



Significant Episode: Student Voice

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Finding 3.6: Student Voice

Realise that responsive mathematics pedagogy builds on student voice, recognition of diverse ways of learning mathematics and connection to worlds beyond the classroom (both local and non-local).

What happened?

My first experiences with the *Make It Count* program involved a colleague who offered his assistance in a mentoring role. He shared his ideas and teaching methodologies in combining the arts and maths. After learning new skills in the arts I was able to take the knowledge and use it with the class by exposing them to one and two point perspective and building abstract sculptures. The students' responses to this 'new way' of learning maths were filled with mixed reactions. The majority of the class were excited and enjoyed the tasks. However there were still a small number of students who would comment and ask when we were doing maths. It took those students a longer period of time to realise that what they were doing was in fact maths – it was just that it was delivered in a different context. For the students who were engaged it was amazing to see that by simply incorporating hands on tasks it was possible to build the confidence in particular students. This encouraged them to have a go at tasks that they wouldn't normally attempt.

As a result of this trial in teaching, class enthusiasm and attendance improved, particularly in one Aboriginal student. As a class we then decided on what context we would like to use for learning maths for the next term. The students were intrigued by the television show 'The Block', so we brainstormed all the mathematics that could be associated with that context. With colleagues in the upper primary English and maths groups, we took the students' ideas and built upon these by incorporating the relevant curriculum requirements. 'The Block' context included many activities that seemed to continue to develop every time we began and completed a task. This kept the students excited and interested in what they were doing. Students were sad to see 'The Block' project end, but were proud of what they had accomplished over the period of time.

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By allowing the students to have a voice about something that was relevant to them at the specific time in their lives proved that they could be engaged in some hands on maths including those students who were sceptical at the beginning. It also brought out my passion for teaching as the students' excitement was infectious.

Some questions to prompt discussion:

- 1. Why do you think students had “mixed reactions” when introduced to these “new ways”?**
- 2. What social contexts like “The Block” could be relevant in your mathematics classroom?**
- 3. What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?**