



Significant Episode: Making Learning Intentions Explicit

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Finding 3.2: Learning Goal

Practise explicit and scaffolded teaching with a defined and planned learning goal for each lesson that is shared with students to orient them to the learning.

Making learning intentions and success criteria explicit helps Aboriginal students to better understand the expectations of the task and when they are successful with the task.

Can learning intentions help improve maths outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students?

I always enjoy teaching maths but I often wonder about how I can teach better. After a Maths PD session with Professor Peter Sullivan (Healesville Cluster Critical Friend), I was reminded about the importance of using explicit Learning Intentions (LI) and Success Criteria (SC) for each maths session.

I found that by using a learning intention with each lesson, and discussing it with the children before starting the lesson, the children were more in-tune with what is happening, more focussed with what they are looking to get out of the lesson and quite often more engaged - just from this seemingly simple exercise of including a LI.

I also found that my teaching is more focussed. In planning, I ensure I include a LI for each lesson which in turn focuses my planning and instruction. Plans can be altered due to student understandings if needed, but this still requires a LI. I also include SC so that both the students and I know what I am looking for in terms of understanding and expectation. It's like a goal.

In class, I have a clear and simple LI on the whiteboard using an old photo frame to draw attention/importance to it. It is in a language that the students can understand and often I will get them to rephrase it so that everyone understands. Sometimes, they will write it down in their workbooks under the heading to help them remain focussed during the session.

The SC helps the children work towards a goal and know what I am looking for to see if they have a solid understanding of the topic.

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Some questions to prompt discussion:

1. *In what ways might making the learning intentions explicit at the start of the lesson enhance Aboriginal students' learning? Why would this be important to students?*
2. *What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?*