
PCSM NEWSLETTER

Leaders in Mathematics Education

August 2007

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF SUPERVISORS OF MATHEMATICS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

From the President

- Mary Foley

The 30th Annual Meeting of PCSM will be held on Thursday, November 8, 2007, in conjunction with the PCTM Annual Meeting at the Radisson Hotel in Valley Forge. The meeting will begin with breakfast sponsored by Houghton Mifflin - McDougal Littell at 8:00 A.M. President-elect Jane Wilburn has put together an outstanding program featuring NCSM Eastern Representative Janie Zimmer, NCTM Executive Director Jim Rubillo, and PDE Math Coordinator Frank Marburger. Janie will present "NCSM Projects and Position Papers." Jim will then speak on "The Dialogue on Curricular Coherence: NCTM Focal Points, the National Math Panel, and Policy Directions." Then Frank will keep us up to date on "The State of Mathematics." We will also have a morning coffee break, sponsored by Prentice Hall, and we'll conclude with a luncheon, sponsored by Pearson Scott Foresman. Awards will be presented at the luncheon. Macmillan/McGraw-Hill will provide other goodies. We

Please check the date on the mailing label of the newsletter. If the date is 2007 (07) or earlier, it is time to renew your membership. Save money by renewing for three years. If each of us signs up a new member, our membership will double!

are certainly thankful to all our sponsors for their continued dedication to mathematics education and support of PCSM.

I encourage you to invite lead teachers in your districts to become members of PCSM and attend our Annual Meeting. These are the people who have the most influence on your teachers and need to be up to date on what is happening in mathematics education. Be sure to pre-register for the meeting since we will not have registration at the meeting.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all the outstanding members of our organization who have assisted me during my tenure as president. Carolyn Marchand, past president, has been a guiding influence, as have Jack Mowbray, our always efficient secretary; Kathy Hebert, who has kept our finances and membership up to date; Ann Massey, who has represented us so professionally and always looked out for our best interests at NCTM

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Annual meetings; Cathy Schloemer, who is responsible for our outstanding newsletter; Hank Field, historian; and Gen Battisto, who is in charge of awards. Special thanks to Janie Zimmer, NCSM Eastern 2 Regional Director, who has always kept us informed and has attended our Annual Meetings, as well as providing vouchers to be given to lucky members. Changes in the Constitution were necessary since we have changed the date of the annual meeting from spring to fall. Arlene Dowshen, Hank Field, and Kathy Hebert took on the awesome job of rewriting the Constitution and have done an outstanding job. We will be voting on it at this meeting. We cannot thank them enough for all the time and effort they have put into this revision. Please come prepared to vote.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Jane Wilburne, who has made all arrangements for this meeting and who will be taking over as President, and also each and every member for the time and effort you put into making mathematics interesting, exciting, and a positive experience for your students. I know you will give Jane the support and cooperation you have given me.

Enjoy the rest of your summer. See you in Valley Forge.

Mary Foley
foleymmath@earthlink.net

From the Editor

- **Cathy Schloemer**

By the time you receive this newsletter, school bells will most likely be ringing again for you. I hope you are filled with energy and enthusiasm as you return to your school.

While clearing out some old files this summer, I ran across a 10-year-old article called "The Beleaguered Mathematics Teacher" by

UCSMP Director Zalman Usiskin. Do you feel beleaguered, especially around the end of May? Can any of us not identify with the following challenges Usiskin enumerates: teaching itself, conflicts from multiple sources about what we should teach, continual media statements that we teach poorly, pressure from multiple high-stakes tests, and what Usiskin calls "Bombardment by Those at the Helm," including President Bush, NSF, NCTM, College Board, and ACT? We may have summers "off," but I often feel that summer is our "beleaguerment recovery period." Someone once said you could not burn out if you'd never been on fire, but I think it definitely helps to bank the fire every now and then, especially in the summer! I hope the summer has been a time to regain your delight in teaching and to look forward to greeting your students with the joy of a new beginning.

Remember to register for and attend our annual meeting in Valley Forge November 8. Jane Wilburne has planned a great program for us. You'll refresh yourself during the middle of the school year!

As always, this is your newsletter. Would you like to contribute a suggestion or even an article? Please send correspondence to me at:

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And thank you, Chris Czapleski, for your continuing help as proofreader!



What Do We Tell the Kids?

[You may recall in our the May 2007 newsletter an article about the "fixed mindset" and "growth mindset" of intelligence, as described by researcher Carol Dweck. The gist of the article was that learners who perceive intelligence as something that grows and changes, rather

than being fixed and immutable, will keep working to master difficult tasks rather than simply giving up. Dweck's book, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*, provides both teachers and parents with techniques for teaching children the growth mindset. Below are excerpts from a follow-up article.]

YOU HAVE A BRIGHT CHILD, and you want her to succeed. You should tell her how smart she is, right?

That's what 85 percent of the parents Dweck surveyed said. Her research on fifth graders shows otherwise. Labels, even though positive, can be harmful. They may instill a fixed mind-set and all the baggage that goes with it, from performance anxiety to a tendency to give up quickly.

Well-meaning words can sap children's motivation and enjoyment of learning and undermine their performance. While Dweck's study focused on intelligence praise, she says her conclusions hold true for all talents and abilities. Here are Dweck's tips from *Mindset*:

- * Listen to what you say to your kids, with an ear toward the messages you're sending about mind-set.

- * Instead of praising children's intelligence or talent, focus on the processes they used.

- * Example: "That homework was so long and involved. I really admire the way you concentrated and finished it."

- * Example: "That picture has so many beautiful colors. Tell me about them."

- * Example: "You put so much thought into that essay. It really makes me think about Shakespeare in a new way."

- * When your child messes up, give constructive criticism - feedback that helps the child understand how to fix the problem, rather than labeling or excusing the child.

- * Pay attention to the goals you set for your children; having innate talent is not a goal, but expanding skills and knowledge is.

- * Don't worry about praising your children for their inherent goodness, though. It's important for children to learn they're basically good and that their parents love them unconditionally, Dweck says. "The problem arises when parents praise children in a way that makes them feel that they're good and love-worthy only when they behave in particular ways that please the parents."

(Source: Jerry Becker 5/14/07, jbecker@siu.edu, as reported in Stanford Magazine [A publication of the

Stanford Alumni Association], Stanford University, March/April 2007, pp. 46-52. See <http://www.stanfordalumni.org/news/magazine/2007/mar-apr/features/dweck.html>.)

Snippets: News You Can Use

(1) Why NCLB Is Unsalvageable

There has been considerable rhetoric about why NCLB is problematic and what can be done about it. For a good and concise summary of these issues, read Eric Schaps article from *Education Week*, May 9, 2007, Volume 26, Number 36, pages 32-33, at

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/05/09/36schaps_h26.html?qs=why+the+no+child+left+behind+act+is+unsalvageable

(2) Stereotype-induced Math Anxiety Robs Women's Working Memory - Also Has Lingering Effect on Other Tasks

In the May 2007 PCSM newsletter, we featured an article about how gender-stereotype math anxiety interferes with women's working memory. A follow-up article indicates that such anxiety can carry over into other tasks, even, for example, a verbal portion of a standardized test. Read the details in the Chronicle [University of Chicago News Office], Thursday, May 24, 2007. See

<http://www.news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/070524.beilock.k.shtml> . There are related articles in the Chicago Sun Times - see <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/citations/07/070524.beilock-st.html> and the Chicago Tribune - see <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/citations/07/070524.beilock-ct.html> . A pdf of the full report from *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* is available at <http://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/070524.beilock.shtml> - click and download.

(Source: Jerry Becker)

(3) Everyday Math Blog

Whether or not you currently use *Everyday Mathematics* for your students, you may be aware of the recent "math wars" that received national attention when a superintendent declined to accept a position in a district where parents were up in arms about *EM* and its philosophy.

Jerry Becker (6/15/07) comments: "I found there some writing about *Everyday Mathematics* [multiplication -- and comments by readers] and also a letter written by the

blogger, Mr. Michael Paul Goldenberg, to Dr. Martin Brooks -- the school superintendent who changed his mind and didn't accept the position at Ridgewood School District in New Jersey due to some developments in the 'math wars' that have emerged there.

Here is the blog address:

Rational Mathematics Education:
<http://rationalmathed.blogspot.com/search?q=>

The blog has the open letter to Dr. Brooks, an article "What Does Liping Ma REALLY say?", other information and an Archives.

Here is a brief profile of Mr. Goldenberg:

Michael Paul Goldenberg
 Gender: Male
 Industry: Education
 Occupation: Mathematics Educator
 Location: Ann Arbor, Michigan - United States

This is a new blog, having come up just this month."

(Source: Jerry Becker, 6/15/07)

(4) How Dads Influence Their Daughters' Interest in Math

We might have guessed this, but families tend to provide more math-supportive environments for their sons and less math-supportive environments for their daughters. Research now demonstrates that girls' interest in math decreases as their fathers' gender stereotypes increase, whereas boys' interest in math increases as their fathers' gender stereotypes increase. To find an article on this topic see

<http://www.engin.umich.edu/students/support/wie/summit/index.html>

(Source: Jerry Becker, 6/17/07)

(5) U.S. Poised to Sit Out TIMSS Test

With all the rhetoric about NAEP, PISA, TIMSS, and so on, the U.S. is in 2008 opting for the first time not to participate in advanced high school mathematics and physics portions of the TIMSS. The reasons given for the U.S. non-participation are budget and staffing constraints. In fact, at present only nine countries have agreed to participate in this part of the test. Some leaders in mathematics research and education are arguing that the United States should still participate. For details, read:

Education Week 8/1/07, Vol. 26, Issue 44, Pages 1,13

Or go to

http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/08/01/44timss_h26.html?tmp=473156992

(6) Want to Be Good at Science? Math Is Key

Research indicates that high school math preparation is highly correlated with success in college science. In this study, each additional year of high school math boosted college science grades. Each year of high school math had a greater effect than any high school science class except for the relationship between high school physics and college physics.

Original article appeared in the Washington Post, Monday, August 6, 2007 - See

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/08/05/AR2007080501179.html>

(Source: Jerry Becker, 8/8/07)

(7) Gesturing Means Learning

Do you gesture while you teach? Research suggests that teachers who gesture while explaining teach more effectively. Also, students who spontaneously gesture while learning will better retain what they have learned.

See the July 25, 2007, issue of the journal *Cognition*.

(Source: Jerry Becker, 8/8/07)

(8) Dad's Math Book Receives Attention

When two brothers were doing poorly in math classes, their dad Nicholas Aggor decided to write his own math books! The K-9 books are generating excitement in some circles, and some schools are beginning to adopt them, even though the books have not yet been officially published. Users say the books combine the best of skills instruction with conceptual understanding based on students' everyday experiences. See <http://www.detnews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/2007/0720/SCHOOLS/707200402/1026>

(Source: Jerry Becker, 7/23/07)

(9) Frequent Quizzing Enhances Memory Retention

For a fascinating article about how immediate and frequent quizzing enhances memory retention, go to the Chronicle of Higher Education [Research and Publishing Section], Friday, June 8, 2007, Research & Publishing, Volume 53, Issue 40, p. A 14. See <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i40/40a01401.htm>

Original source: Henry L. Roediger III and Jeffrey D. Karpicke, "Test-Enhanced Learning: Taking Memory Tests Improves Long-Term Retention," *Psychological Science* (2006)

(Source: Jerry P. Becker, 6/27/07)

Update: National Mathematics Panel

National Mathematics Advisory Panel

Source: U.S. Department of Education

URL: <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel>

The sixth meeting of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (NMP) was held on April 20 at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in Aurora, IL. Progress reports from the Task Groups were presented at this meeting and are now available for download as PPT and MS Word files from sixth meeting of the National Mathematics Advisory Panel (NMP) was held on April 20 at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in Aurora, IL. Progress reports from the Task Groups were presented at this meeting and are now available for download as PPT and MS Word files from <http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/6th-meeting/pr.html>

(In each case below, the URL for the PPT document is the same as the URL for the MS Word file, except the extension is .ppt rather than .doc)

Task Group Progress Reports:

1. Conceptual Knowledge and Skills:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/6th-meeting/1-ckstg-report.doc>

2. Learning Processes:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/6th-meeting/2-lptg-report.doc>

3. Instructional Practices:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/6th-meeting/3-iptg-report.doc>

4. Teachers:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/6th-meeting/4-teacherstg-report.doc>

5. Assessment:

<http://www.ed.gov/about/bdscomm/list/mathpanel/6th-meeting/5-assessmenttg-report.doc>

(Source: COMET: Vol. 8, #15, May 7, 2007 at <http://csmf.ucop.edu/cmp/comet/>)

NCTM Releases Second Volume on Math Education Research

Reston, Va., June 25, 2007-- The Second Handbook of Research on Mathematics Teaching and Learning is now available from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM). The new handbook is an update of NCTM's ground breaking publication of the original handbook in 1992.

In the era of No Child Left Behind and increased accountability, the two volumes will be a valuable resource for math education researchers as well as those outside the immediate community. It will help researchers who, today more than ever before, are being urged to gather and analyze data to evaluate instructional practices and curricula. In addition, it will become an essential tool for a wide range of decision makers, including teacher educators, curriculum developers, state and national policy makers, test developers, and others involved in assessment. "The Second Handbook of Research on Mathematics Teaching and Learning picks up where the 1992 handbook leaves off, focusing on research contributions and trends during the past 15 years," says editor Frank K. Lester. "Among the 58 researchers who contributed to the set are many of the most prominent researchers in the field as well as some of the most influential members of the mathematics education community."

The updated handbook includes 31 chapters on a wide array of subjects. The chapters address some of today's most pressing questions in math education: How is a teacher's mathematical knowledge assessed? How do curriculum, culture, and race influence student learning? How can assessments measure and support learning? The handbook is organized around six major themes, including new areas of research that have burgeoned since the 1992 volume, such as early childhood math learning, early algebra and algebraic reasoning, and the learning and teaching of proof. The 1,324 page two-volume set, published by Information Age Publishers, is available for purchase from the NCTM Catalog at my.nctm.org. Review copies are available for a cost.

Editor Frank K. Lester, Jr. is a former editor of the

Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, the only

journal in the United States devoted exclusively to research on mathematics teaching and learning. He is professor of mathematics education at Indiana University. For more information contact Gay Dillin, Media Relations Manager; phone (703) 620-9840, ext. 2189; e-mail gdillin@nctm.org

(Source: Jerry Becker 6/26/07)

Upcoming Conferences and Events:

NCTM Regional Conferences

October 11-12, 2007

Richmond, VA

For more information, see:

<http://www.nctm.org/richmond.aspx>

(More distant conferences this fall are in:

Kansas City, Mo., October 25-26, 2007

Houston, Tex., November 29-30, 2007

For more info, see:

Kansas City:

<http://www.nctm.org/kansascity.aspx>

Houston: <http://www.nctm.org/houston.aspx>

PCSM Annual Conference

November 8, 2007, Valley Forge, PA

PCTM Annual Conference

“Freedom: The Essence of Mathematics”

November 7-9, 2007, Valley Forge, PA

For more information visit: www.pctm.org.

School Science and Mathematics Association Annual Convention (SSMA)

November 15-17, 2007, Indianapolis, Indiana

Hotel reservations at www.adamsmark.com

Registration and information at www.ssma.org

NCTM Annual Conference

April 9-12, 2008, Salt Lake City, Utah

www.nctm.org/meetings/

International Conferences in Mathematics Education - The Mathematics Education into the 21st Century Project

Next conference: September 7-13, 2007,

Charlotte, NC. Go to:

http://csmp.ucop.edu/cmp/comet/2006/01_23_2006.html#B3) or contact conference coordinator

Alan Rogerson at arogerson@ineta.pl

Attend ICME-11 in Monterrey Mexico:

Grants available!

Applications for travel grants are now available to attend the Eleventh International Congress on Mathematical Education (ICME-11), which will be held in Monterrey, Mexico, from July 6-13, 2008. (see <http://www.icme-11.dk/>). Contingent on the funding of a proposal pending at the National Science Foundation, grants will be available and awarded by the close of 2007. These grants will be available only to U.S. citizens and will support travel expenses to ICME-11 that include hotel accommodations, meal costs, and conference registration. They also can be used toward air transportation (on American carriers only). Travel grant awardees under this program may not use funds from other NSF programs to supplement their international travel (airfare to Mexico or subsistence at ICME-11).

The International Congresses are held every four years and offer a unique opportunity for mathematics educators from the United States to discuss issues related to mathematics education with international leaders from developed and developing countries. Grants will enable participants to listen to world-renowned scholars in mathematics and mathematics education and to take part in small, focused discussion groups on a wide range of topics, including a special emphasis on educating students from diverse cultures, mathematics education for second language learners, the relationship between research and practice in mathematics education, the professional development of mathematics teachers; closing the achievement gap, and information and communication technology in mathematics

education.

The National Science Foundation grants are available only to U.S. citizens and will support travel expenses to ICME-11 for K-12 mathematics teachers, mathematicians, graduate students and mathematics teacher educators from the United States. A selection committee will review applications and award the grants for ICME-11 travel. The committee will include representatives from the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, the Mathematical Association of America, the American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges, the American Mathematical Society, and the U. S. National Commission on Mathematics Instruction.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Tips for Teachers:

Archive of ideas and suggestions on starting the school year, answering common questions, homework, and more.

http://www.nctm.org/resources/content.aspx?id=9584&ekmense1=c580fa7b_44_398_btnlink

The Futures Channel: Mathematics and Science Movies and Lesson Plans

URL: <http://www.thefutureschannel.com/>

The Futures Channel offers teachers a variety of free online movie clips and related lesson plans about real-world applications of mathematics and science. For "**Algebra in the Real World**" movies and lesson plans, see

http://www.thefutureschannel.com/algebra_real_world.php

For other topic areas, visit the following Web pages:

"Hands-on Math":

http://www.thefutureschannel.com/hands-on_math.php

"Living and Working in Space":

http://www.thefutureschannel.com/living_working_space.php

"Problem Solving":

http://www.thefutureschannel.com/problem_solving.php

"Science and Technology":

http://www.thefutureschannel.com/science_and_technology.php

(Source: COMET Vol. 8, #16, 12 May, 2007)

Motorola Workshop Info

Motorola presented a free two-day workshop focused on science and mathematics education in support of the Department of Education's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative, launched in 2004, as an outgrowth of the No Child Left Behind Act. Presenter teachers gave seminars such as:

- Patterns to Symbols: Looking into Algebra in Grades 3-6
- Fractions ... Decimals ... Percents ... Oh My! Creating Cohesive Units of Instruction Using Best Practices for All Students Including LEP Learners (Grades 5-8)
- Everybody Wins: Reviewing Math Assessments School-Wide (Grades 6-9)
- Integer Instruction that Works Best Practices for Instruction of Integers for All Students Including LEP Learners (Grades 5-8)

<http://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/EventInfo.asp?EventID=55>

View other math session materials here:

<http://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/Sessions.asp?Content=Math>

(Source: Math Forum Internet News, No. 12.30, 7/27/07)

TinkerPlots Workshop Guide

<http://www.keypress.com/tinkerplots/guide>

Key Curriculum Press has recently posted a Workshop Guide for TinkerPlots. TinkerPlots is software for dynamic data exploration and analysis which has been field-tested with math classes grades 4-8.

The free 72 page guide is meant to be used in a workshop setting, where participants can work together and a workshop leader can give demonstrations, lead discussions, and answer questions. The site also includes updated data for use with the guide.

(Source: Math Forum Internet News, No. 12.31, 8/3/07)

Teacher2Teacher FAQ

<http://mathforum.org/t2t/faq/>

As many of you greet the new school year, browsing the Math Forum's Teacher2Teacher FAQ can provide you with new ideas:

- First Day of School
- First Year Suggestions
- Assessment Suggestions
- Elementary Thoughts

Pages to share with parents:

- Algebra Help
- Disabilities and Math Anxiety
- Fraction Help
- Homework Help Ideas
- Multiplication Help
- Place Value
- Searching for Information
- Tricks for Learning Mathematics

Pages to plan ahead with:

- 100th Day of School
- Assessment Preparation
- Literature and Mathematics
- Manipulatives
- Metric Week
- Pi Day

Math in the Real World:

- Mathematics and Constitution Day
- Mathematics and Elections
- Mathematics and Census
- Mathematics and the Media

Have a question about teaching? Submit it here:

<http://mathforum.org/t2t/ask/>

(Source: Math Forum Internet News, No. 12.32, 8/10/07)

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10 Big Ideas in Mathematics Education

Need a concise way to focus on key ideas in how to teach mathematics? Check out:

http://www.mathsolutions.com/documents/2004_10_Big_Ideas.pdf

(Source: Dr. John C. Uccellini)

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Are You Searching for Answers to questions such as:

1. Why should K-8 teachers know mathematics?
 2. What is the nature of the knowledge of mathematics needed for effective teaching?
 3. What can mathematics departments and schools of education do to help teachers develop such knowledge?
- If you are, go to this site for a copy of *Using Math to Teach Math*, which should offer insight

and guidance:

www.msri.org/calendar/attachments/workshops/318/MSRI%20MKT%20booklet%20july28.pdf

Also, hard copies of *Using Math to Teach Math* can be obtained by calling MSRI at (510) 642-0143. Streaming video from the conference, which was the impetus for *Using Math to Teach Math*, is available at

http://www.msri.org/calendar/workshops/WorkshopInfo/318/show_workshop

NCTM Launches Research-Based Resources for Educators

Reston, Va., May 29, 2007 - The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) has launched Research Clips and Briefs, an important resource for finding research-based answers to questions about mathematics teaching and learning. The new resource will make it easier for teachers to link classroom practices to research findings.

* Research Clips present concise statements, backed by research, about mathematics education. These are drawn from NCTM's Research Briefs or address other important mathematics education issues.

* Research Briefs offer two- to three-page summaries that encapsulate the information in NCTM's Research Analyses or in other research reports.

The first set of Research Clips and Briefs covers topics dealing with effective instruction, students with difficulties, and formative assessment. Additional Research Clips and Briefs will be posted on an ongoing basis at www.nctm.org/researchbriefs.aspx.

The Research Clips and Briefs are part of

NCTM's initiative to improve K-12 mathematics education by strengthening connections between practice and research. Education today places increasing emphasis on doing what works by linking research to practice. For teachers to sift through the volumes of research and findings would be a daunting and time-consuming burden.

Comments about the new site include: "The topics you chose to include are the ones that are at the forefront of what I'm thinking about as a math coach." Another visitor to the Web site commented, "The content is current and important. Teachers don't have the time and skills to search and summarize issues that are barriers to success in their instructional activities." NCTM gathers questions about practice from teachers, curriculum specialists, mathematics coaches, principals, and other school-based practitioners. From these questions, NCTM selects a set of topics on which research is available. Then, a leading researcher in the field analyzes and synthesizes the research related to that topic.

NCTM staff members work with the researchers to produce shorter clips and briefs from the analysis. These are designed to translate the research findings for a wide audience of readers by distilling and summarizing current research. Once completed, the clips, briefs, and analyses are reviewed by members of NCTM's Research Committee.

To keep the Research Clips and Briefs closely connected to those questions of practice deemed important by educators, practitioners are encouraged to send a question or topic about classroom practice to research@nctm.org.

(From NCTM, written for Affiliate Publications)