

How do Sprints differ from other written fluency drills?

Traditionally, math speed drills have been presented as sets of randomized facts that provide students intensive practice and/or test their automaticity. Sprints are designed for centered practice but they are structured through carefully sequenced problems that start simple and gradually grow in complexity.

Below are some other ways in which Sprints differ from traditional written fluency:

- Sprints are designed to be used as a self-assessment not a formal one. They are meant to help each student feel successful, but also challenged.
- Most speed drills focus on basic operation problems that are presented abstractly and/or uniformly. Mathematics consists of hundreds of interwoven skills and topics that relate to (and build on) one another. Sprints address this expansive range and provide students the opportunity to practice and master a plethora of skills, concepts, and formats. In short, Sprints are a much greater reflection of mathematics than traditional speed drills.
- The Sprint routine is a two-part activity. Problem-by-problem, the degree of difficulty correlates between Sprints A and B. A concise, carefully sequenced ten-step routine incubates student improvement, which is designed to build student confidence.

I am a strong advocate for helping students build automaticity with basic facts, especially with the following topics:

- Adding and subtracting within 10
- Addition crossing the 10 facts
- Subtraction crossing the 10 facts
- Times tables
- Simplifying fractions with denominators 24 and under

Over the past nine years, I've found that Sprints are a much greater vehicle for reaching this goal than traditional math speed drills.