Mathematics Council NEWSLETTER
The Alberta Teachers' Association

President's Message

Good day, my fellow mathematicians! I hope you are staying safe and keeping your hands washed. These are very interesting times, and I commend you all on learning your new skill sets—and in under 48 hours no less! Make sure you stay up to date with the amazing PD being offered by the Alberta Teachers' Association—check the webpage for the most current information.

I can only imagine the struggle, stress and feeling of helplessness you may feel from time to time. The Math Council of Alberta is here to help in any capacity we can. We are in the midst of updating our website and brainstorming other innovative ways we can assist the math teachers of Alberta.

Here are a couple of interesting problems you may want to explore with your students:

- What is the best way to arrange 5 people such that there is at least 2 metres between any 2 people? What about 6 people? What about n people—and if you say a circle, how would we determine the radius of this circle?
- Before COVID-19, handshaking was a great way to greet people. How many handshakes would have occurred in a room of 4 people? How about 8 people? What about n people?

As always, MCATA wishes you the best, and if you have a suggestion, comment or concern in how we are supporting you, please e-mail me directly at teacher.davidmartin@gmail.com.

Happy counting!

Dave Martin

From the Editor's Laptop

Since March 15, all learning has been moved out of our familiar environments. This is a substantial change; in terms of mathematics instruction and assessment, it is more urgent than ever to require teachers to focus on big ideas of mathematics teaching and learning. Teachers would also want to work collaboratively to look into the coming new school year to identify which essential outcomes would need to be addressed to prepare students for the next level of these courses. This definitely reminds me of Cathy Fosnot's landscape of learning, a framework developed to support teachers in understanding the journeys of learning mathematics focused on important strategies, big ideas and models. The temporary cancellation of classes and social distancing have pushed us to reflect on what really matters in our lives, and it definitely holds true to mathematics teaching and learning.

So, what are the big ideas that you would like to focus on for your students?

Stacey Wu

C^3: Current Commentary by the Council

Dice Chats

Have you heard of dice chats? Check out this image and write down how and what you could you count in this image. Some possible answers could be, but are not limited to

- 6 blue dice,
- 4 yellow dice,
- 10 dice,
- 12 dots on yellow dice,
- 24 dots on blue dice,
- 36 dots in total,
- 16 dots only counting the corners or
- 14 dots on any diagonal.

For this image and more, check out www.bit.ly/ Count4Me for all images curated by Dave Martin @d_ martin05.

Locally Developed

Last semester, Dwayne Donald tasked my Curriculum Foundations class at the University of Alberta with what he described as *curriculum archeology.* In participating in this archeological endeavour, I have been struck by those individuals who have striven to change education for the better, who have done so in small, achievable pieces over very long periods of time, and who have done so with the support of their colleagues and friends. It is these a-little-less-than-professional, a-little-more-than-acquaintance relationships that have bonded the Alberta mathematics education community.

When asked, Fred Tarlton recalled tent-caterpillar moths on a trip to Grande Prairie after he had received a small honorarium in Red Deer (Worth and Jorgensen 1995). Jean Martin recalled carpools and dancing in elevators, and Ted Rempel remembered falling asleep during a debrief session in a hotel room after a conference (Worth and Jorgensen 1995). Joan Worth recalled a nightmare summer of receipting memberships while at the same time developing great friendships (Worth and Jorgensen 1995). Dinners and laughter, "appropriate spirits," chuckwagons, get-togethers and dancing—so much dancing that one executive member described it as a requirement to be on the council—were also among treasured memories (Worth and Jorgensen 1995, 58).

Even while these now retired MCATA executive members admitted that there was a need for "new blood," they insisted that Alberta's mathematics education community remain on the cutting edge of curriculum and "sound mathematics learning and teaching opportunities" (Worth and Jorgensen 1995, 65). I am impressed by the impact of our local community; informal chats and long car rides have been able to temper indiscriminate testing proposals and contribute a respected professional teaching resource to Alberta. While it may feel as though the work this group of educators accomplished has been lost to the pages of history, I have been pleasantly surprised to find the yet intact testament of conversations, teaching resources and publications they left behind. My friends on the Mathematics Council have been extremely supportive in making these publications and resources available to educators. A steadily increasing number of these historical documents, alongside the consistently excellent *delta-K* journal, currently edited by Lorelei Boschman, are now available on our new accessible platform at http://mathteachers.ab.ca/. Familiarizing myself with the giants who came before me has offered perspective about the places that we've been—so much so that I feel more prepared for the conversations ahead.

Reference

Worth, J, and A Jorgensen. 1995. *Thirty-Four Years and Counting: The History of the Mathematics Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association*. Edmonton, Alta: Alberta Teachers' Association.

Darcy House

delta-K

Do you have an idea or thoughts you could share with other mathematics teachers? MCATA is looking for teacher submissions for its journal, *delta-K*. This is something that could be included on your yearly professional growth plan—and at the same time, you are sharing with others. Please consider submitting a lesson plan, activity, book review, rich task, research paper or simply something that worked in your classroom for other math teachers to try. Our combined collaboration can enrich all of our students' math experiences. Send your submission to lboschman@mhc.ab.ca and see your idea in print!

Lorelei Boschman
Editor, delta-K

Save the Date! Fall 2020

Keep October 23 and 24, 2020 open.

Despite COVID-19, our hopes are still high that we will be able to hold our fall conference in Red Deer, on October 23 and 24, 2020.

We are looking for speakers who would be interested in presenting a session on one of the following topics:

- Making thinking visible in assessments
- Making thinking visible through learning activities
- Making thinking visible through projects
- Making thinking visible through the use of technology, manipulatives or mathematical tools

We are also looking for presenters for our Math Playground on Saturday, October 24.

You can fill out the speaker proposal at https://bit.ly/MCATA20Speaker; send any questions you have to mathcouncilata@gmail.com.

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For a complete listing of
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visit www.mathteachers.ab.ca.

2020 Vision
Bringing Mathematical Thinking into Focus

Find out more at
http://mathteachers.ab.ca

#mcata20

October 23—24, 2020
Red Deer, Alberta

Keynotes

Jon Orr
@MrOrr_geek

Kyle Pearce
@MathletePearce

Guiding Questions

- **Making thinking visible in assessments**

- **Making thinking visible through learning progressions**

- **Making thinking visible through the use of technology, manipulatives or mathematical tools**

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