

# CSUS MATH PROJECT NEWS

September 2000

"The true spirit of delight is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry."  
--Bertrand Russell

## THOUGHTS FROM DEBBIE...

I know the academic year has begun with a flurry for most of us. Our students have joined us once again. I am sure all of you find it as difficult as I do to maintain sight of goals to improve teaching in the midst of handling all of the nitty-gritty details which begin the year. If you pause to reflect a moment, I am sure you can recall an instant in your day about which you are proud. Mine happened after my classes last Thursday. While I was in the department office replenishing my supply of add/drop slips, turning in phone contact records, and checking for my latest class lists, I caught myself reflecting about the variety of the levels of questions I had used in class. I was happy to be reflecting in the midst of the drudgery work that goes with teaching. I know you all are having similar thoughts about your teaching. I hope you are being as supportive a teaching coach for yourself as you would be to someone else. Don't forget to pat yourself on the back for the good things you do each day.

## WE'RE GROWING...

This last summer was our second summer of offering professional development to teachers. Thanks to the Professional Development Initiative passed by the California Legislature we were able to offer four additional summer institutes; two Algebra Institutes designed for teachers trying to obtain their supplemental authorization to teach Algebra, one Upper Elementary Institute designed for

teachers of grades 4-6, and one Pre-Calculus Institute for high school teachers. Also, as in the past we hosted our Invitational Institute for elementary and secondary teachers. Teachers in all of the various institutes found the time invested this summer valuable. Here is a small sample of the thoughts that teachers left us with this:

[The institute] is an exponential function of what I had hoped! I envisioned discussing problem solving as the subject matter, not being imbedded in problems to solve! But being imbedded in kinds of problems we have been attempting to solve has widened and deepened my experience with mathematics and my understanding of how to implement problem solving in the profession. I couldn't be more pleased to find myself --me who always feared math--so totally absorbed.

—Deanna Clark

...[T]he institute has exceeded my expectations in almost every way. I wanted to make fractions understandable for my students, and not only are we working on that, but I'm learning how to make all math more understandable. Also I wanted to learn how to coach and be coached by other teachers. That is a huge strength of the institute--demonstrating coaching-debriefing methods. I've also increased my resources by virtue of the wonderfully deep problems we've tackled as a group--and through the network of teachers the institute facilitated.

—Glen Odabashian

The institute is much more than I expected.... I know math will be more understandable and interesting for my students if I have anything to do with it--and I do! I'm more comfortable, now, moving from [the] conceptual [process] to an algorithm....

—Gina Valine

## SATURDAY SEMINARS OPEN TO ALL

The variety of summer institutes held this summer has expanded the structure of our support for teachers during the school year. This academic year we will offer six Saturdays as follow-up support for those who participated in this past summer's institutes. The Saturdays are open to any teacher who would like to join us, even if that teacher was not a summer institute participant. The schedule of Saturdays is listed in our "UPCOMING EVENTS" column.

These Follow-Up Saturday Seminars serve many groups of teachers from each of the institutes as well as teachers who have not been able to attend our institutes. The rough structure of each Saturday will be:

- 9:00 - 11:00 Do Some Math & Peer Coaching Debriefing of Lesson
- 1:00 - 3:20 Break Out Sessions—Algebra, Upper Elementary, Pre-Calculus, Elementary Content Discussions, Secondary Content Discussions, Improving Observational Skills Through Video Analysis, Peer Coaching Logistics
- 3:30 - 4:00 Journaling and Goal-Setting

Lunch will be provided for you if you RSVP.

## A PECULIAR PATTERN SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Scott Farrand has been waiting in anticipation of this first Saturday. When asked what he has in mind for the problem solving, he remarked with a smile that he has found a very peculiar pattern. Aside from peculiar, this first Saturday could have also been named a "Bring-Your-Teaching-Partner Saturday". Last summer one of the main emphases of both the Invitational and the Upper Elementary institutes (and of the Summer 1999 Institute) was to demonstrate how peer coaching in mathematics can help teachers be more reflective about their teaching, thereby improving their teaching. In order to give participants' teaching partners a flavor of the summer experience, some of the sessions offered on Saturday, September 23 will be tailored to help partnerships begin building peer coaching relationships by setting-up common expectations. Please note however, that participants of all of our summer institutes as well as folks new to CSUSMP will find Saturday's activities

relevant and valuable. If you would like to attend this Saturday Seminar on Sept. 23, please RSVP to Debbie Stetson or to Sarah Davis. When you RSVP we will let you know the exact room location of the seminar here at CSU Sacramento.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **CSUSMP Events:**

- Saturday Meetings 9:00-4:00pm:
  - ◆ September 23
  - ◆ October 21
  - ◆ November 18
  - ◆ February 3
  - ◆ March 3
  - ◆ April 28
- School visitations- we will visit 14 schools providing observations & guest teaching. Please contact us if you would like to schedule a visit.

### **Other Events of Interest:**

- Asilomar Mathematics Conf.  
Dec. 1 - Dec. 3  
Many people from CSUSMP and NCMP will be presenting.

## MAILING LIST REQUESTS

Would you like to be on our mailing list? If you would like this newsletter mailed to your home, contact us at (916) 278-5951.

If you would like an electronic version only and no hard copy, please let us know that also.

## CSUSMP CONTACT INFORMATION

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