

General discussion of the Canadian Math Education Forum.

CMEF 2014 is the fifth in what is now planned to be a regular 4-year cycle for CMEF. Previous meetings have been in [2009](#) (Vancouver), [2005](#) (Toronto), [2003](#) (Montreal) and 1995 (Quebec City). Each meeting has its own theme, but the overall objective is to bring together a full spectrum of participants from all parts of Canada who share a concern and a passion for mathematics education: elementary school teachers, high school teachers, school board coordinators, college and university mathematicians and math educators, graduate students, and representatives from government and publishing. In particular, a critical component for the success of the meeting has always been the participation of school teachers at all levels from different parts of the country. A significant objective is to allow as many participants as possible to present, showcase and discuss their work and their challenges in a broad collegial environment. In all, a typical meeting might have 100 to 150 participants.

The idea is that the conference should move among different parts of the country and while each meeting will attract local presentations and participation, representation from all parts of Canada is expected. Principal funding for the meetings has come from the Canadian Math Society (CMS), the host university, the regional research institutes: the Fields Institute (Fields), the Centre de recherches mathématiques (CRM), the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences (PIMS), the Atlantic Association for research in Mathematical Sciences (AARMS) in addition the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) and some publishing companies. Significant indirect sources of funding have been school, school board and teacher federation contributions to travel and teaching release of teachers.



Lynn Pacarynuk (Photo by Bruce McLaurin)

CMEF 2014

CMEF 2014 was held May 1-4 at the University of Ottawa and welcomed just over 100 participants from a broad geographical and educational landscape. Funding for the conference was obtained from CMS, the University of Ottawa, Fields, CRM, PIMS, SSC, Crowdmark and Pearson Education ERPI. CMS provided major administrative support and the research institutes provided travel funding, principally for plenary speakers, panelists, teachers and graduate students. The two publishing companies supported food and drink and last but certainly not least, the University of Ottawa provided excellent facilities free of charge.

CMEF 2014 was based on a vision of having teachers and professors share what we call “vignettes.” A CMEF vignette is a stand-alone piece of writing aimed for mathematics educators that is based on a mathematical activity, a pedagogical reflection or a curricular innovation. Invitations were sent seeking vignette proposals. The live presentations could vary in length between 30 and 120 minutes and the vignette had to be accompanied by a more formal and detailed description and posted on the Forum’s website. The posting of these complete vignettes allows the Forum to reach beyond the participants attending each meeting and acts as an archive of the work shared during sessions. In fact this new “vignette” feature of the conference turned out to be enormously successful; in particular it gave many more teachers a chance to present their work than had been the case at previous meetings.

One of the extraordinary features of CMEF 2014 was the convergence of issues and ideas that everyone seemed to experience towards the end of the meeting. There was a point at which it suddenly seemed that everyone had been talking about the same thing—the desire to be free of a curriculum that was regarded as too heavy and too prescriptive and that if only we teachers could be given a simple outline of the essential ideas and techniques, we might manage to move forward in our professional lives in a more creative and impactful way.



Peter Liljedahl (Photo by Bruce McLaurin)

Program

A list of participants and further details of the programme and design of the meeting can be found on the [CMEF2014 website](#). Here we append the main events of the plenary program.

Plenary speakers

France Caron, Université de Montréal

Relier le curriculum - au-delà des tensions, des mythes et des paradoxes

Peter Liljedahl, Simon Fraser University

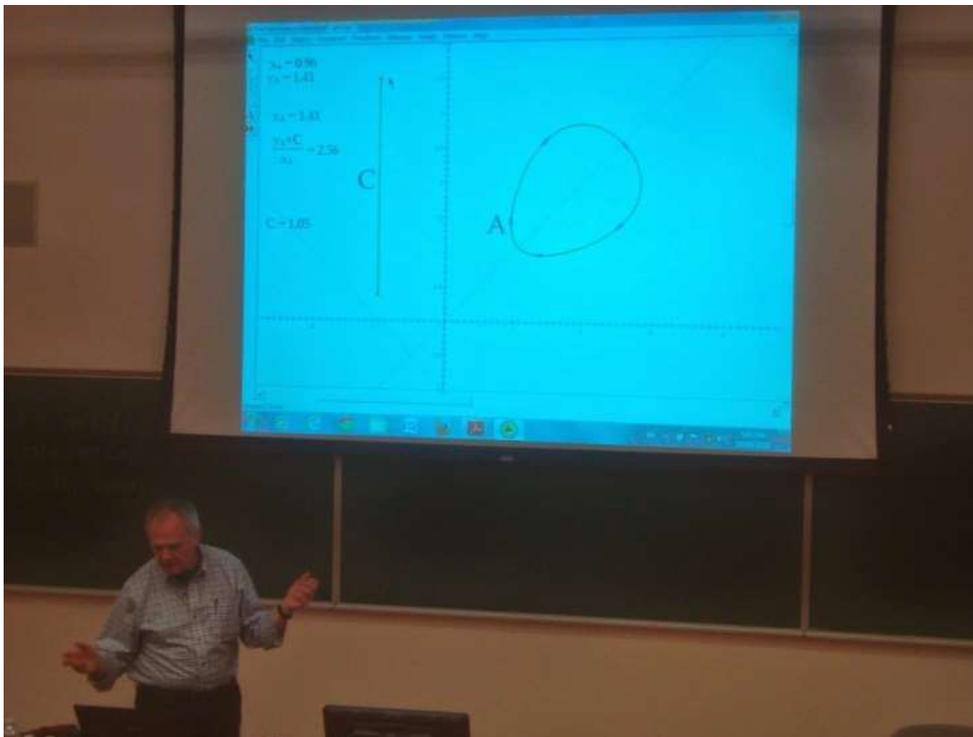
Environments to Occasion Problem Solving

Chris Suurtamm, University of Ottawa

Assessment that elicits and supports mathematical thinking

Peter Harrison, Toronto DSB

Ontario's Stifling Mathematics Curriculum



Peter Harrison (Photo by Bruce McLaurin)

Report of CMEF 2014

Panel: Statistical thinking in schools

Chair: Len Rak, Sheridan College

Michael Campbell, Ottawa Carleton District School Board

Georges Monette, York University

John Braun, Western University

Panel: Does the curriculum need some fresh air?/Le programme scolaire a-t-il besoin d'un apport d'air frais

Jocelyn Harrison, Toronto District School Board

Shaun Hussain, Toronto Catholic District School Board

Yves Khouzam, École secondaire Saint-Georges, Commission scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys

Ruth Hicks, Pierre Elliot Trudeau, West Quebec School Board

2014 CMEF Co-Chairs and Steering Committee

Ann Arden (Osgoode Township High School and University of Ottawa)

Richard Hoshino (Quest University Canada)

Kathleen Pineau (École de technologie supérieure)

Peter Taylor (Queen's University)

Sarah Watson (Canadian Mathematical Society)



Len Rak and Michael Campbell (Photo by Bruce McLaurin)



Susan Milner presenting "Rectangles." (Photo by Caroline Fortier)



Mélisande Fortin-Boisvert and Anik Soulière (and France Caron)
The *Hospital Weights* vignette (Photo by Kathleen Pineau)