

On your mark, get set, go!

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Focus Question: Are timed multiplication drills an effective way to begin a science class?

Location: Hardin is the county seat of Big Horn County. Hardin High School (HHS) is the largest school district in the county and has a student population that varies between 400 and 500 students in grades 9 through 12. The student body is approximately 70% Indian, 25% White with the remaining 5% being Asian or Hispanic.

Background: I have always sought to have my classes start promptly in the belief that this would help my students establish a good work habit. My interest in studying this treatment came about in the spring of 2006. In seven years of teaching at HHS I had never had an entire class that was ready to get started right after the tardy bell rang. This occurred twice while I was starting class with a variation of the "mad minute" multiplication drill. I was intrigued as to what this drill offered to prompt students to get to class and get ready before the tardy bell rang.

My study is an effort to see if this activity will reinforce these observations and to try and explain the appeal that these drills have to motivate my students to be on time and ready to get to work.

Results: Results for 2008 have not supported all of my observations of 2006 and 2007. Gains in attendance and alertness were not present this year. There were improvements in management and performance.

Subjects of AR: My study subjects for this project were a class of 9th grade Physical Science students and a class of seniors in Physics.

