

Math/Quantitative Reasoning Mini-Convening Summary

February 29, 2008

Dear AHSI Math/Quantitative Reasoning Colleagues,

Thank you once again for your participation in our first ever AHSI Math/Quantitative Mini-Convening taking place in San Diego earlier this month. This venue provided us a great opportunity to learn more about each respective organization and the issues and challenges we all face with respect to Math/Quantitative Reasoning. Your focus, energy, and willingness to fully engage in each task enabled us to pull together a great deal of information into two key focus areas for future work. You demonstrated that when you place a group of knowledgeable, creative and committed educators together in one room for an extended period of time, dynamic work can evolve from the process.

Following our February mini-convening, as the facilitator I was asked to provide a couple of take-aways/general observations to the AHSI Network Team. Here is what I included:

1. We are all dealing with similar issues around Math/QR – working to improve students’ disposition and motivation; searching for best methods for making the learning relevant to students’ lives; looking to access quality instructional resources to promote numeracy across the curriculum; working with staff to help them see that Math/QR is everyone’s responsibility; dealing with state testing requirements and student proficiency expectations, etc. The more we can network and share – both internally in BP and throughout the AHSI network, the stronger we’ll be and the more progress we’ll make. As Lynn Arthur Steen stated in his article for the NCTM Journal titled, **Facing Facts: Achieving Balance in High School Mathematics**, “Understanding the obvious, there is no one right way to approach the teaching of mathematics that will work well for all teachers and all students.” We must continue to work collectively to identify a wide variety of tools and techniques so that we’re able to most effectively meet the needs of all of our students.
2. The Intermediary representatives at the AHSI Math/Quantitative Reasoning mini-convening are creative and knowledgeable individuals deeply committed to improving Math/QR delivery for all students. They are willing to go above and beyond to work towards marked improvement in the way Math/QR is currently delivered and are eager to contribute their ideas, time, and energy to make a difference in the lives of others. As the AHSI Network Team, I believe we must continue to provide opportunities for these people to come together as it’s the face-to-face discussions, sharing, and brainstorming of new ideas that generates a high level of enthusiasm to return to their respective sites and organizations and apply new learning. We are helping to both develop and support leaders which WILL have a significant positive effect on student outcomes.

The purpose of this summary is to: provide a recap of key issues and strategies shared and emerging from discussions; outline proposed desired results and strategies synthesized from information shared; and suggest next steps for continuing our collaborative work around the Math/Quantitative Reasoning topic. It is my hope that this will ignite further discussion and action to move things forward in a positive and productive direction.

Key Issues

When meeting in mixed intermediary groups, you were asked to identify key issues around the Math/Quantitative Reasoning topic and attempt to draft 1-3 focus questions to get at these key issues. Following is what emerged from the groups:

Key Math/Quantitative Reasoning Issues	Focus Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Finding "Holes" (missing pieces) in kids▪ Filling in the "Holes" (How do we fill the gaps)▪ Society says it's okay to not do well in math▪ Standards (state/federal) elevate unimportant to vital ▪ Widely varied skill levels▪ Urgency vs. time to develop meaningful work▪ Lack of time in day to teach▪ How to teach problem solving▪ Quality planning time▪ External personal issues▪ Coverage vs. in depth learning▪ How to incorporate remediation in high school math classes ▪ Range of skill levels▪ Self-Confidence▪ **Retention▪ Lack of critical thinking skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ How do we deal w/ math phobia?▪ How do we deal with lack of basic skills?▪ How do we elevate things like teamwork, cooperation... ?▪ Can we make math relevant? ▪ How do we manage varied skilled levels in the classroom? ▪ Strategies for critical thinking/reasoning skills?▪ How to increase motivation to learn and retain info?▪ How to teach to a broad range of grade levels in the same classroom?

Identified Challenges by Intermediary

Following this task, you paired up for a "walk and talk" to share and discuss one particular challenge facing you and/or your organization around the Math/Quantitative Reasoning topic, steps that have been taken to address this challenge, resources used, successes, and next steps. This "walk and talk" was intended to prime the pump so that when you returned to the room and met in intermediary groups, you were prepared to further discuss and log responses with your respective intermediary colleagues. The attachment titled, "AHSI QR Mini Conv Wall Postings (formatted)" represents the work you posted and shared with others.*

* Please note: AHSI Network Support Coordinator, Lauren Smock-Randall graciously typed up all of the wall postings in the order I presented them to her. Thank you, Lauren! I have made an honest attempt to format these to my best recollection without the posters in hand yet acknowledge I have erred along the way. Please excuse any omissions I've made and/or work I've incorrectly attributed to a different group. I believe Jane took photos of each of the wall posters so we'll see about getting access to those in the near future.

Focusing Our Future Work

Late on Friday afternoon, you were once again divided into mixed intermediary groups and given the following task:

Looking at both the collection of mixed intermediary key issues/focus questions and the information provided by the various intermediary groups, try to find 1-2 common areas of intersection that can help focus and ultimately direct our future work together.

What emerged from this group synthesis of all of the work and ideas emerging from our time together were the following two focal areas:

1. Building a Culture of Numeracy/Combating Innumeracy
2. Creating a Math/Quantitative Reasoning Resource Library

Please see the final two pages from the attached document, "AHSI Mini Conv Wall Postings (formatted)" for detailed notes presented by your respective groups.

Proposed Desired Results and Strategies

On Wednesday, February 20th, the AHSI Network Team met to debrief the three mini-convenings taking place the first week in February (Principal Training, High School to College Transition, Math/Quantitative Reasoning). Using a Desired Results Framework provided by AHSI director, Talmira Hill, one of our tasks was to use the information gathered from the respective mini-convenings to draft 1-2 Desired Results and strategies that would help yield these results. The attached draft document titled, "AHSI Math_QR_Proposed Desired Result" is a first attempt at using the collective work and ideas from the mini-convening to focus our future work together. It is my hope that we can use this document to help guide follow-up conversation.

Next Steps

In order to move this process forward, I'd like to invite each of you to join a conference call on Wednesday, March 19th from 2 – 3:30 pm ET. The purpose of this 1 ½ hour call will be to discuss the contents of this summary and attachments; make a collective decision about desired results and strategies; determine products and deliverables that will help carry out these strategies; and collaboratively outline a draft work plan and timeline. In addition, we'll discuss best means for exchanging tools, materials, and other informational resources throughout the AHSI network. Please confirm your interest in participating in this call by Friday, March 14th as specific call-in information will be sent out on Monday, March 17th.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or if you feel there are any pressing issues that require immediate attention. I trust this correspondence finds you busy but well and I look forward to continuing our work together.

With warmest regards,

Tim

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