

# BCCUPMS MFEE Subcommittee Meeting

**July 26, 2007**  
**SFU Vancouver**  
**10:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

proto-minutes

**Present:** Veda Abu-Bakare (Lang), Melania Alvarez Adem, (PIMS), Brent Davis (UBC), Malgorzata Dubiel (SFU), Justin Gray (SFU), Bernice Kastner (SFU), Wendy Lynn (Cap), Wayne Matthews (Cam), Susan Milner (UCFV), Susan Oesterle (Doug), Margaret Wyeth (UVic).

1. Arising from previous meeting:

(a) The minutes were approved with three minor corrections.

(b) Malgorzata e-mailed Ian Affleck about the MFEE page of the BCcupms website.

(c) Susan O. submitted the proposal for the workshop at the BCAMT conference in October. Janice Novakowski, the BCAMT Fall Conference Program Chair, replied that she expects the proposal to be approved at their next committee meeting, and suggested including a survey with registrants' packages.

(d) Malgorzata contacted PIMS about the possibility of some support for travel-related costs for our committee members but has not had a response yet.

2. Readings circulated:

(a) Brent sent to the committee via e-mail Hyman Bass' article "Computational Fluency, Algorithms, and Mathematical Proficiency" (published in *Teaching Children Mathematics*, February 2003).

(b) Melania brought copies of "The Development of Students' Algebraic Thinking in Earlier Grades: a Cross-Cultural Comparative Perspective", published on-line by ZDM (2005)

(c) Melania also passed around a copy of Elementary Mathematics for Teachers by Parker & Baldrige. This text is used for "Singapore Math".

3. Questionnaire for elementary school teachers:

(a) We agreed that while an extensive scientific study is beyond the scope of the committee, it would be valuable to collect responses from as many elementary school teachers as we can reach.

(b) We decided to have two questionnaires: a very short form which we hope could be widely disseminated via the BCAMT conference website and available in registrants' packages, and a longer version for face-to-face interviews and workshops.

(c) Melania suggested that she might be able to gather responses to the longer version during some of her visits to elementary schools around the province.

(d) Suggested questions:

This questionnaire is about the math *content* (not math methods) course taken by many elementary school teachers. When did you take your math content course and where?

Which grades have you taught in the past five years?

Do you feel confident about your ability to do mathematics?

Do you feel confident about your ability to teach mathematics?

Did the math content course you took change your attitude towards mathematics? If so, how?

Which topics would you have liked to see covered in greater depth?

What are the (three) main things you learned in your math contest course that have turned out to be helpful in your work?

**Action:** Susan & Susan to craft the questionnaires and e-mail them to the group for further input.

(e) **Action:** Justin will look into the details of the Free Assessment Survey Tool (FAST) in order to create the on-line questionnaire.

4. We had a discussion on what knowledge/competencies should/can we assume the students entering this course have, and whether this is important to the course design. We agreed that one semester does not give enough time to teach the "basics" to students with very weak backgrounds; we would have to assume that the course will give them deeper understanding of the concepts which, in turn, will motivate those who need it to acquire the necessary competencies.

5. Course objectives:

The group exchanged their homework from the last meeting – lists of important objectives for the MFEE course.

**Action:** Malgorzata and Bernice will compile these lists into a “meta-list”, attempting to coordinate the very different approaches of individual committee members. They will circulate this before the next meeting.

## 6. Homework:

Everyone is to bring a **one-page description** of one of their favourite classroom activities. This should include the mathematical importance of the activity along with suggestions for useful follow-up discussions/questions/homework.

The plan is eventually to post these activities on the MFEE webpage, with the hope of generating discussion within the larger group, and to include the activities in an appendix to

the committee's final report, where they will provide examples of fruitful approaches to teaching MFEE.

6. Next meeting: **Tuesday, August 21** at 10:30, at SFU Vancouver.

*Minutes produced by Susan, Susan & Malgorzata*