

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR STATISTICAL EDUCATION

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This column begins with information on the proceedings for the Fifth International Conference on Teaching Statistics, and presents details on the planning of the IASE Round Table conference to be held in the year 2000. Information is shared on the Third Iberoamerican Conference on Mathematics Education and a stochastics working group that will meet at this conference and on the PME Stochastics Working Group on Teaching and Learning. The final section includes announcements.

PROCEEDINGS OF ICOTS V

On June 21-26, 1998, in Singapore, the most important event in the scientific life of this Association will take place: the Fifth International Conference on Teaching Statistics (ICOTS). The ICOTS 5 theme is "Statistical Education - Expanding the Network". The Proceedings of the Conference will be distributed at the meeting but may be purchased after the conference through the ISI. The proceedings consist of three volumes with approximately 1,500 pages. Papers are grouped in the eight main topic areas of the conference, which are:

- Statistical education at the school level, (Elementary level, secondary level, teacher training, local teachers)
- Statistical education at the post-secondary level (Introductory statistics, mathematical statistics, design and analysis of experiments, regression and correlation, Bayesian methods, sample survey design and analysis)
- Statistical education for people in the workplace (Statistical consultancy, continuing education, distance education, total quality)
- Statistical education and the wider society (Statistical Societies, statistical literacy, publications, legal contexts)
- An international perspective of statistical education (African region, Asian region, Spanish speaking countries, Other developing regions)
- Research in teaching statistics (School levels, post-secondary levels, probability)
- The role of technology in the teaching of statistics (Software design, teaching experiments, graphics calculators, visualization, research, multimedia and WWW)
- Other determinants and developments in statistical education (Cultural/historical factors, learning factors, gender factors, projects/competitions).

IASE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

2000 will be the year of the IASE Round Table in Japan on the topic: Training Researchers in the Use

of Statistics. This meeting will be held at the Meiji University which is located in the central area of Tokyo. The IASE Round Table Conference will be held in August, after the International Congress on Mathematics Education (ICME 9). Carmen Batanero will be the Chair of the Scientific Committee. The Statistical Education Committee of the Japan Statistical Society, chaired by Professor Yuki Miura, will provide the local organisation.

As statistics has become an important tool for research in many disciplines, the study of difficulties and obstacles that new and senior researchers face when learning and applying statistics has become a fundamental concern for statistical educators.

The following are possible topics and issues to be discussed at this Round Table Conference:

- (1) Statistical competencies that researchers in different disciplines should acquire in their initial training.
 - (2) Statistical training of researchers in specific fields, such as Medicine or Education, and the training of official statisticians.
 - (3) Assessing/identifying frequent errors in the use of statistics, consultation as a teaching/ learning process.
 - (4) Researchers' attitudes towards statistics, examining researchers' beliefs about the role of data analysis in experimental research in light of current methods of data analysis.
 - (5) Statistics as a language of communication, statistical analysis published in research papers, and informal statistical learning from reading research literature.
 - (6) Technology: teaching the use of statistical software to researchers, its educational potential and its dangers.
 - (7) Design/evaluation of courses for training researchers in particular statistical topics and learning problems.
 - (8) Continuous training of senior researchers.
- More information can be obtained from Carmen Batanero, Departamento Didáctica de la Matemática, Facultad de Educación, Campus de Cartuja, 18071 Granada, Spain (batanero@goliat.ugr.es).

STOCHASTICS WORKING GROUP AT THE III IBEROAMERICAN CONFERENCE ON MATHEMATICS EDUCATION (CIBEM)

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The idea of holding an Iberoamerican Congress on Mathematical education (CIBEM) arose during the VII Interamerican Congress of Mathematical education (CIAEM), which was held in the Dominican Republic in 1987. The Spanish delegation, headed by Dr. Gonzalo Sanchez (Vélezquez), former president of the Spanish Associations of Teachers of Mathematics, suggested carrying out a Mathematical (Education) conference where specialists from America, Portugal and Spain could meet. The main reasons for the proposal were historical links and common educational problems which offered an important base for exchanging experiences. The first CIBEM took place in Seville, Spain in September, 1990, and the second was held in Blumenau, Brazil, in July 1994.

The III CIBEM is being held from July 26 to July 31, 1998, in the Central University, Caracas, Venezuela. The scientific program consists of plenary and parallel lectures, expert panels, brief communications, working groups and posters. However, the main part of the conference will be devoted to Working Groups. Accordingly, the Organising Committee has proposed a specific working group on statistical education, which is co-ordinated by Audy Salcedo (Venezuela) and Carmen Batanero (Spain). The purpose of this working group is to analyse the specific problems of statistical education in the Ibero-American community; to provide statistical educators the opportunity to meet and exchange their work, and to study the establishment of links with international groups of statistical education.

The working group will start a network of statistical educators in Ibero-America, who plan to work on producing a monograph to summarize the work carried out in the Ibero-American community of statistical education.

PME STOCHASTICS TEACHING AND LEARNING GROUP

Web page: <http://www.ugr.es/~batanero/pmegroup.htm#planning>

The PME Stochastics Working Group was established in 1997 with the goal of linking two research areas: studies concerned mainly with psychological aspects of stochastics learning, particularly decision-making in an uncertain environment; and studies concerned mainly with pedagogical aspects of stochastics education. The PME Stochastics Working Group currently serves as a focus for members interested in the psychology of the teaching and learning of probability, statistics and combinatorics. It maintains an informal network between PME Conferences by means of an electronically distributed newsletter.

The working group will meet in July, 1998 as part of the 22nd Annual Conference of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education (PME22), which will be held at the University of Stellenbosch, in Stellenbosch, South Africa.

One activity that will be discussed by the working group is a plan for a new handbook on statistical education from a research perspective. This project arose from the increasing interest in research into statistical education which is noticeable in international conferences, specific books and journals, and the existence of professional associations and research groups. This interest reflects two important changes in educational practice. One is the common trend towards teaching probability and statistics in primary and secondary schools, the other is the large growth of "in-service" statistics courses at tertiary institutions. On top of these curriculum changes there is now also the opportunity for teaching methods to change significantly by using increasingly available electronic aids.

All of these changes have highlighted limitations in understanding good pedagogic practice and the sense which students actually make of the courses which they study, and have therefore, pointed out the very important need for further research into statistical education. A particular problem is that research is currently being carried out from a variety of research fields (such as Psychology, Education, Mathematics Education and Statistics). Consequently, research results are widely spread in different journals and conference proceedings and many of them have not had adequate dissemination.

The idea of producing a handbook, which summarises research on statistical education, and addresses the educational implication from its results, is a consequence of the PME Stochastics Working Group initial work at Lahti in 1997. The proposed structure includes some historical, philosophical and epistemological considerations, learning theories and teaching methodologies in statistical education, papers on the teaching and learning of probability, papers on the teaching and learning of statistics, and comprehensive papers on topics such as textbooks and curricular material, student attitudes towards stochastics in the classroom, assessment of stochastic understanding, preparing teachers to teach stochastics, and cross-cultural studies.

If you are interested in this project and would like to contribute to the planning of this handbook, please send an e-mail message to one of the co-ordinators: Kath Truran Magill Campus, University of South Australia St. Bernard's Road, Magill 5072, South Australia (fax + 618 8302 4732)

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THE ASA STATISTICS EDUCATION SECTION

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The American Statistical Association (ASA) is a scientific and educational society of 19,000 members formed to "foster excellence in the use and application of statistics to the biological, physical, social and economic sciences." Members of the ASA can elect to join one or more of 20 sections that focus on various interest areas within statistics. Approximately 1,100 ASA members belong to the Section on Statistical Education.

The best way to learn about the activities of the Section on Statistical Education is to take a look at our World Wide Web page at <http://www.stat.ncsu.edu/stated>. The Web page includes information about upcoming conferences, work-shops, and contests of interest to statistics teachers, as well as links to the *Journal of Statistics Education*, the Statistics Teacher Network, and our excellent section newsletter. There is also information on undergraduate textbooks, awards received by statistics educators, graduate programs in statistics, and much more.

Our section newsletter is published twice a year, and is available in both paper and electronic versions. The section also keeps ASA members informed about activities in statistics education via monthly articles in the Section News column of the *Amstat News*, a newsletter received by all members of the ASA.

Many of the section's activities take place at the Joint Statistical Meetings (JSM), which are held annually in August. Each year, the section organizes a full slate of invited and contributed paper sessions and roundtable luncheons. The papers presented at the meetings are later published in a Proceedings volume. At each JSM, the section gives an award for the Best Contributed Paper presented at the previous year's JSM. The 1996 Best Contributed Paper Award was presented to Robin Lock for his paper "Datasurfing on the World Wide Web." The section holds a business meeting and mixer at the JSM so that section members can discuss section business and socialize.

The Section on Statistical Education contributes to improvements in teaching statistics by providing financial support to competitions and award programs and to conferences on statistics education. The section had the opportunity this year to take the lead in selecting a winner for the 1998 Educom Award, which will be presented to a member of ASA who has made a significant contribution to transforming undergraduate learning in statistics through the application of information technology. This winner of this award will be announced by Educom and ASA this summer.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

* Fourth Iranian Statistics Conference, August 23-25, 1998 Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, IRAN

Contributions are encouraged on the topics of statistics education at both school and university levels, popularizing statistics, the influence of computers on statistics education, and teaching probability and statistics to non-specialists. For further information on the conference, please contact: School of Mathematical Sciences, Shahid Beheshti University, Evin, Tehran, 19839, IRAN. Fax: (9821)2401763, E-mail: statconf@cc.sbu.ac.ir

* A proposal for an International Statistics Olympiad (ISO)

In order to prepare the societies for the year 2000, to encourage students to study statistics and probability, and due to the need of statistical sciences in everyday life, the establishment of an International Statistic Olympiad is proposed. Please send information about similar activities that you are familiar with, in your country or elsewhere, to: Ali Rejali, school of Mathematical Sciences, Isfahan University of Technology, Isfahan, 84156, IRAN E-mail: A_Rejali@cc.iut.ac.ir FAX: (9831)8912602

Joan Garfield

