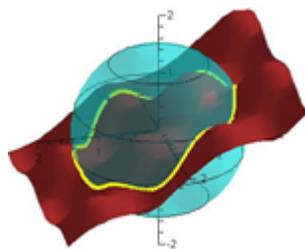




INTERSECTION POINTS

The Newsletter of the Research
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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.

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Elections

It is that time of year where we elect new officers and committee members. All RCML members need to be aware that we will be voting from December 1st through January 15th. There will be a more complete ballot that will come along with the early December issue of Intersection Points.

Signal and Noise

The purpose of this section is to get to know scholars more deeply and build relationships that span the tests of time, distance, and background. “Signal and Noise” is a reference to gaining statistical information from a data set. Each datum in a data set provides valuable information. However, it is the responsibility of the statistician to detect the unique structure (i.e., signal) found within a data set. Noise is not a negative aspect of this process but is rather a natural and welcome feature of the complex world in which we live. With that in mind, readers are invited to learn more about a senior RCML

member as well as an early career RCML member. Bill McGalliard interviewed members at the 2018 annual meeting of RCML in Baton Rouge, La. For this edition of “Signal and Noise”, Dr. Keith Adolphson (Eastern Washington University) is our featured senior member and Dr. Natalia Bailey (University of Central Missouri) is our featured early career member.

Early Career RCML Member



Natalia Bailey
University of Central Missouri

Bill: I am here today with Natalie Bailey of University of Central Missouri. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. My first question is, how long have you been an RCML member?

Natalia: Not quite a year. Last year was my first conference and that is when I became a member.

Bill: So, you’ve not been a member very long, by your own words, but what drew you to RCML?

Natalia: I had a colleague who spoke very highly of it, you might know him. He told me that this conference was different from all the other ones. He told me that the organization really cared about the people in it and had more of a mentorship model than many of the other national organizations. He told me how he had gotten involved with it and recommended it to me. I took a look and decided to put in some proposals for it because why not try something new. When I came here and got here, I loved every minute of it.

Bill: Well good, I am glad that you did. Certainly, the purpose of RCML is to try to mentor junior faculty and connect them to older faculty. What do you think, going forward, will cause you to maintain your membership?

Natalia: I plan to attend the conference this next year, I will hopefully be presenting again. I am also involved now, I've become the Social Media Director so I post events and thoughts of interest on both Twitter and Facebook. If you see any of that, it is coming from me. And I would love to get involved more with the organization. I love how RCML people really care about mathematics and really care about mathematics learning. They are trying to find new ways to do it and take old ways and make them better. They're trying to put pieces together with their research and when you go and talk to anybody, it's clear that we are all on this mission together. People are willing to help you. People want to hear your ideas. People want to help you to get to the next step in your ideas and that's something I want to be part of.

Bill: So thinking ahead to our conference for next year, what in general excites you the most about it?

Natalia: My hope is to get some more networking. I met some people last

year, that you know when you meet someone for the first time you don't get to know them very well. You have no clue what you are doing when you walk into something and I had actually walked in late having had some flight delays. So, I was a little bit off through the conference with that, but everybody that I met was just so nice. I remember I was giving a session and one person walked in and said, "I'm just here to make sure that you actually have people in your session." And you don't see anything like that at any other conference and she saw that I had quite the handful and she said, "I'm going to go check somewhere else, but I might be back." I just couldn't believe that they cared if people were listening to you, to share with you and that you could grow with them. I am hoping that I can do something like that at this next conference, that I can start encouraging others and helping them along even though I've only been here a year. I'm also hoping to just make any new networks, and that I can find someone with whom I share some research interest and we can go further. I've got a couple of projects that I am working on that I would love to invite people in to research with me. And I am willing to bring any ideas that I have into their work.

Bill: If you could talk to a longstanding veteran RCML member, is there something that you would like to ask them about how you might do some of that?

Natalia: I might ask them what's the best way of making connections at this conference. Was it trying to sit with new people during a meal? Was it trying to go to sessions that interested them? Was it trying to go to a session they knew nothing about to learn something new? What was their best way to build and keep those connections? I might also really ask about that keeping part. Once you meet someone, how do you keep in contact? How do you continue to grow that networking.

Bill: Was there any one experience, or maybe a couple of experiences, that you could point to at this conference that were the most memorable?

Natalia: There were a couple of things I remember. When I gave my presentation, I was nervous. Very nervous. All the questions that I had were people trying to help me to think more. None of the questions were put downs. All questions indicated that people really were interested and had a genuine response to what I was doing. When I went to somebody else's session, I also tried to reciprocate that. I tried to really listen to what they were saying and think about anything they hadn't thought of, and not in a put down kind of way, but a more where else could they go with this? What more could they do? I tried to ask those sorts of helpful questions. I met some graduate students, which was so amazing to think about people not even starting their careers yet, but already getting involved with this. I had some great discussions with some of them about what they were working on and where they might take it next. I am not necessarily in a beautiful place of mentoring yet, because I am at the beginning of my career myself, but I felt that I was already able to help out somebody else just by asking those genuine questions and caring to listen and taking the time to learn from them.

Bill: I appreciate you being willing to be interviewed.

Senior RCML Member



Keith Adolphson
Eastern Washington University

Bill: I am with Keith Adolphson from Eastern Washington University and thank you for being here with me today Keith. I have a couple of questions for you. First of all how long have you been an RCML member?

Keith: Oh man, you're asking me to do a computation. I would say since '98. So about 20 years.

Bill: 20 years, that's a long time of service. So, in that time, what different positions have you held here within RCML?

Keith: Mainly conference committee positions at various times. I've been an associate editor of the proceedings and I am currently on the Editorial Board for Investigations Publication committee.

Bill: During that time, either at a given annual conference or maybe just some interaction that you've had with RCML members, are there some really interesting memories or experiences or stories that you would like to share?

Keith: I don't have a story in mind per say. Conferences are always interesting in terms of the things I learn. I usually try to go to sessions either about something I'm trying to improve in my own practice, or something that I am thinking about incorporating into courses. I also like the lectures that we get and there is usually one, if not two, of the lectures that happen every year that you go away from and think about and have something that you can either incorporate or do further research on.

Bill: Any of them in particular that stick out?

Keith: Well, I think about one that was an Oklahoma City Conference and I wish I could recall most of it, but right now I remember that I got the guys PowerPoint and I occasionally pull it out and use it in my class. But basically, he used the structure of talking about a FIFA referee, a soccer referee, in terms of how that related to teaching and what he learned from talking to a FIFA referee to think about how to improve teaching.

Bill: Thinking about next year's conference in Charlotte, North Carolina, is there anything that excites you about the conference or the organization in general?

Keith: About the conference, I always like to go back to the conference because it is where I gather and where I meet all the folks that I did my doc work with. And so that is a big part of it. I also value RCML because of what we do to bring other students along. Now I don't live in a research institution, but in the past, I have brought my Master students to the conference and I hope to do

it again in the future. That would be something that I would be looking forward to doing. It won't be happening next year in North Carolina, but it is always good seeing the other students that are here. Meeting new people and encouraging them to continue coming and contributing to RCML which strengthens it.

Bill: When you bring a doc student or even a nonmember to RCML what sorts of things do you want them to take away from that experience?

Keith: That this is something I can do. If I think about my students, which are principally preservice teachers that major in Elementary Mathematics or Middle School Mathematics, they're going to be mathematics leaders when they finish their degree. I try to encourage them to think about, "What do you want to do in the long term?" I do talk to select students and say that they ought to think about becoming a mathematics educator down the road when they are ready to.

Bill: So you are thinking about how to get them into the profession?

Keith: Yeah, because I think that we need more math educators.

Bill: Yes we certainly do. So, let's talk about this particular meeting. Was there something particularly interested you or intrigued you enough to attend the meeting here in Baton Rouge?

Keith: Well I wish I could say something specific about Baton Rouge, but I can't really say that. The things I am looking for are typically things I'm working on to improve our courses. For us right now, it is things revolving around assessment and the use of assessment. And then culturally responsive pedagogy and equity issues.

Bill: So assessment within your program or are you thinking more like....

Keith: More like how can students do assessment better. This translates to how can I improve MY use of assessment, how I enact it in the classroom. Learning from other people's experiences and thinking about ways of incorporating that into my practice is probably the most important part of the conference to me.

Bill: Well thank you, Keith. I really appreciate you being willing to do this interview and we will talk to you soon.

FREE to access IML Articles

For the rest of the year everyone has access to the following two IML articles for free.

1. What do we value in secondary mathematics teaching methods?

Sean Yee, Sam Otten, and Megan Taylor

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19477503.2017.1378554>

2. Understanding children's reasoning in multiplication problem solving.

Lianfang Lu and Kerri Richardson

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19477503.2017.1414985>



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