



KENTUCKY CENTER FOR MATHEMATICS

Good News from KCM Coaching 2008-2009

Coaching + Math = Success

By Connie Smith, Sophomore Math Coach



Across the United States math has been the weak link in student education. Administrators and teachers in Beattyville, Kentucky decided they wanted this to change for their students.

In the past two years they began several initiatives for student improvement in math. One initiative that they began two years ago was that of an elementary math coach. The math coach is part of the Kentucky Center for Mathematics Coaching Program. The goal of the program is to improve math teaching and student learning in schools. Cognitive coach training is an integral element of a successful coach.

Principal of Beattyville Elementary, Maureen Patrick, says “the Mathematics Coaching Program has proven to be an effective and ongoing professional development for all my teachers, incorporating the best practices and strategies for teaching math. The Math Coach shares with teachers a shared vision of high quality; research based instructional strategies to help students reach mathematical proficiency.”



Students are engaged and excited about math now whereas one year ago math was a subject many students dislike or dreaded. Connie Smith, the math coach at Beattyville Elementary and Southside Elementary believes the

coaching program has helped change the way math is being taught and the way students feel about Math while improving their learning which is evidenced by CTBS and CATS scores. Both elementary schools’ math scores improved across the grade levels resulting in a higher math academic index at both schools.

Mr. Carroll, principal at Southside Elementary says, “Mrs. Smith is a resource to teachers that they did not have before. She can develop lesson plans and assessments with teachers, team teach, demonstrate/model lessons, help with Math Labs, and develop activities to reinforce what is being taught. Most importantly she is a sounding board and can use her cognitive coach skills to discuss with teachers what’s working, what’s not, and what are we going to do about it.”



Students and teachers shared their thoughts about Math at their school this year.

“I’m doing harder stuff that I used to couldn’t do.” (Kaylynn)

“Math is my favorite subject now and it used to not be.” (Julia)

“In math class I learned that learning can be fun.” (Zach)

“Student achievement has increased.

Working with the math coach has helped me see better ways to teach the standards.” (Ms. Arnold)

“Students are now able to think and reason better. They can put their thoughts in writing better.” (Ms. Hinkle)

“Working with the math coach using hands on activities has helped me reach students who in the past I was unable to reach.” (Ms. Napier)

“The Math Coaching program has been a great asset to our students over the last two years. The children not only know how to plug in formulas or work out problems, they have a greater understanding of what math is and what those problems mean. Our test scores show an improvement and growth of knowledge in the fourth grade level because of the coaching that was provided. The students are also more able to see math in their everyday lives, which is part of the core content at our grade level. They think mathematically and in a real-world sense. It is a great pleasure to be able to have this program in our school system.” (Ms. A. Smith)

Why is coaching so important to teachers? Athletes have coaches, gyms offer personal trainers, singers have voice coaches, and weight loss centers offer coaches to individuals. All this is done so these people can improve and get better. So, why not teachers? If education is to improve then coaching teachers is the key to future success.

