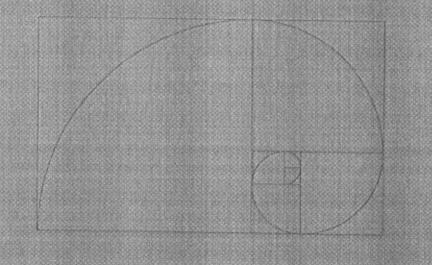
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学校數學通訊 School Mathematics Newsletter

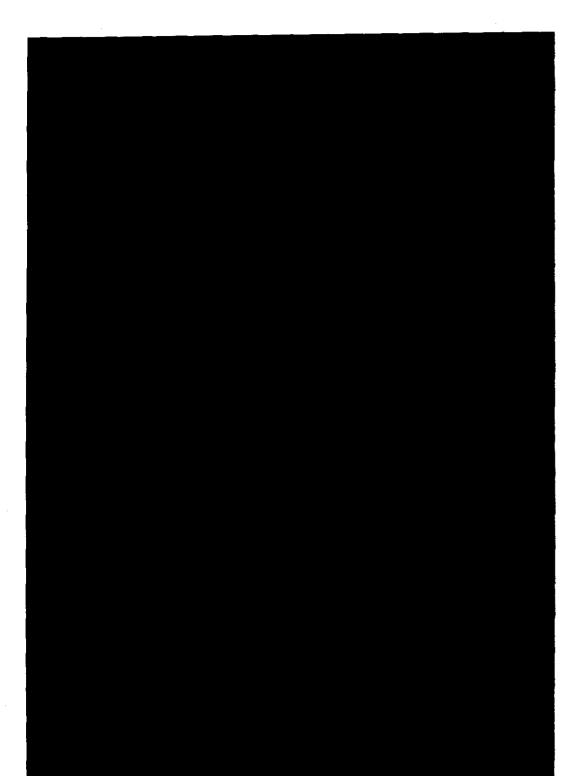
## 15 15 Issue 15

April 1997



Published by
Mathematics Section
Advisory Inspector to Division
Education Department, Hong Kong
T 社会 (計畫原 集團 集團 基礎 (計畫)





The School Mathematics Newsletter (SMN) aims at serving as a channel of communication in the mathematics education of Hong Kong. School principals are therefore kindly requested to ensure that every member of their mathematics staff has an opportunity to read this Newsletter.

We welcome contributions in the form of articles on all aspects of mathematics education as the SMN is meant for an open forum for teachers of mathematics. However, the views expressed in the articles in the SMN are not necessarily those of the Education Department.

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《學校數學通訊》旨在爲香港數學教育界提供一個 溝通渠道,故此懇請各校長將本通訊交給貴校所有數學科 教師傳閱。

爲使本通訊能成爲教師的投稿公開園地,歡迎讀者 提供任何與數學教育有關的文章。唯本通訊內所發表的意 見,並不代表教育署的觀點。

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#### **FOREWORD**

Welcome to the fifteenth issue of the School Mathematics Newsletter (SMN).

As in the past issues of the SMN, the articles in the present issue are contributed by professionals interested in mathematics education, many of whom have rendered uninterrupted support to the publication of the SMN in the past years. The Mathematics Section of the Advisory Inspectorate Division wishes to thank them sincerely for their contribution, without which the publication of this issue of the SMN will not be possible.

In the existing education system, mathematics teachers are faced with the tremendous challenge of teaching pupils of very different abilities, motivations and aspirations. To meet this challenge, mathematics teachers need to equip themselves with necessary mathematical skills and teaching strategies to cope with different teaching situations. To this end, the articles in this publication cover a variety of relevant topics, ranging from hot issues of mathematics teaching to daily applications. There are also some interesting puzzles to tap readers' mind. We do hope that all readers will find the content of this issue informative and stimulating.

The Editorial Board of SMN wishes to express again its gratitude to all contributors, and also to the fellow colleagues of the Mathematics Section who have made good efforts in producing the SMN Issue 15.

Mathematics Section Advisory Inspectorate Division 利用可編程序計算機解決數學問題

尹鋈鴻 港九潮州公學

由以上的報告,可見美國的數學教育相當重視計算機的使用,目前美國很多中學生都擁有可編程序計算機(programmable calculator)及作圖計算機(graphing calculator),而數學教材中亦普遍滲入這些計算機的活動和使用方法。

回到香港,七十年代後期香港考試局已允許 考生在公開試中使用計算機,因此,在八十年代 計算機的使用已相當普及,至目前大部份中學生 都擁有一部或以上可編程序的計算機。雖然都是 學生擁有這些高級的計算機,但可惜大部份 能充份了解這些計算機的最重要功能:可 等 。即使是高年級的學生,亦只限於利用這二字 , 算機的求根公式及餘弦公式等)而已。事實編 對 方程的求根公式及餘弦公式等)而已。事實編 對 類 類 行程序,因此可幫助學生解決一些有趣 與 類 深的數學問題。現舉例如下:

若將 9 這個自然數寫成若干個連續整數之和,試 列出所有可能情況。

解:設9可寫成n個連續整數之和,而最小的整數是a。則

$$9 = a + (a + 1) + (a + 2) + \dots + [a + (n - 1)]$$

$$= \frac{n}{2} [2a + (n - 1) \cdot 1]$$

$$= na + \frac{1}{2} n(n - 1)$$

$$\therefore a = \frac{9 - \frac{1}{2}n(n-1)}{n} \left( \vec{x} \frac{9}{n} - \frac{n-1}{2} \right)$$

把 n=2,3,4,.....依次代入上式中,便可求得對應的 a 値。現將 n 由 2 至 18 之 a 及 an (=a+n-1) 值及寫成(連續整數和)的方法表列如下:

n(連續整數的 數目)	a	an	寫成方法
2	4	5	4+5
3	2	4	2+3+4
4	分數	分數	不可能
5	分數	分數	不可能
6	-1	4	(-1)+0+1+2+3+4
7	分數	分數	不可能
8	分數	分數	不可能
9	-3	. 5	(-3)+(-2)+(-1) +0+1+2+3+4+5
10 至 17	<b>↑</b> 分數 <b>→</b>	<b>↑</b> 分數 <b>→</b>	<b>个</b> 不可能 <b>→</b>
18	-8	9	(-8)+(-7)+(-6)+  (-5)+(-4)+(-3)+  (-2)+(-1)+0+1+  2+3+4+5+6+7+  8+9

註:(i)在一連續整數數列(且其和爲 9)中, a 及 an分別代表最小的及最大的整數。

(ii) 由於  $a = \frac{9}{n} - \frac{n-1}{2}$ ,當  $n \ge 19$ , a 値不可能 是整數,所以不必再繼續嘗試。

由上表,我們可見將 9 寫成連續整數和的方 法共有 5 種,而其中兩種是幾個連續正整數 之和。

我們從以上的例子可見用代入法逐次測試 a 是否整數是頗費時間的,而可編程序計算機正好幫助完成這項工作。現把所用的程序列出如下(共 37 個程序步;一般常見可編程序的計算機皆可處理這些程序步):

註:1. 未編寫程序前,先把計算機進入「LRN」

模式, 然後按程序編號 P1(或 I)。

- 2. 完成編寫程序後,按「MODE」「●」使 計算機進入「RUN」模式。
- 3. 每一方格內顯示一個程序步,很多程序步只須按一個鍵,例如「1」、「MR」及「÷」等;有些程序步則須按兩個鍵,例如「Kout1」(先按「Kout」,後按「1」)及「RND」(先按「SHIFT」或「INV」,後按「0」)等;部份程序步更須按三個鍵,例如「Kin+1」(先按「Kin」,再按「+」,然後按「1」)及「MODE70」(先按「MODE」,再按「7」,然後按「0」)等。

程序編完後,我們立即可以應用來計算上例:

 操作
 顯示
 說明

 9 Min 1 Kin1
 先將自然數 9 貯存在獨立記憶體內,而把 1 貯存在常數記

憶體 K1 內。

		· ·
P1 (或 I )	[ 2 (連續整數的數 目)	.:. 9=(-3)+(-2)+ (-1)+0+1++5
RUN	4 (最小的整數)	RUN   (連續整數的數   目)
RUN	5 (最大的整數) ∴ 9=4+5	RUN -8 (最小的整數)
		RUN 9 (最大的整數)
RUN	[3] (連續整數的數 目)	$\therefore 9 = (-8) + (-7) + (-6) + + 8 + 9$
RUN	2 (最小的整數)	RUN 0 分解完成,離
RUN	4 (最大的整數) ∴ 9=2+3+4	開程序 P1(或 I)。
RUN	[ 6 (連續整數的數 目)	利用 P1(或 I)所貯的程序,我們可以很快獲得將 9 寫成連續整數之和的 5 種方法,而其中兩種是幾個連續正整數之和。
RUN	1 (最小的整數)	練習:試利用 P1(或 I)所貯的程序,把下列各自
RUN	4 (最大的整數) ∴ 9=(-1)+0+1+2	然數寫成若干個連續整數之和(列出所有 可能情況):
	+3+4	(a) 8 (b) 21
RUN	9 (連續整數的數 目)	操作 顯示 說明 解:(a) 8 Min 1 Kin1
RUN	-3 (最小的整數)	P1 (或 [I )
RUN	5 (最大的整數)	數目)

RUN (最小的整數) (最小的整數) RUN RUN (最大的整數) (最大的整數) RUN  $\therefore 21=6+7+8$ RUN ... 8=(-7)+(-6) (連續整數的 +(-5)+(-4)數目) +(-3)+(-2)RUN (最小的整數) +(-1)+0+1+2+3+4 RUN (最大的整數) +5+6+7+8 ∴ 21=1+2+3+4 +5+6 分解完成,離 RUN 開程序 P1(或 RUN (連續整數的 I) • 數目) 因此, 8只得一種寫成連續整數之和的方 RUN (最小的整數) 法。 RUN (最大的整數) Min 1 Kin1 2 1 b)  $\therefore$  21=0+1+2+3 []) (連續整數的 +4+5+6 P1 (或 數目) RUN (連續整數的 (最小的整數) RUN 數目) RUN (最小的整數) (最大的整數) RUN  $\therefore 21=10+11$ RUN (最大的整數) ... 21=(-5)+(-4) RUN (連續整數的 +(-3)+(-2)數目)

+(-1)+0+1 +2+3+4+5 +6+7+8

RUN

21 (連續整數的 數目)

RUN

-9 (最小的整數)

RUN

11 (最大的整數)

 $\therefore$  21=(-9)+(-8)

+(-7)+(-6)

+(-5)+(-4)

+(-3)+(-2)

+(-1)+0+1

+2+3+4+5

+6+7+8+9

+10+11

RUN

42 (連續整數的 數目)

RUN

-20 (最小的整數)

RUN

21 (最大的整數)

∴ 21=(-20)

+(-19)+(-18)

+(-17)+(-16)

+.....+19+20

+21

RUN

0 分解完成,離開 程序 P1(或 I)。

因此,將 21 寫成連續整數和的方法共有七種,而其中三種是寫成連續正整數之和的。

爲了確保學生懂得使用該程序,老師可再給 幾個較大的自然數(例如 100, 147, 275等)讓 學生練習。學生熟習該程序的用法後,老師可引 導他們發現一些規律。

(現將同工尹老師引導學生發現有關連續正整 數特性的過程簡述如下。)

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

尹老師:有沒有一些偶數可以同時寫成三個連續正整數之和及四個連續正整數之 和?

(學生利用該程序在嘗試着。) (幾秒後,有學生回答。)

學生甲:有,是6。

尹老師:由哪些連續正整數相加?

學生甲: 6 可由 1,2,3 這三個整數相加,亦可由

0,1,2,3 這四個整數相加。

尹老師:留意 0 不是正整數,我要求的偶數是可以寫成連續正整數之和的,因此我不接受 6。

學生乙:利用該程序,我發覺 10 這個偶數一開始便可分解爲四個連續正整數之和,不滿足老師的第一個要求(即分解爲三個連續正整數之和),我不想再按「RUN」鍵看其餘的分解方法,怎麼辦好呢?

尹老師:可按「AC」鍵離開該程序,然後再嘗 試另一個偶數。

(十秒後)

學生乙: 我找到了, 是 18。它可寫成 5+6+7, 亦可寫成 3+4+5+6。

尹老師:對。有沒有再大一些的偶數可以滿足我的要求。

(十秒後)

學生丙:有。是 30 。它可寫成 9+10+11 ,亦可 寫成 6+7+8+9。

尹老師:很好,有沒有再大一些的呢?

(不夠兩秒)

學生丁:有。是 42。它可寫成 13+14+15,亦可

寫成 9+10+11+12。

尹老師:怎可以這麼快便找到呢?

學生丁: 我發覺 30 比 18 多 12 , 12 ÷ 3=4 , 將 5,6,7 每個加 4 ,得出 9,10,11,它們三個 相加便是 30 ;同理 , 12 ÷ 4=3 ,將 3,4,5,6 各加 3 ,得出 6,7,8,9,它們四個 相加又是 30 。用同樣原理 ,我便知道 30+12(即 42)亦可寫成三個及四個連續 正整數之和。

尹老師:很好,你的推理能力不錯。有沒有同學可以說出其他在100以內而滿足我要求的偶數?

學生甲:很容易,按照阿丁的方法,其他滿足老師要求的偶數是 54,66,78 和 90。

尹老師:全對。戊同學,你好像一直無反應,是 否不明白我們剛才說甚麼?你試把 90 分解成三個及四個連續正整數之和。

(學生戊如夢初醒,立即取出計算機按鍵。) (五秒後)

學生戊:90 可寫成 29+30+31 , 亦可寫成 21+22+23+24 。老師,我剛才不是發白 日夢,我是想寫出這類偶數的通式,但 又想不出。 尹老師:你們已學過甚麼是等差級數,應該發覺 剛才那幾個偶數 18,30,42,54,66,78,90 正好成等差級數。你們是否還記得等差 級數通項的寫法?

學生戊:我記起了,等差級數第 n 項是 a+(n-1)d, 其中 a 是首項及 d 是公差。現在首項 a 是 18,公差 d 是 12,因此這類偶數的 通式是 18+(n-1)12,即 12n+6,其中 n 是正整數。

尹老師:對了,有沒有同學可以證明形如 12n+6 (n 爲正整數)的偶數是可以同時寫成三 個及四個連續正整數之和。

學生戊:讓我試試, 12n÷ 3=4n,而 6=1+2+3, 所以 12n+6 可寫成 4n+1, 4n+2, 4n+3 這三個連續正整數之和。同時, 12n÷ 4=3n,而 6=0+1+2+3,所以 12n+6 亦可寫成 3n, 3n+1, 3n+2, 3n+3 這 四個連續正整數之和。

尹老師: 非常好, 你的分析能力很不錯。對不起, 我剛才還誤會你在發白日夢。透過以上 的例子, 你們可否再猜一猜同時可以寫 成四個及七個連續正整數之和的自然數 的通式是怎樣的?

學生丙:阿戊剛才得出可寫成三個及四個連續正整數之和的自然數的通式是 12n+6,其中 12=3×4,而6則爲 12的一半。

現在所求的自然數是可以寫成四個及七個連續正整數之和的, 4 × 7=28 , 28 的一半是 14 。我估計所要求的自然數的通式是 28n+14,其中 n是正整數。老師,對不對?

尹老師:不必問我,你們可以代入一些n值嘗試 一下。例如 n=5 ,則所得的自然數是 154 。丙同學,你試試 154 是否可以寫 成四個及七個連續正整數之和。

(學生丙立即取出計算機並利用該程序去嘗試 154 這個數。) (十秒後)

學生丙:對,老師。154可寫成37至40這四個連續正整數之和,它亦可寫成19至25這七個連續正整數之和。因此,我可以肯定這類自然數的通式是28n+14,其中n是正整數。

尹老師:不可以這麼快下結論,剛才你只是嘗試 n=5 這種情況,你怎知 n 是其他正整數 時所得的自然數仍是可以寫成四個及 七個連續正整數之和呢?如果你能夠 以 n 表示這些連續正整數,那麼你剛才 作的結論便可以成立。

學生丙:好,讓我試試。  $28n \div 4=7n$ ,假設四個連續 正整數最小的一個是 7n+a,則 a+(a+1)+(a+2)+(a+3)=14,那麼 4a+6=14,

即 a=2 ,因此四個連續正整數是 7n+2 , 7n+3 , 7n+4 , 7n+5 ;而  $28n \div 7=4n$  ,假 設七個連續正整數最小的一個是 4n+b ,則 b+(b+1)+(b+2)+(b+3)+(b+4)+(b+5)+(b+6)=14,那麼 7b+21=14,即 b=-1,因此七個連續正整數是 4n-1 , 4n , 4n+1 , 4n+2 , 4n+3 , 4n+4 , 4n+5 。老師,我現在可以肯定剛才所作的結論是正確的。

尹老師:果然聰明。

學生庚:老師,我們可否立即推論能夠同時寫成 р個及 q 個連續正整數之和的自然數的 通式是 pqn+ pq/2 (其中 n 爲正整數)。例如, 能夠同時寫成三個及六個連續正整數 之和的自然數的通式是 3×6n+ 3×6/2 ,即 18n+9(其中 n 爲正整數)。

尹老師:有沒有同學可以代我回答?

學生申: 當然不能一概而論, p和 q都是奇數時便不可以,例如當 p=3, q=5,照阿庚所說,通式是15n+15(其中 n爲正整數)。但這個式根本不代表自然數,又怎可以寫成正整數之和。

學生庚: 那麼 p 、 q 都是偶數時又如何?例如當 p=4 , q=6 , 通式是否是 24n+12 ?

尹老師:你自己可以試試看。

學生庚:好,讓我按鍵試試。當 n=1, 24 × 1+12=36。噢! 36 可以分解成三 個及八個連續正整數之和,但不可以

分解成四個或六個連續正整數之和。

尹老師:你自己已經找到一個反例證,毋須再試 其他n値了。好,今天到此爲止,明天

再研究其他有趣的性質吧。

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

利用計算機所貯的程序,老師是可以引導學生在短時間內發現下列的有趣結果。對於高年級的學生,老師可進一步要求他們作出證明。

(1)任何大於 1 的奇數都可以寫成兩個連續正整數之和。

證明:設所給的奇數是 N,則

$$\frac{N-1}{2} \pi \frac{N+1}{2} \left( = \frac{N-1}{2} + 1 \right)$$
 是兩個連續正整

數,並且

$$\frac{N-1}{2} + \frac{N+1}{2} = \frac{N-1+N+1}{2} = \frac{2N}{2} = N \circ$$

(2)任何自然數 N 都可以寫成 2N 個連續正整數 之和。

證明:假設把 N 寫成 2N 個數(等差級數,公

差為 1)之和而最小的一個數為 a ,則  $N = \frac{2N}{2}[2a + (2N-1) \cdot 1]$  N = N[2a + 2N - 1] 1 = 2a + 2N - 1 2 - 2N = 2a ∴ a = 1 - N ∴ 1 - N(即 a) 是整數 ,

- :. N可以寫成 2N個連續整數之和。
- (3)任何含有奇數因子 m(m>1)的自然數 N[例如 60(含有因子 3)及 77(含有因子 7)]都可以有超 渦一種寫成連續整數和的方法。
  - 證明:根據性質(2), N可以寫成 2N個連續整數之和(最小的一個整數是 1-N,最大的一個整數是 N)。現在再看看 N能否寫成其他連續整數之和。假設把 N 寫成 n 個數(等差級數,公差爲 1)之和而最小的一個數是 b ,則

$$N = \frac{n}{2}[2b + (n-1) \cdot 1]$$
 $= nb + \frac{1}{2}n(n-1)$ 
因此  $\frac{N}{n} = b + \frac{n-1}{2}$ 
 $\therefore b = \frac{N}{n} - \frac{n-1}{2}$ 
由於 N 含有奇數因子 m ,所以 N=mk ,
其中 k 爲正整數而 m ≤ N 。

設 n=m ,則  $b=\frac{mk}{m}-\frac{m-1}{2}=k-\frac{m-1}{2}$  。 由於 m 是奇數,所以  $\frac{m-1}{2}$  是整數,從而 b 亦是整數。因此, N 亦可以寫成 m 個  $(m \le N)$ 連續整數之和。

- (4) 任何形式如 2<sup>m</sup>(m 爲正整數)的自然數(例如,2,4,8,16 等)都不可以寫成若干個連續正整數之和。
  - 證明:假設2<sup>m</sup>可以寫成 n 個連續正整數之和而 a 是最小的正整數,則

$$2^{m} = \frac{n}{2} [2a + (n-1) \cdot 1]$$
$$= \frac{n}{2} (2a + n - 1)$$

情況一:如果 n 爲奇數,則  $\frac{2a+n-1}{2}$  爲正整數。那麼  $2^m$ =奇數×正整數,但這是不可能的(因爲  $2^m$ 不可能被奇數所整除)。

情況二:如果 n 爲偶數,則 $\frac{n}{2}$ 爲正整數而 2a+n-1 爲奇數。那麼  $2^m=$ 正整數  $\times$  奇數,但這也是不可能的(理由與情況一相同)。

無論 n 是奇數或偶數都產生矛盾,所以假設不成立,即 2<sup>m</sup>不可以寫成若干個連續正整數之和。

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高科技與數學課程

黃毅英 香港中文大學

各國關注以繪圖計算機與個人電腦爲首的高科技對學校數學的衝擊已非近年的事。早在一九八二年英國的《數學在乎》(Mathematics Counts)、一九八六年英國 Howson 和 Wilson 的《九十年代的學校數學》及一九八九年美國《學校數學課程與評鑑標準》均以大篇幅析述箇中關係(詳見《數學傳播》 64 期「九十年代的數學教育」一文)。事實上,高科技對學校課程有著重大的影響,而數學可謂是首當其衝。

正視高科技對數學課程的影響已是刻不容緩。近年更有不少獨立的聲明在各地發表。上期筆者亦曾節錄並翻譯英國國家教育技術議會一九九五年「數學與資訊科技」一文。本文續介紹

英國數學教師協會「高級程度代數 —— 電腦代數系統可能對課程做成的轉變」及澳洲數學教師協會「計算機與電腦於澳洲學校之應用聲明1996」。欲詳閱原文者,可與二會聯絡。前者地址爲 7, Shaftesbury Street, Derby DE23 8YB, England;後者網址爲 http://www.aamt.edu.au。電子郵址則爲 aamtinc @ nexus.edu.au。

澳洲之聲明共分五節。其中包括背境、何謂計算機與電腦科技、對學校與課堂運作之引申、 一些關鍵性項目及研究告訴我們些甚麼。在這五 節之前是五點建議:

- 一. 所有學生應能獲得適當的科技作爲支援及擴展其數學學習經驗的工具。
- 二.於一科技先進的學習環境中,計算機及電腦應優先作爲學習數學的媒體。
- 三. 在各階段中,教師應主動開拓利用科技學習數學的方法。

四.在評核學生數學理解能力時,應可讓他們使用計算機及電腦等器具。

五. 教育當局應對教師提供有關科技知識與 技能的發展機會,以便計算機與電腦科技得以於 課堂上成功地運用。

於第二節中,作者提到利用電腦科技之數學活動。其內容與下列各項有關:傳意,數學建模, 資訊搜尋、提取、分析與表達,數學符號及圖形 運算,用不同形式表達數學意念及過程,估量及 判斷結果之合理性和探討規律及問題。

至於對學校課程的影響則分四個階段作討 論。今簡譯如下:

- 一. 早段: 應向所有學生提供基本的計算機 以培養數字感。科技應用能促進問題解決、文字 (概指表達未知量等之英文字母)、數字、符號、 確認規律、題意及數字感等等的學習經驗。
- 二. 中及高小:於此階段,學生應漸次作較主動的學習。他們與所提供的科技器材間之互動能促進有目的地探討數學行動的效果,乃至於無壓迫及鼓勵性的環境下探討數學意念。在任何時間內均應提供計算機作爲個人的工具,而電腦則建議每班最少設置一部。
- 三. 初中: 此階段之學生應獲得以科技工具於有意義處境中探討數學過程的鼓勵。此階段不應限制科學計算機的使用。

四. 高中及往後:繪圖計算機的科技能在這階段協助學生學習大部份的數學。因此,學校或家長應向學生提供繪圖計算機等工具。迭代過程與近似方法應與傳統符號方式並行;遞推與理應於科技處境中進行,而數據分析與傳統分析方法應當並重。學生應經常接觸繪圖計算機,而作者極希望每班最少應設置一部電腦供學生使用。

於最末二節,文中對幾個較受關注的問題作了討論。例如強調高科技會否對一些學生(如家

中並無電腦者)較爲不利呢?於「平等」一段中便提出應盡一切方法保障飽受種族、性別、殘疾、社會地位等引致不平等之人仕的學習機會。文中更指出:「一些學生可能有廣泛使用電腦的經驗,並已對其操作建立了信心。學校應於無壓迫及鼓勵性的環境中,爲經驗稍遜者教授運用科技的技巧。」

於「課程」一段,文中提出科技顯然強調了一些數學內容(如離散數學與混沌理論)及過程(如估值、近似及評鑑結果)的學習並淡化了其他部份(如重覆算法及背誦)。這體現了教育重心由知識累積到資訊處理的根本變化,亦顯示了科技世界中普通公民對獲得資訊、具備批判及決策能力等需求不斷增加。

文中最後引述了一些研究結果,研究顯示在 適當環境下利用計算機及電腦能提高學生的運 算能力及數字感。其次,學生無須先學數字再用 計算機。利用計算機及電腦學習的學生有更好的 學習數學態度和更有信心;及學生比教師對科技 有更高的適應能力。

英國的文件則集中討論高級程度(預科)階段,並針對「電腦代數系統」,即用電腦解方程、處理微積分等利用符號而非數值之運算。

該文中首先談及一些常見的問題:例如學生 會否過於倚賴電腦展開(1+x)<sup>2</sup>?叫學生運算冗 長的

$$\frac{d}{dx} \frac{\sin\left(2 - \frac{7}{x}\right)}{\sqrt[3]{\tan\sqrt{2x - 3}}}$$

會否浪費精力(電腦只須用一秒半秒的時間)? 學生是否至少能求形如 x³之簡單函數的導數?

故此,作者認爲我們應該在教學上靈活地利 用電腦代數系統。

作者續以過兩點的直線方程爲例,指出此一題實有多種方法求解,各有其闡示的概念。利用電腦是其中的一種方法。作者並指出,對於簡單的技巧,學生甚至可先利用電腦求得答案然後學習其中技巧。例如學生可先用電腦勘察甚爲複雜函數的斜率,然後再由此出發學習應用微積分求斜率的方法。

對於例如求函數極大值之複雜技巧,一般不能用電腦以單一步驟算出(因運算過程中包含了求導數、設定等於 0 而求解、將答案代回原式求極大值等等)。是否利用電腦運算各單元實無關宏旨,而學生理解這種問題之解決方法方爲至要。

有了電腦代數系統、課程可以得到擴闊,例如,學生可勘察不同函數的導數,然後輕而易舉地學習 3 × 3 、 4 × 4 矩陣等。然而課程的次序亦應調整,除上述可對各類形函數先作勘察再計算相關多項式的導數外,在計算

$$\lim_{h\to 0} \frac{\sin(x+h) - \sin x}{h}$$

時,所需的各種三角知識亦可壓後教授。總括而言,文中重申過往側重對運算技巧純熟的觀念應轉爲注重培養概念與解決問題等能力。

文件最後以建模、概念理解、教學活動舉隅 及評核舉隅作結。

# 爲何要舉辦數學營

馬兆權 金文泰中學

在很多人的心目中,數學祇是一門學習如何運 算數字的學科。如果某人運算數字快而準,人們 便說他的數學水平很高。事實上,這只是一個誤 解。

數學除了訓練人在運算時快而準外,更重要的 是訓練人如何去解決問題。如果掌握了數學的解 題技巧,並能把它應用在日常生活上,那麼對解 決日常所遇到的問題,會有很大幫助的。

老師爲了要把整個課程教畢,或操練同學的運算技巧,所以甚少時間教導同學如何利用解題技巧去解決問題。有見及此,香港數學競賽籌備委員會,得到教育署財政上的支持,舉辦數學營去關補課堂上的不足。數學營的內容十分豐富,包

括:

- (i) 解題技巧
- (ii) 解題比賽
- (iii) 康樂活動
- (iv) 結交朋友

此外,領隊老師還可以利用入營的時間,與其他 學校的老師,交流教學經驗及心得,以改善教學 技巧,大大提高數學教學的質素。

在過去兩年,數學營所獲得的評價是肯定的。 同學都踴躍參加,認爲在營中既可學到在課堂上 所學不到的解題技巧,還可以與其他學校的同學 交朋結友,擴闊社交圈子。

金文泰中學家長教師會"會訊"第十期

記一次有意義的數學營

這是我有生以來第一次參加宿營,當然是欣喜若狂。一行十二人,包括一位老師和十一位同學 向目的地進發,還有一位在營內接應我們。

到達目的地後,我按捺著雀躍不止的心情,聽完那位在營內接應我們的老師講述營規之後初馬上磡察周圍的環境,眞令我驚嘆不已。當我初聽到「宿營」二字,就馬上聯想到一處荒漠無人的地方,蓋著幾間足可列入古董行列的破屋,周圍人蹟罕至,荒涼蕭瑟。然而這裏鳥語花香,環境優美,設施一應俱全。既有遠離繁囂之感,亦無甚麼生活條件不足之處。

安頓妥當,吃過豐富的晚飯後,我們就坐在容納著二百多人的禮堂裏,等待著李博士的來來與當次數學營的主要目的是爲了提高同學對經歷學問題,與趣及介紹解題的技巧。經一教學經數體富的老師提點——有機會認識新事物一定對於一種一樣會認識不久,當他金口一開,滿堂頓時鴉雀無聲,想到了就是博士的威嚴吧!這位博士年僅三十出頭,也就認可親,平易近人,又不失其博士的威嚴,也就

是學生學習的好榜樣。

博士解題時,大家更是全神貫注。沒想到那難題在博士的講解下輕而易舉的就解決了,然而所用的方法是我絕對不會用的。比如,解方程式,用的卻是三角的知識。這又令我明白到解題要善於運用以前學過的基礎知識。眞是學海浩瀚無際!

過了兩個鐘頭,我們可以回房休息了。一個房間共有十六人,我們藉著玩撲克牌,很快和其他學校的同學混熟了,有說有笑,不知不覺就到了睡覺的時間。大家躺在床上時,先是互相交談做人之道,後來以至無所不談。就在這愉快的氣氛中我漸入夢鄉……

第二天,我們將面對一小型的數學比賽。比賽

這次數學營,不但改善了我對解題方面的技巧, 而且實踐了爲人相處之道,增進了師生間的感情, 使我獲益良多啊!

# 歷史是這樣創造的

94、95、96 香港小學數學奧林匹克代表隊教練 吳重振 謝愛琼

香港自一九九四年開始派出香港小學數學奧林匹克代表隊(以下簡稱香港代表隊)參加中國及香港「首屆亞洲區城市小學數學邀請賽」以來,連續三屆的香港代表隊經我們訓練後,共榮獲三個團體冠軍、兩個團體亞軍、三個團體殿軍、十六個一等獎、六十五個二等獎和三十六個三等獎,成績彪炳,爲港爭光。

94香港代表隊在北京舉行的「第二屆全國小學數學奧林匹克總決賽」中,跟九十五隊代表隊逐鹿中原,結果戰勝日本國家隊贏取了城市隊團體成績第五名,而榮獲一等獎的隊長譚子健是一大功臣,他更是香港第一個在中國「全國小學數學奧林匹克總決賽」中榮獲一等獎的數學天才;95香港代表隊的成績更上一層樓,在惠州舉行的「第

三屆全國小學數學奧林匹克總決賽」中,榮獲全國接力賽 甲組冠軍、乙組亞軍、丙組亞軍及數學競賽全國第四名; 96香港代表隊的成績再攀高峰!再創歷史!在香港舉行的 「首屆亞洲區城市小學數學邀請賽」中,戰勝了來自中 國、台灣、日本、馬來西亞、泰國及菲律賓的城市代表 隊,榮獲紅組隊際冠軍和藍組隊際冠軍。我們訓練的三屆 香港代表隊所取得的驕人成績,爲香港小學數學資優教育 寫下光輝的一頁,他們能夠跟亞洲各國的小學數學精英爭 一日之長短,究竟說明了甚麼?

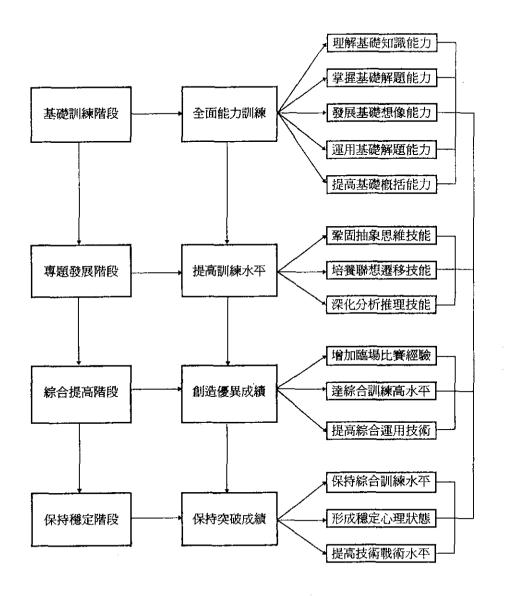
香港政府的小學教育政策,較側重普及教育,沒有像國內數學奧林匹克學校那樣對數學資優生作系統的、有計劃的長期培育。一般來說,內地的小學數學資優生在四年級開始,已定期接受訓練,而過去三屆香港代表隊的培訓及集訓工作都只能集中在六年級下學期開始,在時間上,我們首先吃了一個大虧,更何況香港代表隊每年的主要對手都是從中國各省、市、自治區內二、三百萬的學生中,經過初賽和決賽脫穎而出的佼佼者,國內用兩、三年才能完成的培訓工作,我們卻要跟時間競賽在短短的兩、三個月內把擬定甄別試卷、揀選合適教材、編排培訓進度、選拔數學天才、制訂比賽策略等事情作最優化的處理。我們憑著推動小學數學資優教育的熱誠和經驗,探索出一條在短期內發掘、培育小學數學資優生的道路。值得高興的是三年以來我們都能夠成功地選拔數學天才,組成香港代表隊,出外參賽,屢創佳績,爲港爭光。

「首屆及第二屆香港小學數學奧林匹克競賽」及「96 香港小學數學精英選拔賽」分別在九四年五月、九五年三 月及九六年三月舉行,參加甄選的小學數學資優生分別有 七百多人、一千一百多人及一千七百多人,我們每年在比賽結束後都會立刻向老師和學生派發所有題目的詳細解答,希望藉著比賽的機會培養小學生對數學的興趣以及進一步推廣這項深具意義的小學數學比賽活動。三年來,我們都從全港數百所小學擇優錄取一百多名學生接受加速式學習的培訓課程,再從中選出香港代表隊進行「密集式訓練」。

培訓,從狹義的角度來說,是指具體的訓練工作;從廣義的角度來說,是指競賽者在賽前爲創造最佳成績所做的全部準備過程。最佳訓練不僅要看最後的結果,而且還要看是否做到以最小的投入獲得最大的效益。現代競賽的訓練早已告別昔日簡單的"個人經驗"、"時間投入"和"題海戰術",邁入科學訓練的殿堂。

下圖是我們設計的小學數學奧林匹克競賽程序化訓練的四個階段:

# 香港小學數學奧林匹克程序化訓練圖解



資優學生感知敏銳、注意集中、記憶牢固、想像豐富、思考敏捷、理解力強、能創造性地解決問題,他們這些智力及個人特點必然成為所採用教學方法的重要依據。國內外對資優學生所實施的教育,其成功與否在相當大的程度上取決於所採用的教學方法。三年以來,我們探索出一種能夠在短時期發揮小學數學資優生潛能的「加速式教學法」,其具體操作過程有下列五個步驟:

#### 第一步: 出示競賽題

競賽題以專題的形式顯示,一般有二、 三十道,是有機的整體;題目安排由淺入 深,循序漸進,層層相因,環環相扣,前有 孕伏,後有突破。

#### 第二步: 嘗試練習

數學資優生勇於嘗試,勇於接受挑戰, 勇於用自己的思維方式進行獨立思考,解決 問題,而且正確率甚高。老師巡迴觀察的目 的有三:

- (一) 做對的學生當堂批改,繼續讓他們嘗 試做下一道題;
- (二) 做錯的學生要求重做,不必解釋,因 爲資優生自我更正的能力甚強;
- (三) 未完成的學生,不必打擾,讓他們繼續嘗試。

# 第三步: 老師提示或個別教學

學生經過一段時間嘗試練習後,做對的,讓他們繼續用自己的能力高速前進;做 錯或未完成的,若佔大多數,老師就必須畫 龍點睛,向全體學生重點提示,因勢利導, 引而不發,讓他們繼續嘗試。

再做錯或未完成的學生若只佔少數,對 前者來說,老師就必須盡快指出其錯誤的地 方,不能讓他們孤立、片面認識問題,然後 給與他們繼續嘗試的機會;對後者來說,老 師的做法有二:

- (一) 必須「接棒」,敏銳地搜索學生的思路,與學生一起思考,共同尋找解題的突破口;
- (二) 指出學生思維的疏漏,並加以點撥, 令其恍然大悟,懸崖勒馬,不再鑽牛 角尖。

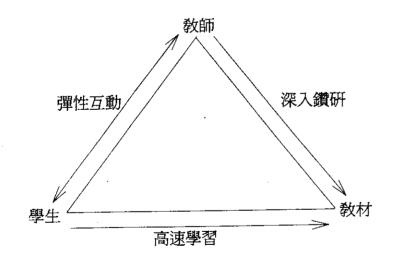
#### 第四步: 學生討論

大部份學生做對的題目,一般來說,讓解題方法最「漂亮」的學生板演,讓全體學生討論其思路,板演的學生可以答辯,不同的想法可以爭論,各抒己見,這樣進行解題思維訓練,可以激發學生對解題思路及方法作最優化的處理。

# 第五步: 老師講解

老師對大部份學生「沒有眞正弄懂」或「感到迷迷糊糊」的概念進行系統講解,指導學生分析問題,驗証假設,推導結論,以保証學生眞眞正正掌握問題的關鍵。老師是出發人深思的問題,讓學生思考,學生遇到存疑和含糊的問題,老師先不下結論,應讓學生去探索,去分析,去討論,不去討論,所經數學生去探索,去分析,去討論,去判斷,到適當的時候再由老師理清脈絡、歸納總結。

下面的「教學三角形」概括了在加速式教學中教師、學生與教材的關係。



加速式教學法的特點是自學爲主、自我加速、立即回饋和及早更正。加速式教學法對老師、學生和教 材有「六高」要求:

教師:高知識、高技巧; 學生:高質素、高要求; 教材:高速度、高難度。

我們在培訓香港小學數學奧林匹克代表隊的過程中,看到他們如痴如醉地進行加速式學習,不斷嘗試、突破、再嘗試、再突破,永不言倦,他們的優厚數學潛質在嘗試加速中不斷萌芽,不斷顯露,不斷成長,實在令人振奮。加速式教學法不但培養出他們探索的精神和自學的能力,而且更難能可貴的是,他們環具備了勇於接受挑戰、知難而進的毅力。

香港自九四年破天荒派隊參加中國「全國小學數學奧林匹克總決賽」以來,我們每年都利用工餘僅有的時間「由零開始」一步一腳印地完成舖天蓋地而來的工作,期間的壓力,真不足爲外人道,我們感到欣慰的是三屆的香港代表隊經歷孕育、成長和騰飛三個階段,在亞洲區小學數學競賽史上,創造了一個可以說是空前的壯麗景觀。

展望將來,我們盼望香港小學數學資優教育有長足的發展,也希望藉著此篇文章與有關專家、學者及老師交流小學數學資優教育的經驗。我們深感香港學生數學潛質優厚,及早甄選、培訓使其成材,不單是社會所需,也是國家福祉所在。

由 87·4% 談起

柏

### 一. <u>前</u>言

某日到一間茶餐廳午膳,因爲人客太多,所以好不容易才在該餐廳的樓上找到一列卡位坐下,而卡位的另一邊剛巧亦坐了一對男女。言談間,男的指出到樓上來的客人有87.4%是女性。在短短數分鐘內,通過觀察和心算而得出這結果,佩服!

驟眼看來,找出這答案並不是太難的事。 $\frac{6}{7}$ 不就是 87.4%嗎?不!  $\frac{6}{7}$  等於 85.7%,比 87.4%小。是  $\frac{7}{8}$ 嗎?亦 不是,這又比 87.4%多了一些( $\frac{7}{8}$ = 87.5%)! 到底他是怎 樣算得87.4%的 呢?不會是  $\frac{874}{1000}$  或是  $\frac{437}{500}$  吧!

# 二. 問題

基於餐廳的面積不大,我們不妨假設在數分鐘內到樓上的人客數目不多於100。我們的問題便可轉化為:求一分數  $\frac{p}{q}$  (其中 p,q 為正整數,且 p, q≤100) 使得它 與87.4% 最接近 (亦即求不大於100的正整數p和q,使得  $0.874-\frac{p}{q}$  的值爲最小)。

解這一道類似丟番圖逼近的問題,我們將利用連分數 和 Farey 數列的一些性質。

# 三. 簡單連分數

以 [x] 表示 x 的整數部分。對任意正實數  $\alpha$  ,若  $\alpha$  不 是整數,則  $\alpha$  可用下式來表示:

$$\alpha = a_0 + \frac{1}{r_1} \rightarrow [a_0 = [\alpha], r_1 > 1]$$

若r1亦不是整數,則可再將r1表示爲:

$$r_1 = a + \frac{1}{r_2}$$
,  $[a_1 = [r_1], r_2 > 1]$ 

一般來說,若  $r_{n-1}$ 不是整數,則可再將 $r_{n-1}$ 表示爲:

$$r_{n-1} = a_{n-1} + \frac{1}{r_n} (\sharp r_{n-1} = [r_{n-1}], r_n > 1)$$

於是,我們可以得到 $\alpha$ 的一個展開式:

$$\alpha = a_0 + \frac{1}{a_1 + \frac{1}{a_2 + \dots}}$$

$$+ \frac{1}{a_{n-1}}$$

其中 $a_i(i=0,1,2,\dots,n,\dots)$ 皆是正整數。

我們亦可以用下列方式來表示 $\alpha$ :

$$\alpha = a_0 + \frac{1}{a_1} + \frac{1}{a_2} + \frac{1}{a_3} + \dots + \frac{1}{a_n + \dots}$$
或 =  $\begin{bmatrix} a_0, a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n \end{bmatrix}$ 

$$\alpha_0 = \frac{a_0}{1} \\
= [a_0] \\
\alpha_1 = a_0 + \frac{1}{a_1} \\
= [a_0, a_1] \\
\alpha_2 = a_0 + \frac{1}{a_1} + \frac{1}{a_2} \\
= [a_0, a_1, a_2]$$

爲  $\alpha$  的第一個,第二個及第三個漸近分數,又  $\alpha_{n-1} = [a_0, a_1, a_2, ..., a_{n-1}]$  爲  $\alpha$  的第n個漸近分數。

一般來說,若將 $\alpha$ 的第n+1個漸近分數表示爲分數 $\frac{p_n}{q_n}$ (其中 $p_n$ 和 $q_n$ 皆爲整數),則 $p_n$ 和 $q_n$ 可根據下列定理3.1計算出來的。

#### 定理3.1

若 
$$\alpha_n = \begin{bmatrix} a_0, a_1, a_2, ..., a_n \end{bmatrix}$$
 爲  $\alpha$  的第 $n+1$ 個漸近分數 且 
$$p_0 = a_0, \quad p_1 = a_0 a_1 + 1$$
 
$$q_0 = 1, \quad q_1 = a_1$$
 
$$p_n = a_n p_{n-1} + p_{n-2} \quad (n \ge 2)$$
 
$$q_n = a_n q_{n-1} + q_{n-2} \quad (n \ge 2)$$
 則 
$$\alpha_n = \frac{p_n}{q_n}$$

(這裏,我們不準備證明所引用的定理。如有需要,讀者可參考有關代數或數論的書籍。)

## 定理3.2

若  $\alpha_n = [a_0, a_1, a_2, \dots, a_n]$ ,爲  $\alpha$  的第n+1個漸近分數

則  $\alpha_0 < \alpha_2 < ... < \alpha_{2m} < ... \leq \alpha \leq ... < \alpha_{2m-1} < ... < \alpha_3 < \alpha_1$  (其中m爲正整數)

$$\underline{\mathbb{H}} \mid \alpha - \alpha_m \mid < \mid \alpha - \alpha_{m-1} \mid \circ$$

### 定理3.3

若  $\alpha_n$  = [ $a_0$ , $a_1$ , $a_2$ ,....., $a_n$ ] 爲  $\alpha$  的第 n 個漸近分數,且以已約簡的分數  $\frac{p_n}{q_n}$  來表示 $\alpha_n$ ,

則 
$$p_n q_{n-1} - p_{n-1} q_n = (-1)^{n-1}$$

若以連分數來表示0.874, 則 0.874 = [0,1,6,1,14,1,3]

所以,由定理3.1的公式可計算出

#### 由此可計算出

$$\alpha_0 = 0 \qquad \alpha_4 = \frac{104}{119}$$

$$\alpha_1 = 1 \qquad \alpha_5 = \frac{111}{127}$$

$$\alpha_2 = \frac{6}{7} \qquad \alpha_6 = \frac{437}{500}$$

$$\alpha_3 = \frac{7}{8}$$

顯然,

$$0 < \frac{6}{7} < \frac{104}{119} < \frac{437}{500} = \alpha < \frac{111}{127} < \frac{7}{8} < 1$$

由定理3.2 得知 $\alpha_n$ 比 $\alpha_{n-1}$  更接近 $\alpha$ 。

所以  $\alpha_3 = \frac{7}{8}$  比  $\alpha_2 = \frac{6}{7}$  更接近0.874,而  $\frac{104}{119}$  又比  $\frac{7}{8}$  更接近。但要注意的是  $\frac{7}{8}$  並不就是最接近87.4% 的分數,而它只是眾多個87.4%的漸近分數中能滿足分子和分母皆小於100,而又最接近 87.4%的一個而矣。

#### 4. Farey 數列 F<sub>n</sub>

將 0 與 1 之間,分子和分母皆爲整數,而分母不超過 n 的全體既約分數,按由小到大的次序來排列,即可得到 n 階 Farey 數列,記爲  $F_n$ 。因此,若  $0 \le a \le b \le n$  且 (a,b)=1 (即 a,b 互質) 時,  $\frac{a}{b}$  爲  $F_n$ 中的一項。

例如: 
$$F_1$$
 爲  $\frac{0}{1}, \frac{1}{1}$   $F_2$  爲  $\frac{0}{1}, \frac{1}{2}, \frac{1}{1}$ 

$$F_3$$
爲  $\frac{0}{1}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{1}$ 
 $F_4$ 爲  $\frac{0}{1}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{3}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{2}{3}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{1}$ 

若  $\frac{a}{b}$  和  $\frac{a'}{b'}$  爲 Farey 數列中的兩相鄰項,我們稱  $\frac{a+a'}{b+b'}$  爲它們的 Farey 中項。

#### 定理4.1

若 
$$\frac{a}{b}$$
 和  $\frac{a'}{b'}$  爲  $F_n$ 的兩相鄰項,  
則 (i)  $\frac{a}{b} < \frac{a+a'}{b+b'} < \frac{a'}{b'}$ 

(ii) a'b - ab' = 1  
(iii) 
$$\frac{a+a'}{b+b'}$$
 爲 $F_{b+b'}$  的其中一項。

#### 定理4.2

若 a, a', b 和b'爲正整數,且 a'b - ab' = 1, 則在  $\frac{a}{b}$  之間沒有分母小於b+b'的分數。

# 5. 問題的解

由第 3 節得知 
$$\alpha = 0.874$$
 的漸近分數爲  $\frac{0}{1}, \frac{1}{1}, \frac{6}{7}, \frac{7}{8}, \frac{104}{119}, \frac{111}{127}, \frac{437}{500}$ 

由定理(3.3)得知,若將 $\alpha$ 的第 n 個和第 n+1 個漸近分數表示爲已約簡的分數

$$\alpha_{n} = \frac{p_{n}}{q_{n}} \# \alpha_{n-1} = \frac{p_{n-1}}{q_{n-1}}$$

$$p_{n} q_{n-1} - p_{n-1} q_{n} = (-1)^{n-1} \quad (n \ge 1)$$

則

故此由定理(4.2)得知,  $\alpha_n$  與  $\alpha_{n-1}$  之間沒有分母小於  $q_n+q_{n-1}$  的分數。

而由定理(3.2) 亦可得知

若 n 爲奇數, 則  $\alpha_{n-1} < \alpha < \alpha_n$  。

若 n 爲偶數, 則  $\alpha_n < \alpha < \alpha_{n-1}$  。

所以

$$\frac{0}{1} < \alpha < \frac{1}{1} \qquad (\alpha_0 < \alpha < \alpha_1)$$

$$\frac{6}{7} < \alpha < \frac{1}{1} \qquad (\alpha_2 < \alpha < \alpha_1)$$

$$\frac{6}{7} < \alpha < \frac{7}{8} \qquad (\alpha_2 < \alpha < \alpha_3)$$

$$\frac{104}{119} < \alpha < \frac{7}{8} \qquad (\alpha_4 < \alpha < \alpha_3)$$

$$\frac{104}{119} < \alpha < \frac{111}{127} \qquad (\alpha_4 < \alpha < \alpha_5)$$

$$\frac{437}{500} = \alpha < \frac{111}{127} \qquad (\alpha_6 = \alpha < \alpha_5)$$

若  $\frac{a}{b}$  爲滿足問題的最優解,且  $b \le 100$ ,由定理 (4.2) 得知  $\frac{a}{b}$  不在區間  $\left[\frac{104}{119}, \frac{7}{8}\right]$  ,  $\left[\frac{104}{119}, \frac{111}{127}\right]$  ,

由於  $\frac{55}{63}$  < 0.874,所以小於  $\frac{55}{63}$  的其他 Farey 中項亦再無需考慮。而因為  $63 \times 7 - 55 \times 8 = 1$ ,所以  $\frac{55}{63}$  與  $\frac{7}{8}$  間沒有分母小於71的分數。

所以介於 $\frac{55}{63}$ 和 $\frac{7}{8}$ 之間且分母小於100的所有既約分數(Farey 中項)只有 $\frac{55}{63}$ , $\frac{62}{71}$ , $\frac{69}{79}$ , $\frac{76}{87}$ , $\frac{83}{95}$  (由小至大排列)。

因爲 
$$\frac{83}{95}$$
 = 0.8737 及  $\frac{7}{8}$  = 0.875 ,所以 
$$\frac{83}{95} < \alpha < \frac{7}{8}$$
 ,且  $\frac{83}{95}$  爲問題的最優解。而再沒有其他分 母小於100的分數比  $\frac{83}{95}$  更接近0.874的了。又由於 
$$\frac{76}{87}$$
 = 0.8736, $\frac{69}{79}$  = 0.8734 · 分母小於100,而其數值又在 能捨入至0.874的分數中則只有  $\frac{83}{95}$  和  $\frac{76}{87}$  。

## 6. 結論

茶餐廳的那位仁兄是由  $\frac{83}{95}$  或  $\frac{76}{87}$  算得 87.4% 的! 要是在那短短數分鐘內,走到樓上去的人數不多於 80,那麼他要不是胡說八道,便是算錯了。

# 後記

重讀本文時,也自覺有些小題大做。撰寫本文的靈感是源自文中那位男仕的速算。由分數化小數,連小學生也懂得做。求一個可捨入至一給定的小數值的既約分數,方法亦頗多。用電腦更可將在約束範圍內的所有分數化爲小數,以致得出可能的解;可是,撇開用嘗試的類似方法,問題便不再是那麼簡單了。

文章論及的這一道問題,與丟番圖逼近問題有關,亦 需利用與連分數有關的方法。

華羅庚先生亦在其多篇科學普及著作中論及連分數 (見《時代叢書》)。連分數其實是一個頗有趣的數學課題,可以說是老幼皆宜。較常見的 e,√2,黃金比,…的展開式亦頗爲特別。

$$\sqrt{2} = [1,2,2,2,\cdots]$$

$$= 1 + \frac{1}{2 + \frac{1}{2 + \dots}}$$

$$+ \frac{1}{2 + \dots}$$

$$= [2,1,2,1,1,4,1,1,6,1,1,8,1,1,3,1,9,\cdots]$$

黃金比 
$$\frac{\sqrt{5}+1}{2}$$
 =1.61803......  
= [1,1,1,1,1,...]  
 $\sqrt{3}$  = [1,1,2,1,2,1,2,...]

連分數、Farey's sequence 等問題不失爲趣味數學的一個好題目,學生只要有一部簡單的計算機便可以參與了。

順帶可以一提的是 $\pi$ 的幾個漸近分數。算 $\pi$ 是 3 1416 吧!

因為 3.1416 = [3,7,16,11], 3.1416 的最初幾個漸近 分數是可通過下列算式求得。

$$p_0 = 3$$
  $q_0 = 1$   
 $p_1 = 22$   $q_1 = 7$   
 $p_2 = a_2 p_1 + p_0$   $q_2 = a_2 q_1 + q_0$   
 $= 16 \times 22 + 3$   $= 16 \times 7 + 1$   
 $= 355$   $= 113$   
 $p_3 = 11 \times 355 + 22$   $q_3 = 11 \times 113 + 7$   
 $= 3927$   $q_3 = 1250$ 

所以,3.1416 最初的三個漸近分數分別是  $\frac{3}{1}$  , $\frac{22}{7}$  和  $\frac{355}{113}$  。我們時常提及的周三徑一,約率  $\frac{22}{7}$  和祖率(或 稱密率)  $\frac{355}{113}$ ,剛好不就是這三個漸近分數嗎?

又例如一個回歸年等於365.2422天,我們可以用連 分數來表示0.2422。

首先,用輾轉相除法,

4	10000	2422	7	
	9688	2184		
1	312	238	3	
	238	222		
	74	16		
	•	•		
		1 .		

得0.2422 = [0,4,7,1,3,…]。其漸近分數分別是

$$\frac{1}{4}$$
,  $\frac{7}{29}$ ,  $\frac{8}{33}$ ,  $\frac{31}{128}$ ,  $\frac{163}{673}$ ,......

這些漸近分數表出,四年加一閏是初步解決回歸年與一年有365天之差異的合理方案。29年7閏更好些,33年8閏又更好些。這相當於99年24閏,即「四年一閏,而百年少一閏」了。不過百年24閏,一萬年只有2400閏與一萬年應有2422這個數字又差了22個閏年,所以唯有再加「四百年再加一閏」的這一個附加方案。

下一個世紀初 2000年,按四年一閏方案應該是閏年 (2000 是 4 的倍數),但是「百年少一閏」 2000年又應該 不是閏年了(2000可被100整除),到最後的修正方案,

「四百年加一閏」(2000 是400 的倍數), 所以最終的結論 為: 公元2000 年仍是閏年。

行文至此,也自**覺**這篇後記太長,原想學寫一些科 普文章,可是對掌握「深入淺出」這技巧仍很不到家!

礙於能力有限,文中若有錯漏,敬請讀者指正。更 希望本文能起「拋磚引玉」的作用,各同工能多寫科普讀 物以供大家分享。

# 探究學習

君

「探究學習」,一個令人看起來覺得頗爲艱深的詞語。 有人認爲這種學習形式只適用於高年級的學生,或一些題 材比較特別的課題,對於上述觀點,筆者並不完全同意。

首先,就讓我們從字面上看看這個詞語到底解作什麼?從字面看,所謂「探究」,其實只不過包含了探索、發現和研究的意思。因此,這種學習形式是否只適用於高年級的學生確實是值得商榷的。身爲教育工作者,我們的首要任務是將知識傳授給學生。所以,不論他們的年紀有多少,老師都應嘗試採用不同途徑將知識灌輸給他們,從而達到教學的目的!

當然,各師各法,每位老師都可以因應學生的情況而採用不同的方法去授課,筆者對此說法絕無異議;但無可否認,每位老師所採用的方法絕對不應是一成不變的;反過來說,隨機應變可能才是最靈活的教學技巧!因此,老師如能善於在課堂內運用活動來教學的話,往往可以增加學習效果。基於上述種種原因,筆者認爲探究活動這種學習方法不單只適用於高年級的學生,甚至低年級的學生一樣可以從這學習形式中得到裨益的。

現在,就讓我們來看看這種學習形式有甚麼與別不同的好處。第一,這是一種以學生爲中心的學習方法,學生會通過各種活動,例如分組討論(discussion)、搜集資料(data gathering)或實驗嘗試(experiment)等,去發現(discover)和有系統地解釋(formulate an explanation)他們從各活動中所學到的東西,從而明白他們所要學的到底是甚麼。第二,由於他們所要學的東西是他們做實驗得回來的,並非單憑聽老師講解;所以,概念方面必然較清晰,印象方面亦會較深刻,而記憶當然亦會較持久。

事實上,在小學的課程內,也有不少課題可以通過探究活動學習的!

例一:三位數的認識

一般來說,老師會預備大量數字來幫助學生熟習三位數的 讀法和寫法。可是,老師有否考慮到這方法會令學生覺得 沉悶呢? 在這時侯,我們不妨利用探究學習法來提高他 們的學習興趣,同時亦可增強他們的記憶及鞏固所學。方 法如下: 利用2,5 和 8這三個數字,最多可以組成多 少個不同的三位數呢? (數字不得重複使用)

當中最大和最小的數各是什麼呢?爲什麼?

首先,老師將問題帶出,然後請學生們討論和嘗試,最後回答問題並加以解釋。假如學生程度許可的話,老師更可將問題稍加變化作爲延續活動,最簡單的方法莫如容許學生將數字重複使用吧!這樣一來,數字組合多了,難度亦相應被提高!

例二:圓周和直徑的關係

在教授這個課題時,老師可能會直接告訴學生圓周約是直徑的3倍,但是卻忽略了它的由來,因而令學生一知半解。可是,利用探究學習法,學生不但能認識到圓周和直徑的關係,還能夠明白3倍是怎樣得來的,這不是一舉兩得嗎?

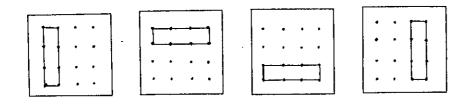
例如,老師可要求學生預備一些圓形的罐 頭,大小不拘,帶回學校進行活動。

首先,老師請同學將罐上的貼紙剪下,用直 尺量度並紀錄貼紙的長度,然後和它的直徑 作出比較。因爲每個同學所帶的罐頭大小不 同,他們的答案亦有所差異,這正好說明圓 周和直徑的關係始終維持著一個固定比率, 而這數字的數值約是3! 使用這個方法的好處在於學生利用直尺量度,他們出錯的機會比較小,亦避免了利用 繩子量度時所產生的不必要錯誤(例如繩子 所產生的彈性),因而令這學習活動的準確 度增加,令學生們更易達到學習的目的!

例三:16釘板上的四邊形

圖形的認識,看似簡單,但要學生的概念掌握得好,亦不 是一件容易的事,老師不妨考慮用探究法去達成目的吧!

每位同學利用一塊16釘板和一條橡筋,在釘板上圍出不同的四邊形,然後抄在工作紙上。最後,看誰人圍得最多,並給與老師一個合理的解釋。不過,老師一定要和學生解釋清楚下面類似的圖形只當作一個計算:



當然, 圍得多與少都不太重要, 只要學生們都用心去做, 他們的概念都會掌握得較好!

話說回來,從以上例子,我們可以看見探究學習法事實上都是由老師在課堂上和學生討論問題開始,然後學生進行不同的活動去達到學習目的。在學習過程中,假如學生遇到任何困難,老師都會和他們商討,把傳統教學的連番

講解改為補充講解,以協助他們達到學習目的。這方法重點不在老師如何教得好,而在老師如何引領學生探究得好,重點在如何組織學生的學習思維。因此,教學亦由傳統的單向改爲雙向傳遞!

當然,以上所舉的例子只是一些個人見解,老師大可因 應學生程度,學習環境等作出適當的調節,隨機應變以達 到最佳的教學效果!

# 淺談小學數學教學

祐

#### 引言

「啓發兒童的思考,培養兒童的創造力」是香港小學數學課程其中一個目的。近年推行之目標爲本課程更將「構思、探究、傳意、推理、建立與解決數學問題」等能力定爲數學科的學習總目標。可見學生之解決問題(Problem Solving)能力在數學科中甚受重視。但教師多以課本爲本教學,亦有一種「教了等於有機會學到的想法」(節錄自黃家鳴、林智中、黃毅英(1995)香港小學數學教學現況的探討)。故每多忽視培養學生解決問題的能力。本文以小學課程內之題材,舉出幾個例子,討論如何在小學數學科課堂上應用建構主義(Constructivism)、問題聯想(Problem Posing)及協作學習(Peer Collaboration)培訓學生在這方面的能力。

## 建構主義

近年頗多教育家同意用「建構主義」來審視教與學的關係。他們認爲數學知識不能單靠老師的直接傳授,而學生則被動地學習。學生應「通過活動,在已有知識基礎上對一些課題內容建立主觀的理解」(節錄自 黃家鳴、林智中、黃毅英(1995)香港小學數學教學現況的探討)。一個數學課堂應成爲培訓探究及解決問題能力的地方,因發展思考數學問題的能力比強記公式及演算法以求正確答案更爲有價值。以下是一位教師敘述她如何應用上列主義教授一年班(grade 1)學生學習「量度長度」的情況。

在上課前,我將課室內之桌椅移開,利用膠紙在地上圍出一隻船的外形,其長度約爲四米。爲了增加上課的趣味性,我更準備了一份「聖旨」,預備在上課時宣讀。「聖旨」的內容便是要學生在課堂上解決的問題。

在上課時,我選了小強作爲國王的特使並宣讀「聖旨」。小強說:「如果你們能說出這船的長度,它便會載你們到我的王國遊覽。」爲了幫助學生開始討論,我便要求學生想想,有甚麼日常經驗可幫助他們量度這船的長度。但學生們並無意見,只是一片靜寂。這時我在想,小孩子對長度有甚麼認識呢?他們在日常生活裏有甚麼情境與這相關呢?雖然現在他們茫無頭絮,但我相信總會有學生想出一點意見來的。

過了一段時間後,小玲便舉手回答說這船有一米 長。我感到有點奇怪,便問小玲如何得出這結果?她 說國王在「聖旨」上寫上的。她更解釋如何「看」到。 原來在「聖旨」上,某些字的反影,使小玲誤會答案 已寫在「聖旨」上,於是,我便向學生解釋淸楚。剛開始的討論又告終結了。

過了一段靜寂的時間後,小明忽然舉手回答說:「我知道這船一定不是一米長,因爲上星期媽媽才和我量度過高度,媽媽說我有一米高,而這船明顯比我長得多。」得到小明的啓示,學生們便開始熱烈地討論。終於,他們同意用「小明的高度」來量度,而量得船的長度剛好是「四個小明」的長度。

正當他們覺得已完成量度時,我便問他們如何告 知國王船的長度,因爲國王並不認識小明。他們便提 議將小明一起送到國王處。但有部份同學覺得小明應 該留下。這時我多麼希望他們能說出船的長度是四 米,因小明已說出他自己的高度。可能他們對這單位 並不認識,故只繼續討論找誰來代替小明。這時,突 然有人提議用腳板來量度,因爲這學生見過父母用這 方法量度一間房子的長度。於是,他們開始用腳板量 度。在量度完畢後,我便說爲使答案無誤,應找多一 位同學,再量一次。於是他們選了另一位同學作量 度,但發覺答案與先前量度到的不同,後來他們覺察 到,原來每一個人的腳板長度並不一樣。於是,有人 提議用手掌,但很快便發覺,每一個人的手掌也不一 樣的。最後,他們決定必須用一個指定的人的手掌、 腳板或身體來量度才可靠,否則便會混淆不清了。最 後他們決定選用小強,因他是國王派來的特使,國王 必定認識他。學生決定用小強的「腳板」來表示船的 長度。最後,我便利用這機會問學生爲什麼要用公認 單位(在學生來說就是「小強的腳板」)?其重要性在 那裡?學生們經過了用不同人的身體、腳和手掌的長 度來作量度所產生的混亂,故在回答這問題時,便很 容易得到正確的答案。

很多老師在教授上述的課題時,多直接要學生用米尺量度船的長度,作爲教學活動。但學生每多不知爲甚麼要用米尺。從以上的敘述,我們發覺教師只要從旁協助,使學生自己建立對課題的認識,從而通過他們積極參與,最後他們應能用已有的經驗來建立新的概念。

#### 問題的聯想

問題的聯想在學習數學時,是一個重要的環節。波利亞(George Polya)在《怎樣解題》(How to solve it) 一書中建議可循四個步驟解題。在第四步「回想與檢討」(Looking Back) 中提出因解決一些問題時,每多會聯想起其他的問題,而這些問題可能比原先的更爲有趣及有實用價值。問題的聯想亦並不一定在問題完結時才產生,而很多時是在解決某些問題前或過程中產生的。

以下是一條簡單的小學數學問題,但如要求學生將聯想起來的問題一併解決的話,這問題便變得更有趣及實用了。

下列的六位數字是否可被 13 整除呢?

- (a) 267 267
- (b) 130 130
- (c) 112 112

通常學生在解這問題時亦會同時發覺下列問題。

(一) 這些數的數字之和是否也能被 13 整除呢?

- (二) 每個由兩個相同的組(每組有三個數字)組成的六 位數是否都能被13整除呢?
- (三) 如第二題的答案是肯定的話,這些數字是否都有一個 13 以外的共同因數呢?

學生在解答上列問題時,很快便能否定第一題問題, 而第二題也很容易被肯定。但在解答第三條問題時,便需 要一些時間了。當這些學生能找出任何一個數字寫成 abcabc 的形式時,便有 1001 作爲它們的因數。學生因解 答聯想起的問題而所得的,比單做上列的數題,更能了解 因數及數的整除性。

### 協作學習

同學間之協作是指兩個初學者在一起工作以解決學習上所遇上的難題。以上所指的與「小老師」制(Peer Tutoring)及分工合作制(Cooperative Learning)有些分別。因每一組同學,大至上對問題的認識程度沒有多大分別,在互相學習和鼓勵的情況下,他們共同分享了對方分析的成果與意見。同學間的互助有利於進行「發現學習」(Discovery Learning)。因同學們會勇於嘗試,故在試驗中的錯誤更會成爲學習中的一種樂趣,而非像個人學習般,遇上困難時那麼孤立無援。上述學習的情境,特別適合於課堂上培養學生的解難能力。以下是一個頗爲適合應用協作學習形式去解答的數學問題。

在某茶室內,茶每杯三元,蛋糕每件五元。現有顧客數人,每人都吃了相同數目的蛋糕及喝了相同杯數的茶, 合共付款 133 元。問有顧客幾人,每人吃蛋糕幾件及喝茶 幾杯? 如學生個別解答上列的題目時,他們每多集中求取答案,而忽視對問題作深入分析。如果讓學生分小組討論的話,學生分析出來的答案,可能比個別同學得到的更爲豐富。以下是一些學生於討論後得到的答案。

因爲  $133 = 19 \times 7$  或  $133 = 1 \times 133$  故上列的題目只有下列幾個可能性。

每人付款	人數	茶及蛋糕的數量
\$19	7	茶三杯及蛋糕二件
\$7	19	不可能。因每人最小喝茶一杯 及吃蛋糕一件,合共 \$8。
\$1	133	不可能。因每人最小喝茶一杯 及吃蛋糕一件,合共 \$8。
\$133	1	不可能。因有多於一位顧客。

學生將答案如此分析的話,相信比只提供一個答案, 更能顯示其對題目的掌握程度。而學生解難能力亦能因此 而培養出來。

### 結語

從上述的討論中,我們能覺察到,在提高學生解決問題能力方面,教師的影響力是很大的。相信大家都同意, 老師在課堂中應作爲新的學習方法之推動者。老師在課堂 內的功能,亦以此項至爲重要。雖然以上所提的各種方法 皆需頗長的教學時間,但如在進度編排上容許的話,是頗 值得嘗試的。

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TWGHs Wong Fut Nam College

In this short note, I would like to discuss various methods used in solving trigonometric equations of the form  $a \cos \theta + b \sin \theta = c$  -----(\*)

Three often-used methods for solving (\*) are:

- (1) Express (\*) in the form  $R \cos (\theta \phi) = c$ with  $R = \sqrt{a^2 + b^2}$  and  $\phi$  given by  $\tan \phi = \frac{b}{a}$ . Solve for  $\theta - \phi$  and finally  $\theta$ .
- (2) Use the substitution  $t = \tan \frac{\theta}{2}$ . Then,  $\cos \theta = \frac{1-t^2}{1+t^2}$  and  $\sin \theta = \frac{2t}{1+t^2}$

Reduce (\*) to the quadratic equation

$$a(1-t^2)+b(2t)=c(1+t^2)$$
.

Solve for  $t (= \tan \frac{\theta}{2})$  and finally  $\theta$ .

(3) Draw the graph of  $y = a \cos \theta + b \sin \theta$  and find  $\theta$  from the intersection with y = c.

There is an approach different from these methods and the details are divulged below.

To solve (\*), let  $\cos \theta = x$  and  $\sin \theta = y$ , then get

(i) 
$$x^2 + y^2 = 1$$
, and

(ii) 
$$ax + by = c$$
.

Solve (i) and (ii) as a pair of simultaneous equations to obtain solution pairs (x,y). Finally, determine  $\theta$  from these pairs.

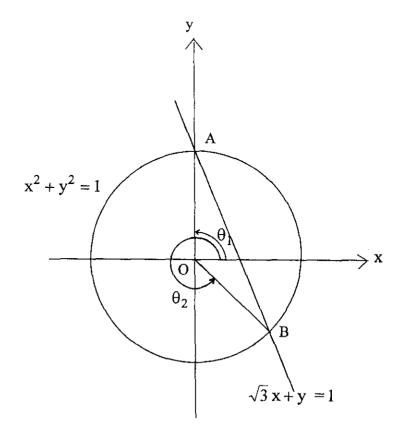
Example  $\sqrt{3} \cos \theta + \sin \theta = 1$ 

Let  $\cos \theta = x$  and  $\sin \theta = y$ , we have

(i) 
$$x^2 + y^2 = 1$$

(ii) 
$$\sqrt{3} x + y = 1$$

As shown in the figure,  $\theta_1$  and  $\theta_2$  are the solutions.



### The 37th International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO)

**Mathematics Section** 

The International Mathematical Olympiad (IMO) is an international mathematics contest for pre-university students. The first IMO was held in 1959 in Romania and only 6 countries from Eastern Europe were invited to the Olympiad. Since then, IMO had been held annually in different countries/regions around the world except in 1980. More and more countries/regions were invited to take part in the event. In particular, USA participated in 1974, China in 1985 and Hong Kong in 1988 (the 29th IMO held in Australia). Moreover, Hong Kong was given the honour to host the 35th IMO in 1994.

Contestants participate in the said event on a personal basis. A participating country/region can send a team of up to 6 students (aged under 20). Each team is

accompanied by a leader and a deputy leader. The IMO (HK) Committee, which is affiliated to the Hong Kong Mathematical Society, is responsible for the annual selection and training of students for the event. Invitation letters for nomination of students are issued to schools through the Education Department in March/April every year and a preliminary selection contest is held in June.

The 37th IMO was held in Mumbai, India in 1996. It attracted a total of 424 contestants from 75 participating countries/regions. The members of the Hong Kong Team were:

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Dr Tat-wing LEUNG

Hong Kong Polytechnic

University

Deputy Leader

Mr Cesar Jose ALABAN

St Peter's Secondary School

<u>Observer</u>

Mr Roger Keng-po NG

Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Contestants

Mr Wing-yip HO (S.7 student)

Clementi Secondary School

Mr Siu-lung LAW (S.7 student)

Diocesan Boys' School

Mr Tze-tao MOK Mr Wai-hoi POON (S.7 student)

(S.6 student)

Queen's College St Paul's College

Ms Shan-shan TSE (S.7 student)

Tuen Mun Government

Secondary School

Mr Chun-ling YU (S.7 student) Ying Wa College

The official period of the 37th IMO ran from 5 to 17 July 1996, during which jury meetings, opening & closing ceremonies, the actual contest, coordination of scores and awards were held. The actual contest took place in the morning of 10 & 11 July 1996. Contestants were required to answer in each morning three problems in 4.5 hours. The full mark for each problem was 7. The six problems were selected and moderated from more than 100 problems on algebra, geometry, number theory and combinatorics in the jury meetings held on 6, 7 and 8 July 1996.

35 gold, 66 silver and 99 bronze medals were awarded in the Olympiad. The cut off scores for a gold medal, a silver medal and a bronze medal were 28, 20 and 12 respectively. Totally, the Hong Kong Team won 1 silver and 4 bronze medals. In terms of the total scores of individual countries/regions, Hong Kong got a total of 84 and was ranked 27 among the 75 countries/regions. The top 6 countries/regions on the list were:

	Scores	Medals obtained
Romania U.S.A. Hungary Russia United Kingdom China	187 185 167 162 161 160	4 golds, 2 silvers 4 golds, 2 silvers 3 golds, 2 silvers, 1 bronze 2 golds, 3 silvers, 1 bronze 2 golds, 4 silvers 3 golds, 2 silvers, 1 bronze
China	160	3 golds, 2 silvers, 1 bronz

In particular, there was only one contestant who got full marks in all the problems (i.e. a perfect score of 42). He was the 17-year-old student, Ciprian Manolescu of Romania and was the star of the Olympiad.

## Notes on the Problems of IMO 1996

T. W. Leung Department of Applied Mathematics The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

#### Introduction

The 37<sup>th</sup> International Mathematical Olympiads (IMO) was held in Mumbai, India during July this year. A team of 6 Hong Kong students participated in the contest and received a total of 1 silver and 4 bronze medals. Personally I think they could have done better, if only they handled the problems more confidently. Another issue of concern is that they should also learn to present their ideas more properly. However I want also to commend that they had already been working hard the last few years for the IMO, besides preparing themselves for the more important public examinations.

The students sat on two  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours tests on the mornings of 10 and 11 July 1996. Each test consisted of 3 questions.

The 6 questions were chosen by the Jury from about 30 questions shortlisted by the host country (India), and the shortlisted questions were chosen from a list of about 100 questions submitted by different countries. I shall give a few comments on the 6 questions that the students struggled to solve on the two July mornings. I hope that this article is of some help to students who are interested in mathematical problem solving, also to colleagues who are interested to see how students solve problems.

- 1. Let ABCD be a rectangular board with |AB| = 20, |BC| = 12. The board is divided into  $20 \times 12$  unit squares. Let r be a given positive integer. A coin can be moved from one square to another if and only if the distance between the two squares is  $\sqrt{r}$ . The task is to find a sequence of moves taking the coin from the square which has A as a vertex to the square which has B as a vertex.
  - (a) Show that the task cannot be done if r is divisible by 2 or 3.
  - (b) Prove that the task can be done if r = 73.
  - (c) Can the task be done when r = 97?

First note that the size of the coin is not specified, thus it is in fact irrelevant, therefore we may assume the problem is to find a sequence of moves going from points to points. It is natural to identify the centre of the square with A as a vertex as (0, 0), and hence the centre of the square with B as a vertex as (19, 0). We then have to move from (0, 0) to (19, 0), with

intermediate points (x, y) satisfying  $0 \le x \le 19$ ,  $0 \le y \le 11$ , where x and y are integers. I want to remark that a few students did get confused by the term "coin". A further remark: this question is in fact composed of 4 sub-questions, (Part (a) consists of 2 sub-questions), many students spent a lot of time on 1 or 2 of the sub-questions, and that might not be very "exam-wise".

First, concerning part (a), suppose now we go from (x, y) to (x + a, y + b) with  $a^2 + b^2 = r$ , and such that r is divisible by 2, i.e.,  $a^2 + b^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$ , we immediately see the only possibilities are  $a \equiv b \equiv 0$ , or  $a \equiv b \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$ . Hence x + y and x + a + y + b are of the same parity. This implies that we cannot go from (0, 0) to (19, 0), since  $0 + 0 \equiv 0 \pmod{2}$ , yet  $19 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$ . Likewise suppose we go from (x, y) to (x + a, y + b) with  $a^2 + b^2 = r$  and such that r is divisible by 3, i.e.,  $a^2 + b^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{3}$ , then the only possibility is  $a \equiv b \equiv 0 \pmod{3}$ . Thus  $x + y \equiv x + y + a + b \pmod{3}$ . This implies we cannot go from (0, 0) to (19, 0) using this kind of moves, since  $0 + 0 \equiv 0 \pmod{3}$ , yet  $19 + 0 \equiv 1 \pmod{3}$ .

Concerning part (b), because 2 and 3 do not divide 73, part (a) does not apply, but that is not enough to ensure the task can be completed, we need to find a sequence of moves that bring us from (0, 0) to (19, 0). Many students did that by trial and error, and constructed many possible sequences of moves. Of course they answered part (b) in full, (because the task is shown to be possible), but that also cost them a lot of time. Many of the sequences so constructed are excessively long. But we may also do some initial analysis, observe that  $73 = (\pm 8)^2 + (\pm 3)^2 = (\pm 3)^2 + (\pm 8)^2$ , and these are the only possible representations of 73 as sum of two squares, thus

there are essentially 4 kinds of moves (8, 3), (8, -3), (3, 8), and (3, -8) ((-8, -3) means taking -1 step of (8, 3), and so on). Denote by p, q, r and s be the numbers of steps taken by these 4 kinds of moves, then we must have

$$8(p+q) + 3(r+s) = 19,$$
  
 $3(p-q) + 8(r-s) = 0.$ 

Many integer solutions exist for this system of equations, for instance, we may take p = 5, q = -3, r = -1, s = 2. Then we try to find a sequence with 5 moves of (8, 3), 3 moves of (-8, 3), 1 move of (-3, -8), and 2 moves of (3, -8), and we must be careful of not going out of bound. A possible solution provided by one of our students is

$$(0, 0) \rightarrow (8, 3) \rightarrow (0, 6) \rightarrow (8, 9) \rightarrow (5, 1) \rightarrow (13, 4) \rightarrow (5, 7) \rightarrow (13, 10) \rightarrow (16, 2) \rightarrow (8, 5) \rightarrow (16, 8) \rightarrow (19, 0).$$

For the last part, by the way how the question is posed and that r = 73 is a possible case, it is likely that the task cannot be accomplished when r = 97. However merely guessing the answer correctly does not carry any marks.

The official solution goes as follows. Denote by A integral points (x, y) such that  $0 \le x \le 19$ ,  $0 \le y \le 11$ , B the integral points (x, y) with  $0 \le x \le 19$ ,  $4 \le y \le 7$  (i.e. B is a suitable middle band), and  $C = A\backslash B$ . Because  $97 = 9^2 + 4^2$ , each such move must consist of one of the vectors  $(\pm 9, \pm 4)$ , or  $(\pm 4, \pm 9)$ . We then observe that the moves of types  $(\pm 9, \pm 4)$  must bring us from points in B to points in C, and vice versa, while moves of type  $(\pm 4, \pm 9)$  take us from points in C to points in C (it is impossible to go from points in B to points in

B). Now each move of types  $(\pm 9, \pm 4)$  changes the parity of the x-coordinate, so as we have to go from (0, 0) to (19, 0), an odd number of such moves is required. Each move brings us from B to C, and vice versa, hence starting from (0, 0) in C, we shall end up at a point in B. However  $(19, 0) \in C$ , we get a contradiction, thus the required sequence of moves in fact does not exist.

One of our students argued as follows. From a point P = (x, y) to a point Q = (x + a, y + b), because  $(a, b) = (\pm 4, \pm 9)$  or  $(\pm 9, \pm 4)$ ,  $a + b = \pm 4 + \pm 9 \equiv 1 \pmod{2}$ , the parity of the sum of the coordinates of P and Q are different. As the parity of the sum of the coordinates of (0, 0) and (19, 0) differ, if there is a sequence of moves to complete the task, then the total number of moves is an odd number. On the other hand, the possible y-coordinates of P and Q (with the understanding of not going out of bound), may be tabulated:

У	y + b	
0	4, 9	
1	5, 10	
2	6, 11	
2 3	7	
4	0, 8	
5	1, 9	
6	2, 10	
7	3, 11	
8	4	
9	5, 0	
10	6, 1	
11	7, 2	

Thus if y is one of 0, 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, then y + b is one of 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11, and vice versa. Therefore jumping out from (0, 0) an odd number of steps, we must land on a point with y - coordinate  $\in \{1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 11\}$ , therefore we cannot land on (19, 0) after an odd number of steps, and the supposed moves in fact do not exist. Now of course the arguments of the student were essentially correct, unfortunately none of us could see through his presentations to decipher his message. A few marks were lost. This prompted me to think: it is extremely important that a student should learn to write properly (besides having good ideas), especially they should take great care when using symbols (try to avoid them as much as possible).

### 2. Let P be a point inside triangle ABC such that

$$\angle APB - \angle ACB = \angle APC - \angle ABC$$
.

Let D, E be the incentres of triangles APB, APC respectively. Show that AP, BD and CE meet at a point.

Extend BD to meet AP at S, CE to meet AP at T, then by the angle bisector theorem,  $\frac{BA}{BP} = \frac{AS}{PS}$ ,  $\frac{CA}{CP} = \frac{AT}{PT}$ , to prove S = T, it suffices to prove  $\frac{BA}{BP} = \frac{CA}{CP}$ , this first step reduces the problem to a more tangible fashion.

There are many possible proofs and constructions. The following proof was provided by one of our students. His idea

was to make the difference of two angles again become an angle.

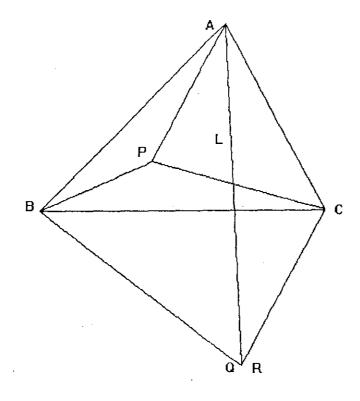


Figure 1

First construct R such that  $\triangle ARC \sim \triangle ABP$ , and Q such that  $\triangle AQB \sim \triangle ACP$ . Since  $\angle BAQ + \angle CAR = \angle PAC + \angle PAB = \angle BAC$ , thus Q and R lie on the same line L from point A. Now from the similar triangles,  $\frac{AB}{AQ} = \frac{AP}{AC}$ ,  $\frac{AC}{AR} = \frac{AP}{AB}$ , thus

$$AP = \frac{AB \cdot AC}{AQ} = \frac{AB \cdot AC}{AR}$$
, hence  $AQ = AR$ , or R and Q coincide.

From the equation  $\angle APB - \angle ACB = \angle APC - \angle ABC$ , we get  $\angle ACR - \angle ACB = \angle ABQ - \angle ABC$ , or  $\angle BCR = \angle CBQ$ , which implies BQ = CR.

Hence 
$$\frac{AB}{BP} = \frac{AR}{RC} = \frac{AR}{BQ} = \frac{AQ}{BQ} = \frac{AC}{PC}$$
, and the proof is completed.

The problem also follows from the well-known Ptolemy's theorem (see Kin Yin Li's article in Mathematical Excalibur, Sept-Oct 1996). In fact, we draw perpendiculars from P to meet BC, CA and AB at X, Y and Z respectively. Then AZPY, BXPZ, CYPX are cyclic quadrilaterals. Now

$$\angle APB - \angle ACB = \angle YAP + \angle XBP$$
 (Exterior angles)  
=  $\angle YZP + \angle XZP$  (Cyclic quadrilateral)  
=  $\angle YZX$ .

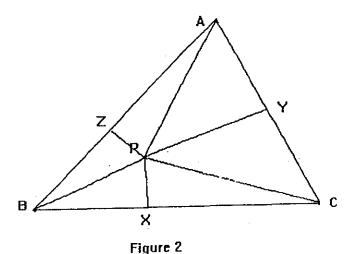
Similarly  $\angle APC - \angle ABC = \angle XYZ$ . Thus  $\angle YZX = \angle XYZ$ , hence XZ = XY.

Now BP  $\sin \angle ABC$ = BP  $\sin (\angle ABP + \angle PBC)$ = BP  $(\frac{PZ}{BP} \cdot \frac{BX}{BP} + \frac{PX}{BP} \cdot \frac{BZ}{BP})$  (compound angle formula)

$$= \frac{1}{BP} \cdot (BP \cdot XZ)$$
 (Ptolemy's theorem)  
= XZ.

Similarly CP  $\sin \angle ACB = XY$ .

Thus 
$$\frac{BP}{CP} = \frac{\sin \angle ACB}{\sin \angle ABC} = \frac{AB}{AC}$$
, hence  $\frac{AB}{BP} = \frac{AC}{CP}$ , as required.



3. Let  $S = \{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$  be the set of non-negative integers. Find all functions f defined on S and taking their values in S such that

$$f(m + f(n)) = f(f(m)) + f(n)$$
, for all m, n in S.

The good thing about trying a problem in functional equation is that one can pluck in a lot of values to get some properties of the function, however the bad thing is those properties may not lead to some things that we want. One needs to have a sense of discernment. In this case, many students recognized they had to consider the fixed points of the function. However they missed to consider the smallest fixed point, and that every other fixed point is in fact a multiple of that smallest fixed point.

Put m = n = 0, get f(0) = 0, put n = 0, get f(f(m)) = f(m), hence if f is not identically zero, then there are many fixed points. Put f(f(m)) = f(m) back to the original equation, get

$$f(m + f(n)) = f(m) + f(n).$$

Now f = 0 is a solution of the problem. If f is not identically zero, then by the well-ordering property of nonnegative integers, there exists a smallest fixed point a. If a = 1, i.e., f(1) = 1, then by induction one can show f(n) = n for every n in S. Suppose now a > 1. We note that (i) the sum of two fixed points is a fixed point, (ii) every integer of the form ka is a fixed point, which can be proved by induction, (iii) if b = aq + r is a fixed point, with  $0 \le r < a$ , then b = f(b) = f(aq + r) = f(r + f(aq)) = f(r) + f(aq) = aq + f(r), thus f(r) = r, by the minimality of a, get r = 0. This implies the fixed points of f are

precisely 0, a, 2a,  $\cdots$  (a is the generator of all fixed points). What happen to f(1), f(2),  $\cdots$ , f(a-1) then? We know that they are fixed points, hence  $f(i) = n_i a$ ,  $1 \le i \le a-1$ , and  $n_i$  are certain natural numbers (we have no further control on their values). Finally if n = ka + i,  $0 \le i \le a$ , then  $f(n) = f(ka + i) = f(i + f(ka)) = f(i) + f(ka) = n_i a + ka = (n_i + k)a$ . This means that if f(1), f(2),...,f(a-1) are chosen, the values of all f(n) are determined. We then have to check that this construction does yields a function that satisfies the functional function.

4. The positive integers a and b are such that the numbers 15a + 16b and 16a - 15b are both squares of positive integers. Find the least possible value that can be taken by the minimum of these two squares.

The problem has a strong "East European" flavor, as it turned out it was posed by Russia. The official solution goes as follows. Let  $15a + 16b = r^2$ ,  $16a - 15b = s^2$ , where  $r, s \in N$ . We now obtain:

$$r^4 + s^4 = (15^2 + 16^2)(a^2 + b^2) = 481(a^2 + b^2).$$

Note that  $481 = 13 \times 37$ . We also note the fact that -1 is neither a fourth power modulo 13 nor a fourth power modulo 37 (to see why it is the case, observe  $-1 \equiv x^4 \pmod{13}$ ) will lead to  $-1 \equiv x^{12} \pmod{13}$ , which is false by the Fermat's little theorem; likewise the congruence  $-1 \equiv x^4 \pmod{37}$  will lead to  $-1 = (-1)^9 \equiv x^{36} \pmod{37}$ , which is false again by the Fermat's little theorem). Now  $r^4 + s^4 \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$ , then either  $r \equiv s \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$ , or both are nonzeros modulo 13.

But the later case cannot occur, otherwise we get -1 a fourth power modulo 13, therefore  $r \equiv s \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$ . Therefore r and s are multiples of 13. Likewise we get  $r \equiv s \equiv 0 \pmod{37}$ . Therefore r and s are both multiples of  $13 \times 37 = 481$ , and so  $r \geq 481$ , and  $s \geq 481$ . It is easy to try out that r = s = 481 are realizable, for we may take  $a = 481 \times 31$ , b = 381. Thus the required answer is  $481^2$ .

Nevertheless it is unnatural to take the squares of  $r^2$  and  $s^2$  in the first step. In fact by way of how the equation is posed, we know that the (linear) system (with unknown a and b):

$$15a + 16b = r^2$$
  
 $16a - 15b = s^2$ 

is solvable with positive integers as solutions. Thus we might as well pretend to solve the system (by eliminating a, say) to get

$$481b^2 = 16r^2 + 15s^2.$$

Now  $481 = 13 \times 37$ . This means we have

$$16r^2 + 15s^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$$
  
 $16r^2 + 15s^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{37}$ .

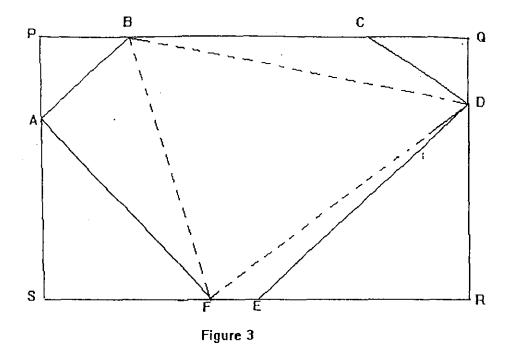
The first equation implies  $3r^2 + 2s^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$ , multiplied by 7, we get  $8r^2 + s^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$ . If r is nonzero modulo 13, then so is s, we get  $(s/r)^2 \equiv -8 = 5 \pmod{13}$ . It is routine to check that 5 is not a square modulo 13 (of course we may use the law of quadratic reciprocity, but the equation is simple enough that we can check it out case by case). Hence  $r \equiv s \equiv 0 \pmod{13}$ . Multiplying the second equation by 7, we get  $r^2 + 1$ 

 $31s^2 \equiv 0 \pmod{37}$ . Again if r is nonzero, then so is s, and we get  $(r/s)^2 \equiv -31 \equiv 6 \pmod{37}$ . It is again routine (but more laborious) to check that 6 is not a square modulo 37. Hence we must have  $r \equiv s \equiv 0 \pmod{37}$ . And we come to the same conclusion as before.

5. Let ABCDEF be a convex hexagon such that AB is parallel to ED, BC is parallel to FE and CD is parallel to AF. Let R<sub>A</sub>, R<sub>C</sub>, R<sub>E</sub>, denote the circumradii of triangles FAB, BCD, DEF respectively, and let p denote the perimeter of the hexagon. Prove that

$$R_A + R_C + R_E \ge p/2$$
.

I am not sure if I can add more to this question. As it turned out, this is one of the most difficult question encountered in the IMOs, only 5 (out of more than 400) students scored full marks (7 marks), and an average student (in the IMO) scored about 0.5 mark. Many students tried to apply fancy inequalities to solve the problem, but in fact mainly the triangle inequality is relevant. I believe there is much to learn from this problem.



We know that R<sub>A</sub> is related to BF, and BF is related to AB and AF, thus we may try to connect BF to AB and AF (and correspondingly BD to BC and CD, DF to DE and EF), hoping to get a connection between the circumradii and the perimeter. But unfortunately this reasoning is not good enough, as the official solution provides, we need to connect BF, not only to AB and AF, but also CD and DE (likewise each of BD and FD to 4 corresponding sides). I don't know if there is any other fundamentally different approach.

Now we present the official solution. Let a, b, c, d, e, and f denote the lengths of the sides AB, BC, CD, DE, EF and FA respectively. We also note  $\angle A = \angle D$ ,  $\angle B = \angle E$ ,  $\angle C = \angle F$ .

Extend BC and FE so that we can draw the rectangle PQRS such that PS meets A and QR meets D. Now BF  $\geq$  PS = QR. Therefore  $2BF \geq PS + QR$ , hence

$$2BF \ge (a \sin B + f \sin C) + (c \sin C + d \sin B).$$

Similarly

$$2DB \ge (c \sin A + b \sin B) + (e \sin B + f \sin A)$$
  
 $2FD \ge (e \sin C + d \sin A) + (a \sin A + b \sin C).$ 

Now 
$$R_A = \frac{BF}{2 \sin A}$$
,  $R_C = \frac{DB}{2 \sin C}$ ,  $R_E = \frac{FD}{2 \sin B}$ . Thus

$$4(R_A + R_C + R_E) \ge a(\frac{\sin B}{\sin A} + \frac{\sin A}{\sin B}) + b(\frac{\sin B}{\sin C} + \frac{\sin C}{\sin B}) + \cdots$$
  
 
$$\ge 2(a + b + \cdots) = 2p.$$

And hence  $R_A + R_C + R_E \ge p/2$ . Equalities hold if and only if  $\angle A = \angle B = \angle C$ , and BF  $\perp$  BC, ..., etc (i.e. the hexagon is regular).

- 6. Let n, p, q be positive integers with n > p + q. Let  $x_0, x_1, \dots, x_n$  be integers satisfying the following conditions:
  - (a)  $x_0 = x_n = 0$ ,
  - (b) for each integer i with  $1 \le i \le n$ , either  $x_i x_{i-1} = p$  or  $x_i x_{i-1} = -q$ .

Show that there exists a pair  $(i, j) \neq (0, n)$  such that  $x_i = x_j$ .

The question 6 of this IMO is in fact a relatively easy problem. Many students scored a few points after some trial and error, although they might not be able to get the full score.

The first observation is that we may assume p and q be relatively prime. In fact if d is the greatest common divisor of p and q, take p' = p/d, q' = q/d,  $x'_i = x_i/d$ , then the result is valid for the quantities x<sub>i</sub>, p and q if and only if it is valid for the quantities  $x_i$ , p' and q'. Now observe if there are k points where x move up,  $(x_i - x_{i-1} = p)$ , then there are n - k points where x move down  $(x_i - x_{i-1} = -q)$ . Hence by hypothesis kp = q(n - k)q, because (p, q) = 1, then  $q \mid k$  or k = aq, forcing n - k =ap, which implies n = a(p + q), or (p + q)|n. Trying a few simple cases (p, q small, n = 2 or 3, say), it is not hard to guess that there exist two x's, distance p + q apart, (  $x_i$  and  $x_{i+p+q}$ ), that they are equal. It is curious to observe that many students did not bother to work out a few simple cases to get some intuition, thus finally got being clogged up by a lot of messy details. We note that there are many ways to prove our claim, and we leave it to our readers.

# THE 13TH HONG KONG MATHEMATICS OLYMPIAD (95/96)

**Mathematics Section** 

The idea of Mathematics Olympiad was first introduced to Hong Kong in 1972 by the Mathematics Club of the former Northcote College of Education (NCE) Student Union. It was a mathematics competition organised exclusively for NCE students with a view to arouse their interest in mathematics. In 1974, this idea was pushed further to secondary schools in Hong Kong. Due to limited space and manpower available, only 20 schools participated in the first Inter-School Mathematics Olympiad. In 1975, the number of participating schools increased to 50.

As it was recognised that this kind of mathematics activity could promote, encourage and sustain students' interest in the study of mathematics, the Mathematics Section of the Advisory Inspectorate and the Mathematics Department of NCE modified this activity and extended it to all secondary

schools of Hong Kong. From 1983 onwards, all secondary schools were annually invited through (General) Schools Miscellaneous Circular to participate in the Hong Kong Mathematics Olympiad (HKMO). Experienced mathematics teachers are also invited every year to serve on an Organising Committee which composes of mathematics teachers, school inspectors of the Mathematics Section and College lecturers.

With the establishment of the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), the 13th HKMO was jointly organised by the Department of Science & Mathematics of the HKIEd and the Mathematics Section of the Advisory Inspectorate Division. The main activities of the 13th HKMO consisted of the Poster Design, the Heat Event & the Final Event of the contest and the Mathematics Camp. Response from schools was extremely good.

Letters were sent to all participating schools of the 12th HKMO in April 1994 to invite their participation in the Poster Design Competition of the 13th HKMO. There was a total of 180 entries from 39 schools. Outstanding entries were selected by the Organising Committee. The results of the competition were as follows:

Champion : CHING Ka-fung

(Jockey Club Govt Sec Tech School

1st Runner-up: TANG Ka-man

(Jockey Club Ti-I College)

2nd Runner-up: YU Man-ching

(Sacred Heart Canossian College)

A trophy cup was given to each of the 3 winning schools and a certificate of merit was awarded to each of the prize winners. In addition, gift coupons were awarded to the best 13 designers

as stipulated in the regulations. The poster with the best design (See Appendix) was produced and issued to all secondary schools in September 1995 for promoting the 13th HKMO. All the selected entries were exhibited in the Final Event of the 13th HKMO held in 1996.

The Heat Event was held on 10 February 1996 (Saturday) in Clementi Secondary School, Tsuen Wan Government Secondary School and Black Campus II of the HKIEd. A total of 176 schools had participated in the Event. Verbal instructions were given in Cantonese. Choice of Chinese or English version of scripts was allowed in the contest. The papers were marked by the student teachers from the HKIEd. The 40 finalists were as follows:

Team No.	Name of School		
1	Baptist Lui Ming Choi Secondary School		
2			
3	Bishop Hall Jubilee School		
4	Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College		
5	Chuen Yuen College		
6	Diocesan Boys' School		
7	Heep Woh College		
8	Heung To Middle School		
9	HKSYAPC&I Assn Wong Tai Shan Mem		
	College		
10	King's College		
11	La Salle College		
12	Ming Kei College		
13	Mongkok Workers' Children School		
14	4 Munsang College		
15	NTHYK Yuen Long District Sec School		

16	Po Leung Kuk Centenary College
17	Po Leung Kuk Tang Yuk Tien College
18	Pui Ching Middle School
19	Pui Kiu Middle School
20	Queen Elizabeth School
21	Queen's College
22	Salesian English School
23	Shatin Methodist College
24	Shun Lee Catholic Secondary School
25	Shun Tak Fraternal Assn Lee Shau Kee College
26	SKH Tsang Shiu Tim Secondary School
27	St. Catharine's School For Girls, KT
28	St. Francis Xavier's College
29	St. Francis Xavier's School, Tsuen Wan
30	St. Joseph's College
31	St. Mary's Canossian College
32	St. Paul's College
33	Tsuen Wan Public Ho Chuen Yiu Mem College
34	TWGHs Kap Yan Directors' College
35	Valtorta College

40 Yuen Long Lutheran Secondary School

A ruler which bore the logo of the HKIEd was

Wah Yan College, Hong Kong

Wah Yan College, Kowloon

Wa Ying College

Ying Wa College

36

37

38

39

presented to each of the participants in the Heat Event. In addition, a certificate of merit was awarded to each of the participants of the best three teams in each of the Hong Kong Region, Kowloon Region and New Territories Region.

The Final Event was held on 30 March 1996 in Black Campus II of The HKIEd. The results were:

Champion : Mongkok Worker's Children School

1st Runner-up: The Bishop Hall Jubilee School

2nd Runner-up: Ying Wa College

A large trophy cup was given to each of the three winning schools. Apart from the small trophy given to each of the schools participating in the Final Event, certificates of merit were also awarded to all these schools and student participants.

Thereafter, a Mathematics Camp was organised in May 1996. Letters were sent in March 1996 to the finalists of the 13th HKMO and Committee Members' schools to invite their participation in the Camp. The main objective of the Camp was to provide some follow-up activities to school teams which had performed outstandingly in the HKMO. Besides the normal recreational and social activities of a student camp, a series of training sessions on mathematics problem-solving skills were conducted for the Camp participants. competition on mathematics problem solving was also held for the Camp participants to practise the skills learnt in the training sessions. Many mathematics teachers have the opinion that the format of the HKMO should be modified to incorporate higher order process skills like problem-solving, inquiry and communication into the contest questions. Therefore, the Mathematics Camp also serves as the testing ground for the feasibility of incorporating the desired higher order process skills into the HKMO contest.

Prizes were awarded to the best 5 schools in the Problem Solving Competition in the Camp. Each of the winning schools was presented 7 copies of recreational

mathematics reference books as prizes. The 5 prize winners were:

- 1. Heung To Middle School
- 2. La Salle College
- 3. Mongkok Workers' Children School
- 4. Ying Wa College
- 5. Yuen Long Lutheran Secondary School

The 13th HKMO came to an end after the Mathematics Camp.



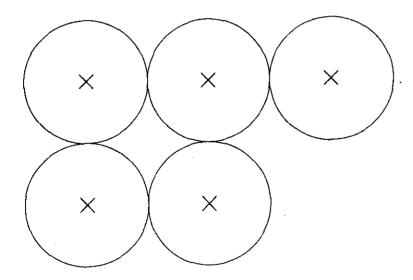
### **PASTIMES**

- 1. Which number would come next in the sequence 11, 101, 111, 181, 1001, 1111? Why?
- 2. What is the 100th letter in the pattern ABBCCCDDDD......?
- 3. How many digits does the number  $2^{100}$  have?
- 4. When each of the digits 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 is placed in exactly one of the boxes of this subtraction problem, what is the smallest difference that is possible?

5. Without using a calculator, evaluate

$$\frac{1997}{1997^2 - 1996 \times 1998}$$

6. The figure shows five identical circles. Draw one straight line across the figure so that the total area of the circles is divided exactly in half.



### Suggested Solutions to PASTIMES

- 1. The number which comes next is 1881. The first and the last digits of all the numbers in the sequence are 1. For the three digit numbers, the middle digit is either 0, 1 or 8. Following the same pattern, the two digits in the middle of four digit numbers are 00, 11 or 88. So, the answer is 1881.
- 2. N. By observation, there should be 5E, 6F, etc. Now, 1+2+3+...+13=91; adding 14 gives 105. Therefore, the 100th term of the sequence is the 14th alphabet (i.e. N).
- 3. Since  $2^{10}=1024$ ,  $2^{100}=1024^{10}>1000^{10}=10^{30}$ . Moreover

$$\frac{1024^{10}}{1000^{10}} < \left(\frac{1025}{1000}\right)^{10} = \left(\frac{41}{40}\right)^{10}$$

$$= \frac{41}{40} \cdot \frac{41}{40}$$

$$< \frac{41}{40} \cdot \frac{40}{39} \cdot \frac{39}{38} \cdot \frac{38}{37} \cdot \frac{37}{36} \cdot \frac{36}{35} \cdot \frac{35}{34} \cdot \frac{34}{33} \cdot \frac{33}{32} \cdot \frac{32}{31}$$

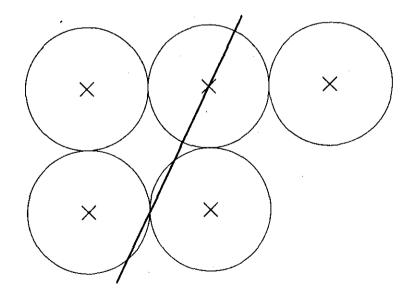
$$= \frac{41}{31} < 10$$

We have  $10^{30} < 2^{100} < 10^{31}$ . Therefore,  $2^{100}$  consists of 31 digits.

- 4. The smallest difference occurs when the minuend is as small as possible and the subtrahend as large as possible. Thus 135-97 = 38 is the smallest difference.
- 5. Let n = 1997. Then, the denominator is  $n^2 (n-1)(n+1) = n^2 n^2 + 1 = 1$

The solution is 1997.

6.



### For Your Information

### 1. Mathematics Education Resources Centre

The Mathematics Teaching Centre (MTC) at 4 Pak Fuk Road, North Point, Hong Kong was renamed as Mathematics Education Resources Centre in January 1997. However, the opening hours remain the same; that is

Monday 9:00 am - 12:30 pm
Wednesday 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 12:00 noon
(except public holidays)

To facilitate teachers preparing test/examination papers, the Mathematics Section has set up an "item bank" in the centre. In the bank, a variety of questions (such as short questions, structural long questions and multiple-choice items) at S1 - 7 levels, contributed by some enthusiastic teachers, are kept. To get the questions (in the bank) for reference, you are required to bring along with you a blank disk and copying service will be provided in the centre. In order to enrich the bank, you are cordially invited to contribute questions, which are desirable to be stored in disks and typed with "WORD 6". In addition, the Mathematics Section has designed some computer programmes to

support/facilitate mathematics teaching in schools. Details of the programmes are divulged as follows.

Name of	File	Author	Description
File	structure	ļ	
ANT.	XLS	W.T.IP	About Chaos;
	(Excel)	Maths Section	path of an ant.
COMPOUND	XLS	W.T.IP	Compound
		Maths Section	interest
MARTIX	PPT	W.T.IP	3×3 matrices.
	(Power Point)	Maths Section	Multiplication
			and inverses.
SQUARE	PPT	W.T.IP	Geometrical
		Maths Section	demonstration
			on the square
			of $A + B$ .
COMPLSQ	PPT	W.T.IP	Geometrical
		Maths Section	demonstration
·			on completing
<u> </u>	<u> </u>		the square.

You are welcome to copy/collect the programmes at the resources centre, but please remember to bring along with you a blank disk.

Apart from the "item bank" and computer programmes, you can also access to various reference materials (such as journals and teaching aids). You are cordially invited to visit the centre and give us suggestions for further improvement.

### 2. Environmental Education

The Environmental Education Resource Centre located at Room 505, 19 Hok Yuen Street, Hung Hom, Kowloon was opened in December 1996. The centre serves as a venue for displaying resource materials related to environmental education. These include reference books, leaflets, periodicals, reports, newspaper clipping, articles, teaching kits, work plans, suggested learning activities, video tapes, slides, tapes and CD-rom. In addition, advisory services on the implementation of environmental education in schools are provided there. Further details of the centre are divulged below.

**Opening Hours:** 

Tuesday 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Thursday 9:00 am - 12:30 pm Saturday 9:00 am - 12:00 noon

(except public holidays)

Enquiries:

Environmental Education Team,

Geography, History & Social Studies

Section, Advisory Inspectorate Division, Education Department.

Tel No .:

2334 7359 (Environmental Education

Resource Centre)

2892 6529 (Environmental Education

Team)

At present, publications such as "Guidelines on Environmental Education in Schools", "ECC and Me Protecting Our Environment" and "Environmental Education and Awareness in Hong Kong", and leaflets about the Environmental Education Resource Centre are available at the Mathematics Education Resources Centre. In these documents, you can find a lot of data about environmental protection, which may be useful in teaching some mathematical topics (e.g. Statistics). To access to them, please visit the Mathematics Education Resources Centre at regular opening hours as stipulated in section one.

### From the Editor

I would like to express my gratitude to those who have contributed articles and also those who have given valuable comments and suggestions to the newsletter.

The SMN cannot survive without your contributions. You are, therefore, cordially invited to send in articles, puzzles, games, cartoons, etc for the next issue. Anything related to mathematics education will be welcome. We particularly need articles on sharing teaching experiences, classroom ideas, teaching methodology on particular topics, organization of mathematics clubs and even the organization, administration and co-ordination of the mathematics panel. Please write to the SMN (with your contact address included) as soon as possible and the address is

The Editor, School Mathematics Newsletter, Mathematics Section, Room 1207, Wu Chung House, 213, Queen's Road East, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

For information or verbal comments and suggestions, please contact the editor on 2892 6554.