

Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center
February 21, 2003

Early in the history of the Southern California Comprehensive Assistance Center (SCCAC) preparing students for algebra was identified as a regional need. Teachers in middle schools lacked deep knowledge in mathematics and, as a result, did little beyond what the textbook offered. Students required by the state of California to take algebra in 8th grade were having great difficulty mastering its concepts. SCCAC responded by bringing together the County Office of Education Mathematics Coordinators from across the region and assisted them in designing and implementing the Algebraic Thinking Series that it has been offering.

The SCCAC Algebraic Thinking Institutes are week-long institutes providing teacher-leaders the knowledge to integrate algebraic thinking into grades 4-7 curriculum and assisting them in implementing The California Academic Content Standards in Mathematics and The Mathematics Framework for California Public Schools. This capacity building residential institute is designed to develop teams of teacher-leaders who can provide training in algebraic thinking in their home districts and in county teams throughout the region.

The SCCAC Algebraic Thinking Network brings participants from the 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001 Algebraic Thinking Institutes and county-based series twice a year for on-going professional development and resource sharing. The participants share lessons learned while conducting training and assisting with implementation in their home districts, as well as materials and activities developed to support the training.

Algebraic Thinking has been implemented in 200 schools across 8 counties. It has included 4 regional trainings and 12 county trainings. The follow-up professional development (SCCAC Algebraic Thinking Network) has provided teachers a venue for lesson study and for sharing their learning.

Plans for the immediate future are to review the professional development process for improving teacher knowledge that we have been using and, in light of current research and the Mathematics Initiative, to design professional development to meet the needs of the mathematics teachers of the regions and counties we serve.

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