

**Title:** Understanding the Professional Development and Support Needs of K1 and K2 Teachers for Implementing the Enhanced Numeracy Curriculum

**Authors:** Abbie Sng

## **Summary**

This report presents the analysis of the qualitative feedback gathered from K1 and K2 teachers regarding a prototype of an enhanced numeracy curriculum, focusing on common themes, and differing professional needs of teachers. The objective of the evaluation was to gather feedback to inform refinements to the proposed curriculum enhancements, and the findings have since been used by NFC to guide further development of the enhanced programme. Key findings reveal that teachers appreciate the increased focus on differentiated learning, the provision of clearer objectives and differentiated instructions, and the emphasis on hands-on learning. However, concerns persist regarding material availability, time management in certain activities, especially outdoor ones, and the balance between teacher-directed and child-directed learning.

## **Introduction**

As part of the prototype evaluation of the enhanced numeracy curriculum for 4 to 6 year old children, this report presents findings on the differing support needs of Kindergarten 1 (K1) and Kindergarten 2 (K2) teachers. The objective of the evaluation was to gather feedback to inform refinements to the proposed curriculum enhancements. Understanding these differences is essential for tailoring curriculum materials, resources, and professional development to better meet educators' needs and enhance lesson delivery. The focus of this inquiry was to identify practical and developmental differences in the teaching contexts between K1 and K2 classrooms that may require differentiated planning and support.

## **Methodology**

Data was collected through post-lesson feedback forms completed by teachers, and group interviews. Teachers were asked to reflect on two lesson components: Lesson 1 (focused on inviting children's interest and discovery) and Lesson 2 (focused on application and reinforcement). Responses were transcribed and analysed thematically using relevant packages in Python, and key differences between K1 and K2 teacher experiences were identified.

## **Common Themes of K1 and K2 Teachers**

A recurring theme across responses from both K1 and K2 teachers was about differentiated instruction (DI). Teachers appreciate the explicit guidelines provided in the enhanced curriculum for supporting children at varying levels of ability. The recognition that diverse developmental profiles must be accommodated is

crucial, as evidenced by frequent mentions of strategies to support children requiring low, medium, or high levels of support. This approach fosters inclusivity and enhances the learning environment for all children. K1 and K2 educators also highlight the importance of hands-on activities, a positive attribute of the curriculum. The emphasis on active learning and manipulation of concrete materials is viewed favorably, as it aligns with the development and comprehension of abstract numeracy concepts. This is corroborated by the shared experiences of increased student engagement and enthusiasm. The clarity of lesson plans, with their structured flow and explicit objectives, is also appreciated by both groups. Teachers found the well-organised approach conducive to lesson preparation and implementation.

### **Differing Needs of K1 and K2 Teachers**

While both K1 and K2 teachers see value in the DI and hands-on elements, their challenges and suggestions reveal differing professional support needs. K1 teachers emphasised the need for more concrete and specific guidance in the lesson plans, particularly regarding material choices and anticipated challenges like managing diverse child responses within a single lesson. Their feedback points to the need for clearer directives on how to differentiate tasks for each level of learner, thus minimising ambiguity during implementation. For example, concerns were voiced that detailed preparation instructions and a greater variety of suggested supplemental materials would enhance lesson planning.

K2 teachers, on the other hand, recognised the improved flow and clarity of the revised lesson plans compared to the previous curriculum. However, their concerns centred on potential difficulties with pacing, particularly when managing the transition from introduction to hands-on application. Suggestions for improvement related to balancing the variety of opportunities provided and the potential for child disengagement due to prolonged activities or a perceived lack of follow-up activities. K2 teachers also highlighted a need for more nuanced guidance in questioning techniques. This underscores the importance of prompting thought and inquiry from students during the lesson. Furthermore, while the differentiated instructions are generally viewed positively, the K2 group suggested a more comprehensive support system for implementing differentiated learning strategies in the classroom.

Drawing from the findings, NFC has further refined the proposed enhancements to better support diverse classroom contexts.

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