

Numeracy learning in kindergarten

Counting

Transcript of video

This video is available from www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/32886.html.

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The activity that we did at group time this morning was around ... we're doing some work around reflection. We've just set up our light studio. And so I thought spoons would be an interesting activity for these children to do. And a couple of children had brought spoons earlier this week. So by introducing objects that have similar characteristics, it's a really nice way to start doing some of that sorting into sets, noticing the attributes and then doing some counting to go with it.

One of the things I deliberately do when we're doing those sorts of counting activities is I do it the wrong way, because what that does is it really pushes the children to think, hang on, that's not how it works. So for them to start really thinking much more consciously about what are the rules about counting? And it adds a sense of fun to it too. They really enjoy those activities.

One of the strategies that we try to use is modelling appropriate ways of counting, because it's actually a skill. So that by getting a child to actually touch and count the objects, it helps reinforce that kinaesthetic, tactile experience as they're actually saying the words. So that ... we use that as ... that is the way that we count. We touch and count. And by doing it together, we're just helping our friend to quantify the objects that we're trying to count.

Excerpt from class session

- Sue But I've got a spoon as well.
- Child No.
- Child Yours is not a shiny one.
- Sue Not a shiny one, you're right. There are 13 shiny spoons. Wow. I wonder how many spoons are not shiny. How could we find out?
- Children Count.
- Sue Okay, let's count them. Leave them in the rest position. One, nine, seven, three ...
- Children No, stop.
- Sue Put up your hand if you can tell me the problem. Have a think. There's a problem. What is the problem with how I'm counting those spoons? Cross your legs, Justice. Have a think. Pacey, what was the problem?

Pacey You need to count like this: one, two and then three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

Sue But I was touching each one. I was touching each one. Hang on. Have a listen to Pacey. She's right.

Pacey Go like this: one, then like ...

Sue So if I start over here with one. Then what do I do next?

Pacey Two.

Sue Two. What's next?

Pacey Three.

Sue What's next? Help Pacey.

Children Four

Sue Four, five ...

End of class session

Sue So what happens with children when we form these sets, and we quantify how many objects are in each set, it's interesting for children to start comparing sets to see which are the larger sets and which are the smaller sets. And it's actually giving the children a way in to doing that, the skills that they need, the strategies that they need to make those judgments about which set has more and which has less.

Excerpt from class session

Sue Which is the biggest set?

Child Those ones.

Sue Which is the winner?

Child The shiny ones.

Sue Which one, Zoe?

Zoe The shiny ... this one.

Sue Yeah, one of those ones.

Zoe Shiny.

Sue The shiny ones are the ones that win at the moment. Isn't that clever?