

More than Just the Basic Facts, Please

Joan Young

Synopsis

This curriculum unit, for grades 3-5, is designed to increase understanding of multiplication by having the students actively involved in peer discussion of interesting problems where they create models to solve problems. The three areas of focus are multiplication combinations, understanding multi-digit multiplication, and activities helping students decide whether to multiply or divide to solve word problems. Students use arrays and other model activities to learn several ways to “remember” the multiplication combinations. Five structures of word problems are discussed to help students understand what piece of information is missing in a word problem involving multiplication or division. The Singapore Model Method is taught to add another problem solving strategy to the student’s repertoire. The area model of multiplication is used in problem solving to show the meaning of multi-digit multiplication. The unit’s emphasis is on working in small groups to discuss solution ideas to interesting problems using the language of math.