

47th Annual NCSM Conference, Boston, MA
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Attending the National Council of Supervisors (NCSM) Conference in Boston, MA was without question, one of the best professional development opportunities I've experienced. My checklist of hopes included having the opportunity to network with other professionals, attend sessions to learn from the leading experts in mathematics, and experience the daily keynotes to expand my thinking.

The opening keynote with Jo Boaler quickly checked the first item off my list. Dr. Boaler's easy delivery style filled with passion and punch is a must-see for leaders in mathematics. Her style of thinking regarding students learning in mathematics is a conversation starter which leads to 'what ifs' and 'how abouts' in shaping the dialogue regarding what is possible for students.

The luncheon and breakfast presentations were provided by quality speakers who inspired me to think about what they said and apply it to my situation. Jill Gough's luncheon presentation on Monday was inspirational and engaging. I appreciated how Jill connected her personal story in a relevant way. Dan Meyer is always a treat. His ability to be so connected with current issues in mathematics and offer thought-provoking commentary is a welcome voice in the conversation. Dan Meyer's talks always make me reflect upon them for a great deal of time afterward, so I appreciate his ability to be so relevant.

During the conference, my NCSM planner app for my phone was my constant companion. I was often conflicted on which one of the quality sessions I would attend. Often when I attend a conference, I have a main session I'd like to see and a back-up plan. This conference added many new wrinkles to my tried-and-true conference technique. I often had three or four plans on my list and was constantly changing and rearranging their priority of what to attend. Sometimes my decision was ultimately based on geography and selecting which session was closest to where I was located. After

seeing Jill Gough at lunch, I quickly used the ‘search by speaker’ feature of the app to see if she was presenting another session. Then I realized I already had two other sessions I’d selected for that same time slot. Highlights of my sessions were: Deborah Ball and using video to improve instruction, NCSM’s Great Modeling Tasks in 3 Acts, and a hot topics Café conversation with Greg Tang.

The ending presentation by Dylan Wiliam was an exclamation point on an amazing conference! He has long been on my wish list of people to see and NCSM was able to fulfill that wish. He was simply awesome. His visuals in unpacking formative assessment were a clear picture of how integral a part it is of many current policy priorities. Especially relevant for me was his look at the book *Switch* by Heath and Heath. I’ve heard colleagues who have read this book speak of directing the rider, motivating the elephant, and shape the path, but Dylan Wiliams’ description and connections were a great way to bring the concepts to me.

The final sentence of my Iris Carl Travel Grant application indicated that I was eager for the opportunity to network with other mathematics leaders and expand my knowledge. My experience at NCSM in Boston far surpassed my initial hope for the conference. I am grateful to the selection committee as well as the organizers of the Boston NCSM Conference for providing me with an amazing experience.