

O'Connor, John, 2013, *Is Project Maths fit for Purpose? The Perspective of Mathematics Teachers in Ireland.*

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Since its gradual introduction from September 2008, opinions have been divided over the suitability of Project Maths as a second level mathematics syllabus in Ireland. As it is the maths teachers who are the practitioners and the ones charged with introducing Project Maths in second level schools, this dissertation investigates their opinions on Project Maths. The dissertation investigates the maths teachers' opinions on the balance and content of the new syllabus, as well as the new examination style. Furthermore, it investigates if they believe that Project Maths will increase the uptake of Higher Level mathematics, improve the level of mathematical skills of Irish students, and their performance in State and international tests.

Questionnaires and interviews were completed by a sample of maths teachers in Ireland yielding quantitative and qualitative data. The investigation showed that maths teachers in Ireland were positive in their belief that the new syllabus would improve students' ability to understand mathematical concepts and problem solve. It was found, however, that the syllabus content, balance and aspects of the new examination style were flawed.

The dissertation recommends that changes need to be made to the syllabus content as well as the new style of examination paper in consultation with second and third level educators. While the new teaching methodologies should remain, more emphasis needs to be placed on fundamental mathematical skills and more in-service time is needed for teachers as the number of days provided was felt to be inadequate.