

In recent years, the challenge of including, in a responsible way, the diversity of students who, by right, compose the education system has become an ever increasing concern. Today, the mathematics classroom, like the whole school institution, is to be treated as a place for everyone, a place in which difference is respected, not avoided – a marked contrast to traditional education models shaped to meet the generic student, which have ended up conditioning all students to the rhythm of a standard considered *normal*. In this perspective, the *International Journal for Research in Mathematics Education* - RIPEM publishes its first special edition, presenting a series of articles concerned with the theme of Inclusive Mathematics Education.

Research in the area of inclusion has shown that individuals whose physical, racial, ethnic, linguistic and social identities differ from the normative identities constructed by the dominant social groups can come to be marginalized within mathematics classroom and seeks to understand how learning environments might be structured and resourced to meet the needs of all student groups. In this edition, the focus is on a diverse set of learners who have until now received relatively little attention in the mathematics education literature: people with disabilities.

In this direction, we invited contributions from researchers who have dedicated their studies to the teaching and learning of students with different disabilities. The special edition is composed of five papers, four concerned with the Brazilian context and one bringing data from other countries. In the first paper Tania Elisa Seibert and Claudia Lisete Oliveira Groenwald present a case study conducted in order to identify the cognitive difficulties in mathematics of a student with Spina Bifida and Arnold Chiari Syndrome. Renato Marcone and Miriam Godoy Penteado also report upon data collected using a case study methodology, which they used to construct the story of Mara, a student who became blind while studying for an undergraduate degree in Mathematics. In this story, they highlight the actions of some of the university lectures aimed to permit Mara to complete the course. The third and fourth articles are also concerned with blind students, with both focussing on how emergent mathematical practices are mediated by learners' access to the visual field. In our contribution, we adopt the perspective of embodied mathematical cognition and present two episodes to illustrate how the coordination of multimodal resources may be differs in the

mathematical practices of students who lose the ability to see as compared to those who are born blind. The fourth article also considers how the formation of mathematical concept is achieved as a function of the students' available sensorial modalities. Again two episodes are presented and analysed, the first involving sighted learners and the second those with visual impairments. In the final article, attention moves to the auditory field as Heloiza Helena Barbosa presents results from a study that investigated the knowledge of mathematical concepts and procedures amongst deaf as compared to hearing children. As a result of her analyses, she concludes that there are no differences in the mental representations of quantitative information of deaf and hearing children, but that significant differences do exist in relation to their respective abilities to work with exact symbolic and numeric information.

In compiling this special edition, our aim has been to bring together a set of researchers all of whom are concerned with the development of a more inclusive mathematics education, in which the particularities associated with the mathematics practices of learners with disabilities are valued and understood, not overlooked or illegitimated. Our approaches and perspectives may be different, but underlying the contributions of all the authors is a commitment to building educational cultures in which each learner is recognized and respected. It is in this spirit that we offer this special edition.

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