



Mathematics Teachers Research Colloquium

It is with anticipatory excitement that we announce the next **Mathematics Teachers Colloquium, November 11-13, 2016 at the Rudolf Steiner School, New York City**, hosted by Marisha Plotnik and Beth Weisburn. Mark your calendars now!

Inspired by the First World Mathematics Teachers Conference at the Goetheanum in October, 2015, we are more convinced than ever about the necessity for colleagues to work together in a radically new spirit of collaboration. We know that it is no longer enough to teach out of habit, no matter how beautiful and cherished those traditions may be. Neither should we merely adopt new outer forms and methods without understanding them from the inside.

Indeed, our times are calling for increasingly strong *inner* capacities. The study of mathematics can play a unique educational role in enabling human beings to develop their own strong, clear, flexible, powers of thought. Unfortunately, it can also merely train youngsters to follow algorithms that they experience as empty of meaning. While it is easy to measure how a student performs on a certain task, such as a standardized test, this only describes an external action. A high score might correspond to highly developed thinking capacities, but it can equally well be the result of a well-executed algorithm: when you see this kind of problem, follow these steps. As teachers, we must take an increasing interest in the inner experiences of the students in our math classes. Are they merely going through the motions? Or are they truly learning to think?

We are proposing a Research Colloquium at which willing teachers would present their individual work on this common theme. Our days together will also include working together on mathematics, open time for questions and dialogue, and informal fun.

Researchers

Any interested colleague, regardless of experience, is invited to participate as a researcher. As a suggested topic for research, we invite you to document the work that your students create in mathematics over a minimum period of three weeks, with the aim of recognizing and articulating the transformation in thinking that can occur through mathematical work. This might best be observed not in a highly polished main lesson book, but in “rough drafts” where a student is working out of his or her own interest in a problem. Can we see how the student has entered in? Do they take up something of interest there, not knowing where it may lead? Do they develop their own questions out of their work? What evolves in successive drafts of the work? Can we identify the moment when a new thought emerges?

It would be particularly interesting to follow a student, or several students, over a longer period of time - perhaps an entire academic year. Researchers will prepare and deliver a brief presentation at the colloquium - perhaps 10 minutes with added time for questions and discussion. Longer presentations can be scheduled in advance if desired. Researchers will pay no conference fee and will receive a modest contribution towards their travel expenses.

Research on other topics would be equally welcome. You may be experimenting with new curricula, or new ways of working in your classroom. If you have something to share, we would like to hear it.

Participants

Our Colloquium is open to all those interested in the teaching of math, whether they are researchers with something to present, or whether they simply wish to come as participants. There will be a sliding-scale fee for participants.



Mathematics Teachers Research Colloquium: Practical Details

Dates

Friday, November 11: 4pm-8pm
Saturday, November 12: 9am-6pm
Sunday, November 13: 9am-noon

Registration

Registration Deadline is November 1, 2016.

Those wishing to request accommodation in a private home must register by **October 1, 2016.**

Register directly with Marisha Plotnik:

mplotnik@steiner.edu or 212-879-1101 ext. 334

Fees

Colleagues are invited to attend in one of two ways:

Researchers will pay no conference fee, and will receive a modest contribution towards travel costs as funds allow. Researchers commit to undertaking a research project, and to making a presentation at the conference (described above).

Participants are asked to pay a conference fee on a sliding scale from \$150-\$250. These collected fees will be used to help defray the travels costs of researchers. Participants are neither required to undertake a research project nor to make a presentation. Simply come and enjoy!

Meals

A simple supper on Friday evening, and snacks on Saturday and Sunday will be provided. Other meals can be enjoyed from the wide range of offerings available in New York City.

Lodging

While housing in New York City is typically expensive, modest accommodations in the range of \$100 per night are available. Airbnb is a good option, as is the nearby House of the Redeemer, an Episcopal retreat house within walking distance of the school. A few spaces will be made available by faculty and parents of the school to those for whom the cost of accommodation is prohibitive. If you wish to request accommodation in a private home, you must register by October 1.

Travel

New York City is served by 3 major airports and frequent train service. Street parking is a viable option on these weekend days.

Airports:

La Guardia Airport (LGA) is the closest to Manhattan, cab fare to the school is about \$45. Local bus service (\$2.75) can also bring you to the school.

John F. Kennedy (JFK) is served by more airlines from more destinations. Cab fare is \$52 + tolls.

Subway service (\$2.75) can also bring you to the school.

Newark Airport (EWR) is a considerably longer journey from Manhattan. Cab fare is about \$72 + tolls. A combination of NJ Transit commuter rail and subway can bring you to the school (about \$20 together)

Rail Service:

Amtrak, and the commuter rails **NJ Transit**, **MetroNorth**, and **LIRR** all arrive in midtown Manhattan at one of two train stations. Travel from either station to the school is easily accomplished on public transit.