

Learning & Teaching

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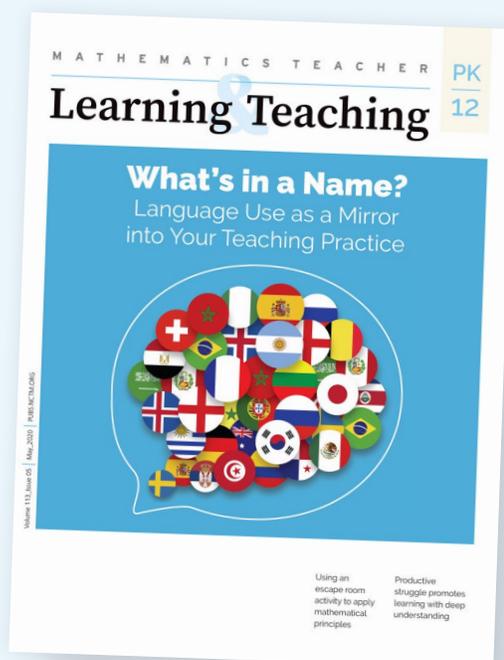
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Mission Statement

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics advocates for high-quality mathematics teaching and learning for each and every student.

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Share the Golden Nuggets

Ear to the Ground features voices from several corners of the mathematics education world.

Joel Amidon

During my time as a teacher, I have been handed golden nuggets by colleagues and mentors seeking to invest in my development as a teacher. Those golden nuggets took the form of books, articles, presentations, websites, and so forth, which led to conversations, advice, and insights that would influence my teaching for the better. Over time, the golden nuggets start to pile up, so what to do with the nuggets I have been given?

My answer was to start a podcast. I knew it was one thing to share a resource, which could be done through a simple list posted on a website, but sharing the talk that discloses why the resource is being recommended in the first place is another thing. The *Amidon Planet* podcast (link online) was started for the expressed purpose to lead people to love others through teaching. Through the podcast, I wanted to share the kind of talk that was inviting, inclusive, conversational, and informative, on improving teaching

beyond tips and tricks—A podcast that would document my journey toward better teaching.

For example, early in my teaching career, a colleague recommended that I read *Radical Equations: Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project* by Robert Moses and Charles Cobb Jr. (2002). That book changed what I thought

was possible through my actions as a mathematics teacher. It is a must-read for any teacher of mathematics, and it is now featured on episode 50 of the podcast (link online), in which I talk about the book and its implications for teaching mathematics with fellow mathematics educator Aris Winger.



Another mentor recommended that I read *Teaching with Problems and the Problems of Teaching* by Magdalene Lampert (2001). This book shaped how I understand my teaching as building relationships between students and content and provided a vision for how to teach with open-ended tasks. It is now featured on “Teaching with Problems,” episode 009 of the podcast (link online).

Sometimes a golden nugget is not a resource but a person. As an undergraduate mathematics education major, I was assigned as a student teacher to Joe Dye. He saw the teaching of mathematics as a human endeavor and never put the subject over the people he taught. To this day, the lessons he taught me echo through my teaching, and the desire to share his awesomeness led to episode 042 of the podcast.

But not everything shared on the podcast is based on the classroom. One of my favorite episodes (link online) is about the “Broken Record Podcast,” in which Rick Rubin and Malcom Gladwell talk about music with several recording artists. In the episode, I share the several learnings I took away from the podcast on improving creativity in my own teaching.

Probably the biggest golden nugget I was given was during

summer 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, when I was mystified as to how I was going to teach my classes in the fall. Enter friend and colleague Jennifer Wolfe, who shared a gigantic resource she had assembled on teaching mathematics remotely. As she shared this resource with me, I wondered aloud if she would be willing to share it with others through an episode of the podcast (link online). She agreed; thus the first episode of the podcast was also released as a YouTube video (link online) and released on the *Teaching Math Teaching* podcast feed (link online).

The podcast has become a low-risk way of sharing high-quality resources aimed at inclusive, equitable, caring, and resilient pedagogy, where each episode serves as an entry point to learning more. So, when I hear teachers mention their desire to learn more about culturally relevant pedagogy, I can easily share *Amidon Planet* Podcast E018: The Dreamkeepers with Gloria Ladson-Billings (link online), during which they can hear Ladson-Billings talk about how culturally relevant pedagogy came to be and her current thoughts on how it can be seen in today’s classrooms. If that piques their interest even

more, they can read the book *The Dreamkeepers: Successful Teachers of African American Children* by Ladson-Billings (2009).

The sharing of my own development as a teacher through the *Amidon Planet* podcast has even led to the development of other podcasts. The *Teaching Math Teaching* podcast with cohosts Eva Thanheiser and Dusty Jones is designed to present those stepping into the role of mathematics teacher educator with the entry-level knowledge necessary to be successful. By sharing conversations with experienced mathematics teacher educators in a variety of roles, listeners are able to learn from these mentors through the insights, advice, and resources they share. The *Teacher’s Journey: Mile Markers on the Road to Better Teaching* (link online) is another podcast in which I and cohost Ann Monroe share stories of teacher development from teachers and educational leaders to help educators identify and share their own golden nuggets.

Sharing through the *Amidon Planet* podcast has helped me remember we are not merely teaching a subject in isolation but are teaching people to shape this world for the better. To that end, how will you pass on the golden nuggets you have been given? —

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