

# A Teacher's Point of View

*What follows is the story of one teacher's struggles to help her students achieve math fact mastery and how the Rapid Recall System revolutionized her approach and effectiveness in achieving that goal.*

For years I drilled math facts into students without much success. Flash cards and drill sheets were the standard fare. Students were expected to know their math facts and recite them with confidence and accuracy. Students would use their fingers, stare at their paper, or look to the ceiling as if the answers might fall out of the sky for them.

Oh yes, I did send home those flash cards with the answers on the back instructing parents to spend a set amount of time drilling their children. We spent hours on math manipulatives. But at the beginning of the new school year, I would hear from the second grade teachers that the students didn't know their math facts and would I please work harder this year. This went on year after year.

Last year I had the opportunity to implement the Rapid Recall System in my first grade classroom. We began the system in September with students that ranged from not recognizing numbers to being able to do one or two addition problems in three minutes. The majority of the students were familiar with counting, but that was the extent of their mathematic skills.

Rapid Recall was easy to implement. The first week was spent teaching students about 'plus zero' facts. This system had us showing the students addition facts with 'plus zero' in all forms. We reviewed 'plus zero' facts several times throughout the day. By the end of the week, all my students mastered their 'plus zero' facts.

The second week we did the same routine with 'plus one' facts and the students did speed drills on 'plus zero' facts. My students were thrilled with the perfect scores they received on their speed drill papers!

The third week we began the meat of the program. Each week we focused on five math facts - two reciprocals and one double.

We started each day by listening to a two-minute math track with only the five facts for the week. This part was easy. The students were listening while I was able to do those daily tasks like attendance and lunch count that take time but include no educational instruction. When the math track was over, we went on to other tasks. Later in the morning, I flashed the five math fact cards to the students twice. I read each card. The students didn't speak; they just listened. It took about a minute and it was on to other activities.

-more-

Rapid Recall System = Math Facts Mastery

# A Teacher's Point of View

Right after lunch, the students were given a discovery game card/speed drill sheet. The students listened again to the same track as earlier in the day. This time they had to hunt for the correct problem on the row and write down the answer. This was the first time we asked for something back from them, but they were hearing the math facts on the CD, so while it was more intense, it was also easy for them. Upon completion of the CD track, they would turn their papers over and do the speed drill. The problems on the speed drill only included problems that they had been exposed to in the previous weeks. That made it easy to complete the page quickly because they knew all the answers.

Even one student who didn't know his numbers at the beginning of October was feeling successful. He was able to keep up with the rest of the class.

Later in the day I would flash the same cards again or I would use the Smart Board and run the Input DVD on it. The Input DVD is divided into tracks so that I could easily find the math facts we were working on that week or I could use the review track for a student that had been absent or needed a little more practice with a set of facts. We completed the addition program in a total of 14 weeks. My students were excited about math! For the first time, they had high math scores and were able to quickly remember all their facts.

When we finished the addition module, we moved on to subtraction. My students were pre-tested for subtraction at the same time as they were tested for addition. Most of them scored zero. The highest score was a 3 in a three-minute test. We were only on week nine of fourteen when we were asked to take the post-test on addition and subtraction. In comparison to other classes that hadn't used Rapid Recall, the three-minute addition post-test showed amazing results.

I had one student that even finished 30 seconds early and scored 100%. Two others did all 70 problems in the three-minute time limit. The bottom three students scored the *same as the top students in the other classes*.

**On the three-minute subtraction post-test, my students showed an even higher percentage of improvement than they did in addition and we hadn't even finished the program yet!**

While mastering math facts is vital to being successful in math, there were other benefits to this system. My students were confident. They were begging to do math, but even more remarkable, they were begging to do math homework! They wanted to be able to show their parents how easy it was for them and how quickly they could get homework done.

Rapid Recall is an amazing product and I would recommend that you use it with all students to gain *rapid recall* of math facts!

Tanda Trussell,  
1<sup>st</sup> Grade Teacher  
West Texas Elementary  
Stinnett, Texas

Rapid Recall System = Math Facts Mastery