

MALGORZATA DUBIEL, CLAUDE GAULIN AND CAROLINE LAJOIE, Simon Fraser University, Université Laval, UQAM
Education of Elementary School Teachers: Goals and Challenges / Formation des enseignants du primaire : buts et défis

Teachers face enormous challenges in their work:

- balancing the needs of "average" students with those of students who have learning difficulties, and those of gifted students;
- motivating uninterested and undisciplined students;
- enriching the classroom experience of students who enjoy mathematics.

Teachers need to keep abreast of new approaches to learning, curriculum reforms, and changes in technology. They also need to be able to explain reforms and new methodologies to parents, and to do all this while teaching all the other subjects.

The elementary school years are crucial in shaping students' perceptions of, and attitudes towards, mathematics. Their effect can last a lifetime. So the importance of the quality of mathematics teaching in these early years cannot be underestimated.

How can we attract good mathematics undergraduates to careers in primary education?

How can we prepare future elementary school teachers to deal with the challenges they will face in teaching mathematics?

How can we support them during their careers?

How can we create strong links between elementary teachers and other math educators?

Our group will look into these and other questions. We will compare elementary teacher education programs across Canada, both pre-service and inservice. We will look into what models are in place, what works and what can be improved.