

Straw Javelin

Where are they now?

Students can count by ones



Where to next?

Students are able to meaningfully count by tens.



Why?

As well as being an efficient method of counting large collections, counting by ten helps students to develop place value ideas.

How?

Mark a throwing line on the floor with tape or string. Students stand behind the line and take turns to throw a drinking straw as far as they can. Provide the students with Unifix blocks which have been assembled into towers of ten (it's best if each tower is composed of blocks of a single colour), as well as single blocks. The students then measure the distance the straw traveled by placing the Unifix block towers along the floor in a line from the starting point to the straw. As the ten towers are placed along the floor in a row, encourage the students to count, 'one ten, two tens, three tens ...' then once the straw is less than a ten tower away, start adding ones to continue the count to the straw. For example the teacher may continue the count; "three tens and one, three tens and two. Three tens are...thirty. Thirty and two makes...thirty two blocks altogether." Students then write down their own total on the score sheet. Once all players have had a turn, the scores are compared.

Variation

Change the activity from throwing a tissue paper airplane to other actions, such as taking a giant step from the starting point and then measuring the distance of the steps using the Unifix blocks.

Organise the students into pairs. Provide each pair of students with lengths of string and ask them to use the string to measure their arm span and their height. After the students have completed measuring with the string, they place the string on the floor. Have the students use the towers of ten Unifix blocks and single blocks to record the length of the string.