

Email  
7th May 2008

Dear Doug,

Thank you for your insights about our MathMaster student calculators being battery-powered rather than solar-powered. Since we have a mixed reaction to this topic in our U.S. market, as noted below, your insights are very helpful to our analysis.

We have ongoing research of both the market preferences for battery-power vs. solar-power; and, the accompanying tooling and manufacturing cost to switch this product to solar power. So far, our reaction in the U.S. market is very mixed about customers' preferences for solar vs. battery. This mixed reaction in the U.S. market focuses on the battery replacement issue vs. the reliability of the battery power in some classrooms with lower light emissions who have switched from solar-powered calculators to battery-powered to gain this reliability. I think from talking with our U.S. customers they also feel, since some of the features of the MathMaster calculator are not available on other calculators, the trade-off of the battery issues are worth the added features. This, of course, raises the question for me of would these customers be more satisfied if they had these features and a solar-powered MathMaster? It would be easy to deduce that they would be more satisfied. However, changing to a solar-powered MathMaster would raise the purchase price; and, when asked this follow-up question most respondents have stated they would prefer a battery-powered calculator to a higher priced solar calculator with the same MathMaster features.

I am surprised by your comment about battery life of only 12-18 months...our experience with U.S. schools is that they are replacing batteries within a 3-5 year time period; and, as several customers have stated..."five years is the maximum life of student calculators in our school; so, battery life is not a major negative considering the added features".

We will continue to study our user base both inside and outside the U.S.; however, we are at least 18-24 months away from making any change in the power source of this calculator.

Doug, again, thank you for your insights and your support of the features of our MathMaster student calculator.

Best regards,  
Jim Wehrly  
Vice President Stokes Publishing Company