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**Influences on practice in the mathematics classroom:
An investigation into the beliefs and practices of
beginning teachers**

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degree of Master of Educational Studies (Mathematics)**

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ABSTRACT

This study reports on an investigation into some of the issues impacting on the provision of equitable classroom programmes in mathematics by beginning teachers, and focuses in particular, on the ways in which the teachers were able to cater for both the girls and boys in their classes. Due to the constructivist environment within which their pre-service mathematics education courses had been presented, constructivist principles formed the belief-framework for the teachers. The initial aim was to explore the relationship between the beliefs and practices of beginning teachers but during the course of the study, it became apparent that teacher-belief is only one of the many factors influencing practice. Therefore, a case study approach was used, to explore what life is really like, for six teachers in their first year of primary teaching. The findings from the study confirmed the complexity of classroom research and identified, in particular, three crucial issues of influence on practice: the teachers' own beliefs about mathematics and mathematics teaching; the mathematics curriculum and its philosophy; and the process of socialisation into their school culture as it affected their professional survival as teachers. The results of the study have implications for all involved in the support of beginning teachers and in particular, for pre-service educators.

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