering Traditionalists to Episode 109. Today I've got a question for you and it pertains to The Use of AND in Math.

Welcome to Build Math Minds the podcast, where fidelity to your students is greater than fidelity to your textbook. I'm your host, Christina Tondevold, the recovering traditionalist and BuildMathMinds.com Founder, where my mission is to change the way we teach elementary math to our kiddos. Are you ready to start building math minds and not just creating calculators? Let's get started.

As a Recovering Traditionalist I want you to know that I don't have it all figured out and it's okay that you don't either. I'm still refining my understanding and teaching and it's been over 17 years I've been working on changing my teaching.

So I'm going to start doing a different type of podcast episode every once in a while. I'm calling them my 'wonderings.' So today I'm Wondering About The Use of the word AND in Math. Did any of you catch how I said the number of today's episode?

I see it often on social media and it is very common in my discussions with other math teachers, it's that the word 'AND' should only be used to denote the decimal when saying numbers.

For example, how do you say the number 245?

Do you say *"Two hundred and forty-five"*?

How about 1036?

Is it okay to say *"One thousand and thirty-six"*?

A lot of people say *"NO!! You cannot do that. You should only use the word 'and' when there is a decimal."*

So, according to them we should only use 'and' when it's a number like 12.5...we should say *"twelve and five tenths"*.

But this is where the Recovering Traditionalist in me comes out. I want to buck tradition. Just because we've always used 'and' in that way does it mean we *HAVE TO????*

So here's what I'm wondering...

Is the use of the 'and' just there as a rule to help kids know when to put a decimal instead of helping kids actually understand when a decimal is used?

Are we teaching kids the rule that when you hear 'and' that's where you place a decimal instead of helping them understand place value and that when they hear *'tenths'* or *'hundredths'* etc, then that is when you need a decimal??

Let's put it into context. If I have \$134, I have one hundred AND thirty-four dollars. Yes, I *can* say it as "one hundred thirty-four dollars" but do I *have to*??? Can't I say that I have one hundred AND thirty-four dollars?

If I have \$134.25, can't I say "*One hundred and thirty-four dollars and twenty-five cents*"??? And expect kids, and even adults will understand what that is?

I get that it's a mouthful and it's more streamlined to say it without the extra 'and's in there, but when we try to make it easy for kids, we often strip out the understanding that goes with it.

When we teach kids that the 'and' means 'put a decimal here', we aren't addressing place value with them and that's a big concern to me.

Yes, we will probably always say 'and' when the decimal appears in a number but I don't want kids to be looking for and listening for the 'and' to tell them they need a decimal. I want them to listen to the values of the numbers and when they hear 'tenths' or 'hundredths' or 'cents' when talking about money...basically anything that isn't a whole number, then that means they need a decimal or it's written in fractional form.

So those are my thoughts and wonderings, but I'd love to hear what you think on this topic. Like I said this is something I'm wondering about. Is there a reason I'm not seeing that we must only use the 'and' when we have a decimal?

Let me know your thoughts on this. You can come over to the show notes page at [buildmathminds.com/109](http://buildmathminds.com/109) to leave me a comment or I'll also be posting about this on my social media accounts. You can find me at The Recovering Traditionalist on Facebook and on Twitter and Instagram my handle is @BuildMathMinds. I'd love to hear your thoughts and let me know if my wonderings are correct.

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