

Intervention Name: Balanced Massed & Distributed Practice

Grades: K-12

Description:

Teachers can best promote students acquisition and fluency in a newly taught math skill by transitioning from massed to distributed practice. When students have just acquired a math skill but are not yet fluent in its use, they need lots of opportunities to try out the skill under teacher supervision – a technique referred to as ‘massed practice’. Once students have developed facility and independence with that new math skill, it is essential that they then be required periodically to use the skill in order to embed and retain it – a strategy also known as ‘distributed practice’.

Materials:

Daily practice problems

Steps:

1. **Massed practice:** provide numerous amounts of guided practice opportunities of a newly acquired skill.
2. **Distributed practice:** Teachers can program distributed practice of a math skill by:
 - a. Regularly requiring the student to complete short assignments in which they practice the math skill in isolation (e.g., completing drill sheet on single skill) or
 - b. Teaching a more advanced algorithm or problem-solving approach that incorporates and therefore requires repeated use of the previously learned math skill (e.g., requiring students to reduce fractions to least-common denominators as a necessary first step in adding the fractions together and converting the resulting improper fraction to a mixed number).