

Examining the relationship between the documented curriculum, classroom tasks, and the learning of mathematics

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT FOR PARENTS

A research partnership between the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education Office (Melbourne), Monash University, and Australian Catholic University

This research project will investigate the learning prompted by different types of mathematical tasks. The project will be managed by Monash University. The Chief Investigator is

Peter Sullivan
Professor of Science, Mathematics and Technology Education
Monash University, Clayton 3800, Victoria, Australia
Tel: (03) 9905 5924
Email: peter.sullivan@education.monash.edu.au

Professor Doug Clarke, from Australian Catholic University, and Associate Professor Barbara Clarke from Monash University are also Chief Investigators. The Executive Office for the project will be Ms Alison Jansz-Senn. Mr Richard O'Donovan and Ms Sarah Ferguson are PhD candidates working within the project.

The project is investigating the best ways to use different types of mathematics tasks. We are aware that some schools are facing challenges in engaging students in learning mathematics, and at the same time, there is a serious decline in the number of students entering university level mathematics courses.

We will work with teachers to examine a range of tasks that have potential to engage students in learning mathematics, to identify the best ways to use these tasks, to examine how the students respond to the different types of tasks, and to explore what challenges the teachers experience in using the tasks.

We are working with teachers in 3 clusters of schools. Two of the clusters were nominated by the Department of Education, after the clusters expressed interest in the project. One of the clusters was nominated by the Melbourne Catholic Education Office. Even so, only volunteer teachers from the schools within each cluster are participating.

The teachers will benefit by participating in an important research initiative, and they will have access to a range of resources gathered for the project. These resources can be used in their teaching to assist the students in their learning. The results of the research will be used to improve mathematics teaching generally and mathematics teacher education.

The project will involve all students completing up to two surveys. The questions are related to aspects of their experience when learning mathematics. Some students will be interviewed, and some classes of willing teachers will be observed. The students will only be doing activities that are part of their usual program and will therefore not be at any risk. In a very few cases, we will videotape classes, but we will write those parents involved a further letter before doing so.

The researchers will communicate the results of the project to the teachers progressively, and will provide the schools with written reports.

We hope to present the results at professional conferences, in professional journals, and in other reports.

The confidentiality of the children will be maintained at all times. No publication will identify the school, the teachers or any students. We understand the rights of teachers, students and their parents to privacy and will respect that at all times.

Data will be stored at Monash University, Clayton in locked cabinets for five years.

Participation by the students is voluntary. You and/or they may withdraw consent at any time without adverse consequences.

There are no financial incentives offered to students or teachers to participate, and the researchers have no financial interest in the research.

All contacts with students will be made through the principal. If you have any questions regarding this project please feel free to contact me on 99055924. If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:

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