TEACHING STATISTICS TO CHILDREN AGED 6-11

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Students' initial experiences with statistics are fundamental to the future development of the topic. Consequently, the teaching of statistics to children in this age group can be considered the foundation for the secondary and tersary phases of statistical education. The three sessions that comprised this part of the programme reflect three distinct, but not disjoint components of the experience. The first session examined the curriculum and addressed the issue of what statistical topics were currently included in the programme for these children. The data here contained information from both the European and North American continents. This session concluded with a panel discussion of future directions. The second session dealt with the use of probabilistic games. Active involvement in the learning process is essential to learning and these papers gave you a sense of how games can be used to develop probabilistic ideas. The third and final session consisted of two components. In one, the role of stem-and-leaf plots within the broad framework of exploratory data analysis was discussed, while in the other, a variety of activities for developing statistical and probabilistic concepts were presented.

These three sessions were designed to complement one another, comprising papers on both curriculum and instructional issues related to teaching young children. They provide some insights into the current curriculum and appropriate instructional techniques for teaching statistical concepts.

The outlines of the papers on the next few pages can only give a brief sense of the issues associated with teaching statistics to children aged 6-11. Clearly, in a few pages, all the issues cannot be even discussed, let alone explored in depth; however, the sessions provide a focus for those interested in teaching statistics to children. The questions raised by the sessions can act as a catalyst for future research and development in this area.

Examining the current literature indicates that the teaching of statistics to young children is receiving considerably more attention than a few years ago. Maybe this increased attention has been sparked by ICOTS I. Certainly, the sessions build-on and extend the information presented at ICOTS I. While it is impossible to predict what might happen in the years ahead, it is reasonable to conclude that this trend will continue and it is hoped that this component of the programme will be a foundation for part of the ICOTS III conference in New Zealand.