



Summing Up -- Σ JVMP

NOVEMBER 2, 2006

"Your home for professional development in mathematics education for the Central Valley"

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We're on the Web!

www.csufresno.edu/sjvmp

Lori and Lisa with our 3D logo!

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Keeping up with SJVMP Changes

Anyone who has attended a workshop led by **Lori Hamada** (SJVMP Class of 1990) knows that she knows what's going on in the world of Mathematics Education. As the Mathematics Coordinator for the Fresno County Office of Education, Lori has been a guide for mathematics educators throughout Fresno County as well as an influence throughout the state as the lead for AB 466 in Harcourt. Lori was selected to represent Fresno County as Administrator of the Year in 2004 and is the founder and producer of the television homework hotline, Math on Call. She taught middle and high school mathematics for 14 years and has worked as a consultant for the past 12 years, currently as a national trainer for the College Board. She is an adjunct instructor in mathematics education at both Fresno Pacific University and at CSU Fresno.

Lori has been directing the San Joaquin Valley Mathematics Project to new growth and strength for the past 2 years. For all these reasons, it is so hard to say good-bye. Lori stepped down as director of SJVMP at the end of August, but we know she will continue to be an active SJVMP Alum.



The good news is that SJVMP still has a director. **Lisa Portela** (SJVMP Class of 2000) has been working for the SVJMP in an ever increasing role since 2001. She is a high school mathematics teacher who started doing workshop presentations as an SJVMP Teacher Leader. In

2003 she was hired part time by SJVMP to Coordinate the Instructional Materials Based, Mathematics Professional Development Institutes. The following year she started working full time to keep-up with the growing work being done by SJVMP. Through 05-06 Lisa served as the Associate Director and has been effectively trained by the SJVMP to take over this role.

This Year's Conference Dates

- California Math Council Conferences (www.cmc-math.org)
 - Southern Section, Palm Springs Nov. 3-4, 2006
 - Northern Section, Asilomar, Monterey Bay Dec. 1-2, 2006
- NCTM 85th Annual Conference, Atlanta (www.nctm.org)
 - National Conference, March 21-24, 2007



Lesson Study: SJVMP Goes to Sri Lanka

Our very own Faculty Advisor, **Dr. Rajee Amarasinghe**, CSU, Fresno, spent the Spring Semester in 2006 on Sabbatical in Sri Lanka. While he was there he had the opportunity to introduce Lesson Study to Sri Lanka through a six-month long project conducted by the Department of Mathematics, University of Colombo. **Dr. Kirthi Premadasa** from the Department of Mathematics coordinated this multi-phase project with the support from mathematics department faculty. Mr. W.M. Pragnadarshana from the faculty of education collected research data on teacher change. Thirty six teachers from around the country participated in the project. Both teachers and students alike embraced the concept of lesson study heartily.

Lesson Study is a very simple idea. If you want to improve classroom instruction, the change has to be teacher-driven and student-focused. Lesson Study model has been found to be one of the key component for the impressive mathematical performance of the Japanese students in international mathematics achievement studies. Lesson Study has gained the acceptance as an effective model for Professional development and instructional improvement. It spread rapidly in United States of America since 1999.



Lesson Study has spread like wild fire in Sri Lanka. More than 300 teachers are currently engaging in Lesson Study or an adaptation of the process. Since returning to Fresno, Dr. Amarasinghe has been conducting Lesson Study workshops via video conference for 30 teachers in Sri Lanka who will be trainers of those teachers. Sri Lanka is on the other side of the world, so while technology brought Fresno and Sri Lanka together, it did not help the time difference. The workshops were held from 6:30 PM to 3:00 AM PST.

See much more about the project at <http://www.mathslessonstudy.org/>.

Lesson Study Guru, Dr. Makoto Yoshida Visits Fresno

On Wednesday, September 27, 2006 the SJVMP, Sanger Unified, and Kings Canyon Unified (CVMP) had a dinner at the Smittcamp Alumni House on the Fresno State campus. Our special guest for the evening was Dr. Makoto Yoshida. Dr. Yoshida is the person who first brought lesson study to the United States and has written or contributed numerous books and articles on the subject. His presentation was very informative and he enjoyed his time with us very much. He will likely return to the Valley at the end of May next year to wrap up the Lesson Study activities for 2006-07. He also stated that he will be taking a group to Japan next summer to watch teachers implementing lesson study in their classes. Sanger hopes to send a few teachers! See more about Dr. Yoshida at www.globaledresources.com.



Dr. Makoto Yoshida holding the entire 1st - 6th Grade Japanese math curriculum in one hand!



Back: Jeff Brown (CVMP), Rajee Amarasinghe (CSUF), Makoto Yoshida, Agnes Tuska (CSUF), Jaime Arvizu (SMEC)

Front: Carol Fry Bohlin (CSUF), Lisa Portela (SJVMP), Naomi Kent (Ed. Resource Consultants)

NCTM's New Publication: Curriculum Focal Points



Every once in a while, a news story takes on a life of its own. A recent article in the September 12th edition of the Wall Street Journal is just such an example. I received copies in the snail mail as well as my email. And of course, the copies were accompanied by a "What do you think?" remark.

The headline of the Wall Street Journal article read, "Arithmetic Problem New Report Urges Return to Basics in Mathematics." The author went on to write, "The nation's math teachers...are getting some new marching orders: Make sure students learn the basics. ...In a report to be released today, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), which represents 100,000 educators from pre-kindergarten through college, will give ammunition to traditionalists who believe schools should focus heavily and early on teaching such fundamentals as multiplication tables and long division."

The report is actually a new NCTM publication, Curriculum Focal Points. And the Journal writer's interpretation is, so to speak, a bit fuzzy. According to NCTM President, Professor Skip Fennel, the Journal got it wrong. In a September 19th email sent to all NCTM members, he wrote, "Despite several conversations with a reporter from the Wall Street Journal explaining what the Curriculum Focal Points are and are not, a September 12 Wall Street Journal Article did not represent the substance or intent of the Curriculum Focal Points. ...The Council has always supported learning the basics. ... but such knowledge and skills should be acquired with understanding. Unfortunately, some of the other news media have followed the Wall Street Journal's lead and have similarly misrepresented the Curriculum Focal Points."

So what are the Curriculum Focal Points? What do they address and who should be using them?

First, the Curriculum Focal Points is not a departure from the 1989 Curriculum and Evaluation Standards and the 2000 Principals and Standards. It is more of an enhancement. The Curriculum Focal Points is seeking coherence as it looks at pre-K through the grade 8 continuum. And curricular coherence is not a trivial matter in California.

Many districts and schools in California have currently adopted K-7 pacing guides that seek to cover the key standards as they appear on the CST test. This can sometimes result in curricular fissures, where key ideas are skipped and sequences are ignored. Besides, the texts themselves have pacing guides that are longer than the actual school year and they don't take into account the variances in time that some lessons and topics need. Finally, compared to our international counterparts, the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies (TIMSS) characterized US curricula as "mile wide, inch deep."

With all these competing forces, the Curriculum Focal Points is designed to target the significant ideas that can be viewed as curricular foundations. The actual points were selected because they represent mathematically important topics that should be viewed as major teaching goals. By making explicit connections from grade to grade, they are meant to provide teachers and curriculum writers with unifying ideas as they plan and design mathematics programs.

The Curriculum Focal Points can be purchased through the NCTM catalog, but it is also a free download when accessing the following url: www.nctm.org/focalpoints. As current K-8 programs are assessed, modified and redesigned, this new publication might help provide organization, and even more importantly, coherence.

(Article used by permission of Al Mendle, Lecturer/Supervisor of Teacher Education, UC Davis.)

Educators are Still Being Sought for Service on Advisory Panels for the 2007 K-8 Mathematics Instructional Materials Adoption

Individuals are being sought to serve on panels that will assist with the evaluation of kindergarten through grade eight (Algebra I) instructional materials to be submitted for the statewide 2007 Mathematics Primary Adoption. Panel members are needed to review three types of mathematics programs: Basic grade-level programs for grades K-8, Mathematics Intervention programs for grades 4-7, and Algebra Readiness programs for students in grade 8 or higher who are not prepared to study Algebra I. The expertise of educators from all grade levels is critical for the successful review of these programs. Appointees will be reimbursed for travel expenses and per diem (i.e., lodging, meals, and incidental expenses).

Applications are being accepted to serve as **Instructional Materials Advisory Panel (IMAP)** members. A majority of these panel members must be classroom teachers. Application packets for IMAP members are available online at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/im/documents/mathimapappfinal.doc>. Although the stated application due date is September 7, 2006, this **date will be extended**.

- * **March 26-29, 2007** - Panel Training (Sacramento, CA)
- * **July 16-19 OR July 30-August 2, 2007** - Panel Deliberations (Panel members will need to attend only one of these deliberations sessions).

If you have any questions, please contact:

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URL: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ma/im/>

Upcoming Events

Research Series

- December 8-9: Liping Ma, author of *Knowing and Teaching Elementary Mathematics*
- February 16-17: Philipp Jacobs (SDSU) and Behrend (CSUF), "Paying Attention to What Teachers Notice in Mathematics Instruction"
- April 13-14: Ken Bain, author of *What the Best College Teachers Do*

Linking Standards, Students & Practice: From Background Knowledge to Higher Level Thinking

Literacy Strategies modeled in the Arts, Foreign Language, History, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Writing for K-8 Teachers.

Winter Leadership Retreat

January 26 – 28, 2007

SJVMP Summer Leadership Institute

July 23 – August 3, 2007

Content Series Grades K-2, 3-5, 6-9

Jan. 13, Feb. 3, Mar. 3, April 21,
May 5, '07

Mathematics for Teachers of English Language Learners – 9 day Saturday Series

Jan. 13, Feb. 3, March 3, April 21, May 5, June 18-21,
2007

For more information please contact us or visit our website www.csufresno.edu/sjvmp

To keep in the know on mathematics issues such as IMAP, subscribe to COMET! The *California Online Mathematics Education Times* is a free, weekly online news journal designed for mathematics educators and educational leaders and is produced by SJVMP's PI Carol Fry Bohlin. COMET features education-related news from California and across the nation, as well as information about professional events and opportunities, current educational issues, and online resources. Email Carol at carolb@csufresno.edu if you're interested in subscribing!

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