

MEDIA RELEASE

Supporting the next generation of mathematical minds

3 August 2015: A new assessment for children in the first years of schooling is set to change the future of mathematics education in Australia.

Developed by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) and Macquarie University, the Pattern and Structure Assessment (PASA) provides teachers with diagnostic information on young children's thinking about underlying mathematical ideas, rather than the mathematics they can and cannot do.

"By knowing how children approach mathematical tasks, teachers can plan and scaffold individual learning experiences," lead author Professor Joanne Mulligan from the School of Education at Macquarie University said, speaking ahead of the PASA launch on Wednesday 5 August in Sydney.

PASA consists of three one-on-one assessments designed for children in Foundation to Year 2. Each PASA assessment consists of approximately 15 tasks, covering a wide variety of ideas that connect with strands of the early years Australian Curriculum – Mathematics.

"PASA is based on our research with children aged four to eight years over the past decade, which has found that an awareness of patterns and the way that they are organised is central to mathematical development and spatial reasoning," Professor Mulligan said.

ACER Chief Executive, Professor Geoff Masters AO, described PASA as a game-changer for mathematical assessment in Australia.

"PASA fosters understanding of where students are in their learning, promotes tailored solutions, and has the potential to improve educational outcomes," Professor Masters said.

PASA will be launched by Dr David Cullen, Director of Early Learning and Primary Education with the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Wednesday 5 August at 4.00–6.00pm in the Lindsay Room, The Hub, Macquarie University in Sydney. Media and members of the public are welcome to attend.

PASA is published by ACER, and authored by Professor Joanne Mulligan and Associate Professor Michael Mitchelmore from Macquarie University, and Dr Andrew Stephanou from ACER, following research conducted in schools in New South Wales and Queensland by Macquarie University with funding from the Australian Research Council.

For more information about PASA, visit www.acer.edu.au/pasa.

*****ENDS*****

PASA author Professor Joanne Mulligan is available for interview.

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