

J. Herlong's reflection for my Foundation grant:

Implementing the Building Thinking Classrooms framework has fundamentally shifted the ownership of math in my 2nd-grade classroom. By moving students to Vertical Non-Permanent Surfaces (VNPS), the physical barriers to participation have vanished. In 2nd grade, the fear of making a permanent mistake on paper can be paralyzing; on the whiteboard, a mistake is just a temporary sketch. This has fostered a "brave" environment where the focus is on the process rather than the result. The most transformative part of our routine is the rotation. When students move to another group's board to add to their thinking, several things happen:

- **Critical Thinking:** They aren't just looking for an answer; they are decoding someone else's logic. They have to ask, "How did this group see the problem?" \* **Building, Not Just Correcting:** Instead of saying "that's wrong," my students are learning to say, "I see what they did, let's add a number line to show why that works." This moves them from basic computation into the realm of mathematical discourse.
- **Language Development:** For my 7 and 8-year-olds, the boards serve as a visual scaffold for their math talk. It is much easier to explain a "make-a-ten" strategy when you can point to a physical drawing left by a peer.

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to purchase these boards. Enjoy some pictures below of them in action.



