

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kathleen Cramer is a professor in the College of Education and Graduate Studies at the University of Wisconsin at River Falls. She teaches graduate and undergraduate mathematics techniques classes for students majoring in elementary education. She has taught mathematics in elementary school and in junior high school. Kathleen has a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota in mathematics education. She has published articles and book chapters dealing with the teaching and learning of fractions and proportional reasoning. She has done numerous workshops for teachers dealing with fraction instruction.

Professor Cramer has been involved with the Rational Number Project (RNP) since 1980. She participated in the initial teaching experiments with fourth and fifth graders. She has taken the primary responsibility for revising the lessons developed from the research to form the two sets of RNP Fraction Lessons for the Middle Grades.

Merlyn Behr was for over 25 years a professor of mathematics education at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois. He was also a faculty member at Florida State University where he received his Ph.D., and at Louisiana State University at Baton Rouge. Merlyn's primary interest was in children's learning of elementary- and middle-grades mathematical concepts. He contributed a great deal to our understanding of children's cognitive processes in these areas. He was very active in the research community and served on the editorial board of the Journal for Research in Mathematics Education (JRME) and as chair of the North American chapter of the research group of the Psychology of Mathematics Education. As a co-founder of the RNP, Merlyn was instrumental in charting its course and providing much valued intellectual leadership in many aspects of RNP activity.

Merlyn died in February 1995. His wit and professional contributions are sorely missed.

Thomas Post, former high school mathematics teacher in New York State, joined the faculty of the College of Education at the University of Minnesota in 1967 after receiving his Ed.D. from Indiana University. Professor Post's interest is closely allied with other RNP members as he is especially interested in children's and teachers' perceptions of middle-school mathematics. He also has an interest in interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum. He was a co-founder of the RNP and has been active in the mathematics education research community. Along with Kathleen Cramer, Merlyn Behr and Richard Lesh, he has been one of the co-authors of some 70 papers, book chapters and technical reports produced by the RNP since its inception in 1979. Tom has also served on the editorial board of the JRME and has been chair of the North American chapter of the research group Psychology of Mathematics Education.

Richard Lesh, former professor and dean at Northwestern University, received his Ph.D. from Indiana University. He spent 5 years overseeing computer software development in mathematics and science at WICAT systems in Provo, Utah. He then served as senior research scientist at ETS in Princeton, NJ where he developed innovative strategies and materials for assessing outcomes in mathematics classrooms. Professor Lesh has served as project manager of the program unit - Research on Teaching and Learning - at the National Science foundation. Currently, he is a professor of mathematics at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth helping to further advance our thinking about authentic assessment, principles and strategies. Dick is one of the original co-founders of the RNP and has worked on each of its six grants since 1979. He currently leads the Massachusetts site of the RNP's Middle-Grades Teacher Enhancement Project which is the latest of the projects funded by NSF.

Merlyn Behr was a founding member of the Rational Number Project. He developed the first draft of the fraction materials that was used in the initial research with children. His insights into children's learning, and his thoughtful analyses of students' thinking are an integral part of this curriculum..

These lessons are dedicated to merlyn Behr. After a long and illustrious career in mathematics education, he passed away in February, 1995.

The authors would like to acknowledge the important contributions made by the fourth- and fifth-grade teachers in the Rosemount-Apple Valley, MN school district who participated in the pilot study of these materials. Their suggestions for improving the lessons have been incorporated into the materials. The quality of these lessons is due in part to the input these teachers provided.