

Building Connections: Research, Theory, and Practice

An Invited Symposium

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As teachers of mathematics our knowledge, beliefs and actions are fundamentally shaped by our own experiences of learning, teaching, and researching. More often than not, this exists as a body of knowledge that is largely personal and unshared. The Research Symposium will provide an opportunity to make some of these ideas explicit by exploring the relationships between research, theory, and practice in mathematics education from a variety of different perspectives.

Colleen McMurchy-Pilkington, a teacher educator from Auckland University, will explore the use of accessible, classroom-based research in pre-service teacher education and the importance of engendering a life-long approach to professional learning. Peter Gould from the NSW Department of Education will present a system perspective on the nexus between research and practice, noting the type of research that systems find useful and a growing trend towards breaking down the distinctions between researchers and teachers. Will Morony, the Executive Officer of the Australian Association of Mathematics Teachers, unravels some of the taken-for-granted words that underpin what it means to be a professional and reminds us in a very powerful way that, at the end of the day, it is the students for whom we should be working to make the connections. This timely and valuable observation is amplified by Vicki Nally, a teacher from St Mary's Primary School in metropolitan Melbourne, who will offer a view from the perspective of a teacher engaged in classroom research. Vicki points to the both the joys and constraints inherent in this dual role and reminds us of the need to respect the very important work of teachers as they strive to help all children learn mathematics.