

# EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A GEN-AI FIRST MATHS & STATS SUPPORT CENTRE TO DEVELOP NUMERACY SKILLS

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The importance of competent numeracy skills continues to become more of a necessity in an increasing number of professions, such as nursing and teaching. Across Australia, there has been a decline of numeracy as a prerequisite in most course offerings of nursing and teaching, shifting to 'assumed knowledge' instead (Minty-Walker *et al.*, 2021; King, 2015). This has coincided with students entering both disciplines with a lack in the foundational numeracy skills required to succeed. This issue has been addressed by most tertiary providers by implementing a maths and/or statistics support centre (MSC) as additional support for students that is separate from their course of study. The effectiveness of a MSC has largely been attributed to its convenience, approachability, and knowledge of its availability within the student cohort (O'Sullivan *et al.*, 2021). However, a lack of engagement from students can stem from factors such as a fear of asking for help and times that do not suit increasingly diverse study patterns (Lawson *et al.*, 2020). In this paper, we describe a pilot of an MSC in which generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI), using the *Cogniti* platform, seeks to overcome the aforementioned disengagement of students by providing support at any time, particularly outside of staffed hours. Furthermore, Gen AI can be utilised as a first point of contact in a MSC as it is perceived to be less intimidating when asked questions. Gen AI is enabled by the aid of meaningful human engagement and additional resources to provide a holistic form of support that caters to multi modal learning strategies. The effectiveness of Gen AI as an additional learning tool for numeracy is investigated, presenting results of in the initial experience of varying student cohorts following commencement of the pilot in June 2025.

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