

Linking research and teaching

Educator Story

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The following story is a important example of linking research with practice. We know that development of pedagogy must be underpinned by an evidence base and that the development of new thinking and new language is one of the effects. This story also exemplifies the value of the practitioner-researcher partnership.

I became involved in the *Make it Count* project in the second year of its implementation. At that time I was a grade 3 teacher and the school's Indigenous Liaison Officer. As part of the *Make it Count* project I was involved in mathematics professional development facilitated by Prof. Peter Sullivan and cultural awareness training conducted by Uncle Henry Atkinson and Monash University.

The partnership of researchers and teachers that was established by *Make it Count* proved to have considerable effect on my teaching. I implemented current research in best mathematics teaching practice with pleasing results. I found that my students benefited in terms of engagement and achievement, from the new strategies and tasks I had learnt through this ongoing professional development.

It also gave me the opportunity to feed back to our critical friend, Prof. Peter Sullivan, about the results of trying new ways of teaching maths. This ongoing support enabled me to alter and strengthen my practice.

Through the *Make it Count* project I attended two conferences. One was held in Alice Springs in 2011 and another in Adelaide in 2012. As this was my first mathematics education conference I was surprised to find a research body so invested in improving mathematics outcomes in schools.

These two experiences encouraged me to begin reading mathematics education journals and eventually I enrolled in a masters by research program at Monash University under the supervision of Prof. Peter Sullivan.

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Finding 6.9: Improvement

Engage critically with external resources to gauge their appropriateness and relevance for Indigenous learners and compatibility with your aspirations for pedagogical improvement.