

Counting back

Annotation

Luisa is able to successfully count back across a decade, tracking systematically with her fingers to solve a given subtraction problem.

Problem: Counting back

The teacher shows this problem to the student and reads it with her as required:

Kat had 36 plums but she had to throw away 9 rotten ones. How many did she have left?

Student response

Luisa: It's 27.

Teacher: Tell me how you did that.

Luisa: I had 36 and I counted the 9 on my fingers like this, 35, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30, 29, 28, 27.

Teacher: What do you know that helped you?

Luisa: I know how to count backwards...you know...count down.

Teacher: Tell me why you did it that way.

Luisa: Because it's a takeaway and that's how you do them.

Teacher: How would you record that?

Luisa: I had thirty-six and nine are taken away which means there's 27.

She writes 36, and circles it, then writes 35, 34, 33, 32, 31, 30, 29, 28, and 27. She points to the 36 and says "I started here." She then circles 27 saying, "This is what I got."

(36) 35 34 33 32 31 30 29 28 (27)