

*42nd NCSM Annual Conference, San Diego, California*  
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***Wow! Just thinking about my experiences regarding the opportunity to attend the 2010 NCSM Annual Conference fills me with excitement and enthusiasm.***

As an emerging mathematics leader, this was by far the most amazing conference I have had the privilege to attend. I was not sure what to expect during my first time attending the NCSM Annual Conference. My experiences were amazing and beyond anything I could have ever imagined. The opportunity to utilize and share my new knowledge could not come soon enough. I boarded the plane heading back to Texas feeling renewed, refreshed, and ready to empower others.

***NETWORK:*** The opportunity to network with mathematics leaders from around the country was priceless. Networking opportunities existed in numerous places, especially the unexpected! During the general sessions, I was able to meet and talk with individuals who served in similar roles to mine. It was refreshing to be able to discourse with others holding the same mathematics beliefs and values. Furthermore, it was incredible to be able to share our challenges and struggles. This provided me with affirmation, different perspectives on current issues, and fresh ideas to implement upon my return. While waiting outside for new sessions to begin as the previous sessions wrapped up, I utilized each and every spare minute! I found that introducing myself led to conversations that quickly turned to mathematics education. This gave me yet another opportunity to gain knowledge and perspective from numerous stakeholders. I also thoroughly enjoyed the sponsor display area. Having the ability to visit with the sponsors and view products through the lens of a mathematics leader was very beneficial for me. As I looked around and listened, I heard great conversations regarding products and implementation from other leaders.

***COMMUNICATE:*** Participating in sessions at the NCSM Annual Conference provided me with the chance to obtain knowledge regarding current issues in mathematics education from leaders around the country. I was impressed by the depth and complexity of the sessions I attended. My current responsibilities include providing leadership in mathematics intervention and instruction, staff development for elementary and junior high mathematics teachers, supporting the implementation of the Texas Student Success Initiative, and supporting the RTI process in mathematics. I was able to walk away with knowledge to share in my daily work. The information that was communicated to me was essential, well-informed, and relevant. In turn, I am able to share new knowledge and help to build capacity with teachers and structures that I support.

***SUPPORT:*** During the conference, I attended two phenomenal sessions pertaining to Response to Intervention (RTI). I left with a fresh perspective. The information shared gave me the ability to offer guidance as our school district establishes a framework for RTI in the mathematics classroom. Supporting students in mathematics continues to be a challenge. However, change occurs in small steps. These small steps, once embraced and celebrated, will add up to large gains in student achievement. Although my responsibilities include coordinating intervention programs, I often find myself talking about the need for high quality first time mathematics instruction. I left San Diego with numerous tools and strategies for supporting mathematics education leading to increased student achievement.

***MOTIVATE:*** In my school district, as in many others, we discuss the achievement gaps our data show. In addition, we often discuss how the sub-populations are affecting our accountability ratings. After attending the NCSM Annual Conference, it is clear that providing equitable access

to high quality mathematics instruction is critical. Several points from numerous sessions have confirmed my belief in the previous statement. For example, during the keynote address I recall hearing that, "Five years of effective instruction can completely close the gap." As I look at students in my school district who persist in low performance for many years in mathematics, I wonder where the equity is in that. I left the conference with a rejuvenated sense of responsibility for promoting access to equitable mathematics instruction in our schools and look forward to attending many more conferences and workshops hosted by NCSM. I am truly grateful for the experience.