

Significant Episode: Students as Teachers

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Finding 1.3: Collaboration

Know that learners may prefer to collaborate rather than compete in their mathematics learning.

Background

We had decided to work together as teachers and as we had found it to be very successful, we decided to see if our students could also gain from working collaboratively.

What happened?

The Year 5 and Year 7 classes both had to cover the 'properties of a circle' in their mathematics program. Mandy was the teacher of the Year 7 class and so she introduced the topic with her students first. After teaching the students about the properties of a circle through some direct instruction, they then went off and independently researched the properties. Mandy then had the students prepare resources and a lesson so they could teach the Year 5 class (Ian's class) about the same topic. The Year 7 students then went to the Year 5 class and taught them about the properties of a circle.

Results

The results of the pre and post-tests showed a significant improvement for both the Year 5 class and the Year 7 class. It seemed that the Year 7 students gained a great deal by having to explain the concepts to someone else, and the Year 5 students clearly appreciated learning from an older peer. However, the greatest gain was in the enthusiasm shown by all students, especially amongst the students that we had considered disengaged.

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Some questions to prompt discussion:

1. *How did the Year 7 students benefit from this experience?*
2. *What might have been significant for the Indigenous students in both Year 5 and Year 7?*
3. *What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?*