

# Getting Started - Introduction

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This section contains a collection of activities for 'getting started' in two senses. 'Getting started' at the beginning of your numeracy course, for example, at the beginning of the year or semester; and 'getting started' at the beginning of your individual numeracy sessions, in other words on a daily or weekly basis.

## Getting started at the beginning of your course

Some activities in this section are particularly useful for as a means of beginning your numeracy course in an inviting and non-threatening manner. This is particularly important for students who may be nervous or anxious about returning to a mathematics classroom.

For many students this is their first contact with the classroom for many years. They may feel 'out of touch' with learning and think that they have forgotten any maths they once knew. It is important that classes at this stage are relaxed and friendly, and that mathematical concepts are introduced gradually, in a non-threatening way.

In this section there are activities that allow students to share their feeling about mathematics in a structured way, to discover what they have in common with each other and to learn to work together in a collaborative manner. These activities also enable student input into the numeracy course by encouraging them to express their opinions about the numeracy skills they need to learn. *Building positive attitudes to numeracy* discusses this important aspect of beginning your numeracy class more fully.

The section also contains activities that cater for a range of students in one class and enable you to get to know their individual numeracy strengths and weaknesses through observation, without formal assessment techniques, such as tests.

## Structured group and pair activities

Many of the activities in this section are structured to encourage students to work together in pairs or small groups. Early use of structured groups activities is a very effective way to build trust and group cohesion in the class. We have found that students who are relaxed and comfortable with each other and with their teacher will have the confidence to contribute their ideas to class discussion, ask the questions necessary for successfully learning mathematics and provide mutual help to one another later in the course.

Included in this section is a collection of structured group problem solving activities called *Cooperative Logic*. These provide a positive introduction to small group activity as well as introducing students to problem solving techniques.



## Getting started in a numeracy session

Many other activities in this section describe structures that are particularly useful as a means of starting off your numeracy sessions. They are usually quick and non-threatening activities, such as number games, problem solving tasks, puzzles or quick sets of questions.

When given immediately at the time the class is scheduled to start, these activities assist students to focus their attention on numeracy and ease them into the class environment before any new topics are commenced. They can be used simply to build students' confidence in familiar skills or they can act as a bridge between skills learned earlier in the course and those which will be taught in the current session.

The activities in this section can also be used effectively during a long session when a change in pace or atmosphere in the classroom is needed.

