

I don't deliver Sprints because I'm philosophically opposed to competition in the classroom.

To deeply understand the purpose of Sprints, it is crucial for teachers to distinguish between the tool's mathematics and theatrics.

Sprints are designed to bolster students' mathematical fluency. They are meant to provide intensive, focused practice on specific skills and concepts, while improving students' number sense through carefully sequenced and patterned problems. This tends to work best when students are trying their hardest, because adrenaline magnifies focus and strengthens memory.

The ten-stage routine that I've outlined consists of theatrics to stimulate student focus and adrenaline. Not every theatric works perfectly for every student and/or teacher in every classroom. However, that does not mean that Sprints can't benefit all students. While some educators are opposed to competitive classroom activities, most would agree that practice is an essential catalyst for building number sense and mastering skills. For those teachers, administrators, etc. who are against competition, I recommend delivering Sprints untimed and/or without competitive theatrics.

For the five years that I delivered Sprints as a classroom teacher, I presented the tool as a competitive drill. Each day, I recognized students who answered the most correctly and/or improved the most. My intentions were never to exalt or demean any student. It was simply a piece of theater to generate excitement in the same way that placing pocket change in the center of a poker table improves focus and effort during a friendly game of cards. The perception that something is at stake deepens participant concentration.

I believe that all good teachers find ways to acknowledge *each* of their students' talents on a regular basis. My students who were rarely recognized during Sprints, were always celebrated during other parts of the day.