

Conference Report

## Mathematics Education and Society

Nottingham (GB), Sept. 6 – 11, 1998

Peter Gates, Nottingham (Great Britain)

The first “Mathematics Education and Society” Conference (MEAS1) was hosted by the Centre for the Study of Mathematics Education, Nottingham University, UK between 6th and 11th September 1998. The conference brought together some 80 participants from across the world to meet, discuss, and share work in the social and political dimensions of mathematics education. Contributions came from the UK, USA, South Africa, Portugal, Australia, Denmark, Lebanon, Brazil, Spain, Israel, New Zealand, China and Greece.

The conference brought together a wealth of contributions from teachers and academics interested in shifting the gaze of attention in mathematics education away from an over-dependence on a psychological paradigm, and toward more social frameworks and perspectives.

The conference was organised into four general themes: *Social justice, politics, sociology and culture.*

The conference was opened with a Keynote lecture from Ubiratan d’Ambrosio: *Literacy, matheracy and technocracy. The new trivium for the era of technology*, and other plenary lectures were given by Stephen Lerman and Anna Tsatsaroni (*Why children fail and what mathematics education studies can do about it. The contribution/role of sociology*), Alan Bishop (*Cultural conflicts and social change: Conceptualising the possibilities and the limitations of mathematics education*), Leone Burton (*Thinking about mathematical thinking – heterogeneity and its social justice implications*), Jill Adler (*Distribution of resources = Equity?*), Marilyn Frankenstein (*The Critical Mathematics Educators Group (CMEG): Attempting to connect anti-capitalist work with mathematics education*), Sal Restivo (*Mathematics, mind and society: An anarchist theory of inquiry and education*) and Ole Skovsmose (*Aporism, and the problem of democracy in mathematics education*).

In an attempt to put the participants firmly at the centre of activity, the conference was organised around discussion groups, which met after each plenary lecture to dis-

cuss key issues and themes. In addition all 40 presented papers were placed on the conference website before the conference, giving all participants the opportunity to read papers in advance of the conference. Paper presentation sessions were then able to be more like group discussion sessions, where all participants could be more centrally involved. All papers may be read on the web-site:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/csme/meas/measproc.html>.

Copies of the proceedings are available from:

Centre for the Study of Mathematics Education  
School of Education, Nottingham University  
Nottingham NG7 2RD, Great Britain.

The conference and the contributions to it were seen as a part of the demand for a more equitable society. One in which all are valued and cherished, and where mathematics education can be used as a force for empowerment and critical engagement with the political and democratic processes of our social world.

Current plans are to hold a further conference in Portugal in the year 2000. Further information will be posted on the website:

<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/csme/meas/conf.html>.

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