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The numeracies of boatbuilding: New numeracies shaped by workplace technologies.

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Summary: Within increasing pressure on young people to perform successfully in work, there is a growing concern regarding their levels of numeracy (and literacy). Whether such concerns are founded is the basis of this paper. This paper reports on the numeracy practices undertaken by three young boatbuilders who were nearing the completion of their 4-year apprenticeship. Using a method of stimulated recall and supplemented with interview data, the numeracy practices enacted by the boatbuilders was documented. It was found that the employees were highly competent in a number of areas-estimation, problem solving, holistic thinking and measuring (formal and informal). These skills are at variance with the basic skills being called for by public and government. It is proposed that the numeracy skills used by the employees may represent significant changes in workplaces being brought about through new technologies, and thus creating new and different numeracy demands from those of previous generations.

Classification: D37 F17 G37

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