

Significant Episode: Big Day Out

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Findings 7.3: Beliefs

Challenge commonly held beliefs about mathematics as following a curriculum, or as culture-free. Promote mathematics as a living human endeavour.

This story refers to the Cluster's *Big Day Out* which celebrated and brought together culture and maths.

The teaching of mathematics is a non-Indigenous construct. The idea of 'maths' as a label is not something that belonged to Aboriginal people but it is an inherent part of living – so you can't learn in an Indigenous context without encountering some level of maths. Most Indigenous cultures around the world have known maths and used maths, but just haven't used it or defined it the way we have in the Western educational system. Part of what we were doing today with the kids was showing them that there is maths all around them, there was maths in the things their ancestors did, and that maths is an integral part of everyday life.

I believe that with Indigenous ways of learning, everything is tied together rather than the compartmentalised Western concept which puts maths here, English over there.

Having Elders participating in a day like this adds that level of legitimacy so what we are teaching is much more like true Aboriginal culture rather than the non-Indigenous representations of the culture that our history books are full of. Essentially it is the only way the culture continues because to me my Mum (Aunty Dot) is a direct connection to her grandmother, who was born in this area – we think – in the era when Coranderk was operating. My great-grandmother learned how to live off the land and learned those traditional things, so the next generation – Elders like my mum (Aunty Dot) and Uncle Roddy – are the connection we have to the past.

"I believe that with Indigenous ways of learning, everything is tied together rather than the compartmentalised Western concept which puts maths here, and English over there, etc."



Some questions to prompt discussion:

1. *Can you see the numeracy and mathematics in this story, particularly when talking about generational connections?*
2. *What are the implications of Andrew's statement "I believe that with Indigenous ways of learning, everything is tied together rather than the compartmentalised Western concept which puts maths here, English over there"?*
3. *What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?*