CONTEXT

St Agatha’s was chosen to be a part of the National Partnership based on our results over a number of years. As a school we had identified Numeracy as an area of need and we were in the process of looking for quality professional development that would help us in this area. The opportunity to become part of the National Partnership was accepted and we submitted our application for the Numeracy part of the strategy. We also made contact with Michael Ymer: we were grateful for the opportunity for Michael to work with us for two staff meetings plus a school closure day.

IMPLEMENTATION

Damian Mitchell Grade 3 Teacher

In keeping with our theme/goal of developing visualisation and explanation skills, I focused on helping the children show and verbalise their thinking. The concept of right or wrong was put to one side and children were regularly encouraged to ‘have a go’ and contribute their thoughts or answers to the class discussion. It was explained to them that being able to ‘tweak’ their thinking was more valuable than being right but having no idea why. This was applied across all areas but particularly in the area of Numeracy.

Below are some examples of work the children completed that linked with this direction I was taking. Each piece of work was the result of the children’s best efforts, focusing on giving reasoning for their thinking and discussing how or why they may approach it differently in the future.
TARGET 18’
Maree Summers Grade 5 Teacher

Our focus for learning was to improve understanding of number through worded problems. The children were encouraged to draw or use materials to help work out their answers and therefore show an improvement in their understanding and visualization of mathematical problems.

Below are examples of problems that we solved and had individual children explain to the class how they worked out their answers. Children were encouraged to use a variety of ways to show their working out (everyone did not have to use the same procedure)

Ongoing testing and end of year PAT Maths testing showed that there had been a great shift in the ability to understand and answer worded problems. This also saw a flow on affect to other types of mathematical problems.
Libby Williams Grade 1 Teacher

St Agatha’s school was chosen as a participating school in the National Partnerships Program. We were fortunate enough to have a team of teachers attend to assist us with developing and updating our Numeracy curriculum throughout the school.

Under the umbrella of, “Thinking Deeply About Learning,” we chose to concentrate on Visualisation and Explanation to help children gain a better understanding of their Numeracy and learn from each other.

After a truly inspiring day spent with Professor Mike Askew, I decided to adopt his method for problem solving and use it with my Grade 1 students. I was astounded at the results. Children used many different approaches to the same problem. They were able to imagine and draw what they were thinking. In the beginning they found explaining their methods a little difficult, but with time became more articulate and precise. Children began applying strategies they saw a friend use to other problems and were elated when successful. Some went home and started writing and solving problems of their own and proudly brought them to show me the next day. Mathematics and in particular problem solving became a highlight of our days.