

Teachers learn new math teaching method

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School districts 91 and 93 have adopted the Singapore math curriculum for elementary schools. National experts were brought in to teach today's conference. Singapore math is very different from the old way of teaching math.

"They were used to doing a procedure and going by certain steps -- doing it because that's how it's done -- not because they understood why it was done," 4th grade teacher William Stewart said.

"My husband's an engineer," said 4th grade teacher Melane Anderson. "And when I was explaining it to him he said, 'I get it, they're just making them think like engineers do,' which means that they learn how to solve problems because they understand what's being asked, and they have creative ways of figuring out how to solve that problem."

Curriculum directors in both school districts came to the same conclusion about Singapore math.

"We looked at data from international testing and those strategies that were used with the Singapore program, they were getting great results," district 91 curriculum director Michaelena Hix said.

The teachers in the two districts enjoyed the experience.

"We have been having a very enjoyable time as we learn how to help our students become more engaged," Melane Anderson said.

The curriculum gets its name from the country of Singapore whose students were doing poorly in math compared to other nations. After adopting this method the country rose to the one of top nations in math test scores.

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