

ZMATH 2014b.00281

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A voyage of mathematical and cultural awareness for students of upper secondary school.

Sci. Educ. (Dordrecht) 23, No. 1, 79-123 (2014).

Summary: Many papers have emphasized the need for and importance of particular examples and the underlying rationale for introducing a historical dimension in mathematics education. This article presents the development and implementation of a project, based on original sources, in a situation where the existing curriculum does not include history. The subject was conic sections and the motivating problems and original work which eventually found resolution in modern concepts. The project was carried out during the school year 2006–2007 with 18 students of a Greek experimental high school 2nd class (grade 11). It was devised as a series of worksheets, separate readings and oral presentations and written essays so that students might appreciate that mathematics evolves under the influence of factors intrinsic and extrinsic to it. Both epistemological and disciplinary issues are taken into account. Even though this work is just one case study, we have found that exposing students directly to primary sources in mathematics contributes greatly to motivation and understanding, and illustrates the nature of mathematics as a discipline and as a human endeavour.

Classification: D34 A30 G74

Keywords: cultural awareness; mathematical awareness; conic sections; history of mathematics

doi:10.1007/s11191-013-9653-y