

Schifter, Deborah (Ed.):

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Identities

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writing. These two narratives shed little light on these teachers' own classroom practices but, as Ball concludes, "it is crucial in designing supports for their learning that teachers' stories be heard; their experiences, respected; and their views, solicited" (p. 44).

The two narratives from Karen Schweitzer and Anne Marie O'Reilly illustrate features of the new patterns of authority involved in the new pedagogy. As Schifter points out, "figuring out how to translate the vision into day-to-day instruction ... will be neither smooth nor rapid, but arduous, sometimes scary, and sometimes exhilarating" (p. 46). Schweitzer's narrative brings her own classroom to life through lively description, samples of dialogue, and analysis of her Grade 2 students' responses to a range of challenging tasks involving practical counting, grouping and measurement. The excitement, disappointment, confusion and frustration involved in giving these young students a large measure of choice and control are well exemplified, and Schweitzer's growing confidence, supported by the MPWP course, is evident. By contrast, O'Reilly's narrative is strong on self-reflection in relation to the rhetoric for reform but she only provides one episode from her Grade 6 classroom. Ruth M. Heaton's essay on the two narratives emphasises the importance of these teachers' feelings about the new patterns of authority in their classrooms, and the value of honest and reflective accounts to support other teachers in the process of change. In particular she focuses on promoting classroom discourse and the risks involved, including how to cope with silence.

The three narratives from Janice M. Szymaszek, Christine D. Anderson and Jessica Dobie Redman illustrate the process of inquiry into students' mathematical conceptions through classroom practice, guided by watching and listening to the students in order to unpack their own lines of thinking. The linking essay is provided by Stephen Lerman who is quick to point out that "interpreting what students know from what they say is far from straightforward" (p. 126). Szymaszek and Redman provide rich accounts of a wide range of counting activities for Kindergarten and Grade 2 students respectively. The element of surprise in students' responses and thinking is strong in both narratives, and the tasks were well chosen to push the students' thinking to their limits, with the teachers "leading from behind" (p. 96). Szymaszek's judgement that her experience was "glorious and bewildering" (p. 96) is well substantiated in her account. Redman makes a significant confession: "Realizing that there were such different levels of understanding of counting frightened me" (p. 119).

Anderson focuses on shape identification in the Kindergarten. The element of surprise is again strong, notably in relation to the concepts of side and triangle as exemplified in different practical contexts. The challenge to draw and talk about drawing a shape, line by line, also proved to be particularly productive. Lerman's essay focuses on the extent to which these three narratives move from classroom observation, through inquiry into students' mathematical conceptions, to promote the notion of "teacher as researcher" (p. 131). The strength of these particular narratives certainly supports this challenging notion.

The final two narratives are provided by Grade 3 teachers, Valerie Penniman and Deborah Carey O'Brien. Penniman presents a detailed description and analysis of her

in education. The significance of the book under review is largely determined by the national context within which it was created.

References

- Mathematical Association of America (1991): A call for change: Recommendations for the mathematical preparation of teachers. – Washington, DC: MAA
- National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (1991): Profe-