

SHOWCASE

A mathematical journey

Alwyn Powell, Darling Heights State School, Toowomba, QLD
Ron Addie, University of Southern Queensland



Ron presents 'What are Numbers?'

In late 2009, Alwyn and Ron embarked on a **Mathematicians in Schools partnership**. To introduce Ron to the school community of teachers, parents and students, the partners held a maths evening at the school and invited **Years 4-7 students and their families** to attend.

Ron prepared and presented an interactive workshop on the topic 'What are Numbers?'. He wove an engaging and exciting narrative on the history of numbers from Mayan and Mesopotamian scratches to Roman numerals and Arabic place value, challenging students along the way to consider both the biggest and smallest numbers they could think of within these mathematical systems.



Student works on a maths problem



Mathematical calculations

Ron included anecdotes of his own mathematical journey, leading parents to think of their own challenges in school and those their children might encounter.

Finally, Ron energetically addressed the concept of infinity. His passion for both mathematics and education was compelling, and the audience of about 80 people sat enthused for a full hour.

The benefits of this partnership are numerous and far-reaching. "Mathematicians in Schools provides an external stimulus for children and their parents to see the importance of maths in today's contemporary society and the need for maths in the future," says Alwyn.



Student works on 'What are Numbers?' activity

"Having an inspiring presenter such as Ron means the children can engage with maths concepts beyond the realms of the everyday classroom. Ron also provides a stimulus for the classroom teachers."



Students and teacher Alwyn take a mathematical journey with Ron

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