

My Reflections on Life, Liberty, and Mathematics for All at the 44th NCSM Conference in Philadelphia

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What a privilege it was to attend the 2012 NCSM Conference in Philadelphia through the support of the Iris Carl Travel Grant! As a teacher and content coach from Fairbanks, Alaska, I appreciated this amazing opportunity to participate in a conference with high-quality sessions that felt small and intimate. Looking over the program, I felt overwhelmed with the number of choices that I had.

I began by focusing on RTI and ways to support secondary students who struggle with math, since this area will be part of my new job working in our Special Education department as a K-12 math content coach. I learned about a high school that expected all freshmen to take algebra or above and how they achieved success with the students and their colleagues. Sessions also reminded me about good teaching and being effective for all students using models such as the concrete, representation, and abstract model.

I wanted to learn more about Common Core State Standards and assessments because our state is adopting new standards that are extremely similar to the Common Core State Standards. I was looking for strategies to support implementation of the standards on a district and state level. Various sessions shared a myriad of resources to help teachers understand what the Mathematical Practices look and feel like. I also learned about the assessment consortiums and their different approaches to implementing and assessing the CCSS.

Our district foci have been on Professional Learning Communities and technology so I sought sessions on those topics as well. I was very excited to see the resources that Solution Tree had developed to support PLC's in mathematics. The technology sessions offered different apps or websites that I can share with others.

During the conference, I felt like a valued professional educator with engaging keynote and luncheon speakers as well as enthusiastic discussions during NCSM State/Provincial Team Leaders meeting and the regional Caucuses.

I felt like there was serendipity at work. During one luncheon, Mary Laycock was honored for work. Mary spent many summers in Alaska and I considered her a family member. She, along with my mother, Susan Royer, inspired me to become a math educator. From Mary, I grew up hearing stories of some man named Steve Jobs and a lady named Marilyn Burns. I finally had the opportunity to see and hear Marilyn Burns talk about the Mathematics Reasoning Inventory, which was an honor.

Many conference veterans told me I needed to attend the Ignite session to end

the conference. During the Ignite session, each presenter has five minutes to present his or her 20 slides, which automatically advance every 15 seconds. The stories the presenters shared were inspiring to hear! I believe that every conference or end of year meeting should end with a few people doing something like Ignite to help celebrate and honor our profession.

What a wonderful NCSM Conference! Thank you for this opportunity through the Iris Carl Travel Grant. I continue to highly recommend this conference to anyone interested in math education and how to teach mathematical thinking to students of ages and abilities. I look forward to attending many more NCSM conferences in the future, with the opportunities to develop more knowledge and leadership skills in the field of mathematics education.