

# What Can Be Learned From Singapore's Math Curriculum

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"Singapore Math" is said to be catching on in American schools, and according to many educators, this is a good thing for the future of math in the states.

According to the newly launched education site, The74.org, allowing Singapore math curriculum into American classrooms has the potential to be a very good thing.

Singapore has shot to the top over the course of the past decade and is now leading in math: according to The74, the most recent report from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study ranked Singaporean fourth-graders in first place and eighth-graders in second for having the most competitive math skills in the world.

One crucial difference between math in Singapore and math in the states is that here, students are taught that math is an innate ability whereas in Singapore, math is a skill that is learned and developed over time. For this reason, education experts argue that students learning math in Singapore are less likely to get discouraged when learning difficult problems and give up.

Further, in a Singapore math curriculum, students learn math skills with visual and audible supplements that help cement the teachings.

"Based on the work of American psychologist Jerome Bruner, the Singaporean curriculum begins with hands-on group activities with objects like buttons or dice. Next, students move onto the pictorial phase — drawing representations of concrete objects before moving on to abstract equations," the article said.

And when Kevin Mahoney, a math curriculum director who has helped schools across the country implement Singapore math, analyzed the effects of bringing Singaporean techniques into the American classroom, the results were positive; in every instance, students made significant improvements with the new curriculum.

"In June, a study released in the United Kingdom reached a similar conclusion: teaching Singapore math in the west can drive a small gain in students' math skills. After one academic year of Singapore math education, gains were equivalent to about one extra month of instruction, according to the study," the article said.

Mahoney told The74 the next step is a comprehensive, national study to analyze the effectiveness of implementing a Singapore math curriculum, and that with the current state of math in the U.S., efforts to get such a study going should be happening now.

Read the full article here and comment below.

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