



Professional Engagement

Standard 6 – Professional Learning

Significant Episode: Teaching Collaboratively

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Finding 6.4: Action Learning

Participate in action learning or research where you design, act, observe and reflect. This involves examining data to determine current progress and future planning.

Background

In 2011 I approached a young member of staff (three years in) about working collaboratively across year 5 and year 7. Although she was initially reluctant, Mandy said she'd "give it a go".

What happened?

We began our collaboration by brainstorming possible concepts that we could explore with our classes and we came up with a short list before deciding on volume. Next, we agreed on some outcomes for each grade and together we planned the lessons. Then, during the lessons we found time to observe each other teach and collected data about shared aspects of the lessons. After the lessons we reflected on the lessons individually also seeking feedback from the students. Generally they had found it enjoyable, if nothing else. The students also sat pre- and post-tests and overall these showed clear improvement across both grades.

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After the units were completed, we collaboratively evaluated what had occurred. Mandy and I enjoyed working together and both enthusiastically committed to continue and develop what we had initiated.

Results

Positives	Negatives	Improvements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to have time to plan collaboratively. • Discussion of various methodologies. • Reciprocal peer observations. • Peer/self feedback and critique. • Expansion of learning opportunities beyond the original goals to cover a wide range of the curriculum. • Seeing where learning is coming from and leading to i.e. Yr 5–7. • Motivating other staff to be involved. • Developing teacher perspective and understanding of open ended investigations. • Using Kinaesthetic activities and concrete materials in upper primary school. • Providing opportunities that the children are relating back to i.e. 'Remember when...?' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time available to collaboratively plan and observe each other teaching. • Absent children (Indigenous) miss out on the creative learning opportunities provided. • Keeping within time constraints of the teaching program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questioning techniques to become more open-ended and target more higher order thinking. • More consistent checking that the children are engaged and understanding what they're learning. • Completing the full action cycle - specifically relating the concepts back to pen and paper. • Teacher have comprehensive understanding of the concept to allow them to see extension opportunities and enhance questioning • Identify a focused observation for peer.

Some questions to prompt discussion:

1. *How does your school make changes to the way mathematics is taught?*
2. *How might investigative learning benefit Indigenous learners (and non-Indigenous students)?*
3. *What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?*

