

New Book Helps Statistics Teachers Stay Ahead

To stay competitive in today's world, students need stronger skills in all quantitative areas for a modern information society, including a sound understanding of statistics. But for teachers trying to help students to appreciate and use the concepts and principles of statistics, the odds are often against them.

Authors of a new book, *Teaching Statistics in School Mathematics: Challenges for Teaching and Teacher Education*, advocate that the key to successful statistics education starts with teachers themselves. "There is little research related to teachers' statistical pedagogical content knowledge, and what is available suggests that this knowledge is weak," according to the researchers. "Many teachers do not consider themselves well prepared to teach statistics nor face their students' difficulties."

This innovative book is a useful guide for teachers, and those who educate teachers, seeking to overcome these challenges. It identifies new approaches to enhancing teachers' statistical literacy that bridge teacher education with teaching practice in the classroom. The growing appreciation for the importance of an understanding of statistics means that in many countries the subject is now taught throughout school levels, including across primary school. But in order to teach statistics effectively, teachers must understand the nature of statistics and its key role in all aspects of today's information society. "Statistics education of teachers could benefit from the support given by national statistical offices and statistical associations," the authors suggest, "which in many countries are increasingly involved in producing materials and organising initiatives to help increase statistical literacy of all citizens."

Teaching Statistics in School Mathematics is the product of a joint collaboration between the International Commission on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI) and the International Association for Statistical Education (IASE). It is the 18th in a series of studies commissioned by the International Commission on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI). The 18th study is also a product of the 2008 IASE Roundtable Conference. Each ICMI study is meant to foster understanding and resolutions of the challenges that face multidisciplinary and culturally diverse research and development in mathematics education by focusing on a topic or issue of prominent current interest in mathematics education. Similarly each of the Roundtable Conferences in Statistics Education, which have been held since 1968, focuses on a prominent topic in statistics education and produces refereed Proceedings. These Roundtable conferences were organised before 1992 by the International Statistical Institute and since 1992 by the IASE.

Thus both ICMI studies and IASE Roundtable studies are built around international conferences with the goal of preparing a published volume that can promote discussion and action at the international, regional or institutional level. The result of this innovative and exciting collaboration is *Teaching Statistics in School Mathematics*, which will be presented at the Conferencia Interamericana de Educación Matemática (CIAEM) conference in Recife, Brazil, June 26 - 30, 2011, published by Springer and will be released in August 2011.

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