

RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

You Can Count on It

Associate Professor Allan White from the Centre for Educational Research is continuing his investigation of the outcomes of the *Counting On* numeracy skills program, operating under the Quality Teaching in the Middle Years program in NSW schools. This research is funded by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

'Lack of numeracy skills for a number of middle years students continues to be a problem in NSW schools', says Associate Professor White. 'The *Counting On* numeracy skills program, an initiative first implemented in 1999, has gone some way in addressing this fundamental problem. It has expanded and evolved to the 2009 program that was implemented in 88 primary and high schools across NSW. It has a twin focus upon teacher professional situated mathematical learning and student learning. There are particular emphases upon Newman's Error Analysis, involving the solving of written mathematical problems, and upon "Lesson Study" a Japanese structured process for school teams to work collaboratively within the program. A "Public Lesson Study" has also been introduced, and substantial use is made of information and communication technologies. As an ongoing part of our research we will continue to collect data from schools involved in the program and make recommendations for further funding and improvements based on our findings.'

This evaluation will use questionnaires, case studies, diagnostic tests, interviews and learning diaries to determine the changes to teacher professional situated mathematical knowledge and skills, as well as examine the outcomes of teacher participation in structured school learning community groups.



School students continue to show significant improvements in their numeracy skills as a result of the *Counting On* program, its development of professional teacher learning and inter-school networking. Ongoing improvements to the program will continue to ensure these successes and help Australian children to become more numerate, giving them a good head start to their young adult lives and further education.

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