

Fresh Thinking Conference 2025

Participant Survey Results

Category	Average Rating (Out of 5)
Overall Satisfaction	4.92
Organization & Logistics	4.94
Recommend to Colleagues	4.96
Greg Sr. - Value	4.98
Greg Sr. - Engagement	4.92
Greg Jr. - Value	4.96
Greg Jr. - Engagement	4.94
Amy Casey Keynote - Value	4.45
Amy Casey Keynote - Engagement	4.68
Tammy Tang AI & U - Value	4.92
Tammy Tang AI & U - Engagement	4.85

The Fresh Thinking Conference was overwhelmingly praised as one of the best professional learning experiences teachers had ever attended. Participants highlighted the practical, common-sense strategies that could be immediately applied in classrooms, particularly the consistent use of models such as number bonds, bar models, and CPA progressions.

Attendees appreciated the warm, welcoming atmosphere, the thoughtful organization, and the generosity of the foundation in making the event possible. Overall, teachers left feeling inspired, re-energized, and confident that they had gained valuable tools to improve math instruction and student learning.

What Participants Liked Most

Content & Learning

- Practical strategies and ideas to immediately use in classrooms.
- High-quality math instruction that was *“relevant, meaningful, and not a minute wasted.”*
- Clear modeling of problem-solving approaches and effective progressions.
- Balance of concrete, pictorial, and abstract strategies.

Presenters

- Greg and Greg Jr.’s expertise, humor, and authenticity.
- The energy and passion of the presenters kept sessions engaging.
- Participants appreciated that presenters were approachable and genuine.

Collaboration & Connections

- Opportunities to connect with like-minded educators.
- Discussions with peers sparked new ideas and perspectives.
- Many appreciated the sense of community and networking.

Conference Experience

- Smooth organization and flow of sessions.
- Variety of session topics and choices.
- Resources provided to support continued implementation.

Overall Sentiment

Participants frequently described the experience as *“fantastic,” “one of the best conferences I’ve attended,”* and *“time well spent.”* Many emphasized that the conference left them feeling motivated, confident, and excited to bring what they learned back to their students.

Standout Quotes:

"The real lessons that we can take back immediately to use in the classroom. The innovative technology that allows students to struggle productively is absolutely amazing! You and your family have done an incredible job!"

"I liked the modeling of consistent strategies...it just makes so much sense! I also liked the variety of topics!!"

"The presenters were friendly and informative and offered effective and worthwhile strategies that I will immediately use with my fourth graders. The conference was very well organized in an enjoyable environment. Everyone involved was friendly and welcoming."

"I absolutely loved every single minute of this conference! It was by far the best PD I have ever been to. You all are the most caring, supportive, and generous people dedicated to helping teachers be better teachers."

"First off, I love Greg's mission and his purpose for what he is doing. You can tell it is very genuine. The strategies and manipulatives are so purposeful and can be generalized as the math gets harder. The curriculum is the most comprehensive and intuitive platform I've ever seen."

"The generalization of models across grade levels, the common-sense approach to teaching math, and seeing the curriculum pieces put into practice made everything click."

"I loved that everything made practical sense. There wasn't anything 'fancy' about the message. Good math instruction needs to be purposeful, and the tools and models you use need to stretch across grade levels for students to make sense of math."

"The introduction by Greg Sr. was powerful in reinforcing the connections across problems. Having dinner together was wonderful! I really felt part of a movement that has been and will continue to make a difference."

"I loved everything about it. We all felt welcomed and valued. The sessions made me feel better prepared to be one of the CRAZY people you want to help improve math education. I'm happily on the crazy train with you guys!"

"The strategies you model and the care taken to highlight fresh thinking beyond instruction. Your curriculum builds skills that work for all students, and gives teachers confidence too."

"The Fresh Thinking Conference was exactly what I was hoping for! Seeing continuity across the grades was so helpful. There was no wasted time—it all felt relevant and meaningful."

"I loved the entire experience! Seeing the Tang Family in action, the delicious BBQ dinner, and the passion behind Greg's push to change math education for the better—I am beyond grateful to have received the grant to be able to attend."

What Could Be Improved for Future Conferences

Overall Sentiment

Many participants said they had *no suggestions at all* because everything was “*wonderful*,” “*smooth*,” or “*one of the best conferences I’ve ever attended*.” Most improvement ideas were framed as “*minor things*” or “*only if feasible*.”

Scheduling & Pacing

- Allow more transition time between sessions so presenters and participants don’t feel rushed.
- Consider extending to a third day or offering longer sessions.

Food & Logistics

- Provide more variety and healthier food options, with lunch choices in advance.
- Offer larger t-shirt sizes and more accessible facilities (e.g., bathrooms, transportation/shuttles).

Conference Materials & Structure

- Reference handouts during sessions and give access to curriculum/tools earlier.
- Offer recordings of missed sessions and more elective/breakout options (e.g., interventionists, special ed, middle school).

Collaboration & Community

- Build in structured time for grade-level group work and peer Q&A.
- Allow more time within sessions for participants to discuss and process ideas together.

Content Suggestions

- Include more opportunities to engage in math directly (e.g., problem solving, games).
- Add a session focused on navigating the curriculum’s features.

Feedback Highlights - Greg Tang Sr.'s Sessions

Engaging & Relatable

Participants consistently highlighted Greg Sr.'s humor, warmth, and relatability. Comments like *"Wonderful speaker and great sense of humor!"* and *"Focused, engaging, inspiring, enlightening, helpful, entertaining!"* were repeated throughout. Many noted that his humor kept them engaged during long sessions and made challenging concepts feel approachable.

Clear, Practical Teaching

Teachers praised his ability to simplify complex math ideas and make them stick: *"He has a way of breaking down complex ideas into something really clear and practical."* His focus on using simple numbers, correct models, and effective tools resonated: *"It gives kids an access point at every grade level."* Several said they left with strategies they could use immediately in the classroom.

Modeling & Classroom Connection

Many appreciated how he modeled good teaching and connected everything back to real classroom practice: *"I found it very helpful to hear the exact phrases he uses with children and how to sneak in higher information."* His use of visual representations, scaffolding, and hands-on approaches helped participants see progressions across grade levels.

Passion & Generosity

Teachers described him as *"a gift to education"* whose passion for helping people is evident. They were struck by his generosity and humility, noting personal touches—like offering resources or listening carefully to individual questions. One wrote: *"He truly is unmatched."*

Inspiration & Impact

Participants left inspired and motivated: *"I feel lucky to know him and be able to spread his mission."* *"His passion and vision of what math instruction could be is contagious."* Even those who identified as weak in math said his methods made concepts stick and gave them confidence.

Standout Quotes

"Greg is so funny and relatable. Made the learning engaging and everything made sense."

"He has a way of breaking down complex ideas into something really clear and practical."

"Greg Sr. is truly a gift to education... His mission and passion for helping is truly evident."

"Focused, engaging, inspiring, enlightening, helpful, entertaining!"

"His passion and vision of what math instruction could be is contagious."

"I left Kansas even more impressed by him than I already was."

Feedback Highlights – Greg Jr.’s Sessions

Overall Impressions

Participants described Greg Jr. as engaging, knowledgeable, approachable, and easy to follow. His clear explanations, professional pacing, and calm, patient demeanor made the sessions both accessible and enjoyable. Many commented on how relatable he was, and how his passion for math and for teachers came through in every presentation.

Teaching Strengths

Greg Jr. stood out for his ability to teach word problems using number bonds and bar models. Teachers found his emphasis on generalizable strategies, rather than relying on quick tricks, to be both eye-opening and practical. His consistent modeling across grade levels, coupled with the use of CPA progressions, helped participants see how mathematical understanding develops and connects over time.

Hands-On Learning

Teachers especially appreciated the hands-on experiences Greg Jr. incorporated into his sessions. Working alongside him with snap cubes, games, and bar models made the learning process tangible and memorable. His pacing allowed participants to experience the same productive wait time a student would, which many found valuable.

Platform Expertise

Another highlight was Greg Jr.’s deep knowledge of the Tang Math website and curriculum platform. Attendees noted how user-friendly he made the tools feel, praising the navigation, manipulatives, and linked videos. Many left excited to share what they had seen with colleagues and administrators, recognizing the potential impact for teachers new to the profession.

Standout Quotes

“Greg Jr. was excellent and very clear. I came away with more practical tools that I’m excited to apply in the classroom.”

“He helped us see the value in using strategies that generalize. The word problem sessions were particularly helpful.”

“His down-to-earth way of speaking and knowledge of the platform made it feel user-friendly.”

“The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree — but Greg Jr. brings a fresh, youthful approach.”

“Very informative and eye-opening. His passion for the mission really came through.”

“Calm, patient, and professional — even with tough questions.”

“I was skeptical at first, but he won me over. He truly understands how to build mathematical thinking in students.”

Feedback Highlights - Amy Casey Keynote

Amy's keynote was described as energetic, authentic, and inspiring. Teachers appreciated her humor, positivity, and focus on well-being, noting how refreshing it was to reflect on themselves as people, not just as educators. Her reminder that we must take care of ourselves in order to serve our students resonated strongly, and many found her story both relatable and motivating.

Participants especially valued her practical strategies, from creating "No Matter What" lists to incorporating brain breaks, karaoke, meditation, and even her smoothie recipe. While not everyone connected with the meditation portion, most agreed her approachable framing made it accessible. Overall, teachers left feeling energized and grateful for the timely reminder that balance and self-care are essential parts of great teaching.

"So much energy, positivity, and joy—Amy made us laugh, reflect, and even dance our way into healthier habits."

Breakout Session Feedback Highlights

Amy Casey - Meditation:

Amy's meditation session was described as peaceful, relaxing, and exactly what participants needed after a full day. Several noted that it was a beautiful reminder to slow down. Others shared that the experience not only helped them decompress but also inspired them to bring meditation practices into their daily lives and classrooms.

Tammy Tang - AI & U:

Tammy's AI session was praised as informative, practical, and accessible. Participants appreciated her clear explanations, honest approach, and wide range of examples that showed how AI can be useful not only in the classroom but also in everyday life. Many noted that they left with a stronger understanding of AI and concrete resources to explore, with some saying they now feel confident enough to try using AI more regularly.

Teachers valued the balance between foundational knowledge and practical tips, especially the fun, real-life examples like recipes and time-saving tasks. Several mentioned they had prior AI training, but still picked up new tools and appreciated that Tammy's message echoed what they've heard elsewhere—that AI is here to stay.

Biggest Take-Aways

Teachers left the conference inspired by how **simple, consistent strategies** like bar models, number bonds, and CPA progression can transform math instruction. Many said it was the first time they truly saw how the K–5 sequence fits together—and how advanced concepts can be introduced in clear, developmentally appropriate ways. The biggest shift? Realizing that **everyone can be good at math** when lessons focus on visualization, questioning, and building understanding before algorithms.

Participants were overwhelmingly positive about the Fresh Thinking Conference, describing it as **amazing, fabulous, and even career-changing**. Many thanked the Tang family for their **generosity, kindness, and passion**, noting how valued and supported they felt throughout the two days. Teachers deeply appreciated the extras—the meals, game box, t-shirt, BBQ dinner, and trivia night—which made the experience both meaningful and fun.

Several highlighted how the **grants and scholarships** made it possible for them to attend, with some traveling across the country. Others shared excitement about bringing their entire teams, advocating for Tang Math in their districts, and even sponsoring colleagues to come because of the powerful results they had already seen. Many called out Tammy’s **hard work and dedication** in organizing such a smooth, well-planned event.

Teachers also expressed eagerness to keep learning, to return next year, and to share Tang Math with colleagues. Some even invited the team to present at professional learning programs in New York and beyond. The overall message was clear: attendees left **inspired, grateful, and energized**—ready to start the school year with fresh thinking, better strategies, and renewed confidence.

General Conference Feedback – Standout Quotes

- “Thank you for an amazing conference! Everything was so well organized and I felt valued as a teacher.”
- “This was an absolutely wonderful and career/life-changing two days!”
- “You treated us so well—breakfast, lunch, dinner, games, and resources. You really do know how to make teachers feel valued.”
- “I would highly recommend this conference, and I would love to attend again.”
- “In 32 years of teaching, I have never come across more gracious people, willing to support teachers in whatever way needed.”
- “From the bottom of my heart, thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I will spread the important work of the Fresh Thinking Foundation in my area.”
- “I’d go to this training every summer. It felt fun and made me excited to start the school year—I haven’t felt that since 2019.”