

The fourth Canadian Mathematics Education Forum Report to the CMS Endowment Fund

The fourth Canadian Mathematics Education Forum (CMEF) was held in Vancouver, April 30 to May 3, 2009 with about 180 participants, made up of approximately 70 university mathematicians and math educators, 60 teachers and coordinators, 30 graduate students and 20 representatives from government, publishing, parent groups, etc. Its theme was curriculum and assessment, and it was cosponsored by CMS and PIMS with major support from SSHRC, SFU, Fields, CRM, CAIMS, SSC, MITACS, the CMS Endowment Fund, Nelson, Pearson, Wiley and Maplesoft. [Recall that CMEF III was held in Toronto in 2005 and was co-sponsored by CMS and Fields.]

Two major aspects of the Forum set it somewhat apart from comparable meetings, first that it centred around the work of 13 working groups which had been collaborating already for many months before the actual meeting, and secondly that the meeting brought together a wide range of folks engaged in the mathematics education. In particular it is rare that so many teachers from across the country are able to come together to share ideas and talk with university folk, and with publishers and government officials in panels and working group encounters. We mention this in that of all the comments received from participants, the most “wonder-full” were the comments from teachers particularly from far away—“I can’t believe I’m here!”

We had three plenary speakers, Rina Zazkis a professor of Mathematics Education at SFU (joint speaker with the *Changing the Culture* conference), Steve Rasmussen of Key Curriculum Press and Hugh Burkhardt of the Shell Centre in Nottingham. The soul of the meeting was perhaps provided by the panel discussions. Two of these were Reaction Panels of teachers and researchers which followed each of the second two talks. In addition, the opening panel featured a number of teachers from across Canada discussing the questions: *What did I need then? What do I need now?* The working groups spanned many areas including assessment at all levels, problem-solving, on-line learning, school-university interface, text-book design (which included a number of publishers), indigenous knowledge, statistics, spatial reasoning and (or course?) philosophy.

The success of the meeting persuaded us that the Forum must continue, and though new co-organizers have yet to be chosen, a 4-year cycle seems to be favoured with much the same format as we had this year.

The co-organizers:
Malgorzata Dubiel
Peter Taylor
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