
2011 Adrien Pouliot Award
Prix Adrien-Pouliot 2011

MALGORZATA DUBIEL, Simon Fraser University

Mathematics for Elementary Teachers – The Most Important Course You Can Teach?

Years of teaching and reflecting on SFU's MATH 190 – Mathematics For Elementary Teachers – have had a profound influence on the way I teach, and have inspired many outreach activities which others in our department have also embraced. Math in The Mall, a program developed in the 1990's, originated out of our attempts to make our Math for Teachers course more interesting and more meaningful for students.

The majority of students aiming to teach elementary school have poor mathematical preparation, in some cases even a severe dislike of the subject. They also lack confidence in their mathematical abilities. And these are people who will be teaching mathematics to your children, grandchildren and your future students. University mathematics instructors have been complaining for years about the preparation of first year university students. There is ample research showing that people's attitudes to mathematics are mostly formed by the time they finish grade 5. So shouldn't we be investing more into educating those who have a crucial role in introducing the next generation to mathematics?

I will talk about the evolution of the Math for Teachers course at SFU, its influence on similar courses at other BC institutions, and its influence on our enrichment programs.