



Mathematics Education Research Unit  
Unité de Recherche Éducationnelle en Mathématiques

MERU Seminar Series  
Série de conférence UREM

**Democratizing 'big ideas' of mathematics through  
multimodality:  
Using gesture, movement, sound and narrative as precursors  
to algebraic learning**  
(En anglais seulement)



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**Abstract**

The acquisition of algebraic fluency takes years, and many learners find algebra to be insurmountably difficult – or not worth the effort. However, many of the most interesting, useful and empowering mathematical ideas have traditionally been introduced via algebra. This practice may act as a barrier to many people's opportunities to learn the 'big ideas' of mathematics, and create a fundamentality anti-democratic mystique around these ideas. This talk and hands-on workshop will introduce research into teaching 'big mathematical ideas' to younger, pre-algebraic students, aged 11-14 years (including resistant, dyslexic, gifted, and now visually impaired learners) via gesture and movement, vocal sounds and narrative.