

# Using Time Trials to Improve Student Performance

Students need to be accurate and quick in their responses to be considered fluent. After the student has acquired a skill and has demonstrated it accurately, the student should move on to the practice stage where the concentration is on becoming more fluent and automatic in the use of the skill.

This practice procedure can be used across curricular areas. Time trials should be short in duration, followed by a more relaxed activity.

Time trials require the student to respond accurately and at a quick pace.

## **Benefits of time trials are:**

- Students become fluent with the information learned.
- Practice of a new skill is provided.
- Systematic repetitions are utilized.
- Practice is made a fun activity.
- Automaticity with learned information is gained.
- Student response time is improved.

## **Why use time trials?**

- Time trials build fluency and automaticity.
- Fluency provides a more complete picture of learning and performance.
- Rate per minute is a more sensitive measure of performance improvement.
- Fluency has critical functional implications in and out of school.
- Fluency encourages improved maintenance and generalization.

## Guidelines for conducting time trials:

- Keep practice time short and frequent.
- Do time trials daily.
- Use time trials only during the practice stage of learning.
- Make time trials fun.
- Encourage each student to beat his or her own score.
- Reassure students not to be afraid to make a mistake.
- Give more problems than anyone can do.
- Follow time trials with a more relaxed activity.
- Keep records of student progress.
- Reward students for improvement.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of your time trial program.

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