



Significant Episode: Intervention Program Success - Getting Ready in Numeracy

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Finding 4.3: Confidence

Remember that mastery of a skill in mathematics produces the confidence and enthusiasm to master further skills – a cycle that can be nurtured to produce exponential growth.

GRIN (Getting Ready In Numeracy) tutoring prepares students for the learning they will experience later in the week. It sets students up before the event rather than catches them up after the event.

Can intervention programs such as GRIN build skills and motivation that transfer to the mainstream classroom?

I took a team to interschool hockey last year. Anthony was a member of the team. I was very impressed with his skills and started calling him 'Anthony Everywhere' because it didn't matter where the ball was on the pitch, he was involved in the play. He was able to intercept and control the ball at a much higher skill level than not only his own team, but the opposition as well.

Anthony has been a member of my maths class this year and it was disappointing for me to find that his enthusiasm for academic work did not match his enthusiasm for sport. His attendance, early in the year, not just for Maths, was around the 60% mark. Only when he had P.E. or there was a sport excursion would he be at school bright and early. He lacked confidence in his maths ability and would not attempt questions without prompting or one-on-one assistance. Getting him to hand in weekly homework and make an individual effort in class was a nightmare.

We started running GRIN sessions two mornings per week towards the end of term 3. Not only has his attendance increased, but his attitude to attempting set work (homework and classwork) has also improved. He brought in his homework book and proudly handed it to me. Yes, he had a tutor to help him but the fact that he actually brought in the book was significant.

A couple of weeks ago, I let the class into the room and Anthony – who normally chooses to sit at the back with talkers/non-workers – decided to sit front and centre, by himself. He tried the questions himself, and also sought assistance when he got stuck. He showed me what he had completed at the end of the lesson.

The next lesson he sat with the other boys again and it looked like he wasn't going to attempt anything. I just mentioned how impressed I had been that he had chosen to sit away from them the previous lesson and he got up and moved to another spot. Two of the other three boys also decided it would be better if they sat away from the fourth boy. The amount of work he is completing in class and at home has increased, his motivation seems to have changed. The morning sessions have raised his confidence levels; a 'Good Work Certificate' here and there hasn't hurt either.

"I let the class into the room and this boy who normally chooses to sit at the back with talkers/non-workers decided to sit front and centre, by himself."

Some questions to prompt discussion:

- 1. What actions by the teacher may have helped Anthony's attitude toward maths?*
- 2. What is the significance of the relationship in this story?*
- 3. What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?*

