

Lois Marchand

SINCE RECEIVING THE Mathematics Educator of the Year Award in 1989, I have experienced a career change. In 1991, I became the staffing officer with the Calgary Board of Education. My major area of responsibility has been to oversee the recruitment and selection of teachers from K to 12. Finding the "best" teacher is challenging and rewarding, as teaching continues to be a complex endeavor.

Given that I spent many years working as a specialist in the mathematics area, my work in human resources has allowed me to examine the qualifications of preservice teachers who declare mathematics as their subject area specialty. I regret to say that it is rare to see a file from an elementary applicant who has more than a couple methods courses in mathematics and an expressed interest in the subject. When reviewing the resumes for secondary mathematics teachers, it is also unusual to find someone who has immersed himself or herself in the discipline. The academic preparation is just not there in the majority of cases.

The move toward the notion that if people have a "solid foundation in



teaching and learning" everything else will take care of itself suggests that a teacher is a teacher is a teacher. I

strongly believe that the study of general principles of teaching and learning is insufficient for teachers of mathematics because it does not include consideration of the nature of mathematics and of current research on children's mathematical thinking and its implications for instruction. The NCTM *Professional Standards for Teaching Mathematics* states: "It is time we pay equal attention to the discipline, innovative curricular materials and what we know about teaching and learning."

In discussions with human resources personnel from across Canada, they too identify a shortage of young people preparing themselves for teaching mathematics. We must somehow find ways to encourage young people in their endeavors to study mathematics if we are to ensure school mathematics leaders for the future.