

Using Action Learning Principles for Professional Development: The Waikiki School Experience.

Key words: Action, learning and reflection

Action learning principles were the methodological foundation of the Department of Education Science and Training funded and Murdoch University directed, numeracy research conducted at Waikiki Primary School, Perth, Western Australia. Action learning projects were used to explore innovative teaching strategies for improving student numeracy outcomes.

The structured method for reflective practice used in this research acknowledged and built on the teachers' prior professional experiences and expertise. It provided the teachers with a way to learn from their actions by taking time to plan, implement ideas, observe, question and reflect. This process contributed to the development of a sense of critical reflection or questioning of existing perspectives of teaching and student learning. Combined the teachers projects provided collective reflection, which lead to the identification of shared issues, challenges and concerns. As a result, possible ways forward in both teaching and student learning were developed.

The collegial nature of the action learning approach enabled individuals to receive support from their colleagues in directing their own professional growth or development. It provided teachers with an opportunity to develop a broader and more critical view of their practice. As a result they had increased knowledge and potential for adapting to change.

This project recognised the role action learning can take in the professional development of educators. It found that time needs to be given for new ideas to become incorporated into thinking and practice. Furthermore that teachers' development can be enhance through professional reflection and opportunities for collegial sharing of learning experiences.

Ms Karen Murcia
Project Co-Director
School of Education
Murdoch University
Ph. 93542595
Fax. 93542593

k.murcia@central.murdoch.edu.au.