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Reflections on the 45th NCSM Annual Conference- Reaching the Peak of Mathematics Leadership

On the plane ride home I found myself reflecting and running through my three days in Denver in my mind. It was a whirlwind of wonderful information. There were many fantastic sessions and presenters that gave me things to think about in my work with teachers in my district and county.

As the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for my district and member of the tactical team for investigating the Common Core State Standards for my county I found several things that will help me in my work. There are three sessions that are standing out in my mind right now- *What is Fluency? Why is it Important?* presented by Francis (Skip) Fennell, Kay Sammons, Beth Kobett, and Jonathan Wray; *Helping Teachers Connect Assessment of Numerical Proficiency and Classroom Instruction* presented by Marilyn Burns; and *Illustrative Mathematics as a Resource for Teacher Professional Development* presented by William McCallum.

What is Fluency? Why is it Important? will help me in working with teachers on rethinking their definition of fluency. In the Common Core State Standards the word 'fluency' has caused a lot of conversations in my district and county. The information in this session will help me to focus this conversation. I will be able to look at each grade level of the Common Core State Standards and talk with teachers about the exact intent. I have a stronger sense of when students are expected to have more automaticity with basic facts and when they are to be developing strategies for these facts. It also will help me to focus the bulk of our work with students on relationships within and between arithmetic operations to solidify fluency.

Helping Teachers Connect Assessment of Numerical Proficiency and Classroom Instruction will help me to guide teachers in listening to their students. The videos shared in this session and how to use them in professional development work will guide me in focusing my work with small groups of teachers. Looking at students' successes and misconceptions will help me in working with teachers on the discourse in their classroom. I can focus professional development around student work and student thoughts without it being threatening or evaluative of their classrooms and students.

Illustrative Mathematics as a Resource for Teacher Professional Development will help me in how I choose tasks to work with teachers. Looking at the examples shared and how a simple word choice can change the intent of a task will make me be more particular about what I use with teachers. If I hope to change the tasks used in classrooms I have to be careful of what I use with teachers. It also reminded me that I need to spend more time reading William McCallum's blog.

In between sessions I was able to meet with colleagues. This is a valuable and coveted thing in our profession. So much of my time is spent in isolation preparing to work with the teachers in my district and county. It was very helpful to meet with colleagues for extended amounts of time and get their insights. I was able to discuss sessions attended, upcoming sessions, professional development thoughts, coaching thoughts, and how people are implementing the Common Core State Standards. These conversations helped to solidify what is going well in my district and what I need to work harder on improving.

Receiving the Iris Carl Travel Grant allowed me to attend this conference. I would not have been able to attend without this opportunity. I work in a small rural district that doesn't have the financial resources to allow this type of professional development. This was a once in a lifetime opportunity and will make an impact on my work in my district and county.