

50<sup>th</sup> Annual NCSM Conference, Washington D.C.  
2018 Iris Carl Travel Grant Recipient Reflection  
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Being a career changer into education, my only perspective in the beginning was that of being a teacher in the classroom. As I became an instructional coach and ‘specialist’, and in getting involved in my state’s math organization, the New Hampshire Teachers of Mathematics (NHTM), I often felt like A. Square in *Flatland*, moving from one perspective, my own classroom, to realising that there are so many different dimensions in math education that go beyond the classroom and school building. Through my involvement in NHTM and in other opportunities, I was encouraged to think about attending a National Council of Supervisors of Mathematics (NCSM) annual conference, as it would further allow me to learn from, as well as interact with, many in the position of supporting math education and teachers of mathematics. Being a recipient of the Iris Carl Travel Grant made this wonderful and fulfilling opportunity a reality for me.

The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual NCSM Conference is definitely one of those monumental events in my life and career. While I wanted to attend many more sessions than I was physically capable of, I choose to focus on two of the five strands - *Cultivating a Mathematics Coaching Practice* and *Developing Mathematics Knowledge for Teaching*. I appreciated having both the book and the app in being able to look over each day’s offerings and to plan out what I would attend (although a few times it came down to doing eenie, meenie, miney, moe).

While I filled each day with attending sessions or offerings from the first opportunity in the morning to the last in the late afternoon or early evening, it would be too much to give details on each one I attended. Instead, I am highlighting a few to give a cross section of my learning.

- ***Affiliate Leaders Meeting*** (Nanci Smith -- Facilitator): As a new NCSM Affiliate’s Leader, I began the conference with attending the Affiliates Leaders Meeting. It was excellent gaining some wisdom and advice from more experienced leaders --- one of which was an idea to keep in the back of my mind to bring back to the NHTM board --- having a *Lunch and Learn* as a possible way to extend our PD offerings with a focus for specialists, coaches, and administration. This could be a complement to our *Dine and Discuss* whose focus is for classroom teachers.
- ***Response to Intervention: Amplify Instruction; Don’t Simplify Content*** (Maranacook School District, Reading ME): This session provided strategies in co-planning and co-teaching so that instruction is amplified - clarified by expanding rather than diminishing the concepts and skills in scope or complexity. These support and allow me to expand my toolbox for the teachers I work with and their students as both are initiatives we are trying to build within our district. The time to answer questions and explore their work a bit further at the end of the session was helpful along with their invitation to contact them should one want to learn more.
- ***Math Workshop: Improving Core Instruction with Guided Mathematics, Learning Stations, Student Reflection, and More*** (Jennifer Lempp): This session built off the book I had received in my conference bag. While I tend to think of math workshop as a separate/2<sup>nd</sup> math class for students, Ms. Lempp has taken this concept as a philosophy used as the backbone for any math class. In beginning to read the book, I was struck with this being an excellent structure to implement in our 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes as well as in one of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade classes next year. The structure allows for meaningful math centres and/or guided math areas as well as creating a culture for thoughtful discourse to occur. While the ideal class length for this structure is 60 to 90 minutes, Ms. Lempp graciously worked with me in how to restructure for our 40 to 45 minute class times. I had a discussion with another session participant who uses the same 5<sup>th</sup> grade text as we do and already has written lessons using this text, which is very structured, within the math workshop

framework. She generously gave me her contact information and said that she would try to answer questions and give guidance as I begin to plan with our 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher.

- ***Exploring Problems of Practice Through Role Play*** (Shannon Larsen & Cheryl Tobey): Just as we tend to let go of the use of manipulatives as an effective instructional tool in the middle grades and beyond, we also tend to let go of role playing as an effective means to plan for a variety of situations that may arise in the classroom. Here, Ms. Larsen and Ms. Tobey had us role play various situations that may arise while coaching. This allowed us to consider various approaches as well helping in taking perspective and insights into other's work. Through this work, I could see how valuable a training tool and strategy this is to help think through situations before they may occur. The session also provided me with a focus for a possible *Lunch and Learn*.
- ***Using Learning Intentions Success Criteria to Improve Teacher Clarity*** (Laurie Boswell & Sophie Murphy): Having read John Hattie's *Visible Learning* and using *Visible Learning in Mathematics* as a PLC this year, I was interested in learning more about creating and using effective clarity in writing learning intentions and success criteria. This I felt would help move the "I can" statements we currently have to a deeper level of communicating our learning intentions and allowing students to more effectively assess where they are in their own learning. Success criteria reflect the shared learning and milestones of each lesson --- they are the verbs that guide our planning and instruction. Similar to UDL - creating strong success criteria allow us to think about the desired results of a lesson, what will be acceptable evidence of learning and then plan the learning experiences and instruction to allow students to meet success. As an extension of my attending the conference, we, NHTM, are excited that Ms. Boswell will be the keynote speaker at our *Dine and Discuss* this coming October
- ***Regional Team Meetings and Caucuses*** (Shawn Towle - facilitator): This gave me a glimpse into the behind the scenes workings of NCSM affiliates within NCSM itself. Good discussions along with connections made and renewed. I agreed to serve as an Eastern I NH Team leader and appreciate the opportunity to expand my serving others.

Along with thanking my school and district administration for allowing me the time and support to participate in numerous opportunities for mathematics and education in general, I also extend my thank you and appreciation to all who presented sessions, sponsored events and worked in the background for all that you do for math teachers, leaders, and math education. Your work and willingness to share allowed me to participate fully in one of the wonderful benefits of teaching and in advocating for quality mathematics education -- that of being a student myself.

Finally, I wish to thank the selection committee and to all who have contributed to the Iris Carl Travel Grant for allowing me such an amazing opportunity. In my application, I had stated that I hoped to take my learnings and connecting with others and "pay forward" to those in my district and in New Hampshire, especially in the area of strengthening supports and professional development opportunities for math coaches and specialists statewide. I feel that I have definitely been given tools and ideas with which to do this. Thank you.

Respectfully Submitted,  
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