Overview of the *QuickSmart* Program

*QuickSmart* is a theory-based educational intervention for middle-school students, specifically, for those in Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 (i.e., students aged between about ten and fourteen years).

*QuickSmart* was designed to enhance students' fluency in either literacy (reading and comprehension) or numeracy by improving their information retrieval times. Individually designed intervention programs are developed and implemented as part of *QuickSmart* in order to strengthen students' problematic skills – for example, letter naming, word naming, comprehension, recall of number facts, and basic computation.

Ideally, the *QuickSmart* program runs for thirty weeks over three consecutive school terms. The program is intensive and participating students, selected according to school-based criteria, are withdrawn from their classes to attend the *QuickSmart* lessons.

Students work in pairs for three 30-minute lessons each week with the same instructor. Where possible, the pairings of students match individuals with similar learning obstacles in either reading or numeracy. An experienced teacher or teacher aide, who has been trained in the principles and structure of a *QuickSmart* lesson, delivers the program under the supervision of a trained teacher and university instructor to ensure the fidelity of the intervention.

**Key components of the *QuickSmart* Program**

Some key components of the *QuickSmart* program are:

- A practice routine of about 27 minutes of on-task time, at least 3 times per week.
- Structured and time-efficient lessons which have a set sequence of activities.
Motivating and timed practice activities aimed at speedy recall of known facts.

Individualised instruction, ensured by assessment and instruction forming a continuous purposeful cycle.

Strategy instruction is ongoing, explicit and individually tailored to students' needs.

Opportunities for students to self-monitor, and to receive and generate immediate feedback about their performance.

Instruction that ensures the students experience success by providing regular and predictable learning sequences: students practise and improve on what they already know, and then learn and practise new knowledge during the lesson.

Content is explicitly linked to current classroom curriculum as well as to real-life settings, where possible.

Reflective, metacognitive questioning and responding are incorporated into lessons – for example, *QuickSmart* instructors ask questions such as, "How did you work that out?", "Why are you so sure of your answer?". This focus of instruction can assist students to develop the language to describe their thinking.

The use of stop watches, hourglass timers, and wall clocks assist students to 'externalise' time. These devices encourage students to become more aware of their sense of time and improve their ability to estimate time.

Close collaboration with parents, teachers and principals of participating schools. Stakeholders are fully informed about the project and involved in its implementation and evaluation.

A long term and consistent intervention approach which provides practice opportunities that will bring students 'up to speed' so they can share 'the fast track' with their peers.

Parent participation through meetings, information, involvement and workshops.