



Intersection Points Newsletter

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.

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[Visit the RCML website by clicking here.](#)

Message from the President

The Blank Page

Permit me to present a scene that I suspect many educators have encountered in their mathematics classes or in working with other inservice or preservice educators:

You (the educator) provide a prompt for others to work on in groups (pairs, trios, groups of four perhaps). You provide them 10 minutes, and let them know that the chart paper on their tables is for them to write down and capture their thinking related to the prompt to be utilized in whole group discussions. Perhaps you ask them to note what big ideas they are noticing, what solutions they have formulated and what implications arise for each of those solutions, or what they are wondering, noticing, and observing as they move through the solution process. The class as a whole is engaged, perhaps even more involved in discussion than usual. Every group is on task, you have walked around and listened in on conversations, and are confident everyone will have something to share that will intentionally and meaningfully drive further discussion and instruction. Around the nine-minute mark, you inform the class that you would like them to wrap up their chart paper within the minute so that you can organize their work for a whole-class discussion. As you walk around, you encounter one group (a pair) and their chart paper is filled with entirely nothing. Not one thing had been added since you had provided them with the paper. It is a blank page.

My fellow members of the Research Council on Mathematics Learning, in those moments, what do you as an educator notice and what do you wonder when you encounter a blank page? What do you notice on that blank page? What do you wonder about that blank page?

I have encountered such moments in a variety of instances throughout my various employment opportunities as an educator. Perhaps the most illuminating of these moments happened some years ago during my work with the Nevada Mathematics Project in Silver Springs, NV. The story is not too dissimilar from what I presented earlier. A blank page, quite inconsequential perhaps, turned into an opportunity for two teachers to see themselves as much more rich mathematically than the perceived emptiness of their own blank page. A blank page turned into a critical conduit to teachers' mathematical thinking, while expanding notions of the teaching experience beyond what we would normally be prone to accept in a mathematics classroom for all of us in that room.

A more recent moment, and similarly deeply developmental moment for me, happened this past semester in my undergraduate elementary mathematics methods course. Graciously, a colleague visited my class to discuss her work on multilingual learners with my class. In her thoughtful, and deeply engaging presentation, my students encountered a situation in which a multilingual learner had seemingly produced nothing for a solution strategy. A blank page turned into yet another opportunity to discuss the rich, flesh and blood humanity that underlies each blank page that any educator has ever encountered.

In finalizing this column, I read an exceptional Guest Essay in the New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/09/opinion/temple-grandin-visual-thinking-autism.html>). This essay by Dr. Grandin, *Society is Failing Visual Thinkers, and That Hurts Us All*, is the most recent work in a long line of critical research from an exceptional scientist and scholar. As a mathematics educator, the issue of visual thinkers, spatial visualization, theoretical mathematical concepts and structures, and mathematical education of our own human race has most certainly played roles in shaping my epistemological notions around defining knowledge, as well as shaping my continually developing ontological understandings of our reality. Dr. Grandin's essay moved such understandings of mine yet again. As many of our membership and mathematics education colleagues already understand on deeply personal levels, it is voices that we do not often hear, voices that often produce those blank pages that too often serve as proxies for others' humanity, that we need to listen to the most. We need voices beyond what we expect in the classroom to help shape our own understanding of what it means to live this human experience.

It is our responsibility to act in nothing but compassionate ways to life, human or non-human. It is life that produces what we educators often perceive as a blank page. Without doubt, we have very limited abilities of perception as humans. As educators in stressful situations, those limited abilities become further limited and skewed. It is only ourselves who are able to recognize these fundamental human limitations, accept them, and work to bring compassion to others as they recognize, understand, and develop their own beautifully rich human abilities.

Dr. Travis A. Olson, Ph.D.
President - Research Council of Mathematics Learning

Call for Investigations in Mathematics Learning Editor Applications

The official journal of RCML, *Investigations in Mathematics Learning* (continuously published since 1978), is one of the most prestigious journals among mathematics educators. Currently, RCML is soliciting applications for the position of Editor of *Investigations in Mathematics Learning*, for the term June 1, 2023 to December 31, 2026. The Executive Board of RCML plans to select the new Editor during the spring of 2023, followed by a six-month Editor mentorship with the current editorial team.

Prospective applicants for the three-year term of Editor need to submit a proposal that describes specifically the Editorial Office operations, the composition of the internal Editorial Board specific to mathematics education, and the planned resource utilization procedures.

For further information regarding the application process and requirements, click the link below.

Completed proposals should be submitted to Dr. Colleen M. Eddy, Vice-President for Publications, colleen.eddy@unt.edu, by March 31, 2023. Finalists will be interviewed via conference call in April 2023.

[CALL FOR INVESTIGATIONS IN MATHEMATICS LEARNING EDITOR APPLICATIONS](#)



The 50th Annual Conference of the Research Council on Mathematics Learning (RCML) will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, March 2–4, 2023 at the Alexis Park All-Suite Resort. Refracting is defined as serving or tending to refract or turning from a direct course. Hence this year's conference theme is: Reflecting on the Past, Refracting into the Future. This year we hope to reflect on our past as we direct our path into the future, rather than maintaining the status quo. The purpose of the RCML conference is to share current research in mathematics education, and within this context we ask all potential presenters to submit scholarship that reflects on the past and provides directions for the future of mathematics learning. RCML prides itself on supporting faculty and advanced graduate students as they report on finished findings, share about works-in-progress, and engage in and be receptive to constructive comments on preliminary framings/findings.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE RCML 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE](#)

RCML Elections

We need your leadership!

Nominations are now being accepted for the RCML leadership and committee positions listed below. Please consider running for office or encourage or nominate a colleague to run for a position.

Included in the list are the cycles of service associated with each position. Service years cycle annually at the business meeting held during the conference. (Note: All board positions designated as "Elect" or "Past" are ex-officio, non-voting members of the Board, with the exception of the President.)

Open positions:

Vice-President for Publications (Cycle of service: Elect, 2023; VP, 2024, 2025; Past, 2026)

Treasurer (Cycle of service: Elect, 2023; VP, 2024, 2025; Past, 2026)

Secretary (Cycle of service: 2023, 2024)

Conference Committee (Cycle of service: 2023, 2024, 2025)

Publications Committee (Cycle of service: 2023, 2024, 2025)

Nominations are being accepted now through January 23, 2023. Full descriptions of these positions can be found in the RCML Constitution and By-Laws. You can also reach out to any board member if you wish to learn more about the position before submitting. All board member contact information is listed on the leadership's web page.

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT YOUR SELF-NOMINATION](#)

(Note: You need to be logged in to access the form.)

If you have any questions about the election process or ballot information, please contact Sarah Pratt (sarah_pratt@baylor.edu), RCML President-Elect (2022-2023), who serves this year as the election manager.

RCML Membership & Dues



We welcome you to join our RCML community! As the 50th Annual Conference approaches, it's a great time to join or renew your membership in RCML! Membership includes subscriptions to *Investigations in Mathematics Learning* (IML) and our newsletter *Intersection Points*. Also included is the ability to register for the annual conference and serve in a leadership position.

Our membership fees are reasonably priced and run for the calendar year, January 1 to December 31. Membership fees are listed below:

- **Individual regular membership** - \$50.00 per calendar year.
- **Individual student membership** - \$40.00 per calendar year.
- **Individual international membership** - \$55.00 per calendar year.

We look forward to you becoming a member of our community and we will see you in Las Vegas, March 2-4, 2023!

Upcoming Conferences and Meetings

2023

Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (AMTE) - February 2-4, New Orleans, LA

Research Council of Mathematics Learning (RCML) - March 2-4, Las Vegas, NV

International Consortium for Research in Science & Mathematics Education (ICRSME) - March 15-18, 2023, Panamá City, Panamá

American Educational Research Association (AERA) - April 13-16, Chicago, IL

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