

Number World article as reported by the State Journal on October 16, 2006

Kids get into numbers

A few small tables create an intimate gathering area, there are posters hanging on the wall, plenty of floor space and lots of games in baskets and shelves along the perimeter of the room.

The Math Lounge at Elkhorn Elementary School is a learning environment in disguise.

For math intervention teacher Kris Jarboe, the set-up caters nicely to the laid-back atmosphere she is hoping to create.

I try to keep it relaxed because so many people have a negative view of math, she said.

Dont mistake the ambience as taking away from instruction time; there is plenty of learning going on in Jarboes Math Lounge.

Thats clear from the way students hands dart into the air before Jarboe can even finish asking a question. The way they bounce up and down when they have solved the problem Jarboe has laid before them, the way they smile when she applauds their efforts.

I want them to be successful, Jarboe said. I want them to be confident with numbers.

The work Jarboe is doing is part of the Kentucky Center for Mathematics **Number Worlds** math intervention program funded by the Kentucky Department of Education and the Kentucky Legislature.

The program provides supplemental instruction to students selected by teachers. Selected students attend a regular math class in addition to participating in the program during each school day.

This is the first year for the program, which is providing \$70,000 in renewable grants to 45 primary (kindergarten through third-grade) schools in Kentucky, including Elkhorn Elementary and Second Street School.

Kay Quire, math intervention teacher at Second Street School, said shes already seeing benefits for the students she teaches.

This is the first time theres been math, she said. I can already tell they feel more confident. They know that these things were learning are useful.

Jarboe agrees that achieving student confidence is important.

I tell the students youve got to trust yourself, know what youre thinking, she said.

Not all students participate in the program, a test is given at the beginning of the year and math intervention teachers work closely with students regular teachers to determine which students would benefit most from the supplemental instruction the program offers.

Intervention teachers also collaborate with other teachers when deciding what concepts to cover and which areas students need most help in.

There are 32 students in the program at Elkhorn and around 24 students at Second Street.

Quire and Jarboe say they both use a hands-on approach to aid students in fully grasping and understanding numbers and simple math concepts.

We work in a small groups atmosphere to get more one-on-one attention, Jarboe said.

We try to use real-life situations to make all this make sense to them, Quire said. I want to do hands-on so it will connect it to the real world for them.

Quire said she also gives tests using pencil and paper methods to prepare students for the future.

Math intervention teachers administer three assessments during the year, one at the beginning, one in the middle and one at the end, to track students progress. Those results are then turned in to KCM and the state to determine the success of the program at each school.

Quire said all schools in the program administer the same assessments under state guidelines.

Alice Gabbard, KCM director of diagnostic intervention programs, said she is pleased with the program thus far, and has received positive feedback from math intervention teachers about student progress.

She said the program is still making adjustments on how to best meet needs of math intervention teachers and students.

Its all brand new to us, she said.

Gabbard said early indications are that the program will continue to grow in the future. KCM begins to accept grant applications from schools after Oct. 23 and by the 2007-08 school year the number of schools with math intervention teachers will nearly double, according to Gabbard.

Many of the schools currently receiving grants for the intervention program, including Elkhorn Elementary and Second Street, will be able to renew the funding for a second year.

Quire said she is happy that the math program is in place.

I think its extra help for students in math, she said. At this age they all develop at different levels.

Jarboe said she hopes to see the program extend to even more schools in the area.

Its a worthwhile program that really needs to be in place everywhere, she said. 🌐

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