

Learners collaborating

Educator Story

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Initially Adam was very keen to participate in maths lessons. He took part in the GRIN (Getting Ready in Numeracy) program but decided for himself that he had graduated from this program and no longer needed extra assistance.

Initially in the classroom he was a very interested and motivated student during maths sessions, but unfortunately his attitude deteriorated.

Adam was often reluctant to complete tasks and engage in maths. He often distracted others and found a multitude of ways of disrupting the class. Adam has a good understanding of maths and is able to learn new concepts when focused and engaged, the latter being the operative words.

I needed to quickly find a way to re-engage Adam and turn this new negative behaviour around. I spent more time giving him positive reinforcement and made a point of sitting with him during maths lessons, quietly chatting and nurturing him into continue with the task. I chose a maths topic in which I knew that Adam had very good skills and asked him to act as a peer tutor/teacher to a small group of other, younger students (it was a composite 2/3 class).

Adam rose to the occasion with bells on and really loved teaching the younger children. He was very proud when he felt that they were able to perform the task and went on to select a new group.

These "peer tutoring" sessions certainly re-engaged Adam. He once again became motivated and confident. He possibly needed to be reminded that he was valued class member with many skills to share with others.

I now ensure that I involve Adam in many peer-tutoring situations and also in small group tasks where he has the ability to shine and, at the same time, work collaboratively with his peers.

Adam is now back to being quite engaged and happy during maths sessions.

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Finding 1.3: Collaboration

Know that learners may prefer to collaborate rather than compete in their mathematics learning.