



Significant Episode: Education Assistants Appreciate Maths Training

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Swan Cluster

Finding 5.2: Misconceptions

Recognise and act on students' mathematical misconceptions.

Dear Tracey and Sharon

We would like to extend a big thank you for your presentation and delivery of the mathematics professional development days during the school year 2012.

We work at a school which has a very strong literacy focus and any new ways to assist the teachers in their already over-committed timetable for the other learning areas is always welcomed. Upon reflection we took it upon ourselves to apply what we had learned in those sessions to our own classrooms.

Our classroom teachers were very supportive of our newly obtained knowledge, ideas and resources, allowing us to implement them in to small group teaching and 'first thing in the morning' activities. We found that by understanding the concepts behind the actual mathematics we were more confident in teaching. It was an *aha* moment when we realised how important it is that children can subitise and where partitioning belongs in the concept of place value. By understanding the (learning) sequence (Department of Education WA Numeracy Portal), we can now identify where our own students are having difficulty (such as misconceptions) and can guide them to their next learning stage.

In one of the sessions, mathematical language was discussed. We obtained a comprehensive list of mathematical vocabulary and focused on how we spoke. We used open questions and modelling mathematical vocabulary. It was wonderful to hear five year olds discussing how to make a 'fair share' of leaves to our cut-out koalas.

Word had travelled to the principal about your mathematics sessions and it has been suggested that we develop an Early Childhood mathematics program at our school. We are now looking forward to dissecting the mathematics curriculum and learning how to develop such a program.

Once again thank you for your knowledge, the patience to explain, and your great resources.

Yours sincerely

Milka Harrison, Rachel Regan and Jo Maslin
Education Assistants Pre-primary 1 and 2

Some questions to prompt discussion:

1. *What is significant about this letter and why is it important to the education assistants, the facilitators of the professional learning and to the school?*
2. *Why is the education assistants 'aha moment' significant for them?*
3. *What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?*

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