

39th Annual NCSM Conference, Atlanta, Georgia
Reflections by Noemi R. Lopez, Recipient of the 2007 Iris Carl Award
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The excitement of attending a national mathematics conference again after an eight year absence was truly exhilarating from seeing fellow Houstonian members on the same flight to Atlanta until my return on Friday. Its theme was truly appropriate for me “Achieve Success- Come to the WELL of Leadership Resources in Atlanta” as I truly sought from the wealth of expertise, research and accomplishments provided by all.

While my role at HCDE has changed from being a mathematics supervisor for over 20+ years, to director of professional development and now director of client development, I still cannot leave the mathematics area that I truly love. I am very fortunate to still be allowed to continue in this area. I have been diligently working on issues regarding mathematics and equity especially as it addresses the Latino community.

Collaboration, sharing, and becoming involved in this organization is of utmost importance. While I had been tapped to be part of the NCSM program committee earlier in the year, I accepted knowing at that time that I probably would not be able to attend the conference. I figured it was the next best thing to be given the opportunity to review the wealth of information and expertise being presented. Reviewing the proposals was quite an experience and it was more exciting to be able to greet the presenters in my afternoon shift on Monday. In addition, I recently became a board member for TODOS, Mathematics for All, and an affiliate of NCTM. Attending NCSM gave me an opportunity to help recruit new members and help with the meeting on Wednesday and Thursday. I took an active role in being involved in the awards committee, not only helping with award certificates to company sponsorships but also to honor teacher members, who like me, would not have been able to attend this conference without some financial support.

I attended as many sessions that I could that addressed equity and access. I was hoping to find research in this area that would add to my work. Sessions reaffirmed my belief that to teach ELLs we must address the affective domain and incorporate culture to make the learning personable, meaningful and relevant. Some sessions addressed such topics as differentiation instruction, ethno mathematics, social language vs. academic language, use of manipulatives to visualize mathematics in action and the need to create equitable and high quality mathematics for ALL students. I attended several sessions regarding language. What I concluded is that while we talk about word walls, that as mathematicians we have yet to define the “terms” to the BICS and CALPS of the bilingual education world. For lack of a better word, I heard presenters referring more to the social register for BICS(Basic Interpersonal communication skills) and. the Academic/Mathematics register for CALP(Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency). I especially enjoyed perusing and purchasing materials in this area at the NCTM Exhibitor area

Thanks to all the NCSM visionaries that lead us to new dimensions of learning.

Collaboratively and collectively, we will all be better equipped to meet the needs of all learners in our communities. I want to say “THANK YOU” to the membership and leadership of this great organization for supporting the Iris Carl Award and providing me the opportunity to attend the NCSM conference this year. I hope to incorporate the new ideas received into my current presentations that I am scheduled to present at our State conference and the Regional NCTM conference to be held in Houston this fall.

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