

Good news story

Leader Story

Mrs Jenny H
Assistant Principal
Dharug Cluster

Profile

- Began teaching in 1979 in Mt Druitt area of western Sydney. Taught here for 5 years before resigning my position.
- During 1992-4 worked as a casual teacher in Penrith district.
- 1995 returned to permanent work again in Mt Druitt area working across K-6.
- 2006 appointed to Blackett PS as AP, supervising and teaching across K-6.

How we became involved in *Make it Count*

Early in term 1 2011, the Principal at Hebersham PS – cluster leader school, rang and invited Blackett PS to join the project. I had previously worked with Principal at Colyton PS and highly valued her educational philosophy and did not hesitate to become involved.

I initially met with the cluster leader and Peter Howard (critical friend) about the overview of the project. I must admit, I thought “What have I got myself into?” and was totally intimidated by Peter. His questioning did nothing for my confidence, but it made me realize I should be able to answer his questions. The professional learning for me at this point was immense. The issue was, I didn’t have any idea about the ‘big picture’ of the project or background of why and how. The information given was, “Do you want to be involved in a project on improving Mathematical learning for Aboriginal students?” And I replied “yes” and so I did.

What *Make it Count* has meant for me?

- Firstly to understand the context of the project, after being thrown in the deep end by Peter and Chris.
- Visiting Hebersham PS’s Monday Mob and sharing ideas of how we could begin making a difference for our Aboriginal students.
- Developing an action plan for Blackett PS.
- Cluster meetings to engage in professional dialogue about our Aboriginal students and mathematical learning.
- Sharing ‘best practice’ with other schools within the cluster and being inspired to make a difference for our Aboriginal students.
- Finding an AEW (Aboriginal education worker) who would be critical in linking to our Aboriginal community with the school, teachers and other parents.
- Begin to form relationships with Aboriginal parents within a specific project/purpose.
- Supporting the creation of Allowah Badanami centre. Official opening of this Aboriginal learning room by Elders of the district.

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- Establishing links with Aboriginal Elders within our area.
- As a supervisor it highlighted the need for all students to be taught as individual learners, and not as a class of learners. This has been the most critical finding for me, as this principle can be applied to any behavioural or learning situation across the school for any student. All teachers must realize the significance of the statement and how it applies to them and their class.
- It has allowed the implementation of Mad Monday Maths. Many of our teachers either don't like Maths or are not confident to teach it. Prior to becoming involved in *Make it Count*, I had tried to plan a way of engaging teachers in having fun in Maths. *Make it Count* allowed the two projects to run together, and so began Mad Monday Maths.
 1. Students were grouped into smaller than class sizes as all staff were rostered on for Mad Monday Maths.
 2. Teachers taught the same lesson but to a different group of students each week, thus developing a concept from Early Stage 1 through to Stage 3 for each term. The initial criteria for the lessons was a favourite mathematical topic they enjoyed teaching, followed by a 'hands-on' activity/game, and then concluding in 2011 with a game that could be played with friends or family over the holidays. This year we began with lessons focusing on the Olympics 2012 and athletes, and now focusing on place value.
 3. The purpose was for teachers to engage and show their enjoyment of Maths as a subject to all students in the school. Behaviour of various students has been an issue, but it is about teachers reflecting on building relationships with students across the school, preparing and engaging students in their learning to improve learning outcomes for all students.
 4. These rotations have allowed the Aboriginal students to work together with the selected teachers and AEO, AEW to follow similar topics and cultural perspectives as well.
 5. When no teacher absences occurred, teachers were rostered to view the specific *Make it Count* groups to engage in the learning that occurred within these groups.
 6. Evaluation of staff/students to determine the effectiveness of MMM.
 7. Evaluation for staff/students/parents to determine the effectiveness of *Make it Count*.

The highlight of the project was the 2012 *Make it Count* meeting in Sydney, with the sharing of stories and the inspiration to continue to make a difference. It is the best TPL I have been engaged in. However, it raised so many more questions to be answered.



Finding 1.5: Individual

Know that each student is an individual and has his or her own preferences for learning.