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# **Graphical calculators in the classroom.**

**“The Effects that Graphical Calculators have in  
the Enhancement of Mathematical  
Learning in the Classroom.”**

**A THESIS PRESENTED IN PARTIAL  
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
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# Abstract

The graphical calculator is a phenomenon that is beginning to become a favourable mathematical learning and teaching tool in New Zealand secondary schools. Discussions about the use, role and the impact that this technology in secondary schools have, and will continue to be a topical issue for some time to come.

Technology use in today's mathematics classrooms is of particular interest due to current curriculum reforms. The graphical calculator is a fairly recent technological tool that can be added to the array of mathematical tools already at the disposal of both the teacher and the student.

This study examines the use of the graphical calculator in classrooms to gauge whether it has the potential to assist in the learning of mathematical concepts and to see if students become more active learners when using graphical calculators.

The graphical calculator can be used in the classroom, in as much the same way as an overhead projector or even a piece of chalk. It is a tool for illustrating a concept, opening up avenues for investigation and can enhance the learning that is going on. Secondary school mathematics today is much more than the acquisition of arithmetic and algebraic skills it encourages understanding. The graphical calculator can be considered a powerful, pocket computer and successful users require a higher level of understanding than that which is required for rote or skills based learning.

The introduction of the graphical calculator into classrooms confronts existing mathematics' content and methodologies in the imparting of mathematical knowledge from the teacher to the students. With this in mind, teachers in New Zealand need to react and prepare for this impending change.

This study looks at the impact the graphical calculator had on eight secondary schools, the mathematics teachers inside these schools, and the way in which the graphical calculator was used in their classrooms. The study also examined the implementation of the calculators and the effects that they had on teaching and the mathematical programme delivered to students in the classroom.

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# Contents.

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>(i)</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>(iii)</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>(iv)</b>
<b>List of Figures.....</b>	<b>(ix)</b>
<b>List of Tables.....</b>	<b>(x)</b>
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>Introduction.....1</b>
	<b>Technology in schools.....1</b>
	<b>Hand held technology.....3</b>
	<b>The graphical calculator and its role.....6</b>
	<b>Implications of graphical calculator use.....9</b>
	<b>Summary.....10</b>
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>History of Teaching Aids.....12</b>
	<b>The calculator evolution.....12</b>
	<b>The first steps in numeration.....12</b>
	<b>Early calculations.....13</b>
	<b>The Abacus.....14</b>
	<b>Bones and Tables.....16</b>
	<b>The Slide Rule.....19</b>

	Calculating Machines.....	21
	Modern types of calculators.....	24
	Summary.....	26
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Comparison between Australian and New Zealand Schools.....</b>	<b>28</b>
	The New Zealand scene.....	28
	The Australian connection.....	34
	Ownership Issues.....	40
	Summary.....	43
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Related Readings.....</b>	<b>45</b>
	Learning Mathematics.....	45
	How we learn mathematics.....	45
	From a behaviouralist perspective to . . . .	47
	Learning Strategies.....	49
	Learning Strategies and Technology.....	51
	What teaching aids are presently in place..	54
	Implementing a strategy.....	56
	Metacognition.....	56
	Cognitive and metacognitive strategies.....	61
	Affective and management strategies.....	62
	Implications for the classroom.....	63
	Using Technology.....	65
	What are we gaining or losing.....	70
	The analysis of teaching styles.....	81

	<b>Description: class use of the graphical calculator.....</b>	<b>82</b>
	<b>Factors Affecting Implementation.....</b>	<b>86</b>
	<b>Pedagogical implications.....</b>	<b>90</b>
	<b>Influencing factors - A teachers perspective.....</b>	<b>93</b>
	<b>Influencing factors - A students perspective.....</b>	<b>95</b>
	<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Research Method.....</b>	<b>99</b>
	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>99</b>
	<b>The research setting.....</b>	<b>101</b>
	<b>In the beginning . . . . .</b>	<b>102</b>
	<b>Piloting the study.....</b>	<b>103</b>
	<b>Data collection.....</b>	<b>105</b>
	<b>The project design.....</b>	<b>106</b>
	<b>Ethical considerations.....</b>	<b>108</b>
	<b>The data base.....</b>	<b>108</b>
	<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>Chapter 6</b>	<b>Research Results.....</b>	<b>111</b>
	<b>Some comments from the pre-graphical calculator questionnaire.....</b>	<b>112</b>
	<b>Evaluation of the ‘slice in time’ recordings.....</b>	<b>114</b>



	<b>Evaluation of teacher post-graphical calculator questionnaire.....</b>	<b>116</b>
	<b>The ‘slice in time’ recorded what the teachers used the graphical calculator for.....</b>	<b>121</b>
	<b>The teacher interviews.....</b>	<b>123</b>
	<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>145</b>
<b>Chapter 7</b>	<b>Discussion and Conclusions.....</b>	<b>147</b>
	<b>Significant factors in implementation.....</b>	<b>148</b>
	<b>Assessment issues.....</b>	<b>153</b>
	<b>The teaching variable.....</b>	<b>157</b>
	<b>Relevance to schools.....</b>	<b>157</b>
	<b>Transfer of knowledge, skills and motivation.....</b>	<b>158</b>
	<b>Implications.....</b>	<b>158</b>
	<b>Noticeable changes in using graphical calculators.....</b>	<b>160</b>
	<b>Influencing the curriculum.....</b>	<b>161</b>
	<b>Conclusions and recommendations.....</b>	<b>163</b>
	<b>Assessment strategies.....</b>	<b>168</b>
	<b>Modelling of a mathematics learning cycle when using the graphical calculator.....</b>	<b>168</b>
	<b>Summary.....</b>	<b>169</b>

<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>172</b>
<b>A.1. Participating schools discription table...172</b>	
<b>A.2. Letter of introduction and concent.....173</b>	
<b>A.3. Pre use of G. C. Questionnaire.....174</b>	
<b>A.4. Post use of G. C. Questionnaire.....178</b>	
<b>A.5. Slice in time sheet.....180</b>	
<b>A.6. Teacher interview schedule         and questions.....182</b>	
<b>A.7. Supporting the numerical, graphical         and algebraic approach to problem         solving.....184</b>	
<b>References.....</b>	<b>187</b>

# List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1: Main Menu for Casio cfx 9850 Graphical Calculator.....	7
Figure 2: A page from Robert Recorde's book on arithmetic.....	15
Figure 3: The Chinese abacus the <i>swan pan</i> , the Japanese abacus the <i>soroban</i> .....	16
Figure 4: The Gelosia method of multiplication.....	17
Figure 5: A set of Napier's bones.....	17
Figure 6: A set of Genaille - Lucas rulers.....	18
Figure 7: A modern version of the Mannheim slide rule.....	20
Figure 8: A variety of basic and scientific calculators.....	20
Figure 9: The Leibniz calculator.....	21
Figure 10: The Jacquard 'punch card' weaving loom.....	22
Figure 11: The 80 column IBM card.....	23
Figure 12: Mathematics in the New Zealand Curriculum: a new structure in mathematics.....	29
Figure 13: Achievement levels in MinNZC.....	30
Figure 14: Bloom's taxonomy, the pyramids illustrate the notion of investing more time on 'higher level' activities.....	32
Figure 15: Finding the area between the two curves.....	38
Figure 16: Press article - "Now it's Cybercheat.".....	41
Figure 17: A model of cognitive monitoring.....	59
Figure 18: $ax^2 + bx + c = 0$ and $cx^2 + bx + a = 0$ , reversing the co - efficients.....	69
Figure 19: Pixel definition on the screen and graphing discrepancies.....	71
Figure 20: 'Normal' and 'tangent' lines drawn to a curve illustrating the need to set domain and range values.....	94

	Page
Figure 21: Student illustrations of the N.Z. and Japanese flags.....	104
Figure 22: Teacher response to learning to use the G. C.....	116
Figure 23: Workshop time taken to become familiar with the G.C.....	117
Figure 24: Teacher personal response to using the G. C.....	117
Figure 25: Student feelings about using the G. C.....	118
Figure 26: Teacher feelings on using the G. C.....	118
Figure 27: Graphical calculators in the classroom.....	119
Figure 28: Student feeling on using the G. C.....	119
Figure 29: Differences noted in student learning.....	120
Figure 30: Response to co-operative learning.....	120
Figure 31: 'Guess and check' method to the factor theorem.....	150
Figure 32: Modelling of a mathematics cycle when using the G. C.....	168

## List of Tables

	Page
Table 1: Changes with electronic learning introduction in the classroom.....	72
Table 2: Long division of polynomials using the G. C.....	153