

Mathematical Games

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Project Title	Home - School Partnerships Through Mathematical Games
Project Team	Professor Jane Watson (SiMERR Tasmania), Louise Hodgson (Catholic Education Office)
Period	March 06 – November 06
Funding Agency	SiMERR
Organisational Base	SiMERR Tasmania

Description

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This project, proposed by the Catholic Education Office, Hobart, sought to assist teachers, families and students at four remote schools to make connections between mathematical concepts and the real life context in rural and remote schools. It utilised mathematical games in a home setting to increase students' problem solving competence, ability to communicate and reason mathematically, perception of the value of mathematics and self confidence in their ability to apply mathematical knowledge to new situations.

The games used were selected after teachers undertook professional development to guide their choice of appropriate games for their students. Games were prepared for distribution to families in packs that included a rationale and clearly articulated instructions in plain English for each game (a minimum of three family mathematics packs per class was made). A "Family Maths" night was held to familiarise families in the effective use of the materials. Inducements to encourage parents to attend the Family Maths night included the provision of a sausage sizzle, door prizes, having parents participate in some of the games, and having a crèche for younger children.

Participants

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4 schools, Catholic Education

Findings

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- Some of the games were so popular that they became whole class games used as a conduit between older and younger students. Some teachers started using them as the main part of their lessons.
- It raised the awareness that mathematics can be fun and more than what you do in class.
- Families were very keen to be part of it, and parents became more confident with the mathematics.
- In one school, it was believed that the project assisted significantly in building relationships between parents and the school.

Issues included:

- Time in constructing the games, making them non-jargonistic for parents, appropriate selection for greatest impact.
- Turn around of staff in remote schools—though games became part of the culture of the school.

Outcomes

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- Hodgson, L. (2007). Home school partnerships through mathematical games. *Delta*, 47(1), 12-15.

Impact

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This project impacted in a very positive way on the culture of learning in some schools, engaging the parents in their child's learning. It had longevity in that the schools who valued it continued with it. A key issue is how to embed such a program on a larger scale in the education system.

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