

EDITORIAL

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This month I have the opportunity to attend the Spring Conference of the North Carolina Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators. The focus of this year's conference will be "Designing a K-5 Mathematics Specialist Certificate Program."

The goal of the conference will be to begin discussion of a program of study that

- at the university level, may lead to a graduate certificate in K-5 Mathematics,
- at the state level, may lead to a K-5 Mathematics Specialist endorsement,
- at the national level, will lead to a national K-5 Mathematics Specialist certification.

It is important to recognize that children's K-5 mathematics experiences not only determine the depth of their current mathematical understanding, but also lay the foundation for their learning of mathematics beyond the elementary grades. At the same time, many K-5 teachers are simply not adequately prepared to teach mathematics in a way that will help their students develop depth of mathematical knowledge, computational fluency, and relevant problem solving strategies and skills. Thus, it is crucial that K-5 teachers be prepared in ways that will be consistent with the following principles that will serve as guides for the conference:

1. Students must be engaged in learning significant concepts.
2. Students must learn to reflect on the structure of their knowledge.
3. Teachers must have a deep understanding of content and a coherent vision of content so that they can understand students' thinking about key concepts.
4. Teachers must have a repertoire of effective instructional strategies and access to high quality materials.
5. Teachers must understand how students' learning of mathematics develops and be able to assess the depth of students' understanding.
6. Teachers must view their own professional development as a critical, continuing part of their lives as teachers and incorporate "reflection on practice" as part of their professional development.

This conference will address a most vital issue and should provide opportunities for some lively discussion and sharing of ideas. Certainly, providing relevant, meaningful professional development for pre and inservice