



## Inspiring Stories

### Relationships

Leader Story

#### Christine Payne

Cluster Leader and Assistant Principal  
Hebersham Primary School  
Dharug Cluster

#### Biography

Christine Payne has been a primary school teacher for 21 years. She has been at Hebersham Primary School for 16 years, the past 10 years as Assistant Principal. Chris has been a part of the *Make it Count* project since its inception in 2009 taking on the role of Dharug Cluster Leader.

#### Introduction

I feel privileged to have led the Dharug Cluster in this *Make it Count* project. While we all designed projects to meet the individual needs of our own schools we always kept our eye on the focus of improving student mathematical outcomes for Aboriginal students. Many great bonds and relationships have been formed between the members of the cluster group. I hope to continue this network beyond the project in 2013.

#### What I've learned?

Through my involvement in the *Make it Count* project I have learned so much about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. This has enhanced my own professional knowledge and understanding. I have had the opportunity to present findings from our project at a number of conferences. It is through these that I gained a deeper understanding of Aboriginal people and culture by talking and sharing with them. I have a greater respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island students in my class and now regularly engage in discussions with them about their own culture. My highlight was attending and presenting at the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Conference in Darwin in 2011. I gained many ideas which I have used in my daily teaching life.

As Cluster Leader I have learned about the importance of relationships between not only individual schools and their community but also between similar schools. Over the three years we have developed a learning community across the three schools. We have regularly visited each other's schools for sharing and observation sessions. We held cluster days off site and in each of the three schools. We attended conferences as a cluster group and shared strategies to enhance our project. While we did have a change of school in the middle of the project the past 18 months have demonstrated stability and allowed growth and development to occur.

At a school level I have played a fundamental role in sharing the success of our project and bringing the staff on board. One of our most significant presentations was the 90 minute workshop presented on Staff Development Day by the *Make it Count* team. Not only were teaching staff involved but also Aboriginal Educators and School Support Learning Officers. Seeing all members of the audience engaged and enthusiastic about our project was highly satisfying. Our project with a K-2 focus has now moved across K-6 within our school.

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**Finding 1.2: Significance**

*Know what is significant in the daily, lived reality of learners so mathematics learning can be culturally relevant/connected as well as academically rigorous.*



**Finding 6.2: Expertise**

*Share expertise between schools to grow and enrich professional learning communities.*