

*One step back and two steps forwards*

*The Back to Basics movement in Sweden, 1970–1990*

Authors:

Johan Prytz, Uppsala University

Linda Ahl, Uppsala University

Uffe Thomas Jankvist, Aarhus University

In recent years a number of research publications concerning the history of New Math have appeared. They cover New Math as an international movement or its fate in single countries. In this paper we take a closer look at the movement that countered the New Math. This counter reaction can be observed in several countries and it is commonly known as Back to Basics. Not least, it was a reaction to some of the scientific elements of New Math. Our analysis is focused on a state funded Swedish research and development project called PUMP which channelled this counter movement in an organised way. PUMP was running between 1973 and 1977 and the acronym stands for *Processanalyser av undervisning i Matematik/Psykologisk* (Process analyses of teaching in Mathematics/Psycholinguistics). Our aim is in part descriptive as we identify the purpose of PUMP, its main objectives, methods, and underlying theories. Based on the descriptions, we seek (our second aim) to understand how innovations were created within the PUMP project and how these were implemented at a later stage. For our second aim, we use theory from implementation research (Century & Cassata, 2016; Coburn, 2003); both to understand what factors were in play during the project and later on when innovations were implemented and to understand the phenomenon of scaling up an innovation. The analysis reveals a clear step back to the basics regarding the content of mathematics teaching, but we can also report steps forward, or rather in a new direction, in the use of scientific theories and methods to develop innovations. Our main material is official reports about PUMP and interviews with the leading people involved in PUMP.

*References*

Century, J., & Cassata, A. (2016). Implementation research: Finding common ground on what, how, why, where, and who. *Review of Research in Education*, 40(1), 169–215.

Coburn, C. E. (2003). Rethinking scale: Moving beyond numbers to deep and lasting change. *Educational Researcher*, 32(6), 3–12.