“I get by with a little help from my friends” – The effects peer learning can have on the confidence of maths resit students.

The Problem

Students often enter a maths classroom with already negative emotions and attitude and with a feeling of isolation. This research will look to address the issue around confidence and problem-solving skills of students taking a maths resit course (both functional skills and GCSE).

Intro to literature

Using the work of Dylan Wiliam (2018), Frank Coffield (2014) and Michael fielding (2011) – I looked at a variety of peer learning methods that could be easily implemented into the classroom to make the learners more involved in the classroom activity. I began to use these methods each week gradually increasing the participation by the learners and taking back my facilitation, Discussing answers, taking sections from each person to build a model answer.
Pair work/ group delivery of a topic

William, D (2018) 2nd ed Embedded formative assessment. Solution tree press
Bloomington

Coffield, F. (2014), Students as learning partners within a community of learning
In Gregson, M., Pollard, A. S., Nixon, L., Spedding, T. (2015). Readings For Reflective Teaching In Further Adult and Vocational Education. pp. 36-38. London: Bloomsbury

Fielding, . (2011) ‘PATTERNS OF PARTNERSHIP: STUDENT VOICE, INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING AND DEMOCRATIC FELLOWSHIP’ in Mockler, N. and Sachs J. (eds) (2011)
Rethinking Educational Practice Through Reflexive Research: Springer, 61-75

What we did/ methods

Over an 8 month period I have worked with 30 students split into 2 classes. I worked with these students, increasing the amount of peer learning in the lesson to help build the students confidence. Throughout this period, I collected student opinion initially through questionnaires and then through select follow up interviews. Quantitative data was collected as assessment results and attendance figures.

Initial findings

All the students completed a questionnaire and initially said that in a maths lesson they would instantly go to work alone. The majority said that they did not feel confident to answer either an open question or a question directed to them. But all said they would support their peers (though not many currently actually do) This highlighted that collaboration is not common practice within maths lessons .

After an initial slow buy in, and much facilitation from myself the students began to be more involved in the work when learning with their peers, the confidence has grown in them.

EDUCATION & TRAINING FOUNDATION

University of Sunderland

Impact

The biggest impact has been attitudes and emotions in the classroom – this makes for an environment of problem solving and exploration in maths. Quantitatively this has also led to an improvement in attendance figures for the students in these classes.

Recommendations

Peer learning should be embedded into the maths curriculum, it is showing that the students are engaging n the lessons more when learning with and from each other. This will be facilitated and even at points controlled by the teacher. But as the students gain in confidence the amount of free peer learning will increase

What learners said:

We feel more confident in the class, and not embarrassed to give answers. We feel that we can work at our own pace and not have to rush.