How to Deliver a Sprint

The Sprint routine, which takes between ten and fifteen minutes to complete, consists of nine major steps:

Step 1

The Initial Sprint begins with the words "On your mark, get set, GO!" or some variation of it. It lasts one minute and simulates a race, in which all students are trying to answer as many questions as they can. The race creates adrenaline. During this time, students ideally have an internal voice saying "FASTER, FASTER, FASTER." A teacher who doesn't feel comfortable with simulating a race could simply say "Begin." **The important thing is that students receive quiet, focused practice.**

Step 2

At the end of the minute, the teacher says "Stop" and begins calling out answers, with students verbally responding when they get an answer right, e.g. saying "Yes". If the students get the answer wrong, they circle it so that they can go back and fix it if time allows. The teacher continues calling out answers until they stop hearing "Yes." IF they want to recognize winners, they can then ask students to raise their hand if they got one or more right, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. Students drop their hands as the teacher passes the number they got right. After all hands have dropped, the class recognizes the winner or winners with a round of applause or some other acknowledgement. Teachers can call out answers without students verbally responding. They can also project an answer key so that students can check their own answers. **The most important aspect of this step is that students are able to immediately assess their understanding.** Recognizing winners is the choice of the school and/or teacher. An alternative to recognizing winners would be asking students to raise their hand if they tried their best and then acknowledging them.

Step 3

Students take a few minutes to finish up the remainder of the Sprint to prepare for the second Sprint. This time is also meant to be a cool down for the students, i.e. they should lose the adrenaline that they worked to create during stage one. Teachers should let this continue as long as the majority of the students are engaged in the Sprint. When concentration wanes, it's time to move on to stage four. This is also an excellent opportunity for students who finish early to distribute the second Sprint and materials that will be used during the lesson. Teachers with time restraints might have the students work for just one minute before moving on to the next stage. This is the most neglected step in the

Sprint routine. Students need to practice to stimulate improvement and reach more complicated problems. **If answers are projected during Step 2, then the answers should be removed during this work period.**

Step 4

The teacher reviews every answer with students verbally acknowledging when they get answers right and saying nothing when they get answers wrong. This stage serves as a confidence-builder and also helps students recognize mistakes, so that they can correct them on the next Sprint. Teachers can call out answers without students verbally responding. They could also project answers so that students can check their own answers. **The most important aspect of this step is that students are able to immediately assess their understanding and mistakes.**

Step 5

The teacher leads a fast physical exercise while counting by a multiple forward and backward. Adrenaline is again created. Being able to count forward and backward by a number while doing an exercise such as jumping jacks internalizes number facts. The exercises should be short, counting between 10 and 12 multiples of a given number, e.g. 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 20, 18, 16, 14, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2, 0. The teacher paces the class by modeling the exercise in the front of the room with all students looking at them, but they do not count with the students.

Step 6

The teacher leads a slow-down exercise, such as arm circles, while counting by a multiple forward and backward. This is meant to be a cool down for the students, so that they lose their adrenaline. The teacher again paces the class by modeling the exercise in the front of the room with all students looking at them. Just like the fast exercise, the slow-down exercise is short, counting between 10 and 12 multiples of a given number, e.g. 3-6-9-12-15-18-21-24-27-30-30-27-24-21-18-15-12-9-6-3-0.

Step 7

The second Sprint is delivered in the same routine as the first Sprint. It lasts one minute and again simulates a race. It is on the same topic as the first Sprint and each problem correlates in degree of difficulty. The race creates adrenaline. During this time, students ideally have an internal voice saying "FASTER, FASTER, FASTER." Since they know how many they answered correctly on the first Sprint, they also have a target number to pass. Problem by problem difficulty correlation is essential so that students have the opportunity to achieve a fair sense of improvement. A teacher who doesn't feel comfortable with simulating a race could simply say "Begin." **The important thing is that students receive quiet, focused practice.**

Step 8

At the end of the minute, the teacher calls out answers, with students verbally responding when they get an answer right, e.g. saying "Yes". The teacher continues calling out answers until they stop hearing "Yes." IF they want to recognize winners, they can ask students to raise their hand if they got one or more right, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, etc. Students drop their hands as the teacher passes the number they got right. After all hands have dropped, the class recognizes the winner or winners with a round of applause or some other acknowledgement. Teachers can call out answers without students verbally responding. They can also project an answer key so that students can check their own answers. **The most important aspect of this step is that students are able to immediately assess their understanding.** Recognizing winners is the choice of the school and/or teacher. An alternative to recognizing winners would be asking students to raise their hand if they tried their best and acknowledging them.

Step 9

The teacher can then repeat the same recognition procedure for improvement, prompting the class to raise their hand if they improved by one or more. This stage is confidence building, especially for lower performing students, who often don't feel successful in class. It's likely that the same few students will always answer the most correctly. By recognizing improvement, all students get the chance to be recognized by their classmates. Teachers who don't want their students to reveal how many answers they got right, might only choose to recognize students who improve or nobody at all. Recognizing the highest improvement score is the choice of the school and/or teacher. An alternative to recognizing winners would be asking students to raise their hand if they tried their best and acknowledging them. Or, asking them if their score improved on the second Sprint and acknowledging them. **The point of this step is to build student confidence and enthusiasm, helping them to look forward to taking a Sprint again.**