

Mathematics Council NEWSLETTER

The Alberta Teachers' Association

Providing leadership to encourage the continuing enhancement of teaching, learning and understanding mathematics.

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From the Editor



For a long time now, I have been concerned about an expression which I frequently hear teachers use. When asked what they teach, they will often say they teach mathematics, English, science and so on.

When I hear this response, I reply, "I hope not!" and they look at me with amazement. I then tell them that I hope they are not *teaching mathematics*, because mathematics is not likely going to be any wiser at the end of the lesson than at the beginning. They must realize that they are teaching *students mathematics*. They are in the classroom to teach students and not subjects.

Unfortunately, I have, on occasion, met instructors who in fact believed that they were teaching mathematics, and to heck with the students. They may as well have been speaking in an empty room.

Some will say that this concern is only a matter of semantics, but I firmly believe that it is more than that. Students must come before the subject.

I would encourage all members of MCATA to be conscious of this issue, and when asked what they teach, to say *students*. They could become role models for all teachers. I would like to make it editorial policy that in all our publications, we never use the expression "teach mathematics," but use the expression "teach students (children) mathematics." This might help to make mathematics more understandable and enjoyable for students. I would like to have your comments on this topic. Please write to me at 4411 5 Avenue, Edson, Alberta T7E 1B7.

—Art Jorgensen

The Right Angle

Note: This document has been changed from its original format. To receive the originally formatted document and other information on Achievement Tests and Diploma Exams, go to the Alberta Education Web site at <http://ednet.edc.gov.ab.ca>.

New Information on the Grade 6 Mathematics Achievement Test 1999

The Operations and Number Sense part of the Grade 6 Mathematics Achievement Test (Part A) is new for the 1998–99 school year. There are 30 multiple-choice questions on the test: 7 are addition/subtraction questions, 7 are multiplication/division questions, 8 are connecting experiences questions and 8 are number relationship questions. The questions are integrated within the test. The test was developed to be completed in 30 minutes; however, students may take an additional 10 minutes to complete the test. Students are *not* allowed to use manipulatives or calculators when answering the questions. The test will be written on Thursday, May 27, 1999, at 9:00 a.m.

Questions or comments regarding this document should be directed to Daryl M. J. Chichak, Grade 6 Mathematics Assessment Specialist, e-mail dchichak@edc.gov.ab.ca or phone (780) 427-0010 or call toll free in Alberta 310-0000.



Conference Corner

NCTM's 77th Annual Meeting
San Francisco; April 22–24, 1999
**"Mathematics: Celebrating Our Progress,
Continuing the Journey"**

The NCTM annual conference will be held in downtown San Francisco at the Moscone Center, just blocks away from Chinatown. Registration forms, information on hotel accommodation and so on can be found on the NCTM Web site at <http://www.nctm.org>. The theme for the conference is "Mathematics: Celebrating Our Progress, Continuing the Journey." The program features over 250 exhibits and more than 1,200 sessions running Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Special tours are available from Wednesday to Saturday. The conference will highlight technology, the new Standards 2000, and "Research and the Classroom" and will feature many international speakers. Register before March 19 and receive \$10 off the registration fee and receive your conference program book and materials as early as February. At this time you will be able to order tickets for the ticketed sessions.

—Graham Keogh

MCATA Annual Conference
Jasper Park Lodge; October 21–23, 1999
"Mathematics in Harmony with the New Millennium"

Join mathematics teachers from Alberta and the rest of the West for the annual MCATA Conference in Jasper, October 21–23, 1999. Bring the family. Conference accommodations at Jasper Park Lodge are reasonably priced. Enjoy the location and sessions on applied and pure math, technology, math and literature, manipulatives and problem solving. The Annual Mathematics Symposium will be held October 21, 1999, at the Lodge. If you are interested in presenting, please contact Sandra Unrau. For further information, why not e-mail a member of the conference committee: Klaus Puhlmann (klaupuhl@gyrd.ab.ca), Betty Morris (morrisb@ecs.edmonton.ab.ca), Cynthia Ballheim (BallheimCJ@aol.com), Sandra Unrau (sumrau@cbe.ca), Elaine Manzer (manzere@prsd.ab.ca).

—Elaine Manzer

**Spring Workshop: Calgary Area Elementary
Math Teachers**
Calgary; April 24, 1999
**"Making Connections" (affiliated with the
Calgary Science network)**

The Calgary Board of Education and Calgary Catholic Board of Education are organizing a math/science symposium. Sessions will be on math or science or integrated math science. Some sessions have a focus on technology. For more information, please contact Sandra Unrau, phone (780) 777-6390, e-mail sunrau@cbe.ab.ca.

Interested in Special Math Education?

If so, you might enjoy the new Online Certificate Program provided by the University of Washington. Curriculum Integration in Action is brought to middle-school educators through a partnership of the Mathematics, Engineering, and Science Achievement program (MESA) and UW Educational Outreach. Curriculum Integration in Action uses MESA modules, *Real-World Mathematics through Science*, to help educators bring a successful mathematics and science integration model to their students. The program's content and methods are aligned with Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and U.S. national standards.

The program features a series of four courses that lead to a UW certificate in Curriculum Integration with a focus on mathematics and science. It takes advantage of advances in technology to accommodate educators' busy lives and to reach under-served geographical areas. This series will be offered online and will benefit the following groups:

- classroom teachers of Grades 6–9,
- parents or guardians who provide home-school education and
- educators in organizations that provide activities for middle-school aged students.

For more information and an application form please visit <http://www.edoutreach.washington.edu/extinfo/certprog/cia/cia.htm>.

—Cynthia Ballheim

New "Friends of MCATA"

Valeen Chow: In her 29 years with the Calgary Board of Education, Valeen worked as a teacher, an elementary mathematics consultant and a vice principal. For many years after her math consultant role, she continued to provide leadership in mathematics through conferences and inservices. —*Sandra Unrau*

Lois Marchand: Lois is well known for her contributions to mathematics education. She was a teacher, principal and spent many years as a K-12 mathematics specialist for the Calgary Board of Education. Before retiring Lois worked for central office in teacher staffing. Lois continues to provide leadership in the field of mathematics through teacher inservices. —*Sandra Unrau*

Marion Oberg: Marion Oberg is a high school mathematics teacher at Parkland Composite High School in Edson where she currently teaches Mathematics 30 and Pure Mathematics 10. She joined Grande Yellowhead Regional Division No. 35 in 1982 and, as the Mathematics Department Head, she has been actively involved in staff development, conducting inservices/workshops for teachers and working on many curriculum committees. She is currently the Curriculum Coordinator for Secondary Mathematics for Grande Yellowhead.

At the provincial level, Marion participated in several Mathematics 30/33 marking sessions and item writing sessions and acted as head marker of Mathematics 30 exams in February 1994. In addition, she is a member of the Mathematics 30 Examination Technical Review and Validation Committee and from 1994 to 1996 she participated in the Western Canadian Protocol Mathematics Project.

Marion is an MCATA member who regularly attends the annual MCATA conferences, as well as the semi-annual Mathematics Leadership Symposia. She has been a member of the NCTM since 1992 and has attended four annual meetings of that organization.

Marion is truly worthy to be recognized as and be called a Friend of MCATA.

—*Klaus Publmann*

All members who played key roles in organizing the 1997 Annual Conference also received Friends of MCATA Awards, including conference chair Marge Marika. Others receiving the award for their hard work were Sandra Carl Townsend and Rick Johnson, program chairs; Daryl and Patricia Chichak, registration; and Diane Stobbe and Ed Rossal. Again a special thanks to those folks for the wonderful job they did in hosting the conference.

Others who received the Friends of MCATA Award at our 1998 conference will be highlighted in the next newsletter.

NCTM Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (PSSM)

The draft of the updated standards is now available and should be of interest to all educators who teach students mathematics. NCTM members can get a copy of the discussion draft free through the electronic request form on NCTM's Standards 2000 Web page (<http://www.nctm.org/standards2000/>), by e-mail at standards2000-draft@nctm.org (message must include your name, membership number, and telephone number) or by phone—toll free at (888) 220-7952.

Nonmembers of NCTM can receive a copy for a small fee to cover shipping and handling. Allow two weeks for processing and delivery. I encourage all MCATA members to get a copy.

—*Art Jorgensen*

MCATA is again looking for people who have made a significant contribution to mathematics education in Alberta. If you know of anyone who meets this condition—and I am sure you do!—please submit his or her names to Sandra Unrau, 11 Hartford Place NW, Calgary T2K 2A9, e-mail sunrau@cbe.ab.ca. These people will be recognized at the Jasper conference. Please have nominations in by May 15, 1999.

—*Art Jorgensen*

Membership Director's Report

I would like to remind you that if your membership is coming up for renewal, you should renew it as soon as possible. I would still like to hear about activities that our members are performing to promote math education in the classroom, school or community. Let me know of any fellow teachers on your staff who have innovative ideas that they would be willing to share with other members. I would also like to know how your school will be celebrating Math Education Week. Drop me a line to keep me abreast of what is happening with math education in your school. Write to me at 1826 51 Street NW, Edmonton AB T6L 1K1 or fax me at (780) 469-0414.

As of Friday, January 22, 1999, our membership totals 539. Our thanks to all of you who have been promoting membership in MCATA. Keep up the good work!

The winners to date for renewing membership are as follows:

April, May, June 1998 Winners

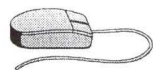
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|------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1st Prize | One MCATA Conference Registration for the Jasper Conference, October 21–23, 1999 | Keith Szautner, Westlock, AB |
| 2nd Prize | One-year membership to MCATA | Mike Krywiak, Glendon, AB |
| 3rd Prize | \$25 NCTM Gift Certificate to be redeemed through MCATA | Peter Schill, Airdrie, AB |

July, August, September 1998 Winners

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|------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| 1st Prize | One MCATA Conference Registration for the Jasper Conference, October 21–23, 1999 | Natalka Iluculak Vegreville, AB |
| 2nd Prize | One-year membership to MCATA | Brian Key, Barrhead, AB |
| 3rd Prize | \$25 NCTM Gift Certificate to be redeemed through MCATA | Michelle Fedorchuk, Edmonton, AB |

Winners from the October, November, December 1998 period will be chosen once I have the summary for December memberships from the ATA.

—Daryl M. J. Chichak



Visit the MCATA Web Site at
<http://www.mathteachers.ab.ca>

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