

# Archived Information

## Project MIND - Math Is Not Difficult®

### **I. Goal Area of the Activity: Improving Teacher Quality**

### **II. Summary / Purpose**

The mission of Project MIND is to improve student performance through the implementation of advanced systemic change in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade mathematics. Project Mind was originally developed by Dr. Hui Fang Huang "Angie" Su in 1988 to help academically at-risk elementary students improve their ability to solve math problems. Since then, the project has evolved into a program to stimulate student interest in math, to introduce and reinforce basic math skills, and to promote abstract thinking and reasoning. Students gain self-confidence, enjoy mathematics through teamwork, games, and competitions, and improve their standardized test scores.

Project MIND is designed to complement and enhance the core curriculum being used through the incorporation of innovative teaching strategies. Through games, story-telling, and other fun activities, Project MIND teaches students and teachers not to fear math. Students learn to think about and analyze numbers and math concepts, not just memorize them. Students also learn several techniques for performing a task and can choose the one that works best for them. By teaching multiple techniques to accomplish one task, Project MIND enables students to feel empowered, and they see numbers as fun to manipulate.

Project MIND works well for all types of students, regardless of their gender, cultural background, and socio-economic status. In addition, research has shown that Project MIND strategies and activities work well with alternative, gifted, at-risk students, exceptional, handicapped, and multi-cultural students. Project MIND curriculum and strategies are aligned to National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Standards and the Florida Sunshine State Standards.

### **III. Accomplishments / Results**

The standardized test score gains are consistently high for students participating in Project MIND. Currently, there are over 130 schools nationwide that use the Project MIND curriculum, and the results have been outstanding. In the first year of program implementation at three low-performing elementary schools in Palm Beach County, the percentage of students scoring at Level 3 and above on the Florida FCAT standardized test increased by an average of 24%. In Broward County, the Somerset Charter School, which primarily serves minority students, was rated the number one school in math statewide in 2000 (out of 1,666 elementary and charter schools). This school uses Project MIND strategies on a daily basis to teach math to its students. Richland County, the second largest school district in South Carolina, recently began Phase II implementation training with school district administrators and staff members. Participating schools in this county showed gains ranging from 10 – 20 percentage points in math scores on 2001 standardized state tests.

Our history indicates that Project MIND produces immediate gains for students. Case studies on Project MIND conducted by the University of Miami indicate the program has positive effects on children's cognitive skills, self-esteem, achievement motivation, and social behavior. Project MIND has also been shown to have a positive impact on parent-child relationships.

Through standardized assessments, it has been proven that students who have been exposed to Project MIND find math exciting, and gain self-confidence, as well as the ability to enjoy mathematics through individual learning, competitions, and teamwork. Longitudinal observations indicate that former students continue to apply methods they learned through Project MIND to advanced mathematical concepts encountered later in life. We would expect similar results at any Pre K-12 school site.

### **IV. Plans for Next Twelve Months**

- Continue to expand Project MIND on a national scale.
- Participate in local, state, and national conversations on achieving high quality mathematics instruction.