

My portfolio

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2412672

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Index

Page 1: Numeracy Essay why is numeracy important

Page 2: Numeracy Essay Continued

Page 3: Numeracy Referencing

Page 4: Numeracy Referencing Continued

Page 5: Numeracy Blog

Page 6: Numeracy Blog Continued

Page 7: Numeracy Blog Referencing

Page 8: Numicon Information Sheet

Page 9: Numicon information Sheet Continued

Page 10: Numicon Information Sheet Referencing

Page 11: Video

Page 12: Evaluation

Page 13: Evaluation Continued

Page 14: Evaluation Referencing

Page 15: Evaluation Referencing Continued

Why is Numeracy Important?

This essay will look at exploring why is good numeracy is important, and to improve understanding of the political and social context of numeracy and why it is important to understand numeracy.

What is numeracy, numeracy is defined in more than one concept as it not only learning numbers it also links to problem solving, reasoning and interpreting data. Good numeracy is important because we use numeracy in everyday real-life situations, according to national numeracy 'Decisions in life are so often based on numerical information and to make the best choices in our daily lives we need to be numerate' (Schleicher, 2014).

It is important to understand numeracy as this is used in every day in people's daily lives. According to the oxford handbook of numerical cognition (2015) 'Maths is so important as it plays a vital role in modern day life from anyone needing to get a mortgage, buy a car or simply sort out their household bills' (Cited IN Budd, 2015). By people not understanding maths it can make life harder for them as they would not be able to understand simple tasks for example bills or how to plan their budget which could leave them without the basic finances, young people often can be financial illiterate as they do not understand the financial world and cause many problems, according to Joint SDG Fund ' the repercussion of financial illiteracy comes in many forms, but one of the largest is debt' (Lobato, 2023) this can lead to many problems in later life as this can have an impact as people want to apply for credit such as getting a mortgage as they possibly could have a low credit rating which would affect what rates of credit could be available to them if any, according to Experian ' having a poor credit score can make it harder to borrow money and to get better deals on loans, credit cards and mortgages and more' (Experian,2026).

Financial numeracy means having a good understanding of number to avoid the poor choices people make when they do not understand the mathematical implications. For example, making choices choosing everyday suppliers for utilities according to Hunt (2022) people may not be able to rationalise their needs which could result in overpayment and financial difficulty. The Royal Society (2011) explains how individuals need to be confident in their numeracy skills and to have education that enables them to go several stages further than they may need so that they can have this confidence in unfamiliar situations. This can help provide financial freedom to understand unit rates or support them in work dealing with unusual situations.

If people at least understood the basic concepts and structures this may give them a feeling to 'give it a go'. This may allow people to challenge themselves by changing their attitude to a 'can do' one and problem solving. The ability to problem solves is also supported by the Royal Society (2011) as being key to good numeracy.

By looking at the Cockcroft report it states that by looking at data over the last century and looking at documents past dated that this draws our attention to how badly the mathematical standards of today are (Cockcroft, 1982).By looking at what challenges people face today when being mathematical illiterate and what support is available for today society to resolve the so what attitude. According to Estyn (2013) their report states that maths in schools are saying

that children are still showing poor numeracy skills and are unable to put them into practice across the whole curriculum. We need to understand the real issues that people are facing so the system of education can change by looking into further into research from Estyn (2025) they believe that the quality of teaching of mathematics is linked to the subject specific support has been reduced across Wales, they found that teachers have little focus on subject knowledge and the pedagogy and resulted in teachers having limited understanding on how best to support learners. By looking at the Estyn (2025) report further they stated that once people have a supportive learning environment whether it be at school or work by having high quality questioning these can contribute to an improved understanding and outcomes in maths.

By looking at why numeracy is important it is clear to see from the research that numeracy is more than just numbers it's about problem solving. It is clear to see from the research that maths is used in everyday living not just in early age but lifelong and having good numeracy it makes life easier as it helps with the simplest tasks like shopping and budget planning but then also more complex situations as getting good deals on mortgages understanding bills. It 's clear that from the research that the maths has not improved a greatly over the years and that more work needs to be done to give people the confidence to look at maths in a new light by looking at the Royal Society (2011) that there are recommendations for the national curriculum up to age 16 and post 16 that maths should be engaged with through schooling and workplace training. By understanding numeracy, it will help to alleviate certain pressures by understanding on how to make your budget last longer and how to get the best deals on credit cards, mortgages and the daily living costs like electricity and gas. It clear to see that maths needs to be applied to real life situations. this can be done simply according to the Hayley (2022) these can vary simply by using money to pay for grocery to working out how to pay and receive change to simple maths games for example snakes and ladder. It is evidence that mindset had a great deal to play if people just say I cannot do it instead of let's give it a go they will not grow in confidence and always have a fixed mindset. According to Armstrong (2019) 'by having a growth mind-set this is likely to lead people to increase the likelihood of them learning through making the wrong decisions

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What can schools do to encourage numeracy?

Hi, I'm Liz and I'm married to my best friend and a mum of two boys and I'm currently studying at UWTSD. Thinking back to my school experiences as a child in the classroom it was not the best experience as a child. I was undiagnosed as a neurodiverse child which made the classroom an uncomfortable place to be. I felt very misunderstood and not supported. I did not like the way the teachers called you out in front of the class if you did not know the answer to the question. As part of my assignment for my first module of my level 5 in Inclusive Learning, I'm going to be writing this blog on how schools can encourage numeracy in the classroom setting and throughout the school. My own experiences as a child have influenced my professional approach to teaching and learning.

I am currently working in primary school in the nursery and reception class in South Wales. The school is in an urban setting and is faith based. We encourage numeracy in the classroom in many ways, for example, by simple counting and doing different maths activities. In our classroom we have pictures on the walls which show numbers to help support learning. Other physical items include Numicon and sand timers; these can all be used presenting and supporting different numeracy concepts and we can tailor the maths to the specific age and stage of the child. According to Piaget children learn by benefiting from seeing pictures and objects and the numbers simultaneously (Ojose, 2008).



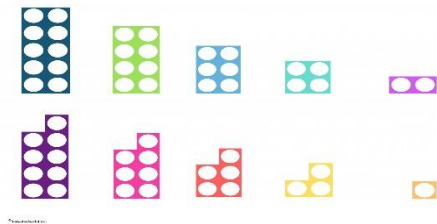
(Cuemaths,2020)

Numbers are not just for the classroom they can be used for outdoor learning and can be tied in with other subjects. For example, in physical education counting goals supports numeracy. In the playground we encourage the children to play hopscotch with their friend's and encourage maths by having the children to say the numbers aloud. According to a very well know theorist Lev Vygotsky he believed that children learned best through social interaction and playing with their peers his theory was called social constructivism he believed 'that children learned more from their peers than they did from adults' (Cherry, 2026). Teachers can also encourage maths by having it planned into the daily routine. According to the Education Endowment Foundation (2014) 'approaches will look different for children at different ages and stages of development'. I believe this to be true based on my experience of working in a classroom, but this also ties into Piaget and his theory of Cognitive Development where he states that children learn through progression and 'each child goes through all of the stages but not at the same rate' (Piaget cited in Mc Leod, 2025).

As we all know maths is a crucial part of the curriculum, Welsh government states that 'mathematics and numeracy are fundamental for the future generations' (Welsh Government, 2023). By looking at my school, they follow the 'Literacy and Numeracy Framework' (LNF) which

is a planning tool to identify clear targets in literacy and numeracy for all learners, so they can apply skills and concepts across the curriculum by completing tasks that are realistic for their development (X Primary ,2025).

One of my roles in the classroom is to support the children in all aspects of their development. One way I support the children in maths is in using a tool called Numicon which are one of the class favourites. These can be used in many ways for counting and shape making. Numicon were designed to help children as they were a visual structure according 'a multi-sensory shape that would be easily followed by teachers and make maths enjoyable for all' (Numicon, 2025).



(Print Play Learn 2017)

Looking at how I can support children in the classroom is about making sure that I can support the child with their needs and with their development. It can be difficult as the activities which are set by the class teacher are general and it is not always possible to support each child individually with the task that has been set. Therefore, it is about adapting to make it suitable. Unfortunately, there are many children in the classroom, and each task cannot be individually set in planning to make it suitable to each child. There is only a limited number of practitioners in the classroom and supporting children with additional learning needs (ALN) with numeracy designed for age related tasks is not always possible. According to Shearsby-Fox (2024), for 'some children with special education needs working within an age-related curriculum is not always possible' and this will create difficulties that staff need to do their best to overcome.

In would again like to take the time to thank you for reading my blog on how schools can encourage numeracy. Just remember we all play a vital role in our children education and upbringing, and maths and numeracy can be supported in many ways think when you're out with your children how can involve them more and how can you help your child have a good relationship with numbers. I hope you found this inspiring and helpful on how you can support you children.

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Numicon



(Oxford Owl.2026)

Numicon what are they you may ask?

Numicon's are plastic shapes which are tactile to help children learn to count they are designed in different colours with holes to represent a number.

How can they support learning?

Numicon's can support children in their learning development according to Early years resource 'that Numicons are a multi-use tool which are very effective in promoting the children's learning as they are a multi-sensory approach as children can see them feel them and can use them in play' (Early Years Resource, 2021). They can be used indoor on numicons boards you can also get them in foam shapes to be used outside.

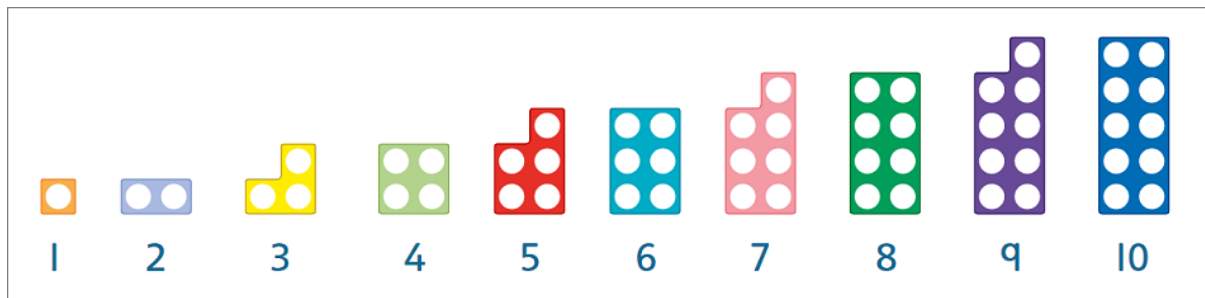


(Marlow,2025)

Numicon can also be used to support children with additional learning as they are a physical object which the children can not only feel they are colour co-ordinated which can help the child to visualize the number through using their senses of hearing touch and sight. According to Oxford University Press Numicon's offer a 'multi-sensory approach' (Crawley, 2026).

Why do Numicon's work?

Numicon work by allowing the children see the objects and feel the objects they can be used alongside different mathematical approaches, or they can be used as a resource of their own. Numicon helps to concrete the understanding of numbers by showing the children each Numicon in turn while using our voices to say the numbers aloud it gives the children a visual representation to be used with the number. You can also concrete this further by having the numicons timeline on the wall as pictured below this further enhances the children understanding.



(Oxford Owl, 2026)

The best thing about Numicon's theses can be used in many different way they can also be used as pattern recognition as this can be done with worksheets where the children can follow the pattern they can also be used with pattern boards some examples below for ideas



(Twinkl,2026)



(Richmond School District,

2020)

Can Numicon be used with curriculum and be used as an assessement tool?

Numicon can also be used in accordance with the literacy and numeracy framework as it promotes developing mathematical proficiency which is explored by splitting it into different areas starting with conceptual understanding, logical reasoning, fluency, strategic competence and communicating with symbols these areas then have 3 progression steps starting with the basics and moving on as the children progress (Welsh Government, 2021). Numicon can be used as a good assessment tool as you can monitor their progress to see if they can recall the corresponding Numicon to the correct number it helps to give them a concept between a physical object and a number. According to Structural learning they say that Numicon gives children a strong sense of understanding on how numbers have connections to other numbers (Main, 2021).

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Video



20260115_094523.mp

Evaluation of Resource in Action

This is the evaluation on the video and resource used when the filming of using numicons for a mathematical activity in the classroom setting. It was decided by the class teacher that she would like for the maths activity to be based on Numicon as they are a classroom favourite and it uses a multi-sensory approach, which is beneficial for all the children in the classroom as they can be adapted to suit the children's development. Based on Piaget's theory of cognitive development, he states that children all go through the same developmental pattern, but they do not all meet the same milestones at the same rate as each other (McLeod, 2026).

I was using Numicon with the children to do pattern making and was sat at a table within the classroom. I find Numicon a good educational tool and think it is very beneficial for the children's development overall as it is a tactile piece of equipment that stimulates the children's development. As they are using their senses as they can touch the object and feel the difference between each number and it also uses their sight it helps to concrete their understanding as when they are being given vocal instructions, they can use the equipment to help them. According to Oxford University Press 'Numicon uses an abstract approach based on a concrete structure which helps children to explore and demonstrate their understanding and is shown to have a positive impact on their learning and promotes their self-confidence' (Crawley, 2016).

I was asked to complete an activity using numicon pegs to make shape pattern with the children. I was asked to do this with one child at a time and to take notes on the children to assess on what their understanding was and what help and support they needed if any was given. According to NRICH 'Often children in the classroom are worried about making mistakes and showing they are struggling so it is important to make the classroom feel like a positive safe environment where the children feel like they can contribute to activities without feeling judged' (Gilderdale, Woodham, 2024).

Although Numicon is an excellent resource and very versatile, and overall, a good learning tool, however some children find these difficult to use. For some children they find numicons hard to use as they often miscount the number that the numicon is showing especially the younger learners as they have not learnt to count fluently and struggle to interpret the holes in the numicons as they see them as broken. Children with additional learning may struggle with numicons as they may face challenges with their reasoning and the language of maths. According to Henderson (2005) children with dyscalculia often struggle with number concepts and figuring out how to apply the reasoning and how to compute mentally and formally. Although Numicon is an excellent learning tool it is not viable for every learner and should be used in accordance with the children you are working with. According to Welsh Government (2023) they say that children need support to develop at their own pace this also ties in with Piaget's theory of cognitive development and he says even though children are the same age they will all go through the same milestones but at different paces and their development is based on biological maturation and also their environments (McLeod, 2026).

I however did face obstacles while trying to do the maths activity I was assigned to do. The task itself was easy to complete the challenges I faced were distractions within the classroom as the children who I was not working with at the time wanted my attention and for me to help them get the toys they wanted or to tell me someone was not using kind hands. It was unfair to the child who I was working with having interruptions and having my attention diverted to other children it interrupted his learning experience. According to Brownlow (2023) by having distractions and noise it can lead to the child having a shorter attention span and difficulty as they can often forget what is asked of them and make the task more difficult to complete. I felt that I had not planned my activity well enough in advance and spoke with the other teaching staff to let them how they could support me better. By looking at research Estyn (2025) state that by not having a structured plan in place for the children, that this can lead to the children having a poor learning experience and can lead to the children having disjointed learning opportunities which will not help them cement their understanding.

What I would do different next time I set out to complete a task with the children and video it in action. I would plan better by sitting with the class teacher explain what I wanted out of the activity and I would like to achieve. By all working together this gives better possibility to achieve the best outcome for the children. According to Johnson (2025) by working together more this allows colleagues to build a more meaningful relationship where they can share experiences and ideas by doing this it will benefit the children and allow them to thrive.

By looking at Numicon there is clear evidence that it a good learning tool and that is it versatile but for some learner's other tools for learning maybe more beneficial. It is clear to see by having a good working relationship with and colleagues in the classroom and having a positive classroom environment that this will benefit the children holistically. By supporting children and tailoring activities in accordance with their age, stage and ability that children will get more beneficial learning as your meeting their individual needs and supporting their development. According to Save the Children (2024) by supporting the learning in the early development this shapes their development as they grow and this is important in their social, emotional and cognitive skills as they grow up and move through life (Partridge, 2024).

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