



# Professional Engagement

## Standard 6 – Professional Learning

## Significant Episode: Leading From The Middle

**Nerang Middle Managers**  
Nerang Cluster

### *Finding 6.9: Improvement*

*Engage critically with external resources to gauge their appropriateness and relevance for Indigenous learners and compatibility with your aspirations for pedagogical improvement.*

Three leading maths teachers from St Peter Claver College met with (Associate Professor) Peter Grootenboer - the Cluster's Critical Friend - and lead maths teachers from the other Nerang Cluster schools in Term 4 2010 and then again in Term 1 2011. These early meetings were to establish a critical link with Peter to develop school-based projects for the lead maths teachers to lead their staff to improve outcomes for Indigenous students. The group gathered again in Term 3 to present an overview of their projects to the others. At this meeting it was clear that the projects were still being developed and it was too early to determine whether the projects were having any direct impact on student results.

In Term 4 Peter visited St Peter Claver College for a whole day working with the lead teachers initially, and then with the 12 maths teachers on staff. This proved to be a very worthwhile day. Given that it was in the middle of student reporting and the busyness of winding up for the end of the year, Peter skillfully worked with the teachers to model new ways of engaging students through rich learning tasks and productive pedagogies. It was also noteworthy that the lead teachers took the initiative to organise the day and take ownership for coordinating how Peter would work with the teachers.

As a result of the 'Leading From the Middle' project the College's lead maths teachers, which includes the junior and senior maths coordinator and a First Steps trained maths teacher, have been far more active and engaged in guiding and instructing teachers in their responsibility to meet the learning needs of all students in their class, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Their association with Peter has also given them the confidence to be effective leaders in pedagogy and practice. A simple yet powerful shift in the style of teaching now includes a questioning technique modeled by Peter and adopted by the lead teachers as a way to effectively engage students.

**"A simple yet powerful shift in the style of teaching now includes a questioning technique... as a way to properly and effectively engage students."**

### **Some questions to prompt discussion:**

- 1. What were the advantages for the Cluster in engaging with an external resource ie the Cluster Critical Friend?**
- 2. What other interesting or important aspects are in this Significant Episode?**

