Strategies for Mathematics

**SPIES**

To help me determine which number is “greater than,” “less than,” or “equal to” when comparing numbers.

**Say** each integer aloud or to yourself.

**Point** to each integer and look for *negative* signs.

- Check for & circle negative integers by looking for the “-“ symbol.
  
  For Example:  
  
  \[ -3.6 \quad 2.5 \]

- Integers that are positive will likely not have a sign

**Identify** whether each integer is positive or negative.

**Estimate** the value of each integer using the Rules of Value.

- **Rules of Value**
  - Rule #1 (positive # & negative #) – positive integer is always greater in value.
  - Rule #2 (all positive #’s) – integer that is farther from zero on a number line is of greater value.
  - Rule #3 (all negative #’s) – integer closest to zero on a number line is of greater value.

**Select** integer of greatest value.

- Use Gator/Shark picture cue (Bernard, 1990) Think of “<” and “>” sign as the mouth of an alligator or shark – it has to open its mouth wider for the ”bigger” integer.

  For Example:

  \[ -12 \quad \subset \quad \triangle 18 \]
  
  Eighteen is *greater than* negative two so the jaws of the alligator have to open toward the number eighteen.

- Use the Greater/Less Than Number Line Cue Sheets
Whole Number Greater/Less Than Number Line Cue Sheet

Fraction Greater/Less Than Number Line Cue Sheet

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