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Rubric supported journal writing in mathematics.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Educational Studies (Mathematics)
At Massey University
Palmerston North,
New Zealand.

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2001
Abstract

Using an Action Research model, this project followed the implementation of a journal writing programme in mathematics, in a grade three (year 4) class. The effect of journal writing, as a formative assessment tool upon a single teacher's approach to the teaching and assessment of mathematics in her textbook-based, whole class mathematics programme, is the focus of the study.

The teacher who participated in this project looked towards the journal writing programme to assist her in making changes to her teaching and assessment practises in mathematics, in an effort to bring them in line with her performance based approach to other areas of the curriculum. Using Greenwood's (1993) criteria for mathematical thinking, rubrics were designed to make mathematical thinking a focus of her teaching and assessment in mathematics.

Several changes in the teacher's approach to the teaching and assessment of mathematics were observed within the study period and continued sustained changes were realised in the longer term. In addition, aspects of her teaching and assessment practices that were not observed to change are discussed. The suggestion is made that the potential of journal writing to be used to extend and challenge the mathematical thinking of students may be partly dependent upon the depth and breadth of the mathematical knowledge of the teacher.
Acknowledgements

This has been a collaborative research project between myself as researcher, and Mrs. J the teacher. I am extremely grateful to Mrs. J for allowing me to work with her in this. I appreciate her professionalism and support.

Likewise, I wish to extend heartfelt thanks to my supervisor, Glenda Anthony, from Massey University, New Zealand, who has been a solid tower of support and inspiration from across the globe.

And finally, I wish to thank my husband, for his good humour and patience, for helping with all the fine-tuning and for always knowing I could do it.
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