
EDITORIAL

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This special student edition of the *ACE Papers* continues the now established tradition of focusing on the writing of current students at the Auckland College of Education. This particular edition is set within mathematics education. It addresses aspects of children's mathematical learning from a socio-cultural perspective across a variety of issues within both early childhood and primary settings.

The writers were all enrolled in 2000 in programmes offered at Auckland College of Education. Four are studying in the Bachelor of Education (Teaching) programme, upgrading from their Diploma of Teaching, and three are studying at postgraduate level in the Master of Education programme. The papers arose as a result of assignments in either the Q7 module '*Social and cultural issues in mathematics education*' or the Q8 module '*Refining your practice: Challenges in mathematics teaching*'.

The writers are all practising teachers who are passionate about the success and achievement of their children in terms of mathematics education and there are strong messages for teacher education from these teachers in the field. Although a specific paper focuses on either an early childhood or primary context, during the delivery of both modules it was apparent that within the module framework of curriculum, assessment and planning there are commonalities across both sectors. Issues that were addressed against this framework were of a socio-economic, cultural or political nature.

The papers are arranged with the four Q7 papers from Fiona McKenzie, Glenys Holt, Kathleen Maxwell and Kerrie Gregory, followed by the three Q8 papers of Norah Parsonage, Elizabeth Ray and Kavita Baluja. The first papers arise from a critique of the literature relevant to a specific issue self-selected by the writer, while the masters' papers

report on a piece of action research undertaken in the writer's place of practice. Full details of the action research papers are available from the writers.

Fiona McKenzie strongly believes that a focus on developing children's language skills helps them become more successful in mathematics. The current mathematics curriculum places a strong emphasis on children's ability to demonstrate their mathematical ideas and understandings through communication. Fiona explores how richer language skills can impact on children's mathematical learning.

Glenys Holt, who has a keen interest in mathematics education, focuses particularly on the mathematics education of Maori children within mainstream classrooms. She explores a variety of appropriate teaching and learning practices designed to improve the mathematical experiences for Maori in mainstream learning situations.

Kathleen Maxwell is convinced that a positive disposition towards mathematics is a necessary component of success in mathematics. Defining a positive disposition as 'enjoyment', she investigates the relationship between enjoyment and self-esteem in mathematics. Kathleen focuses on the intermediate school classroom, exploring the concept of enjoyment as it relates to the learner and the teacher.

Kerrie Gregory believes that assessment of children's mathematical ideas and understandings should always be grounded in contexts that are meaningful to the children. From her own experiences, particularly in low-decile schools, she recognises the need for a stronger link between the reality of children's lives and the contexts of their school mathematics. She explores how authentic assessment can contribute to strengthening this link.

Norah Parsonage believes firmly in the early childhood philosophy that young children's play provides opportunities for them to develop knowledge and skills. She explores how mathematics concepts emerge through the normal programme of a kindergarten and uses the mathematics curriculum as a framework for identifying these concepts. She makes a

strong case for professional development of early childhood teachers in the area of mathematics education.

Elizabeth Ray combines her background of early childhood education and special education to focus on the mathematical experiences of deaf/hearing-impaired children. She explores how it is for deaf/hearing-impaired children within mainstream settings through investigating how a mainstream learning environment may/may not support their mathematical learning.

Finally, Kavita Baluja's recent immigration to New Zealand, together with her strong interest in mathematics education, has led her to focus on mathematics education for immigrant children. She explores the teacher's role in providing appropriate mathematical experiences in order to successfully implement the mathematics curriculum for immigrant children within mainstream classrooms.