

Highly scaffolded teaching

Leader Story

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A highly scaffolded teaching approach that includes planned, defined and purposeful learning goals and questioning increases mathematical knowledge, skills and confidence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners.

Why we say this?

1. A highly scaffolded teaching approach increases mathematical knowledge, skills and confidence for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students particularly:

- if students have missed a lesson(s)
- if students have experienced trauma and related memory challenges. These are overcome by the revisiting of learning, predictable routines and explicit teaching
- as each lesson builds on prior learning.

The teachers involved in this project have a background in Accelerated Literacy pedagogy. This means that they have a knowledge of Vygotskian theory of child development, and how learning precedes development. They have been exposed to the notion of the zone of proximal development, and the role of the teacher in contingently scaffolding students beyond what they can do independently to improve their learning.

From a Vygotskian point of view, Aboriginal students do not learn differently from other children. The role of teachers is to understand and find out what the students in their class already know, and then take them from the familiar to the unfamiliar, from commonsense to the new ways of thinking required for successful participation in mathematics. (Bronwyn Parkin, 2012)

2. A planned and defined learning goal ensures that:

- all students are aware of the desired lesson outcome
- the teacher is accountable for delivering a lesson that will achieve the goal
- the teacher/students can check at the end of the lesson if the goal has been achieved.

Teachers know the importance of stating the learning goal at the beginning of every lesson, and at every stage through the lesson. They also know about reviewing the goal at the end of the lesson to evaluate whether it has been achieved. (Bronwyn Parkin, 2012)

3. Questioning occurs on two levels in a lesson: at the end of a lesson in the 'meaning making' session; and throughout the lesson. Planned, purposeful questioning provides teachers with real-time assessment information about each child's understanding of the lesson content.

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This information is used to determine:

- if the learning goal was achieved
- which students require further support or extension
- whether the lesson needs to be retaught the following day
- if a vital concept has been missed or misunderstood.

They understand the importance of monitoring student understanding throughout the lesson. They call this 'looking for handover'. Importantly, they have experience in how to modify the familiar questioning sequence used by teachers, and are able to scaffold students into understanding through cuing them into what is in the teacher's head (preformulation), and through reframing their answers so that students are constantly being drawn into the world of mathematics through language (reconceptualisation). Control over when to use these strategies enables teachers to provide contingent scaffolding that makes their teaching intentional, responsive and effective. (Bronwyn Parkin, 2012)



Finding 3.2: Learning goal

Practice explicit and scaffolded teaching with a defined and planned learning goal for each lesson that is shared with students to orient them to the learning.