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Min-Lin Lo TSSA Winter 2012

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Winter 2012 Teaching Skills Study Award (TSSA) Report

Name: Min-Lin Lo

Department: Mathematics

Email address: mlo@csusb.edu

Date Submitted: January 18, 2012

Name and Date of conference attended:

AMS-MAA Joint Mathematics Meetings
January 4-7, 2012

Teaching Skill(s) Studied:

Demos and strategies that enhance teaching and learning mathematics.
Developing mathematical thinking and problem solving skills through games and puzzles.
Innovative and effective ways to teach real analysis.
Making connection between math concepts using real life objects.

Impact on Current Teaching (How was this info applied)?

I learned several new hands-on (some feet-on) activities and how they are applied in the presenters' class that I plan to adapt to use in my classes when appropriate. E.g.,

1. Several games/puzzles in which students physically work through a solution to a mathematical task (hidden as a game) and use this experience to analyze their thinking processes and learn how to describe their general solution using math language.
2. Improv techniques for math: the speaker demonstrated how some of the most fundamental tenets of improv can be used to create an open and engaging mathematics classroom.
3. Using cookies to help students visualize multivariable functions; using line dancing to review transformation of functions; using feather boa to help students' understanding of real analysis concepts; using Lego bricks to visualize graph theory and abstract algebra.

I have gathered some research ideas/problems for future undergraduate research projects.

I was also introduced to a book full of interesting math magic tricks. I bought it at the conference and will select some of the magic tricks to enhance math interest for my students.

I am inspired by the talks given by the winners of the *Haimo Awards for Distinguished College or University Teaching*. Here are the two quotes in the talks that made a deeper impression on me: "Embrace your geekdom!" and "Find reasons to like students you think you don't like".