

Notes to Nerds

April 16, 2021

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Announcements

- **So Proud** - Resource teachers Hope Phillips and Laura Stokes have been invited to present at the NCTM National conference this Fall! [\(see page 2.\)](#)
- **Operation Super Solver Camp!** - *We are excited! More information to come! Fifth-grade teachers, be on the lookout!*
- **Sign up! Thinking Classroom** book study on April 20th at 7:30 pm. Join us! It will disrupt your current thinking about teaching (and, of course, new ideas!). Interested? Contact [Peter Anderson](#) !
- **Parent Resource Page** has some pretty cool MATH stuff! Check it out! [\(Cool Parent stuff\)](#) TEACHERS might like it TWO... too!



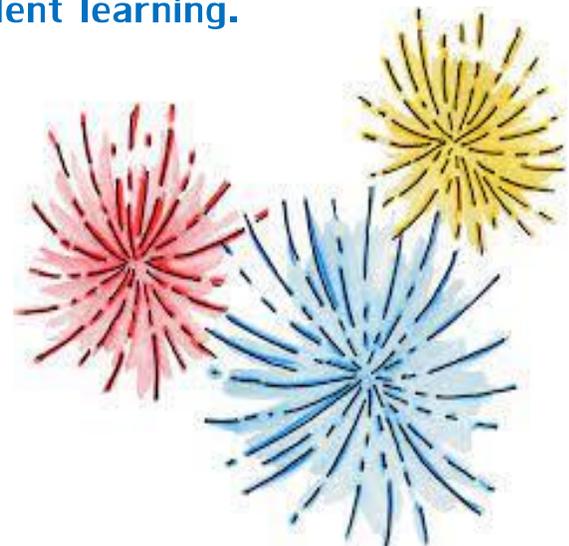
Upcoming Workshops

- Tuesday, April 20: [Aiming for Deeper Understanding - Review of Standards 2nd and 3rd](#) @3:45pm
- Tuesday, April 20: [Finding, Editing, and Creating Your Own Desmos Instructional Activities](#) @4:30pm
- Tuesday, April 20: [Thinking Classroom Book Study](#) @ 7:30pm
- Wednesday, April 21: [Leverage the Standards High School Geometry Workshop Series](#) @4:15pm
- Thursday, April 22: [Leverage the Standards High School Algebra 1 Workshop Series](#) @4:15pm
- Tuesday, April 27: [Finding, Editing, and Creating Your Own Desmos Instructional Activities](#) @4:30pm
- Tuesday, April 27: [Thinking Classroom Book Study](#) @ 7:30pm



RECOGNIZING GOOD WORK!

Two of our own are headed to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics' regional meeting in Atlanta this September. Hope Phillips and Laura Stokes, along with Amanda Merritt, a School Improvement Instructional Coach with SREB, will present, "Blending Borders for Teacher Collaboration." The session will focus on creating collaborative relationships between teachers – even when they are not in the same building or county. This multi-layered support of face-to-face coaching, virtual coaching, and training in math content develops a social network of teachers with a goal of boosting student learning.



From the Director

A curious quote for teachers as they finish the school year...

“Take a deep breath. Get present in the moment and ask yourself what is important, this very second.”

- **Gregory McKeown**

As we finish this difficult school year, I came across this advice for teachers from a leadership journal. I found it laughable at first, but it stuck in my head during a long walk with the puppy dog.

Professionally, my work situation during the past year has been a blessing, with wonderful colleagues, meaningful and interesting work. And relatively safe work conditions. The stresses I experience now are quite different from those I found in the classroom. I say all of this because I have been blown away by the efforts of my fellow educators.

My son is teaching his students fully online. The effort made by his team in supporting their students and supporting each other is beyond impressive. He has even helped restart a robotics team.

A teacher I met through the Math Collaborative virtual workshops has been teaching in a hybrid situation. She is available to students who are in front of her, as well as to her virtual students. The hybrid format seems to be the norm for many teachers, yet it is truly mind-boggling. I can juggle, but these teachers are juggling while walking on a tightrope with plates spinning on a pole balanced on their foreheads!

Incredibly enough, some schools have been face-to-face this entire year, a challenge presenting incredible emotional, physical, and logistical stresses, barely imaginable just over a year ago. Before the pandemic, a teacher had to be constantly aware of the student environment, but in a pandemic time classroom, many more layers of awareness and heightened care must take place. Of course, they have to teach, too.

Remember, when I first read the quote at the top of the page, I laughed. Any teacher knows it takes a whole lot more than a deep breath to make it through a school day, a school hour, and sometimes even a school minute.

Even now, as we begin to get some perspective and assess the situation in education, the tendency is to want to fix things. Some even want to fix everything *right now!* The second sentence of McKeown's quote counsels patience, calling us to do what is most important in the moment. To do this well, we must know what we are about.

A deep breath allows us to gain a little bit of space and perspective, no matter how small. Asking what's important returns us to our mission: *What is it that truly matters?*

I am a believer in taking deep breaths to focus the mind and emotions.
I am also a strong believer in the creativity, energy, and devotion of teachers.

Happy Maths,
Peter

AND... One of my favorite genres of music is Jimmy Buffett beach music.

Maybe on the other side of all of this we can [Breathe in Breathe out Move on](#) and share a margarita, music, and musings.



Slow Reveal Graphs and getting lost in the moment.

Warning: This is a rabbit hole.

In our office, we love to share ideas. Oftentimes, these ideas have absolutely nothing to do with the *particular project* that we should be working on! The caveat is that when we share, we generally make each other a little smarter and, by extension, we grow a little bit more.

Recently the resource teachers have been fascinated with [numberless word problems](#) as an instructional tool. It is one of those things where you strip away the numbers from a word problem, so you get down to a question. The question is easily accessible to a wide variety of students. Interestingly, the math becomes richer as the numbers become fewer because the possible solution paths become greater.

Having been drawn to this idea of numberless word problems, I did some exploration and fell into the rabbit hole of Slow Reveal Graphs. In this approach, you start with just the picture of the graph and add details as you progress. It allows students to look for patterns and gain understanding as they anticipate what will come next.

You are going to get the website link soon enough. Be warned! When you go to the webpage, you will find some interesting topics. And you are going to find yourself in the grass looking through some cool graphs.

Yes... a glorious rabbit hole. Mathematicians *and* non-mathy folk are welcome to explore!

Okay, here is the website: [Slow Reveal Graphs](#)

I dare you to go there and poke around! You might find something that interests and surprises you.

Here is the hoppity path I followed:

- I was intrigued by the [Cherry Blossoms](#) slides. (Who knew people have been collecting data for so long?)
- Then I went to the [Average Size of Major League Baseball Players](#). (Guess the player I am as tall as!)
- I snacked a little bit while viewing the [Junk Food versus Nutritional](#) food graph (Hmm... Wine has nutritional value.)
- I finished with [US Prison Population by Offense](#). (Surprised, but not surprised, by #1.)

I find it fascinating that some pretty sophisticated ponderings are created through the simple use of the Google Slide-Deck. These ponderings lead to engaging in meaningful mathematics. On one level there is accessible mathematical content, and on a whole other level, students develop ideas about the world around them!

I “hop” ... you found this rabbit hole helpful.

To think I wanted to share my new favorite game....

[Ultimate Tic Tac Toe](#) (Maybe next time.)

Contact us if you have ideas, are open to forming partnerships or working towards grant opportunities.

[Peter Anderson](#)

