



SiMERR National Research Centre's STATEMENT

This is SiMERR's response to the Evaluation Report (Report) of the Evidence for Learning Randomised Controlled Trial of QuickSmart Numeracy (the Trial) evaluated by the Teachers and Teaching Research Centre, University of Newcastle (the Evaluator).

Executive Summary

Data collected by the Evaluator in the Trial and analysed by SiMERR using approved Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) procedures showed students with 75%+ QuickSmart lesson participation achieved on average 2.5-to-3 times expected one-year's growth. These results are consistent with that reported by SiMERR, education jurisdictions, principals, schools and parents over the past two decades.

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Using Trial data, ACER procedures also show national percentile progress in the 14 months of the Trial for students who achieved:

- (i) 90%+ lesson participation in QuickSmart, progressed 38 percentiles from the 11th percentile to the 49th percentile; and
- (ii) 75%+ lesson participation progressed 33 percentiles from the 16th percentile to the 49th percentile.

The critical concern of the SiMERR/QuickSmart Team of the Trial is that important data are not clearly revealed in the Report. The analysis in the Report, while technically correct, does not include within-group analysis, which reveals crucial information not made evident in the Report.

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Also, not revealed fully or discussed carefully in the Report, are important details on how *implementation* aspects of the Trial design, including obtaining parent permissions for student participation, pre-and post-testing using PATMaths and randomising students into groups, meant that *at least* 25%-to-38% of the school year was not available to schools for QuickSmart setup and lesson participation.

This loss of school weeks to RCT implementation precluded the possibility for schools to offer 30 weeks of QuickSmart instruction. For schools, this meant a late start, early finish, no setup time and no flexibility for them to cover student or Instructor absences, or any competing in-school activities or excursions. The impact of these normal/typical school functions, with no room for schools to manoeuvre, resulted in further reductions in QuickSmart lesson rates that were beyond the control of schools to address.

Because of concerns with these limitations to the Trial, SiMERR conducted additional analyses of the Trial data (i) using the instrument-based national Australian norms of the PAT-Maths test, and (ii) incorporating lesson participation using sub-groups defined by their levels of lesson participation. We argue that a more appropriate analysis procedure is through the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), developers of the PAT-Maths test series. ACER's approach is robust, statistically valid, and widely used and understood throughout Australia and Internationally. The ACER approach is employed currently across Australia involving many 100,000s of students, and operates at national, state, school, sub-school group, and individual-student levels.