

RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2024

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Institution: Southern Cross University

Title: Transforming Mathematics Education: The Power of Trust

Abstract: As a passionate Mathematics teacher, I've designed and developed the Mathematics and Numeracy unit for first-year education students. My innovative curriculum and teaching methods help students overcome math anxiety and excel. Continuous encouragement, meaningful feedback, and clear learning pathways have helped them succeed.

Based on an evidence-based approach, I believe that success in this curriculum appears to rest in the building of a culture of trust, trust as belief, trust as decision and trust as action. The building of a strong culture of interpersonal and mutual trust between the teacher and the students has served to normalise the learning of mathematics for students. A significant shift in students' normative expectations is reflected in positive responses regarding their own capacities to engage in mathematics learning. Students become willing to take risks in learning as they move from passive trust, through active mistrust, to active trust. Building trust explains a student's exclamation that, "I CAN do maths!"

Since 2015, I've guided around 5,500 students to successfully complete the MATH1002 unit. As a result of their involvement with the unit, SCU Education students consistently achieve success rates in the LANTITE numeracy component that exceed 90%, one of the highest in the sector. At SCU, we emphasize celebrating regional identity and impacting equity cohorts. By addressing challenges faced by regional and equity groups, we ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed in mathematics. Education and research at Southern Cross can be life-changing for diverse groups, including first-in-family university students, Indigenous scholars, and internationals.