

MODUMATH CONNECTIONS

NEWS AND FEATURES ABOUT MODUMATH AND THE PEOPLE WHO USE IT

ModuMath Helps WI College Meet NRS Standards

When the U.S. Department of Education revised its National Reporting System (NRS) in 2005, colleges all across the country faced a challenge to meet the new guidelines. In Wisconsin, the new guidelines led to a detailed revision of the state's Adult Basic Education curriculum. All Wisconsin technical colleges are using the new ABE curriculum, which defines learner competencies.

But Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC) took the ABE math curriculum one step further by creating a manual that provides assessments, learning activities, and published resources for each learning objective.

General Studies Associate Dean Jim Begotka says "Capturing the curriculum in the manner we did was a major undertaking by all in our Basic Education Team. It was a commitment to quality – one with an outcome that will enable our faculty to better serve learners by establishing a standardized approach."



Academic Skills Lab at NWTC. Photo by: C.J. Janus

While the curriculum of outcomes is standardized, the manual offers a variety of activities and resources for learners. Learning activities give students the option of using ModuMath Basic Math software or using workbooks published by several different companies. ModuMath's interactive video tutorials are a popular choice for learners who retain more with audio-visual reinforcement.

(continued inside)

The "Correct Answer" in Corrections

All educators face challenges with difficult students. But correctional educators have some unique challenges: they are working with incarcerated learners in an environment that is not inherently conducive to education. In many cases, their learners are people who lack behavioral, social, or moral reasoning skills. The typical incarcerated adult does not have a strong educational foundation. Academically, many are at the elementary school level.

Shirley Johnson, an ABE teacher at the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility says that many of her students require individual instruction and need to work at their own pace. Johnson has seen ModuMath improve her learners' math skills. "ModuMath begins with a competency... and then builds," she says. "The explanation is well done and the examples are very good – concrete and relevant – which helps our students grasp the concepts. TABE post-test scores prove this."

(continued inside)

INSIDE CONNECTIONS

— MODUMATH TIPS
How to use the "guest" login.

— MODUMATH RESOURCE CORNER
Unit Tests: A paper-and-pencil solution for assessments.

ModuMath Connections is published by the Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation, Inc.
800-821-6313
video@modumath.org
www.modumath.org

NRS Reporting, *continued*

In addition, ModuMath multimedia courses fit naturally into the revised curriculum. Not only are ModuMath lessons chunked into manageable units, but each lesson is organized by a section topic. Discrete sections give students the ability to focus on the specific content they need, and to have that content bookmarked for the next time they return to the software.

“ModuMath is a great product with sound learning theory embedded into it.”

The ModuMath lesson tests can be used as drill-and-practice or as assessment tools. “ModuMath is a great product with sound learning theory embedded into it,” according to Begotka. “Each of our instructors might use it differently for the various learner scenarios they face.”

With its main campus in Green Bay, Wisconsin, NWTC serves a large population

of ABE students who use the college’s 26 regional services sites. Those sites include county job centers, jails, alternative high schools, a homeless shelter, and satellite learning centers. The standardized curriculum means that a student can make a seamless transition from a job center, to an adult education site, to an NWTC campus without inadvertently missing key concepts and without unnecessary duplication of effort.

The math curriculum manual also ensures that the same resources are available to all instructors, whether they are veteran employees or part-time adjunct staff. “This empowers our instructors to find the best ways to achieve learner outcomes. As a result, we’ll have a pool of best practices which will be collaboratively shared among our faculty.”

Wisconsin’s revised ABE curriculum is available at www.curriculumbank.org.

MODUMATH TIPS

Using “Guest” Login Provides Flexibility

The easiest way to access ModuMath is to log in to the Student Menu as “guest.” A “guest” student can look at any lesson or test in any order without an instructor needing to enroll that individual in the Records Management System (RMS).

In most instructional settings, learners are enrolled and assigned lessons in RMS, which then automatically records all activities. But if records aren’t needed, there are situations where you’ll find the “guest” login to be useful:

- Students can use ModuMath for a quick refresher on a specific topic in a learning center environment that offers students independent access with little staff oversight.
- Students can see how they like the courseware before being enrolled and assigned a specific learning plan.
- Instructors can quickly view a lesson or test without enrolling themselves on the system as a student.

To use this feature of ModuMath, just type “guest” at the Student Menu login prompt.

Correctional Educators, *continued*



Using a computer is a new experience for some inmates. Carol Tobin at Ramsey County Correctional Facility in Minnesota has found that students with no computer experience become comfortable with ModuMath in a short time. ModuMath student software is easy to use – there are no hidden functions in menus nor special keys. All of the software controls are clearly labeled.

“..the examples are very good - concrete and relevant - which helps our students grasp the concepts. TABE post-test scores prove this.”

Tobin first started using ModuMath in 2003. With learners who have the time, she assigns the ModuMath assessment test to determine which lessons the student can skip and which lessons they need to study.

“Many students get very motivated to finish all of the lessons before they leave the facility,” says Tobin. “ModuMath is good for the student who needs

to work on his basic skills as well as the student who just needs to brush up on skills.”

For students who have taken the GED practice test and missed a few questions, Tobin will use the ModuMath records management system to assign lessons on topics the student is struggling with. Tobin also likes how the software and study guide give teachers options for using methods that work best with individual students. “The video instruction can be viewed many times until the student feels comfortable with the subject,” says Tobin. “If the student feels he needs extra help with a tutor, it is easy to access the study guide for extra instruction.”

Judy Redmon, a teacher and case manager at the Sussex II State Prison in Waverly, Virginia, says she’s seen learners’ resistance to math and computers melt away. Many students who told her they “couldn’t learn math” are now solving math problems and passing quizzes. One student told Redmon when he first enrolled in her class that he hated math and didn’t like using computers. “After working with ModuMath for two months, he now thinks that he is the math wiz in the class and wants to work on ModuMath daily!”

By the same token, some instructors shy away from computer use. ABE/GED instructor Steve Botney says, “I am still a paper and pencil type teacher, but our younger students are more accustomed to using computers. So, this really helps match a learning style to the teaching style.” Botney’s learners at Avery/Mitchell Correctional Institution in North Carolina are building a solid math foundation. “Once students get started, they want more and more.

They want to get all of the problems correct, so they go over and over and over until they have mastered it.”

In Wisconsin, inmates can use ModuMath to work toward an AA degree in the College of the Air program through Milwaukee Area Technical College. Unlike other College of the Air courses which use a textbook and recorded video, ModuMath is interactive. Nancy Kargel of Redgranite Correctional uses the software to require mastery of lessons before moving on. “Students are held more accountable for their progress than if they worked entirely independently from a book.”

“ModuMath allows students to experience a feeling of independence.”

ModuMath allows remedial college students to master math on their own terms. Such independence is especially meaningful in prison. Many ModuMath users discover a hard lesson: with education, the buck stops with the individual. It’s up to learners to work hard, study, and improve their skills. ModuMath lets a student explore math at his or her own pace. It also helps drive home the point that the learners are accountable for their progress.

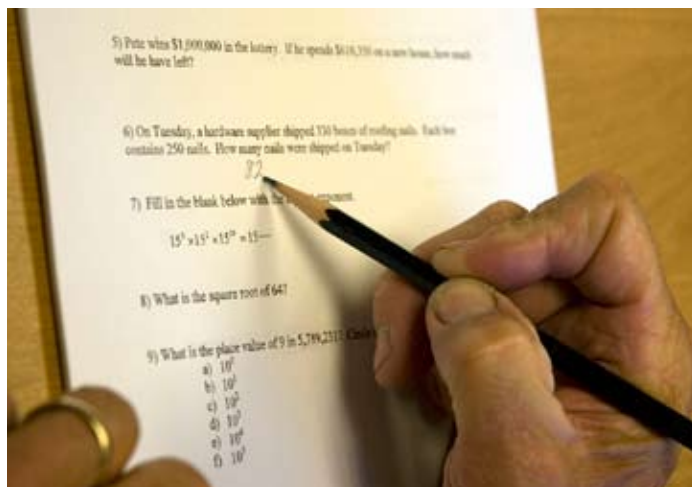
Redmon, who has been using ModuMath with learners for three years, says ModuMath helps foster each learner’s sense of responsibility by providing guided practice, feedback and assessment. “ModuMath allows students to experience a feeling of independence,” says Redmon. “It allows them to feel that they are truly in control of some important facet of their lives again and that they are successful in what they are doing.”

Resource Corner: ModuMath Unit Tests

ModuMath software includes an adaptive, prescriptive test for each course and a competency test for each individual lesson. Beyond the ModuMath software, there is also a supplemental paper-and-pencil testing package, available to current ModuMath users on request. The print-based Unit Tests for Basic Math and Algebra were created to address a variety of requests from users:

- Enhance long-term retention by cumulative testing of grouped lessons
- Offer a written exercise that could show the student's work
- Give students proctored tests

The Unit Test package for the 51 Basic Math lessons includes two sets of six tests. For the 32 Algebra lessons, there are two sets of four Unit Tests. The Unit Test package for both courses also includes two sets of a summative final test. A separate answer key is included with each test.



The Unit Tests are Microsoft Word documents and can be easily edited and printed. If you are a ModuMath user and would like to receive the Unit Tests for either course, contact us at 800-821-6313 or video@modumath.org.

Wisconsin Technical College System Foundation, Inc.
One Foundation Circle
Waukegan, WI 53597