

Earnest

Events and Research News in Engineering & Science Today

The News Magazine of the College of Engineering and Science at Clemson University

Math Out of the Box

Innovative curriculum puts learning in the hands of students

Math Out of the Box is out of the bag.

Results of early field tests for Math Out of the Box, a program designed to close the achievement gap among elementary students, have been so positive that demand for the innovative curriculum for kindergarten through grade 5 is on the rise, says Dot Moss, project director.

Created at Clemson University under the auspices of the Center for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Education, Math Out of the Box presents mathematical concepts through a four-phase learning cycle: engage, investigate, reflect and apply.

The program was field-tested in South Carolina elementary schools and just completed the first of a four-year pilot program in New Jersey's Lawrence Township School District. Princeton University faculty members are helping implement the Lawrence Township program.

Math Out of the Box gets its name from its unique packaging. The teacher's manual and all of the learning materials needed for 30 students come in a box that is marketed and sold through Carolina Biological Supply.

It is a complete K-5, inquiry-based math curriculum. Each of the 20 units is based on principles advanced by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The first of what will be four strands of curriculum is available now.

Math Out of the Box was driven by funds from technology-heavy companies interested in improving inquiry-based math and science skills for America's school children. Support comes from Carolina Biological Supply, DuPont, Michelin North America, General Electric and American Honda Foundation.



Logo used with permission – Carolina Biological Supply Co., Burlington, N.C.

The numbers tell the story. . .

South Carolina third-graders who took part in the Math Out of the Box field tests rose above the state average on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Test. The students tested better — significantly higher in some groups — than students who had the same teachers the year before. Overall Math Out of the Box students meeting the standard rose from 82.3 percent to 89.9 percent, compared to a slight drop from 82.3 to 82.7 percent for all South Carolina students.