

What Works Clearinghouse



Connected Mathematics Project (CMP)

Program Description²

The *Connected Mathematics Project (CMP)* is a mathematics curriculum designed for students in grades 6–8. Each grade level of the curriculum is a full-year program and covers numbers, algebra, geometry/measurement, probability, and statistics.

The curriculum uses an investigative approach, and students utilize interactive problems and everyday situations to learn math concepts.

Research³

No studies of *CMP* meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards, and one study meets WWC evidence standards with reservations. The one study included more than 12,000 students from grades 6–8 in Texas.⁴

Based on this study, the WWC considers the extent of evidence for *CMP* to be small for math achievement.

Effectiveness

CMP was found to have no discernible effects on math achievement.

	Math achievement
Rating of effectiveness	No discernible effects
Improvement index ⁵	Average: 0 percentile points

1. This report has been updated to include reviews of 58 studies that have been released since 2005 or were additionally identified but published prior to 2005. Of the additional studies, 51 were not within the scope of the protocol, and seven were within the scope of the protocol but did not meet evidence standards. Additionally, two studies that met standards with reservations in the previous version (Ridgway, Zawojewski, Hoover, & Lambdin, 2002; Riordan & Noyce, 2001) no longer meet evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline. (The protocol for the middle school math area was revised to specify that groups must be equivalent on the pretest for a quasi-experimental design, and establishing equivalence with prior cohorts is now limited to adjacent cohorts.) A complete list and disposition of all studies reviewed is provided in the references.
2. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from a publicly available source: the program’s website (<http://connectedmath.msu.edu/>, downloaded August 2008). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review. The literature search reflects documents publicly available by August 2008.
3. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 1.0 (see the WWC Standards).
4. The evidence presented in this report is based on available research. Findings and conclusions may change as new research becomes available.
5. These numbers show the average and range of improvement indices for all findings across the studies.

Additional program information

Developer and contact

Developed by Michigan State University, *CMP* is distributed by Pearson Prentice Hall. Address: 145 Mt. Zion Road, P.O. Box 2500, Lebanon, IN 46052. Email: k12cs@custhelp.com. Web: <http://connectedmath.msu.edu/>. Telephone: (800) 848-9500.

Scope of use

Pilot editions of *CMP* were used from 1991 to 1997 and from 2000 to 2006 by approximately 390 teachers and 45,000 students across the United States. As of September 2004, the program had been implemented in 2,462 school districts, covering all 50 states.

Teaching

The *CMP* curriculum is divided into a sequenced set of units, each organized around different mathematical topics. The four

to seven lessons in a unit each contain one to five problems that the teacher and students explore in class. Additional problem sets for each lesson, called Applications, Connections, and Extensions, help students practice, apply, connect, and extend their understanding and skills. Each lesson culminates in a Mathematical Reflections activity. Materials include student units, Teacher Guides, Additional Practice and Skills Workbooks, Assessment Resources, and CD-ROMs for lesson planning, assessment, and student activities.

Cost

For the most recent edition of *CMP*, each student unit costs \$8.85, each teacher unit costs \$19.97, and the Computer Test Bank for Assessment and Practice CD-ROM costs \$129.97. See the publisher website for costs of other resources.

Research

Seventy-nine studies reviewed by the WWC investigated the effects of *CMP*. One study (Schneider, 2000) is a quasi-experimental design that meets WWC evidence standards with reservations. The remaining 78 studies do not meet either WWC evidence standards or eligibility screens.

Meets evidence standards with reservations

Schneider (2000) conducted a quasi-experiment to assess the impact of *CMP* on middle school math achievement in Texas. Twenty-three *CMP* schools were matched with 25 comparison schools that did not implement *CMP*. The analysis sample included three cohorts, but the WWC reports the results for only cohorts 1 and 2 because the study did not establish baseline equivalence for cohort 3. The *CMP* intervention began

when students were in the sixth grade. Cohort 1 consisted of more than 3,000 *CMP* students and 2,600 comparison students; cohort 2 consisted of more than 3,400 *CMP* students and 2,900 comparison students.

Extent of evidence

The WWC categorizes the extent of evidence in each domain as small or medium to large (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix G). The extent of evidence takes into account the number of studies and the total sample size across the studies that meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations.⁶

The WWC considers the extent of evidence for *CMP* to be small for math achievement.

6. The extent of evidence categorization was developed to tell readers how much evidence was used to determine the intervention rating, focusing on the number and size of studies. Additional factors associated with a related concept—external validity, such as the students' demographics and the types of settings in which studies took place—are not taken into account for the categorization. Information about how the extent of evidence rating was determined for *CMP* is in Appendix A6.

Effectiveness Findings

The WWC review of interventions for middle school math addresses student outcomes in the math achievement domain. The findings below present the authors' estimates and WWC-calculated estimates of the size and the statistical significance of the effects of *CMP* on students.⁷

Math achievement

Schneider (2000) reported negative but not statistically significant effects of *CMP* on pass rates for the math portion of the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) for cohorts 1 and 2 separately.⁸ After adjusting for differences between the *CMP* and comparison groups at baseline, the WWC determined that these separate effects for cohorts 1 and 2 were neither statistically significant nor substantively important according to WWC criteria

(an effect size greater than 0.25 in absolute value). The WWC also calculated the sample-weighted average effect for cohorts 1 and 2.⁹ This average effect was neither statistically significant nor substantively important according to WWC criteria.

Rating of effectiveness

The WWC rates the effects of an intervention in a given outcome domain as positive, potentially positive, mixed, no discernible effects, potentially negative, or negative. The rating of effectiveness takes into account four factors: the quality of the research design, the statistical significance of the findings, the size of the difference between participants in the intervention and the comparison conditions, and the consistency in findings across studies (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix E).

The WWC found *CMP* to have no discernible effects for math achievement

Improvement index

The WWC computes an improvement index for each individual finding. In addition, within each outcome domain, the WWC computes an average improvement index for each study and an average improvement index across studies (see WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix F). The improvement index represents the difference between the percentile rank of the average student in the intervention condition and the percentile rank of the average student in the comparison condition. Unlike the rating of effectiveness, the improvement index is entirely based on the size of the effect, regardless of the statistical significance of the effect, the study design, or the analysis. The improvement index can take on values between -50 and

+50, with positive numbers denoting favorable results for the intervention group.

The average improvement index for math achievement is 0 percentile points in the study.

Summary

The WWC reviewed 79 studies of *CMP*. One study meets WWC evidence standards with reservations; the remaining 78 studies do not meet either WWC evidence standards or eligibility screens. Based on the one study, the WWC found no discernible effects on math achievement. The conclusions presented in this report may change as new research emerges.

7. The level of statistical significance was reported by the study authors or, when necessary, calculated by the WWC to correct for clustering within classrooms or schools and for multiple comparisons. For an explanation, see the WWC Tutorial on Mismatch. For the formulas the WWC used to calculate the statistical significance, see WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix C for clustering and WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Appendix D for multiple comparisons. In the case of Schneider (2000), no corrections for clustering or multiple comparisons were needed.
8. Schneider (2000) also included a student-level analysis of Texas Learning Index (TLI) scores, a TAAS statistic designed for comparisons between TAAS administrations and between grades. Because the student-level intervention and comparison groups were not shown to be equivalent at baseline, this analysis was not included in this WWC review.
9. The sample-weighted average of the cohort 1 and 2 effects calculated by the WWC was used in the intervention rating and is reported in Appendix A3. Separate findings for cohorts 1 and 2 are reported in Appendix A4.

References **Meets WWC evidence standards with reservations**

Schneider, C. L. (2000). *Connected Mathematics and the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2000). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 62(02), 503A. (UMI No. 3004373)

Studies that fall outside the Middle School Math review protocol or do not meet WWC evidence standards

Adams, L. M., Tung, K. K., Warfield, V. M., Knaub, K., Yong, D., & Mudavanhu, B. (2002). *Middle school mathematics comparisons for Singapore Mathematics, Connected Mathematics Program, and Mathematics in Context (including comparisons with the NCTM Principles and Standards 2000)*. Retrieved from: <http://www.amath.washington.edu/~adams/full.pdf>. University of Washington, Seattle. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

Adams, R. L. (2005). *Standards-based accountability: Improving achievement for all students through standards-based mathematics instruction* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 2005). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 66(06). (UMI No. 3180485) The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

American Association for the Advancement of Science. (1999). *Middle grades mathematics textbooks: A benchmarks-based evaluation*. Washington, DC: Author. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.

Anderson, N. C. (2008). Walk the line: Making sense of $y = mx + b$. In C. E. Greenes, & R. Rubenstein (Eds.), 2008 yearbook of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, *Algebra and algebraic thinking in school mathematics* (pp. 233–246). Reston, VA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention.

Asquith, P., Stephens, A., Knuth, E., & Alibali, M. (2007). Middle school mathematics teachers' knowledge of students' understanding of core algebraic concepts: Equal sign and variable. *Mathematical Thinking and Learning*, 9(3), 249–272. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

Bay, J. M. (1999). Middle school mathematics curriculum implementation: The dynamics of change as teachers introduce and use standards-based curricula (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri–Columbia, 1999). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 60(12). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.

Bay, J. M., Beem, J. K., Reys, R. E., Papick, I., & Barnes, D. E. (1999). Student reactions to standards-based mathematics curricula: The interplay between curriculum, teachers, and students. *School Science and Mathematics*, 99(4), 182–188. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.

Ben-Chaim, D., Fey, J. T., Fitzgerald, W. M., Benedetto, C., & Miller, J. (1997a). *Development of proportional reasoning in a problem-based middle school curriculum*. University of Maryland, College Park. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED412091). The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.

Additional source:

Ben-Chaim, D., Fey, J. T., Fitzgerald, W. M., Benedetto, C., & Miller, J. (1997b). *A study of proportional reasoning among seventh and eighth grade students*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.

Ben-Chaim, D., Fey, J. T., Fitzgerald, W. M., Benedetto, C., & Miller, J. (1998). Proportional reasoning among seventh grade students with different curricular experiences. *Educational Studies in Mathematics*, 36(3), 247–273. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention

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- and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
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- Bledsoe, A. M. (2002). Implementing the *Connected Mathematics Project*: The interaction between student rational number understanding and classroom mathematical practices (Doctoral dissertation, University of Missouri–Columbia, 2002). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 63(12). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- Bray, M. S. (2005). *Achievement of eighth grade students in mathematics after completing three years of the Connected Mathematics Project*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Cai, J., & Moyer, J. C. (2006). *A conceptual framework for studying curricular effects on students' learning: Conceptualization and design in the LieCal project*. Poster presented at the 2006 Annual Meeting of the International Group of Psychology of Mathematics Education, Prague, Czech Republic. The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- Cain, J. S. (2002). An evaluation of the *Connected Mathematics Project*. *Journal of Educational Research*, 32(4), 224–233. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
- Capraro, M. M., Kulm, G., & Capraro, R. M. (2005). Middle grades: Misconceptions in statistical thinking. *School Science and Mathematics*, 105, 165–174. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Choppin, J. (2006). *Studying a curriculum implementation using a communities of practice perspective*. Paper presented at the 28th Annual Meeting of the North American Chapter of the International Group for the Psychology of Mathematics Education, Mérida, Mexico. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
- Clarkson, L. M. C. (2001). The effects of the *Connected Mathematics Project* on middle school mathematics achievement (Doctoral dissertation, University of Minnesota, 2001). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(12), 4709A. (UMI No. 9997642) The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.
- Collins, A. M. (2002). What happens to student learning in mathematics when a multi-faceted, long-term professional development model to support standards-based curricula is implemented in an environment of high stakes testing? (Doctoral dissertation, Boston College, 2002). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 65(2). The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.
- Danielson, C. (2005). Walking a straight line: Introductory discourse on linearity in classrooms and curriculum (Doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University, 2005). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 67(2). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- De Groot, C. (2000). Three female voices: The transition to high school mathematics from a reform middle school mathematics program (Doctoral dissertation, New York University, 2000). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 61(4). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- Durkin, N. M. (2005). Using *Connected Math Program*: Its impact on the Delaware State Testing scores of 8th-grade students at Milford Middle School (Doctoral dissertation, Wilmington

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- Folsom, M. L. (2002). Empowering girls in math: The influence of curriculum on female beliefs about mathematics (Master's thesis, Pacific Lutheran University, 2002). *Masters Abstracts International*, 41(2). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- Genz, R. (2006). *Determining high school students' geometric understanding using van Hiele levels: Is there a difference between standards-based curriculum students and non-standards-based curriculum students?* Unpublished master's thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample within the age or grade range specified in the protocol.
- Goodman, E. (2004). *Connected Mathematics Project: A constructivist view of mathematics education in the middle grades*. *Masters Abstracts International*, 43(2). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- Grandau, L., & Stephens, A. C. (2006). Algebraic thinking and geometry. *Mathematics Teaching in the Middle School*, 11(7), 344–349. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
- Griffith, L., Evans, A., & Trowell, J. (2000). *Arkansas grade 8 benchmark exam: How do Connected Mathematics schools compare to state data?* Little Rock, AR: Arkansas State Department of Education. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
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- Hull, L. S. H. (2000). Teachers' mathematical understanding of proportionality: Links to curriculum, professional development, and support (Doctoral dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2000). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 62(2). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine the effectiveness of an intervention.
- Izsak, A. (2008). Mathematical knowledge for teaching fraction multiplication. *Cognition and Instruction*, 26(1), 95–143. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include a student outcome.
- Izsak, A., Tillema, E., & Tunc-Pekkan, Z. (2008). Teaching and learning fraction addition on number lines. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 39(1), 33–62. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
- Jansen, A. (2006). Seventh graders' motivations for participating in two discussion-oriented mathematics classrooms. *Elementary School Journal*, 106(5), 409–428. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
- Katwibun, D. (2004). Middle school students' mathematical dispositions in a problem-based classroom (Doctoral dissertation, Oregon State University, 2004). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 65(5). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.

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- Kersaint, G. (1998). Preservice elementary teachers' ability to generalize functional relationships: The impact of two versions of a mathematics content course (Doctoral dissertation, Illinois State University, 1998). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 59(5). The study is ineligible for review because it does not examine an intervention implemented in a way that falls within the scope of the review.
- King, D. A. (2007). A study to ascertain the effects of the *Connected Mathematics Project* on student achievement in the Buffalo public schools. Unpublished master's thesis, State University of New York at Buffalo. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
- Krebs, A. S. (2003). Middle grades students' algebraic understanding in a reform curriculum. *School Science and Mathematics*, 103(5), 233–245. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Additional source:**
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- Additional source:**
- Lapan, R. T., Reys, B. J., Barnes, D. E., & Reys, R. E. (1998). *Standards-based middle grade mathematics curricula: Impact on student achievement*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.
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- O'Neal, S. W., & Robinson-Singer, C. (2003). *The Arkansas state-wide systemic initiative pilot of the Connected Mathematics Project: An evaluation report*. Albuquerque, NM: Accountability & Development Associates, Inc. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
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- Additional source:**
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- Ridgway, J. E., Zawojewski, J. S., Hoover, M. N., & Lambdin, D. V. (2002). Student attainment in the *Connected Mathematics* curriculum. In S. L. Senk, & D. R. Thompson (Eds.), *Standards-based school mathematics curricula: What are they? What do students learn?* (pp. 193–224). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
- Additional source:**
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- Rittle-Johnson, B., & Koedinger, K. (2005). Designing knowledge scaffolds to support mathematical problem solving. *Cognition and Instruction*, 23(3), 313–349. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Riordan, J. E., & Noyce, P. E. (2001). The impact of two standards-based mathematics curricula on student achievement in Massachusetts. *Journal for Research in Mathematics Education*, 32(4), 368–398. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent at baseline.
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- Star, J., & Hoffmann, A. (2005). Assessing the impact of standards-based curricula: Investigating students' epistemological conceptions of mathematics. *The Mathematics Educator*, 15(2), 25–34. The study is ineligible for review because it does not include an outcome within a domain specified in the protocol.
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