

2-20-12 Coley and Smith Teach Singapore Math

Monday, February 20, 2012

During the recent monthly Principal's meeting held at West Bladen High School, Ronald Coley, principal of East Arcadia School and Cheryl White Smith, principal of Elziabethtown Primary School "taught" district office staff how to do Singapore Math. With chart paper and marker in hand, Coley and Smith had everyone in attendance doing Singapore Math. Number bonds, numbers and operations in base ten, model drawing, bar modeling, and other non-traditional methods of learning math are part of the program. The resounding statement by the group during the meeting was they wish they had been taught math the Singapore way.



A key factor to Singapore's mathematics success is how they approach problem solving. Students learn to understand both the "how" and the "why" so they can tackle both routine and non-routine problems. There are several skills that are critical to mathematics success in the elementary grades. Among them are an understanding of number, number sense, and place value. Place value is the system of writing numerals in which the value of the digit is determined by its position, or relationship to the other digits. These values are multiples of a common base of 10 in our decimal system. In Singapore, where students consistently outperform American students in math, place value is considered a foundational skill for all mathematics learning.

The Singapore method teaches confidence by having students dive deep into each math topic until they get a strong understanding of it. Introducing visual concepts early on make learning easier for the students than starting off with numbers and symbols on a board.