



Intersection Points

The Newsletter of the Research Council on
Mathematics Learning

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The Research Council on Mathematics Learning seeks to stimulate, generate, coordinate, and disseminate research efforts designed to understand and/or influence factors that affect mathematics learning.

Visit us on the Web at: www.unlv.edu/RCML

President's Message	2010 RCML Conference	Rich Problems	Connection Points	Investigations Publication	Election Ballot	RCML Personnel
Pages 1-2	Pages 3-4	Pages 4	Pages 4-5	Page 5	Page 6	Page 7

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Investigations in Mathematics Learning: Our first year

By Anne Reynolds

Now that we are beginning our second year of publication of our journal, *Investigations in Mathematics Learning*, I would like to reflect on what has been accomplished over these last couple of years in shepherding the journal through its beginnings. While in some sense the journal might seem like just a new name for the journal RCML was previously associated with, it is much more than that to the organization. The journal editor, Jean Schmittau, brought her expertise in establishing the international reputation of *Focus on Learning Problems in Mathematics* to the task of providing editorial leadership such that the very first issue of

Investigations demonstrated the same high quality of articles to which our readers have become accustomed. We have a journal that publishes high quality research in mathematics education while reflecting the diversity in the field. Thanks to the hard work of our VP for Publications, Sheryl Maxwell, in conjunction with Jean, we have been able to build a list of institutional subscribers beyond our own membership to begin to sustain the journal financially.

Recently faculty at my institution had the onerous task of recommending cuts in journal

subscriptions held by our library, the result of reductions in the amount of funding available to the library. I know that Ohio is not alone as a state that faced a serious budget shortfall for this year which impacted all constituents in a variety of ways, not least of which was resources at our institutions of higher learning.

Investigations was on the list of journal subscriptions from our library. As I highlighted it as one I did not want to see cut I wondered two things; one, how would my vote stack up against all the other hundreds of faculty recommendations and two, at institutions where there are no RCML members to be strong advocates for the journal, how would our journal survive such cuts? The first thing in favor of our journal surviving in either situation is that it is highly respected. Something else in its favor is that its cost compares favorably against many other journals, particularly in the sciences. However, as competition for scarce resources intensifies, I am not sure these two factors would be enough. Libraries keep track of how frequently resources are used; however, no matter how good it is, if students are not aware of a particular resource, then they will overlook it and it will sit on the shelves. That sends a clear message to administration about where to save.

For our journal to be financially viable we need both individual membership subscriptions and institutional subscriptions. When the organization was associated with *Focus* this was not a major concern for us. Someone else was responsible for marketing, particularly to institutions. Certainly under the circumstances outlined above each of us would have been strong advocates at our institutions to keep the library subscription in place but there was also someone else "out there" whose responsibility it was to build and maintain that subscription base. Regardless of all this, it seemed, we paid our

membership fees that entitled us to a copy of the journal.

The health of our organization, not just of the journal, depends on the strength of our membership. I note with sadness that our VP for Publications reports in this issue of *Intersection Points* that the current issue of *Investigations* is being mailed to only 50% of those members who received it in the spring; only those who chose to renew their membership for this year. Now is the time for us to reach out to colleagues and graduate students to think about becoming involved by submitting a proposal for our annual conference in the spring, 2010. This would be a way to encourage new membership and also reach out to former members to once again become involved.

The latest issue of the journal arrived in my mailbox just as I was writing this column. When I looked at the Table of Contents I found three articles listed that would attract a wide variety of readers: one addressed young children's learning, the second was about middle grades students, while the third focused on college level mathematics learning. Just as varied were the research methodologies employed and the research sites: Canada, Turkey, and United States. I took my copy with me when I went to teach a graduate class last evening so I could share with these students the titles of the various articles. Every one of my students became curious about at least one of the articles and wanted to read more. Perhaps I did a little to sustain the institutional subscription to our journal. I know that once they have read an article that provides them with high quality research that engages them professionally they will be back for more.

I wonder: what else can I/we do?

2010 RCML Conference

"Real Challenges in Mathematics Learning"

37th Annual Meeting
University of Central Arkansas
11-13 March 2010

Email Conference Registration Questions to
Anita Luyet: aluyet@uca.edu

As mathematics educators, we face the challenge of instructing students at all levels. We may be preparing pre-service teachers for K-12 or those who will teach for higher education. Regardless of the level, we encounter many demands. How do we implement the standards set by NCTM for our students with different ability levels?

Why was this method or material successful for one group and not the other? Does a student's written work reflect his or her learning of a given mathematical

concept? How do we develop or nurture positive attitudes towards mathematics that will affect their learning? With various reports from numerous educational associations, we face real challenges in mathematics learning.

In keeping with last year's conference, we plan to have one of the founding members give a presentation.

At the request of many RCML members, the organization will have its first proceedings at the 2010 Conference in Conway, Arkansas.

For those completing the speaker proposal form, there is a part to check if you are interested in your paper being published. After receiving notification that your speaker proposal has been accepted, submit it to the vice president of conferences, Carolyn Pinchback by

January 13, 2010 so that it can be reviewed by the editors. The paper should have a maximum of eight pages using *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (Sixth Edition), with a maximum of 1 1/2

spacing. The first page should include the title, author (s), affiliation, e-mail address, and an abstract. Continuing on page one and the following seven pages, the paper should include the related literature, methodology, results, conclusion, and references. The paper should be print ready.



2010 RCML Conference Continued...

Some dates to keep in mind:

January 13, 2010: paper to vice president of conference

February 17, 2010: notification about the status of the paper

March 3, 2010: author (s) sends revisions to vice president of conference

March 11, 2010: RCML conference at the University of Central Arkansas

Conference information and registration can be found on the RCML website at

<http://www.unlv.edu/RCML/conference2010>

***Vice President of Conferences**

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Rich Problems for Rich Discussion

Many of us who teach pre-service teachers began a conversation about what kinds of rich problems we give pre-service teachers to re-engage them in thinking about mathematics they have already “learned”. One of the problems several of us found useful for generating such engagement is the classic chicken and egg problem.

If $1\frac{1}{2}$ chickens lay $1\frac{1}{2}$ eggs in $1\frac{1}{2}$ days then how long will it take 6 chickens to lay a dozen eggs?

If you have other problems that you have found useful in reengaging pre-service teachers or students please share those with us by sending them to gmatney@uafortsmith.edu.



Making Connections – Pre-service and In-service Teacher Education



By: Kerri Richardson

The first few years of my work at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro have been exciting and filled with

challenges. Recently, my mathematics education colleagues and I recruited a group of 24 in-service elementary teachers into a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction with a concentration in elementary mathematics education. Our state will soon be approving an add-on licensure for elementary mathematics, similar to add-on licensures in other content areas such as reading.

The plan of study for this group involves mathematics and mathematics education courses along with core classes taken by other master’s students in different areas. Thus far, the group has taken 2 courses and the experience for me has been informative and thought provoking. I am able to share what these in-service teachers are experiencing in their classrooms with my undergraduates on a weekly basis. Some of the pre-service teachers are placed in the in-service teachers’ classrooms, making our conversations that much richer (perhaps in the future we can find a way to place *all* of our pre-service teachers in their classrooms).

As many of you have experienced with pre-service teachers, they are put in a position of learning about reform based mathematics at the university level but are not always seeing it in

their field placements. Even though what we are doing is a work in progress, I can already see a huge impact on the in-service teachers because they are able to really focus on one area – elementary mathematics education – an area that most who have taught for many years were underexposed to as undergraduates.



Our Journal - - INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHEMATICS LEARNING

Sheryl A. Maxwell, VP of Publications

Volume 2, No. 1 issue of **INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHEMATICS LEARNING** has been mailed to ONLY 68 of the Research Council on Mathematics Learning (RCML) members. If you did not receive a copy in September, check to see that you are a current 2009 member of RCML. If you have not yet sent in your \$35 RCML membership dues, please do so immediately so that you will be kept current in receiving the RCML journal.

If dues are not remitted promptly, the balance of the funds to produce the journal must come from the institutions around the world. If you are a recent RCML member, consider renewing by paying your dues so you can receive the 2009-2010 Volume 2 journal issues regularly. You'll find the application/renewal form on the back cover of the Vol. 1, No. 3 journal that arrived in May 2009. When you send your remittance to Mary Swarthout, Treasurer, please notify me (smaxwell@memphis.edu) by e-mail so that I can send you a Fall 2009 journal.

Additionally, check with your institution and see if they have renewed their subscription to **INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHEMATICS**

LEARNING. If your institution hasn't, let me know and I can send via e-mail their invoice for the three issues of Volume 2 that they will receive this 2009-2010 Academic Year (Fall, Winter, and Spring). They received an individual invoice in early summer, but perhaps they have not returned it, or it got lost in the library shuffle. We have about 300 institutions throughout the world that receive our journal. Continue to support our journal, **INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHEMATICS LEARNING.**



RCML MEMBERSHIP FEE

Just a friendly reminder that our membership fee is due on January 1st, 2010.

To renew a membership please send \$35.00 to the Mary Swarthout (information below).

Please direct those wanting to join RCML to our website
<http://www.unlv.edu/RCML/memberform.html>

On the website they can fill out a short form, print it off and then fax or mail that form to Mary.

Dr. Mary B. Swarthout, Treasurer

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Election Ballot – Fall, 2009

BALLOTS ARE DUE DECEMBER 1, 2009. PLEASE VOTE!

Please email your ballots to Pat Lamphere-Jordan at patricia.jordan@okstate.edu or print this page and mail it to Pat Lamphere-Jordan, 247 Willard Hall, COE-STCL, Stillwater OK 74078-4042.

President-elect (vote for one)

- _____ Winifred A. Mallam
Texas Woman's University
- _____ Kay Wohlhuter
University of Minnesota, Duluth

Treasure (vote for one)

- _____ Mary Swarthout
Sam Houston State University

Vice-president for Conferences (vote for one)

- _____ Stacey Reeder
University of Oklahoma
- _____ Martha Tapia
Berry College

Conference Committee (vote for two)

Position 1

- _____ Eileen Faulkenberry
Texas A&M at Commerce
- _____ Joyce Swan
University of Tennessee at Memphis

Position 2

- _____ Gabriel Matney
University of Arkansas at Fort Smith
- _____ Mikhail Turegun
Oklahoma City Community College

Please look for biographical information on our website at <http://www.unlv.edu/RCML/>

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