

# PRISM Tri-Board Research Project



## School Boards

Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk CDSB  
Halton CDSB  
Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB

## Lead Educators

Agnes Grafton      [agrafton@bhncdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:agrafton@bhncdsb.edu.on.ca)  
Linda Obermeyer      [ObermeyerL@Haltonrc.edu.on.ca](mailto:ObermeyerL@Haltonrc.edu.on.ca)  
Judi Hanta      [hantaj@fc.hwcdsb.edu.on.ca](mailto:hantaj@fc.hwcdsb.edu.on.ca)

## Participants

- Brant-Haldimand-Norfolk CDSB, Halton CDSB, Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB
- 55 teachers, 1111 students

## Research Support

Erica van Roosmalen      [vanRoosmalenE@hcdsb.org](mailto:vanRoosmalenE@hcdsb.org)  
John Volek      [VolekJ@Haltonrc.edu.on.ca](mailto:VolekJ@Haltonrc.edu.on.ca)  
Cheryl Backlund      [cheryl.backlund@sympatico.ca](mailto:cheryl.backlund@sympatico.ca)

## Project Design

Recognizing that effective teaching is critical for the improvement of student learning, the focus of this project was to build capacity with mathematics teachers Grades 7 to 10 using:

- *PRIME Number and Operations Strand* training for 14 teachers - 3 days provided by board lead people
- *LessonLab* training for 5 teachers – 4 days by publisher, 1 day research lesson planning
- *PRIME Number and Operations Strand* training and *LessonLab* training for 11 teachers – 7 days training provided by board lead people and publisher, 1 day research lesson planning

## Research Questions

- Were remediation programs more effective for some students than others?
- Did the use of a developmental continuum improve student understanding for students at risk?
- Did instructional/assessment strategies change following exposure to a developmental continuum?
- Which influenced teaching practices more, the use of a developmental continuum or the use of a developmental continuum along with the establishment of professional learning communities through the use of *LessonLab*?

## Research Instruments

1. *PRIME* Diagnostic Tools: Number and Operations (Tool D)
2. Teacher Attitude and Practices to Teaching Mathematics
3. Student Characteristics Survey

## Research Findings

1. Our data did not allow us to identify the profile of the learner who would benefit most within the available time for this project.
2. There was a marginal increase in student diagnostic average raw scores for both Number and Operations groups.
3. Teacher evaluations and focus group results indicated that, in general, all teachers felt the in-service sessions they received were very useful and made a positive difference in the way they taught mathematics.

## Successes

- Teachers improved math content, instructional strategies, and their attitudes and confidence toward teaching math.
- Networking amongst the three boards was very beneficial for the professional development of math leaders.

## Conditions for Success

- Teachers were given time to collaborate in a professional learning community model.
- This partnership opportunity allowed three small boards to effectively and efficiently share resources and support.

## Lessons Learned

- In order to affect a change in teaching practice to improve student learning, teachers require the time and support to work collectively and collaboratively.

## Suggestions Based on Experience

- In order to build a critical mass, teachers should be selected based on an expressed interest and an openness to professional growth

## Further Recommendations

From the onset, it is important to assign a person whose primary responsibility is to ensure a structured approach for data collection and analysis.