



**MC<sup>2</sup> Countdown to PARCC**  
**October 15, 2014 Webinar**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**  
<http://mc2.nmsu.edu/PARCC/CountDown.html>

- 1. The PED and PARCC have also released a Countdown to PARCC newsletter, are the resources included the same as the MC<sup>2</sup> Countdown to PARCC?**  
The MC<sup>2</sup> Countdown to PARCC is not meant to replace anything already available through PARCC and the PED; but is intended to help teachers better understand the PARCC resources.
- 2. Can you explain the reasoning for recommending our teachers take the practice End-of-Year (EOY) test prior to the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) practice test?**  
The recommendation is because it is available right now for teachers. We are still waiting for the PBA practice test to be available. We are hearing from PARCC that it will be available in November so as soon as we have that, it will be part of the MC<sup>2</sup> Countdown to PARCC.
- 3. Do we have a better idea of when the Performance Based Assessment (PBA) practice test will be available?**  
Our understanding is that the PBA practice test is scheduled to be released in November.
- 4. Can you share the point information regarding students given full or partial credit for the Performance Based Assessment (PBA)?**  
We understand that the scoring for the PBA is an important difference because students will get partial credit for the items. It is not just a certain point value like on the End-of-Year (EOY). On the EOY, sometimes an item is multiple select where students are asked to pick all of those choices which are correct. They either get the points for answering it correctly or not, even if they have only answered it partially correct.  
  
To learn more about the point information go to <http://www.parcconline.org/assessment-blueprints-test-specs> on the PARCC website regarding blueprints and test specifications. Scroll down to the FAQs section and the PARCC Public Blueprints Narrated Math PowerPoint.
- 5. How can you and/or should you incorporate Number Talks into PARCC prep?**  
As a teacher using the Thinking Protocol, there are going to be misconceptions and/or strengths that come out and you will be able to determine if you want to use a Number Talk to actually practice or review items/concepts with which your students need to be getting more practice. The Thinking Protocol could actually inform the topics of the Number Talk.
- 6. I want to make sure I have rigorous tasks to use to prepare my students for the content on the tests - do you recommend we use the actual sample test items with them?**  
We are asking teachers to use the sample tests as a warm-up or as a formative assessment, not necessarily as your instructional tool. We also recommend that teachers look at their curriculum resources and find the rich tasks that match the expectations of the Common Core. Students may need scaffolding and may not be able to answer the questions on the PARCC website. Look at their proficiency levels to determine what rich experiences students need to scaffold their learning to where they can truly understand what they need for PARCC and the Common Core.

A lot of the work that MC<sup>2</sup> has done with districts has focused on cognitive demand and being able to size up the task in their curriculum resources. Other resources that are available will be shared in the November e-newsletter and webinar. Our hope is that teachers will be able to choose tasks that

promote thinking and that they will use the CCSS Math Practices throughout the day as they are delivering math instruction because students need to be engaged in critical thinking and reasoning as an ongoing process rather than just periodically. Building their thinking muscle will better prepare students for PARCC.

**7. I am the only math teacher at my school, how can I collaborate with others in my similar situation?**

You may want to email us at [mc2@nmsu.edu](mailto:mc2@nmsu.edu) if you are interested in MC<sup>2</sup> creating a network of teachers in the same situation. We might be able to find someone that would be happy to work with you because we know that collaboration and having those conversations is much more powerful than working alone. Let us know how we might be able to support you because it is a lot better if you collaborate with a colleague.

Also, consider tapping in to science and ELA teachers at your school. ELA teachers have to deal with some of the same issues of rigor and just having that conversation helps create new ideas.

**8. Teachers have been asking for other resources in which they can find several tasks that are “PARCC-like” in format. Can you recommend any resources?**

We have some resources that we hope to share in November. Additionally, we know of some teachers who are developing tasks and so we may be able to create a network within which to share these. There are also websites that are “up and coming” around PARCC and so we will be scouring through those to share with you. If anybody out there has found a great website, please let us know ([mcs@nmsu.edu](mailto:mcs@nmsu.edu)) so we can add it to the list. We thought we could scaffold these and provide really rich practice items and then move into other domains so you have other resources at the beginning of each month.

**9. What do you suggest for building our teachers’ repertoire of math language so they are providing this for our students?**

One thing that we see happening in schools that we think is really useful is looking at the language that is in the Common Core. How is the language different? For example, in 7th grade, where we are used to talking about *slope*, we are now talking about *constant of proportionality*; so we would look at the Common Core Standards themselves and highlight the vocabulary that should be part of the language of the math classroom. We can also go back to the following sentence starters and use them in everyday language. Really trust that students can share their thinking and compare ideas. They will do it if we keep asking them to; if they know that is the expectation.

- I made sense of the question by...
- I started solving the problem by...
- When I got stuck, I persevered by...
- I compared my answer or strategy to others by...
- I knew my answer made sense because...
- I made connections to someone else’s strategy or approach when...

In a lot of kindergarten classrooms, teachers have anchor charts posted with the vocabulary. The children actually utilize those anchor charts and really draw upon them. In designing those, teachers hopefully will become more familiar with the terms and make sure that is part of ongoing classroom practice where students are using academic vocabulary not only once or twice but often in order to really develop an understanding of the meaning and also connect the language with the math concepts. This strategy is not just for kindergarten but it is actually good all the way up to high school (i.e., having words posted and using them regularly in the classroom).

**10. How can we make the connection for students between the use of manipulatives “in reality” and using manipulatives virtually during PARCC?**

We use manipulatives to help build understanding of a concept but we do not always have access to

the manipulatives so how do we scaffold so that the manipulatives become less and less needed for solving the problem? So when building manipulatives in, also think about how to tie that into the more abstract or the visual. How do we let students talk about the connections between those two things? For example, maybe students are using protractors in the classroom where they get to move them around and now they have to use a protractor online. Have a purposeful conversation about what is the same and what is different about using the protractor online rather than having the actual measuring tool in hand.

Studying the bridges between the use of actual physical manipulatives and online simulations is an important research topic. Young children, in particular, have to have concrete objects to make sense of math ideas. It helps them before they move into the representational and then abstract. What about online resources and is there a trajectory for learning using online virtual manipulatives?

**11. I keep hearing different things about PARCC math in Spanish. Do we have a definitive answer from PARCC as to the availability of the Spanish version? Are there any practice items available?**

MC<sup>2</sup> is currently looking into this and our Countdown to PARCC listserv will be notified of any updated information regarding this question.

**12. Is the Thinking Protocol for students to look at sample items available on the MC<sup>2</sup> website?**

Yes, go to <http://mc2.nmsu.edu/PARCC/CountDown.html> and scroll down or click on the link below. [Thinking Protocol](#)

**13. Are the sample practice test items available online, the same ones we got in the e-newsletter?**

The ones in the MC<sup>2</sup> October e-Newsletter currently online are a partial representation of the complete set of EOY practice test items available on the PARCC website. Additional PARCC EOY practice test items will be included in the MC<sup>2</sup> November e-Newsletter.

**14. Will participants receive a certificate for attending the webinars?**

Yes, attendees may receive a certificate of attendance upon request. Email Sheila ([sshills@nmsu.edu](mailto:sshills@nmsu.edu)).