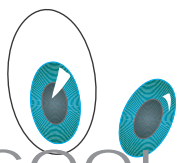




Newsletter

No. 4
October 2007

Everyone seems to have an opinion on **what makes for good mathematical education**. The prevailing opinion seems to be 'I went to school so I know what good teaching is'. I have read several reports that have been published lately (or are due to be soon) that make comment on the teaching of Mathematics and, interestingly, all refer to the influence of the media on public perception. Even the **Senate Report on the quality of school education** referred to this. It states of the media coverage, that 'What is being alleged is not constructive. What is often remarkable is the generalised nature of much school criticism. Individual schools are rarely criticised.' In fact the committee refers to a submission by Professor Alan Reid who posed (and answered) the question '**Why are people satisfied with what they experience at their local school with their children but are somewhat dissatisfied, it seems, with the education system at large...**[even though]...that is not generally based on any immediate experience? You could postulate a



COOL SITE

www.incompetech.com/beta/plainGraphPaper/
(Free graph paper.)

whole set of things, but I would suggest that one of the strong reasons would be the sort of campaign that is being waged in the media, which would tend to influence people, and yet their experience at the local level, quite clearly, is highly satisfactory.'

(To see what typically happens regarding local media comments please see our website where the question asked by the West Australian newspaper and our response regarding time spent in class is posted and compare it to the published article. From our perspective this is a complicated issue and our thinking was that we had an opportunity to raise a number of important concerns, such as national testing and the resultant performance pressure, the fact that numeracy always falls to the maths teacher (unlike literacy which is everyone's responsibility), the evolving curriculum which only sees an increase in what's covered, and so on. Unfortunately the newspaper doesn't seem to be worried about supporting meaningful and constructive debate about education.)

All the recommendations in the Senate Report can be seen in the full document, but the key recommendation made by the committee which impacts MAWA directly is **Recommendation 3: The Committee recommends that schools and school systems take particular measures to improve teacher professional development in mathematics.**

Interestingly there was little mention in the Report of what constitutes good teacher professional development in mathematics or what those 'particular measures' should be, so the job falls to us of finding a way to put policy into practice. **What would you like to see MAWA do differently regarding PD?** Our assumption so far has been that we are meeting your needs, because we get very little response when we ask questions of our members about our PD provision. If you have any suggestions about ways we can meet your professional learning needs better please let us know by contacting the MAWA office or a committee member (or secondary members could provide feedback and ideas

Coming Events 2007

TERM 4

- Week 3 - Have Sum Fun ONLINE**
Tue 30 October - Year 8
Wed 31 October - Year 9
Thu 1 November - Year 10
- Week 4 - Have Sum Fun ONLINE**
Tue 6 November - Year 8
Wed 7 November - Year 9
Thu 8 November - Year 10
- Week 5 - Have Sum Fun ONLINE**
Tue 13 November - Year 8
Wed 14 November - Year 9
Thu 15 November - Year 10
- Week 7 - Sun 25 - Tue 27 November**
Secondary Convention
(registration form enclosed)
- Week 7 - Wed 28 November**
Head of Learning Area Forum
(registration form enclosed)

at our highly regarded Secondary Convention!).

To conclude I would just like to reinforce Professor Alan Reid's message. **By far the majority of people are very happy** with the mathematical education their children are receiving at their local schools. This means that they believe their local teachers (you) are teaching their children well. Keep up the good work!

Michelle Östberg
President



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*(Member of the Australian Association of Mathematics
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Newsletter

No. 4 October 2007
(continued)

A first-timer's perspective...

Attending my first Conference I had envisioned being surrounded by old HOD's, learning about things that I'd either heard before or that were not relevant to me. It was such a pleasant surprise to come away with new friends and a lot of information and ideas that I would use in the classroom. Sharing a room with Erle (pictured) was also a great experience. Both Erle and Greg from Ocean Reef SHS were great company at the conference. I met up again with them a few weeks after the Conference when they shared a great deal of resources and advice.

It was great to see so many texts and technologies that are now available to teachers. I certainly would not have come into contact with many of these otherwise. The MAWA conference for me was a huge success and I look forward to many more years of attending this great event.

Darryl Bayliss (St Brigid's College)

State Conference



L to R: Dr Paul Brown (MAWA Conference Convenor), Darryl Bayliss (St Brigid's College), Erle Franklin (Ocean Reef SHS).

46 schools across Western Australia took part in the 2007 State Mathematics Talent Quest and approximately

200 projects were submitted from Years 1-11 for the dedicated bands to judge! (Many thanks to all the judges who gave so generously of their time.)

The winners were presented with their prizes at the MAWA Awards Night on Friday 3 August at Edith Cowan University. At

the end of the evening Dr Jack Bana (MAWA Student Activities Convenor) announced which projects had been selected for national judging in Sydney. (The results of the national judging to be received in early November.)

MAWA is very grateful to Mrs Sheila Byfield (Secondary Co-ordinator) and Dr Fiona Budgen (Primary Co-ordinator) whose enthusiasm and expertise have helped to make this competition so successful. Thank you to all the teachers who supported and encouraged their students and lastly but not least to all the students who participated.

For more information about getting your students involved next year, please contact the MAWA office 9345 0388 or email office@mawainc.org.au. Visit www.mawainc.org.au for a list of the State prize winners.

Congratulations to all the student winners.

MAWA office news...

In case you missed the State Conference, we are saddened to let you know that Liana Fitzpatrick, after 12+ years, reluctantly tendered her resignation from MAWA. Over the past year a persistent eye problem has made computer work uncomfortable. When Liana joined as the other 50% part-time employee in 1994, 'the office' consisted of one cramped room at ECU Claremont. It's difficult to imagine MAWA administratively being what it is today without her substantial contribution. Fortunately for MAWA, her wealth of experience and many talents are not entirely lost and when the need arises we hope to call on her help. We wish her all the best for the future.

PS Liana has been overwhelmed by the kind words and good wishes from the many teachers she has known over the years. She will treasure the gifts and in particular the book that was circulated at the Conference for teachers to write in as a lovely reminder of her time at MAWA.



Maths Talent Quest



L to R: Jack Dewsbury, Michelle Ostberg (MAWA President), Danny Caddy and Calum Braham. Yr 8 Mathematically Interesting Number Plates



L to R: - Nicholas Nielsen, James Hansen (Dean Cook absent), Michelle Ostberg (MAWA President), Dr Geoff Shaw (Principal, All Saints' College) Yr 10 The Game of Life



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