

STARBASE

Starting 22 August 2011

One of the most exciting programs on Fort Sill for the students of the Southwest Region of Oklahoma is STARBASE. This program focuses on enhancing science and math taught in the classroom. It gives fifth grade students hands-on experience to put the theories they learned into practice. STARBASE curriculum concentrates on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

Jim Henry, lead instructor, says that cadets are given scenarios, conduct investigations or experiments to determine what the best option would be. Teamwork is emphasized throughout the course and, even though the majority of the subject matter is hands-on, all cadets record their group's findings in their own activity log. Some of the favorite activities are rocketry, computer aided design of a lab module and assembly of a space station. Henry adds that the fifth graders also enjoy an activity called Pop Goes the Fizz which encompasses math, science and engineering. Another favorite is an activity that requires each group to design a restrictive device to return an injured astronaut from outer space to get proper medical attention. The astronaut's name is Eggbert. Each group has a budget and purchases material from a shopping list to strap Eggbert into a stretcher.

"The curriculum has changed significantly since the program started here in 2008. New concepts such as nanotechnology are introduced while we still use some of the original lessons that highlight Newton's laws of motion and Bernoulli's Principle."

Added to the five classroom days is a sixth day, known as a field day. The classes go to various sites here on post to see how STEM is used by both military and civilian personnel so they can see that what we cover in the classroom is relevant in the "real world".

STARBASE is offered to Lawton Public Schools and to the school districts surrounding Fort Sill. We have classes scheduled for students from Geronimo, Bishop, Sterling, Flower Mound, Cache, St. Mary's, Lawton Christian School, and Lawton Schools. Classes begin on August 22, 2011 and will end in May of 2012. Excitement is on the rise for this year's fifth graders to be involved in this exciting program!