
In memory of Paulo Abrantes

Julianna Szendrei and Leonor Santos

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Paulo Manuel Caetano Abrantes 1953-2003

Paulo Abrantes was vice-president of CIEAM from 1993 to 1999.

All those who had the privilege to know him recognized Paulo's curiosity and will to learn, characteristics he had since he was a little boy and that contributed to his social engagement at every level. For instance, when he was a university student, during the fascist regime in Portugal, he was leader of the students' union in Lisbon University. His social engagement continued as a mathematics teacher and mathematics educator, specifically in the work that he developed in the Portuguese Mathematics Teacher Association - APM. He was one of the founding members of APM (member number two) and one of its presidents. A long association with the Association's journal, *Mathematics and Education*, culminated with five-year tenure as Director.

Paulo Abrantes was, during 25 years, professor in the Department of Education in the Faculty of Science of University of Lisbon. He played an important role in developing course content within the department curriculum, advised a large number of students in doctoral and master programmes, and served in several administrative posts. All along his professional career, Paulo was engaged in diverse activities related to mathematics education. During the 80s, Paulo wrote several textbooks that were very innovative for the period. He coordinated working groups to study the Portuguese educational context and to provide recommendations for the future of mathematics education. In particular, he was responsible for an innovative project, MAT789, which developed a new Portuguese mathematics curriculum for 12- to 15-year-old students, and the project *Mathematics for All*, in which a large group of teachers and researchers worked collaboratively during four years, creating, applying and assessing mathematics research in the classroom.

His role in educational policy was especially significant. At the end of the 90s, Paulo was director of the Department of Education of the Portuguese Minister of Education, where he carried out a curricular reform for compulsory education. Once again he established strong relations with teachers in schools, with universities, polytechnics and other interested associations, in order to develop this reform in the context of rich participation and ample discussion. Paulo shared and discussed his research findings and policy decisions in national and international meetings, through communications, and plenary lectures (for example, CIEAEM42, 45, 52, ICTMA-9, PMEXXV). He was responsible for many articles and books.

We wish to share with all some of Paulo's principal ideas, using his own words :

- Students should use mathematics to explore problems in realistic contexts. (1988)
- The real curriculum contents are mathematical ideas and processes. (1994)
- Assessment as a component of the learning process. (1993)
- Teachers are professionals that identify and interpret educational problems and try to solve them in the context of curricular orientations. (1999)
- Mathematics is part of the cultural patrimony of mankind and a way of thinking, which should be made accessible to all. Every child and adolescent should have the opportunity :
 - to become acquainted, at an adequate level, with the fundamental ideas and methods of mathematics, and to appreciate their value and nature ;
 - to develop a capacity to use mathematics to solve problems, to reason and to communicate, as well as the self-confidence to do it. (2001)