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## Chapter Four: Participants' Comments

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This chapter examines the responses to the questionnaires completed by the teachers, facilitators, and principals at the end of the project and by the facilitators at the completion of five days of facilitator training.

Questionnaires had two components, one aimed at collecting demographic data and the other asking a series of open-ended questions. A summary of each of the questionnaires is contained in Appendix C. Responses to the open-ended questions were analysed for key themes and patterns. In general, responses concerned the outcomes for the participants (teachers, students, parents, and facilitators) and the project itself. The principals also commented on their reasons for becoming involved.

### Comments from the Teachers

Three hundred and thirty eight questionnaires were returned, representing 60% of the total number of teachers involved in the CMIT pilot project. One hundred of the 338 questionnaires were randomly selected for analysis. A summary of the results from part one of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Demographic Data of Teacher Respondents

Category	Details	Percentage
Size of school	<100	3
	101–200	13
	201+	74
Decile*	1–3	40
	4–7	38
	8–10	17
Age*	20–30	23
	31–40	19
	41–50	40
	51+	17
Gender	Female	94
	Male	6
Years of teaching experience	1–5	19
	6–10	15
	11–15	29
	16–20	17
	21+	20
Level currently being taught	Year 1	34
	Year 2	15
	Year 3	9
	Composite	41
Years of teaching experience with juniors	1–3 years	25
	4–7 years	27
	7+ years	48
Length of time at current school*	1–3 years	42
	4–7 years	24
	7+ years	33
Highest level teaching	Diploma of Teaching	44

Category	Details	Percentage
qualifications*	Higher Diploma of Teaching	11
	Advanced Diploma of Teaching	7
	Postgraduate Diploma	3
	Bachelors Degree	32
	Masters Degree	1
	Other	1
Undertaking further education	Yes	25
	No	75

\* Not all respondents completed this question

The teachers' responses to open-ended questions were analysed for key themes and patterns. The comments received are discussed below under two major categories: outcomes for participants and the project itself. The quotes used are typical of the teachers' comments and are taken directly from the questionnaires.

### Outcomes for Participants – Teachers

The teachers' comments on the outcomes of the project fell into two categories: comments relating to outcomes for themselves and feedback on the programme from parents. Comments regarding teacher outcomes are presented below in three sections: professional knowledge, classroom practices, and affective responses.

#### Professional Knowledge

The majority of teachers believe that their involvement in the project has had an impact on their professional knowledge. Eighty percent of the teachers believe that their content knowledge of maths has developed and 89% believe that their understanding of how students learn number has changed.

The major change in professional knowledge that the teachers commented on was an increased understanding of the stages that students progress through and the strategies that students use. Eighty four percent of the teachers cite such increased understanding:

“CMIT has broadened my knowledge of the sequence and strategies involved in processing numbers.”

“It [CMIT] has helped me see / identify stages and steps to push students along. It has helped me isolate the key content that students need [to know] to make progress.”

“I now recognise more clearly the phases / stages that students go through in learning maths / number.”

For many of the teachers, this development of professional knowledge has been significant: “[my] content knowledge has not just developed, it has been a re-awakening.”

#### Classroom Practice

Ninety-two percent of the teachers believe that, as a result of their participation in the project, their classroom practice has changed, in particular, the way that they teach number. Twenty-nine percent of the teachers say that they place a greater focus or value on the strategies that students use to process numbers and on the development of those strategies.

“I am much more aware now of how students reach their conclusions. I am taking more notice of their use of strategy.”

“There are many ways to a correct answer and as a class we have explored that more thoroughly than before.”

“I have been more focused on helping / teaching the students to develop efficient counting strategies.”

The teachers indicated that they now run more focused maths sessions, with 21% of the teachers using a more structured or organised approach: “the lessons are structured to better meet the students' needs”, with maths sessions having a “much stronger emphasis” and being “very focused”.

Other changes to classroom practice that the teachers identified were:

- a greater focus on number – 16%  
“Concentrating on the number aspect ... has given greater continuity to my teaching, with a more focused teaching point.” Many of the teachers felt that “spending time developing strong foundations [in] numeracy will ensure progress through the curriculum.”
- higher expectations of students’ abilities – 15%  
The teachers stated that their “expectations of the students are higher” and that they were “amazed at how students could be extended”.
- students involved less in recording and more in hands-on problem solving – 14%  
The teachers indicated that their programmes are now “much more game / activity based than worksheet oriented.” Many felt that they used “more hands-on activities” and had their classes more actively involved: “the project has given me and my class confidence to tackle problem-solving activities”.
- a greater variety of activities – 14%  
The teachers reported teaching number concepts through repetition of key ideas: “I make sure number is done in a variety of ways” with “lots of interesting and challenging activities to use to teach number”.
- a more effective grouping of students – 10%  
The teachers reported using more “grouping for abilities” and discussed how classes were “divided ... into groups based on ability / number knowledge”.

### **Affective Response to the Project**

In general, the teachers had an overwhelmingly positive response to the project, with the view that:

“This project has been the most worthwhile [professional] development I have been involved in ... far more effective than a two-day course.”

A wide variety of more specific responses were reported, with 73% of the teachers believing that their attitude to maths changed as a result of their participation in the project. An increased “enthusiasm [for] and interest in teaching mathematics” was experienced by 24% of the teachers. The teachers stated that “maths for both [the] class and myself [is] much more fun” and “[I] am excited by the number of different ways a single problem can be tackled”. The teachers also reported an increase in confidence with 12% “feeling more confidence in my maths teaching”. This increased confidence was often a consequence of a feeling of increased ability. Twenty-four percent of the teachers identified a greater understanding of the strategies that students use as a key to their changed attitude: “[I] feel able to identify key strategies, therefore [I am] more confident and positive.”

A greater focus on number was reported by 15% of the teachers. This percentage includes those who “felt it needed a higher priority in my day” and also those who gained a new understanding of “the importance number has in society”.

Twenty-seven percent of the teachers reported no change in attitude, however 25% of these teachers believe that they have “always been keen on teaching maths.”

### **Outcomes for Participants – Parents**

The teachers reported “very positive feedback” from the parents, with 63% receiving positive comments and no negative feedback reported. Eighteen percent of the teachers reported the parents as being pleased with the progress that their children were making:

“Our parents can see the huge shifts our students have made in their [number] understanding.”

“[I] have had enquiries [along the lines of]: ‘What have you been doing for maths? They know so much’ .”

Thirty-six percent of the teachers reported no feedback or response from parents.

## The Project

The teachers found many different aspects of the project to be useful. Twenty-five percent felt that learning the framework of stages and strategies that students progress through in their development was the most helpful aspect of the project as it “made it quite clear where we were going.” The “learning framework overview has helped [me] to work out where the students are at and where they need to go.” The teachers found that learning “about the strategies they can use to count effectively” was helpful.

The ability to assess students effectively by using the SENA was cited by 23% of the teachers as the most helpful aspect of the project: “testing students helped to pinpoint exactly where students were” and this was “helpful to place students into groups”.

The key role of the facilitator was identified by 28% of the teachers, with views expressed that “regular visits by the facilitator were really useful and her feedback [was] very valuable” and that these “visits enabled growth and reflection”. Other features of the project that the teachers found useful were:

- ideas for games and activities – 19%  
Many of the teachers enjoyed the fact that these games were “fun” and “appealing” to their students.
- collaboration with other teachers – 17%  
Collaboration included sharing ideas both within their own schools and with teachers from other schools.
- *Developing Efficient Number Strategies* (the “DENS” teacher handbook used in the pilot project) – 14%  
“The DENS book has been an excellent resource” and “helpful in providing activities for each level”.
- modelled lessons – 13%  
Modelled lessons enabled the teachers to “see it working”. The teachers found it particularly useful to see these lessons being undertaken with the students in their own classes.

Eighty-two percent of the teachers identified possible improvements to the project. The time taken to prepare teaching resources was identified as an issue by 44% of the teachers: “making the activities is time consuming.” Twenty-seven percent of the teachers suggested that “they [the resources] need to be mass produced and presented to schools.” The teachers found it “very labour intensive” and commented that the time used in making resources could have been used more effectively to help implement the programme.

Improved training was viewed by 19% of the teachers as a possible improvement to the project but there was little consensus on how this could be achieved. The only common theme in these comments is the significant number of the teachers who considered that receiving more information on the framework of stages and strategies for number learning would have been useful earlier in the project.

“A longer period at the start to become more familiar with the student strategies [would have improved the project].”

Sixteen percent of the teachers felt that more activity ideas would have been valuable for students at the facile stage. The teachers felt that they needed “more direction for those already facile – they weren’t really catered for.” Some of the teachers suggested “a second CMIT book to extend their [the facile students’] levels.”

Many of the teachers commented on the DENS book in some way. Ten percent of the teachers felt that the information it contained could be presented more effectively, requesting “a handbook that links strategies / knowledge to each level of the framework.” The teachers found it hard to link the strategies with the activities given: the “DENS book [needs to give] more assistance with strategy teaching.” They also commented that it needed more detail.

Fifteen percent of the teachers felt that the project as a whole lacked direction and that they were left feeling unsure at times: “a dithery start, we were not quite clear on how to be best organised.” Lack of timely communication was an issue for these teachers: “information regarding all aspects of the project came too late”, with the teachers generally feeling that the project needed to be “more focused [with] more direction”.

## Comments from the Principals

Sixty-three questionnaires were returned, representing 79% of the total number of principals involved in the CMIT pilot project. Three of these were returned too late to enable analysis to occur, so the effective sample size is 60 principals or 75% of the total group. A summary of the results from part one of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Demographic Data of Principal Respondents

Category	Details	Percentage (n=60)
Size of school	<100	7%
	101–200	17%
	201+	76%
Decile	1–3	42%
	4–7	40%
	8–10	18%

All principal questionnaires were analysed for key themes and patterns. Comments received are discussed below in three major categories: participation, the outcomes for participants, and the project itself. Quotes used are typical of the principals' comments.

### Participation

The principals quoted several factors affecting their decision to apply to be involved in the project. Concern over students' numeracy skills was reported as a factor by 62% of the principals. The principals stated that they "were concerned that number was too light" and that "our students are poor in numeracy skills generally". Twenty-eight percent of the principals reported taking part in the project as the result of a personal invitation or approach by project leaders and facilitators. Other factors that were identified included:

- meeting identified needs within the school – 25%  
    "... needs identified when [the] number strand [was] reviewed – we had identified students' weaknesses."
- professional updating of staff – 17%
- availability of the opportunity – 12%  
    Principals saw the project as a "staff development opportunity" that "should be taken".

### Outcomes for Participants – Teachers

The principals commented on two main outcomes of the project for teachers: changes in classroom practice and in affective responses. Ninety-eight percent of the principals believe that participation in the CMIT pilot project has had a positive impact on the maths programmes of their staff and list a variety of changes to classroom practice.

A greater focus on or an increased understanding of the stages and strategies involved in developing number skills was listed by 32% of the principals. The principals believe that the teachers now have "more awareness of how students use strategies to help solve number problems" and a "wider (and more in-depth) knowledge about developmental stages in the acquisition / understanding of number".

Twenty-two percent of the principals observed that "teachers are placing greater emphasis on the teaching of number." They report "a more systematic approach to the teaching of number strategies" and "a more highly tuned focus re number / numeracy".

An improvement in the teachers' ability to tailor teaching and learning to the individual student's needs was noted by 22% of the principals. They observed teachers to be "focused on [the] next learning need of [the] child" with "lesson content ... directed at the individual's level of attainment".

Other changes that the principals noted in the teachers' classroom practice were:

- more effective assessment of students' needs – 18%

“Teachers are looking more carefully at what the students can / can not do”, with “more knowledge of what the students know, due to the thorough nature of the testing”.

- increased awareness of their own teaching, with a more reflective approach – 18%  
“The programmes are more challenging. The teachers are more reflective.”
- better progress for students – 17%  
The principals noted the increased competence of students, often through observation, with “teachers [being] amazed at what many young students are capable of.”
- increased collaboration between teachers – 10%  
“[The programme] has drawn staff together in their discussions about mathematics” with “teachers talking [a] common language”.

Thirty-three percent of the principals believe the project to have had a negative impact on the maths programmes of their staff. A large variety of reasons for this negative impact were given, with the only common themes being the “large time input from teachers required to prepare materials” (10% of the principals); the belief that “too much emphasis was placed on number to the detriment of the other strands” (8% of the principals); and the fact that “the project requires some real hard work of all participating teachers” (5% of the principals).

The principals also commented on the affective responses of their staff. All the principals believe the attitude of their staff towards the project to be generally positive. Forty-two percent of the principals note that “the teachers have been very enthusiastic” and “positive”. This positive attitude has been enhanced as the teachers see the effect of the programme on their students. Twenty percent of the principals note that “[the teachers’] attitude towards the programme has been reinforced by the progress the students have made.”

Another common response among the principals was the view that, despite the programme being very demanding for their staff, the results for teachers, students, and the school have been positive. Eighteen percent of the principals made statements such as:

“We have felt privileged and excited about being involved. It is a lot of work but the benefit to students and the school make it worthwhile.”

“Teachers acknowledge that it has been hard work but all have gained professionally – they are now better teachers of number.”

The belief that the project has had an impact on the teachers as people, either inside or outside the classroom, was expressed by 97% of the principals. The major impacts that the principals observed were:

- increased enthusiasm – 63%  
“Teachers have been really enthused.”
- increased confidence – 48%  
The principals observed that “teachers have increased confidence in their ability to make a difference.”
- increased tiredness – 20%  
The hard work involved in the project left the teachers feeling “enthusiastic but very tired.”
- increased collaboration – 12%  
The teachers displayed a “willingness to share ideas about teaching and learning strategies in mathematics”, with discussions differently focused: “teachers discuss HOW students process now”.

The majority of the principals believe that the project has also had an impact on those teachers who are not participating. Seventy-five percent indicated an impact on the non-participating teachers, with the two major factors noted being a general interest in the project (noted by 40% of the principals) and a desire to see the project extended throughout the whole school (noted by 42% of the principals).

“Other teachers are interested in the project and interested in seeing the project move into other areas of the school.”

### **Outcomes for Participants – Students**

Ninety-two percent of the principals believe that the project has had some form of impact on the students involved; 3% believe that there has been no impact; and 5% gave no response to this question.

An increase in the students' competence was noted by 67% of the principals, with comments relating to increased skills, knowledge, and understanding:

“Students have a much better understanding of the basic concepts – [they] have improved [their] skills in using and calculating numbers.”

“[Students] are developing a greater depth to their knowledge.”

“Students have learned to think critically and possibly more creatively in devising strategies.”

An increased enjoyment of maths was observed in the students involved in the project by 52% of the principals:

“Students are the big winners. [They] all felt better about maths. [It was] more enjoyable; at maths time, [they] loved to participate.”

Other impacts on the students noted by the principals were:

- an increased feeling of success / greater confidence – 18%  
The principals observed “great confidence” and “a sense of achievement” and that “knowing about numbers is empowering for them”.
- increased awareness of maths / number – 10%  
Students with increased awareness included those who “are more aware of number” concepts and those who were “made ... more aware of the importance of maths” in general.

### **Outcomes for Participants – Parents**

The general reaction of parents to the CMIT pilot project was noted as positive by 73% of the principals. A wide range of responses from the parents were noted, with the only common themes being parents who were “interested and supportive” (noted by 7%); parents who were “thrilled to see the emphasis on number” or “pleased to see some back to basics” (7%), and “a huge turnout to the parents meeting” (7%).

Twenty-seven percent of the principals reported receiving no response from the parents.

### **The Project**

Thirty percent of the principals did not recommend any improvements to the project. The most widely recognised improvement noted by the principals was a request for teachers to spend less time making resources (30% percent of the principals). These principals saw the making of resources as “an unreasonable amount of work” and asked for “commercially prepared resources or sufficient funding to pay a teacher aide to make them”.

Fifteen percent of the principals requested that the project be extended in some way, either by being run for longer (“time to run over two years”) or by being “[extended] to more senior classes”. The request was “to keep the momentum going”.

Increased “funding to cover costs” was listed by 13% of the principals as a project improvement. Principals wanted “resourcing for release and equipment”, stating that “teacher-release-day costs will exceed funding”.

### **Comments from the Facilitators**

Fifteen questionnaires were returned, representing 88% of the total number of facilitators involved in the CMIT pilot project. One respondent's information was not included as she was unable to comment on many aspects due to being involved in the later stages only of the project, and another questionnaire was returned too late for analysis. These responses result in a sample size of 13 questionnaires or 76% of the participating facilitators. A summary of the results from part one of the questionnaire is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Demographic Data of Facilitator Respondents

Category	Details	Percentage (n=13)
Age	20–30	1
	31–40	2
	41–50	5
	51+	5
Gender	Female	11
	Male	2
Years of teaching experience	1–5	1
	6–10	1
	11–15	2
	16–20	2
	21+	7
Years of advisory experience	0	2
	1–5	5
	6–10	3
	11–15	2
	16+	1

The facilitator questionnaires were analysed for key themes and patterns. Comments received are discussed below in two major categories: outcomes for participants and the project itself. Quotes used are typical of the facilitators' comments.

### Outcomes for Participants – Facilitators

The facilitators noted outcomes of the training in two main areas: in development of their own professional knowledge and in their affective responses.

The majority of facilitators experienced some development of their professional knowledge. Eighty-two percent of the facilitators believe that their content knowledge of maths developed as a result of the facilitator training. Eighteen percent believe that there has been no development in their content knowledge, with 12% citing precious experience of CMIT as a reason for lack of development in this area.

Fifty-nine percent of the facilitators believe that their understanding of how students learn has changed as a result of the facilitator training. Of the 41% who believe there has been no change in their understanding, the majority (35%), regard their previous experience with CMIT as the major reason for this.

Three factors were identified by the facilitators as contributing to the development of their professional knowledge. These are:

- an increased understanding of the stages that students progress through and the strategies that students use – 71%  
 “The training has helped me to consolidate my ideas about how students think [and] the developmental sequences they go through.”  
 “I have a clearer understanding of a junior development sequence in number.”
- an increased understanding of the development of place value concepts and “the extent and expectation of pupils’ ability to work in place value” – 42%
- knowledge of the SENA as an assessment tool – 12%  
 “I am able to pinpoint where students are.”

A wide variety of affective responses to the project were noted by the facilitators. Fifty-three percent of the facilitators believe that their attitude to junior maths has not changed as a result of their participation in the facilitator training. The 47% of facilitators who did experience a change in attitude identified awareness of how students’ thinking strategies develop as an important factor in this change. Twenty-four percent of the

facilitators commented on “[an] increased understanding of teaching based on strategies for thinking” and “the importance of understanding students’ solution strategies”.

### **Outcomes for Participants – Teachers**

The facilitators made comments on the development of the teachers’ professional knowledge, the changes in their classroom practice, and the affective responses of the participating teachers.

One-hundred percent of the facilitators report that the project has had an impact on the professional knowledge of the participating teachers, with development noted in their content knowledge and pedagogy. Eighty-five percent of the facilitators cite a new or deeper understanding by the teachers of the stages that students progress through and of the strategies that they use to process number:

“Awareness of strategies that can be used arithmetically by students [is] a major development for many.”

“ [Teachers gained] a much clearer understanding of students’ acquisition of number knowledge and strategies through the exploration of a sequenced framework.”

An increase in the teachers’ own number skills was reported by 31% of the facilitators. The teachers gained “a greater understanding (metacognition) of their own strategies and processing”. The facilitators believe that “very few [teachers] would have been actively facile before [the project]” and “many who previously relied on written forms are embracing mental strategies”.

All the facilitators believe that the programme has had a positive impact on the classroom practices of the participating teachers. Sixty-two percent of the facilitators report that the teachers are using more problem-solving and hands-on activities, with a decreased use of work sheets. The “context of games and interaction [is] more valued now than photocopiable material” with “many teachers more open to providing hands-on activities for students”.

More effective grouping of students was noted as a positive impact on programmes by 54% of the facilitators: “teachers know ... how to identify where students are at so [that] grouping is more effective.” The use of “more flexible grouping, with students moving on as individuals when ready” was also noted by the facilitators.

Other reported positive impacts on classroom programmes were:

- an increased focus on numeracy – 38%  
The facilitators observed “a large increase in focus on numeracy” with “teachers giving greater priority to maths / numeracy”.
- teaching / learning activities better suited to the students’ needs – 31%  
“The use of activities is more tightly connected to students’ learning needs.”
- greater use of equipment – 23%  
The facilitators noted a “greater use of appropriate equipment” with “equipment an integral part of maths right through to Y4”.
- higher expectations of the students – 23%  
The teachers were observed to have “an increasingly high expectation of what Y2–3 students can achieve” with “expectations for pupils clear”.
- more effective assessment – 23%  
The facilitators believe that the CMIT programme “enables teachers to be more effective in planning, *diagnosing* and teaching.”
- a focus on teaching strategies as opposed to knowledge – 15%  
“Most [teachers] would now say that prior to CMIT they were pretty much teaching knowledge in isolation and no real strategies – just algorithms as ‘tricks and rules’.”

“[there have been] major shifts in terms of teaching for strategies in solving number problems rather than just knowledge.”

Sixty-nine percent of the facilitators report the project as having a negative impact on the mathematics programmes of participating teachers. The majority of these comments (62%) relate to isolated schools or individuals and have a wide variety of themes. The two common themes of these comments are:

- that CMIT is being run as a separate programme – noted by 23% of the facilitators  
“In a couple of cases, CMIT has become a separate programme, not considered part of the maths programme ... it has been perceived by these teachers as a bit of a chore and something extra on top of their maths programme.”
- that “teachers have expressed concern about the time spent preparing activities” – noted by 15% of the facilitators.

All the facilitators (100%) believe that the attitude of the participating teachers towards the overall project has been positive. Fifty-four percent of the facilitators noted an initial overload, hesitation, uncertainty, or scepticism among the teachers:

- “initially [they were] overloaded with information”;
- “[they were] hesitant at first”;
- “the attitude [was] ‘here we go again, another maths initiative’.”

All the facilitators note that these initial feelings dissipated by the end of the project.

Enthusiasm for the project was cited by 38% of the facilitators. They noted an “increase in enthusiasm and confidence”, with teachers “excited by new understanding”. The teachers are described as being “almost unfailingly positive.”

Twenty-three percent of the facilitators note that the teachers were very willing to try something new, demonstrating a “willingness to give it their best.”

As well as noting attitudes to the project, the facilitators noted impacts on the teachers in general. Ninety-two percent believe that participation in the project resulted in impacts on the teachers as people. The following were common themes:

- increased enthusiasm – 77%  
“Most of the teachers ... became far more confident and enthusiastic about mathematics.”
- increased confidence – 77%  
The facilitators observed a “huge leap in confidence”, with “teachers overall much more positive, enthusiastic, interested, engaged, creative and confident about maths”.
- frustration over the time taken to make resources – 31%
- increased uncertainty / insecurity – 15%  
“Some feel threatened by loss of security in [the] book / worksheet model.”  
“[There is] uncertainty – once established [on] how to progress.”
- increased tiredness – 15%  
The facilitators noted that “many teachers have found the project demanding at times ... and this has impacted negatively on their energy” and “they have too much to do and find it hard to give CMIT the attention they would like to”.

Ninety-two percent of the facilitators noted that the project had impacts on teachers other than those participating directly in the project. Seventy-seven percent found “lots of interest from other teachers”, with 62% experiencing teachers “keen to know how they can be involved” and wanting to see the project extended across the whole school.

Twenty-three percent of the facilitators report other staff feeling threatened and concerned about teaching the students who have taken part in the project:

- “Teachers of Y4–6 have expressed concern at the implication for them.”  
“[They are] feeling “scared” as to what they’ll teach those little ones who are thinking beyond students in their own classes.”

## Outcomes for Participants – Students

All the facilitators noted a positive impact on the students participating in the project, with 100% also noting increased enthusiasm and enjoyment among the students they observed:

“They love maths! This is a huge, noticeable impact in nearly all classrooms.”

“Overall [there is] more interest, enthusiasm, excitement about new learning and findings.”

Other impacts on the students noted by facilitators were:

- an increased number competence – 69%  
The facilitators noted “stronger number knowledge”, “noticeable strategy development and ability to visualise and perform mental calculations”, and “improved numeral recognition”. They also observed “students are relishing being challenged by big numbers.”
- an increased ability to articulate their own thinking – 46%  
Students were described as more able to “discuss their thinking clearly and confidently”, with “considerable growth in talking about what, and why, they are doing certain things”.
- increased confidence – 23%  
The facilitators reported a “huge boost in confidence”, with “students more willing to share findings and take risks”. “As one child said, ‘This makes it so easy’ ” (when working with 10 frames).

No negative effects on the students were reported.

## The Project

The facilitators’ comments in this area fell into two categories: on the effectiveness of the training they received and on possible improvements to the project.

A wide variety of views were expressed regarding the effectiveness of the facilitator training. Eighty-two percent of the facilitators cited input from the Australian professionals as an effective element of their training. The input of the Australian consultants was seen as valuable because of its practical nature, while Bob Wright’s sessions were valued for the background knowledge that they provided on the project:

“K’s input [showed] the practicalities of ongoing facilitation with teachers.”

“Listening to Bob Wright and his philosophy gave a clear picture of the background of the project.”

The experience of videotaping themselves as they carried out student assessments and then analysing these tapes was reported as the most effective element of the training by 59% of the facilitators:

“[I] learnt a great deal about my own questioning and about students’ strategies.”

Other elements of the training regarded as effective by the facilitators were:

- hands-on experiences with students – 53%  
“The involvement with students has been good, it has helped to clarify the SEAL stages.”
- collaboration with colleagues – 47%  
“Working in teams with partners from our own institutions meant [that] we could compare notes and refine our own approaches to delivery of [the] contract.”  
“[We had] time to discuss issues with fellow facilitators.”
- sessions on place value development – 29%  
“Sessions with [value] ... and [place] ... – PV understandings.”  
“Input into place value framework and activities.”

Some elements of the training were listed by the facilitators as being unhelpful or leaving them feeling confused. The only common theme among these comments was the view that the first training session assumed too much prior knowledge. The facilitators stated that “the first session ... plunged us into the deep end without following through essential interim stages” and “the first training session ... commenced on a level that was set too high”.

Ninety-two percent of the facilitators noted possible improvements to the project. “Much more time to spend with individual teachers, modelling and supporting” was requested by 46% of the facilitators. The facilitators

also expressed the view that the “time allocation for facilitators has been insufficient”, and that there was a need to “meet teachers more frequently”.

Thirty-four percent of the facilitators suggested the use of a pre-made resource kit to save time for the teachers. They stated that “many resources can be provided centrally rather than teachers having to make them” as “time is very limited”.

Other improvements to the project requested by the facilitators were:

- development of more transition activities – 23%  
The facilitators noted that the teachers needed help with “teaching transitions and moving students on” and they recommended “developing a bank of valuable transition activities”.
- increased initial and ongoing training for teachers – 23%  
“[Teachers need an] increased number of cluster sessions for ongoing training.”  
“[Teachers need] more time for teacher professional development at the beginning of the programme.”
- more / ongoing facilitator training – 15%.