

2017 Ted Lewis Math Fair Workshop

Ted Lewis, Tiina Hohn, Sean Graves

April 21, 22, 23, 2017

1 Introduction

The SNAP Foundation is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to encourage the development of mathematics learning resources at the classroom level with very little retraining of the teaching staff, with very flexible budgets, and by utilizing the energy and natural curiosity of the students themselves. The main theme of the BIRS workshop was, “What is a SNAP math fair and how to organize a math fair in your classroom”. The presenters mostly consisted of teachers/educators who shared their math fair experiences and success stories.

The first SNAP type math fair was designed in Edmonton by Mike Duman-ski and Andy Liu in 1997-1998. Since then, a large number of schools in Alberta and beyond have adapted the SNAP math fair to their needs. The SNAP program has been spread through similar workshops and conferences, and mainly by teachers themselves.

SNAP received its initial funding from the Canadian Mathematical Society and from private donations. PIMS, the Pacific Institute for the Mathematical Sciences, has been a long time financial supporter of our math fairs. BIRS, the Banff International Research Station, has provided funding for the BIRS math fair workshops that have been held in Banff on a regular basis. Currently, our major supporter is Thinkfun - a company that develops a variety of excellent puzzles.

2 Puzzle Resources

- www.mathfair.com
- www.puzzles.com
- www.nrich.maths.org
- www.galileo.org
- www.mathpickle.com

3 2017 Workshop Highlights

The workshop started out with a presentation by Judith Rioux-Wilson, an FI 2 teacher with PVNCCD School Board and PKE LEAD 2016-2017: Math Continuum to Enhance Higher Order Thinking in Problem Solving. Judith introduced the topic of "What is a Math Fair?", and shared the expertise/experiences that she has gained over the past decade while organizing both individual classroom and school-wide Math Fairs.

Judith was followed by presentations from Matthew Morin of Keyano College, Maxine Hildebrandt of Mother Earth's Children's Charter School, and Edmonton Public Schools teachers Janice Hoffman and Silvia Greco. Each of Maxine, Janice, Silvia, and Matthew shared the processes/timelines they follow when organizing Math Fairs in their schools. These presentations are very important for teachers who are thinking of having a Math Fair but are unsure how to start. Some of the issues addressed were: where they found their puzzles, how and when they introduced the puzzles to their students, how student groups were chosen and how the puzzles were allocated to the groups, the importance of dress rehearsals, when and where their Math Fairs were held, who was invited to their Math Fairs, whether or not to have a theme, and how their students were assessed.

Other presentations from Ted Lewis, Tiina Hohn, Geri Lorway, Carolyn Jones and Amanda Forester focused on the importance of rich, interesting, student-centered, non-competitive, all-inclusive, problem-based activities in the K-6 mathematics classroom.

4 2017 Workshop Feedback

"I thoroughly enjoyed the presentations at the Ted Lewis Math Workshop. I found them to be highly informative and very inspiring. It is great to hear about strategies and tips to increase numeracy my classroom, and to create a positive environment where my students continue to thrive, and love math. I also came away from the invigorating workshop weekend at Banff with a renewed sense of purpose to expand my classroom math fair to encompass the whole school. This will be one of my initiatives I will work on for next year. Thank you Sean, Tiina, and Ted for all the great work you are doing to energize all of us in the teaching profession! I appreciate it SO much! "

"I am so happy to have been invited to take part again this year. I left with great ideas and made new acquaintances! I love to meet new teachers and learn about how they are doing things in their class. Thank you again for having me and I hope we meet again soon."

"I had such a great time! It was incredibly informative and so helpful to make

new connections with people who have successfully implemented this concept. I have already started puzzles with my kids and they love it. They are very excited to be putting on a mini-math fair for our school.”