

Large-Scale Implementation of QuickSmart

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| Project Title | A Pilot Study Investigating the Large-Scale Implementation of QuickSmart Across Jurisdictions and Sectors |
| Project Team | Professor John Pegg, Associate Professor Lorraine Graham, Ms Jenny Thomas, Ms Noelene Raymond (SiMERR National Centre); Ms Deb Efthymiades, Mr Geoff Gillman, Mr John Bradbury, Mr Mike Caraher (NT DEET); Mr Kim Morely (NSW DET - North Coast Region); Ms Kerry-Sue Pascoe, Mr Geoff Webb (NSW DET - Western Region); Mr Gary Hampton (NSW DET - New England Region) |
| Period | 2007 |
| Funding Agency | School-based and region-based funding |
| Organisational Base | SiMERR National Centre |

Description

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In total fifty-six schools across New South Wales and the Northern Territory implemented the QuickSmart numeracy program during 2007. These schools were drawn from the public education, Catholic and independent sectors in an attempt to investigate the feasibility of the large-scale implementation of the QuickSmart program. The total number of participating schools included twenty-one schools from various education sectors in the Northern Territory. In New South Wales, twenty-eight of the participating schools came from the Department of Education and Training (DET) regions of North Coast (8 schools), New England (12 schools) and Western (8 schools). The remaining seven schools were located within the Lismore Catholic Diocese. These schools, along with three schools from the Northern Territory and two NSW DET schools, also operated the QuickSmart literacy program.

The QuickSmart program aims to improve the numeracy and literacy development of students in Years 5 to 8 who are experiencing learning problems or delays and, subsequently, are not achieving up to their academic potential. The specific aim of this program of research is for classroom teachers, special needs support teachers and teacher aides to work with, and significantly improve, the learning outcomes of persistently under-achieving middle school students. The QuickSmart program offers professional learning and support for teachers and aides to work intensively with pairs of students during three 30-minute sessions each week for approximately 30 weeks. In addition, data from a small group of average-achieving students in each school are used as a comparison group measure.

Participants

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Northern Territory: 258 (QS and comparison) students from 21 schools in clusters around Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine

Lismore Diocese: 154 (QS and comparison) students from 7 schools

New England Region: 208 (QS and comparison) students from 12 schools

North Coast Region: 292 (QS and comparison) students from 8 schools

Western Region: 216 (QS and comparison) students from 8 schools

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Journal Article

- Graham, L., Bellert, A. & Pegg, J. (2007). Supporting Students in the Middle School Years with Learning Difficulties in Mathematics: Research into Classroom Practice. *Australasian Journal of Special Education*, 31 (2), 171-182.

Conference Presentations

- Graham, L. & Pegg, J. (2008). The importance of fast and accurate basic skills to students with learning disabilities.

- Paper presented at the Queensland State Conference of the Australian Association of Special Education, Cairns.
- Graham, L. & Pegg, J. (2008). Helping low-achieving mathematics students trust their heads. Poster session presented at the annual conference of the International Association for Research in Learning Disabilities, Toronto, Canada.

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The QuickSmart program began in 2001 in two schools in the New England area. The consistent pattern of results from the research to date has underpinned the growth, in terms of influence and impact, of the program. Currently, QuickSmart is part of the learning support offered to low-achieving students in a growing number of NSW and Northern Territory schools. As well as being offered as an intensive program, many of the instructional approaches introduced in QuickSmart are now being used as a regular part of classroom reading and numeracy instruction.

The impact of this research can be further demonstrated by the funding opportunities it continues to provide. For example, as a direct consequence of this study, which explored issues related to the large-scale implementation of QuickSmart, the SiMERR National Centre and the New England DET have been successful in securing DEEWR Federal funding of \$219,000 to support QuickSmart Numeracy in New England region during 2008. Similarly, the Lismore Diocese, Port Pirie Diocese and Western Sydney DET Regions in collaboration with the SiMERR National Centre have applied for extensive funding for 2009 under a pilot scheme offered by DEEWR to support schools located in low socio-economic areas.

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