Educational Brief

Using Space for a Better Foundation on Earth
Mechanics of Granular Materials

For the educator

Anyone who has ripped open a vacuum packed pouch of coffee has experienced a fundamental aspect of mechanics of granular materials: a single shift in conditions can drastically change the properties of a bulk material. While the coffee pack is sealed under vacuum, outside air presses the grains against one another, locking each in place and creating a stiff “brick.” Once pressure is released, the grain assembly becomes very weak and soft, and moves about freely, almost like a liquid.

The principal strength of granular materials—whether they are coffee, soil beneath a house, or sand under a rover’s wheels on Mars—is interparticle friction and geometric interlocking between particles. Billions of grains contribute to the total strength of the material. This is relevant to many fields, not the least being earthquakes, which can loosen compacted soil and compact loosened soil.

Studying Soil Strength in Space

Detailed understanding of this phenomenon is needed to improve techniques for evaluating building sites here on Earth and, eventually, on the Moon and Mars, and to improve industrial processes that handle powdered materials. Research can only go so far on Earth because gravity-induced stresses complicate the analysis and change loads too quickly for detailed study. Going to orbit, though, opens new possibilities. The Mechanics of Granular Materials (MGM) experiments use the micro-gravity of orbit to test sand columns under conditions that cannot be obtained in experiments on Earth. This new knowledge will be applied to improving foundations for buildings, managing undeveloped land, and handling powdered and granular materials in chemical, agricultural, and other industries. MGM has flown on two Space Shuttle missions and is scheduled for a third, STS-107 in 2002.

Because the experiment apparatus used in MGM includes a complex hydraulic system, this educational brief offers a simpler laboratory demonstration, the displacement shear test, of soil mechanics. Although this displacement shear test and MGM use different...
approaches and apparatus, both ultimately depend on the interlocking between individual grains of sand. High school teachers may want to have their students first conduct the sand liquefaction activity in the Mechanics of Granular Materials brief (EB-2002-01-000-MSFC). Although designed for middle school students, this brief provides a good, entertaining introduction to sand liquefaction for students of all ages.

**Education standards**

Education standards for grades 9-12 met by this classroom activity are listed below. For brevity, standards which are not met are not included in this list.

**Standards for Technological Literacy (International Technology Education Association)**

- The Nature of Technology
  - The characteristics and scope of technology.
  - The core concepts of technology.
  - The relationships among technologies and the connections between technology and other fields of study.

- Technology and Society
  - The effects of technology on the environment.

**Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics)**

- Algebra Standard
  - Understand patterns, relations, and functions
  - Represent and analyze mathematical situations and structures using algebraic symbols

- Measurement Standard
  - Understand measurable attributes of objects and the units, systems, and processes of measurement
  - Apply appropriate techniques, tools, and formulas to determine measurements

- Data Analysis and Probability Standard
  - Formulate questions that can be addressed with data and collect, organize, and display relevant data to answer them
  - Select and use appropriate statistical methods to analyze data
  - Develop and evaluate inferences and predictions that are based on data

- Problem Solving Standard for Grades 9-12
  - Build new mathematical knowledge through problem solving;
  - Solve problems that arise in mathematics and in other contexts;
  - Apply and adapt a variety of appropriate strategies to solve problems;
  - Monitor and reflect on the process of mathematical problem solving.

**National Science Education Standards (National Academy of Sciences)**

- Science and Technology
  - Abilities of technological design
  - Understandings about science and technology

- Science In Personal and Social Perspectives
  - Natural and human-induced hazards
  - Science and technology in local, national, and global challenges

- History and Nature Of Science
  - Science as a human endeavor
  - Nature of science
SHEAR STRENGTH OF SAND

Abstract

Soils are three-phase composite materials that consist of soil solid particles and voids filled with water and/or air. Based on the particle-size distribution, they are generally classified as fine-grained (clays and plastic silts) and coarse-grained soils (non-plastic silts, sand, and gravel). Soil’s resistance to external loadings is mainly derived from friction between particles and cohesion. Friction resistance is due to particles’ surface-to-surface friction, interlocking, crushing, rearrangement, and dilation (or expansion) during shearing. Cohesion can be due to chemical cementation between particles, electrostatic and electromagnetic forces, and soil-water reaction and equilibrium. The basic factor responsible for the strength of coarse-grained soils is friction. Cohesion can be ignored.

This educational brief focuses on measuring shear strength of sands (typical example of coarse-grained soils) where, for the same material, packing density is a main factor to be considered when one asks about the shear strength value. Figure 1 illustrates the effect of shearing on the packing density of sand. As the external load is applied, the soil’s resistance is attained through shearing resistance, which causes the soil volume to increase (expand) or decrease (compress) depending on the initial packing density.

Introduction

Anyone who has ripped open a vacuum packed pouch of coffee has experienced a fundamental aspect of mechanics of granular materials: a single shift in conditions can drastically change the properties of a bulk material. While the coffee pack is sealed under vacuum (negative pressure), the grains push against one another, locking each other in place, creating a stiff “brick-like” material. Once pressure is released, the grain assembly becomes very weak and soft, and moves about freely, almost like a liquid.

The principal strength of granular materials – whether they are coffee, soil beneath a house, or sand under a rover’s wheels on Mars – is interparticle friction and geometric interlocking between particles. Billions of grains, ranging in size from large to microscopic, contribute to the total strength of the material. Moisture and air trapped within the soil also affect its behavior if loading occurs faster than the entrapped fluid can escape. As the pore water pressure or air pressure increases, the effective or interparticle stresses or pressures decrease, weakening and softening the soil. When the external loading equals the internal pore pressure, the soil liquefies.

This is relevant to many fields, not the least being earthquakes, which can loosen compacted soil and compact loosened soil. When this happens, buildings sink and buried struc-
Liquefaction phenomena

Sandy soils are usually good foundation soils as long as they are not subjected to dynamic (shaking) load conditions. The packing density and degree of saturation (dry versus fully saturated case, where pore spaces are filled with water) are the main factors that will determine how the sand deposit will react to a dynamic or cyclic load effect (e.g., earthquake load). When sandy soil deposits lie under the ground water table level in an earthquake-prone zone (e.g., the U.S. West Coast and Japan), then there is a high risk of sand liquefaction if the area becomes the scene of a strong earthquake. Liquefaction can be simply illustrated by the schematic shown in Figure 1, where loose packing of sand grains (i.e., large void volumes between sand grains) exists under the water table (also called fully saturated sand layer). Cyclic loads, such as loads that develop as a result of an earthquake, cause sand particles to lose contact with each other as a result of a sudden increase in the pore water pressure (i.e., sand grains will float in water). Therefore, the soil will have zero strength since there is no contact between particles. We say the soil liquefied. After the excess pore water pressure dissipates, the sand particles settle in a denser condition, which results in excessive settlement for buildings and structures.

Studying soil mechanics in space

Detailed understanding of this phenomenon is needed to improve techniques for evaluating building sites here on Earth and, eventually, on the Moon and Mars, and to improve industrial processes that handle powdered materials. Research can only go so far on Earth because gravity-induced stresses complicate the analysis and change loads too quickly for detailed study. Going to orbit, though, opens new possibilities.

The Mechanics of Granular Materials (MGM; Figure 3) experiment uses the microgravity of orbit to test sand columns under conditions that cannot be obtained in experiments on Earth. This new knowledge will be applied to improving foundations for...
buildings, managing undeveloped land, and handling powdered and granular materials in chemical, agricultural, and other industries.

The weightless environment of space allows soil mechanics experiments at low effective stresses with very low confining pressures to proceed slowly for detailed study. Specimen weight is no longer a factor, and the stress across the specimen is constant. This yields measurements that can be applied to larger problems on Earth.

MGM has flown twice on the Space Shuttle (STS-79 and -89; Figure 4), involving nine dry sand specimens. These were highly successful, showing strength properties two to three times greater and stiffness properties ten times greater than conventional theory predicted. On the STS-107 mission (scheduled for 2002), MGM scientists will investigate conditions with water-saturated sand resembling soil on Earth. Three sand specimens will be used in nine experiments. MGM can also benefit from extended tests aboard the International Space Station, including experiments under simulated lunar and Martian gravity in the science centrifuge.

The heart of MGM is a column of 1.3 kg (2.8 lbs.) of sand, 7.5 cm in diameter by 15 cm tall (3 x 6 in.). This is Ottawa F-75 banding sand, a natural quartz sand (silicon dioxide) with fine grains 0.1 to 0.3 mm in diameter. Ottawa sand is widely used in civil engineering experiments and evaluations. The sand is contained in a latex sleeve printed with a grid pattern so cameras can record changes in shape and position. Tungsten metal plates on three guide rods cap each end of the specimen. The specimen assembly is contained in a test cell shaped like an equilateral prism and comprising a Lexan jacket filled with pressurized water to confine and stabilize the specimen during launch and re-entry. An electric stepper motor moves the top platen to compress and relax the sand column. A load cell measures forces. The test cell is held on a rigid test/observation pad mounted between an array of three CCD cameras. Because this mechanism is too complex to replicate in a classroom, this exercise uses a simpler device.

**Coulomb’s Friction Law**

You may recall Coulomb’s friction law from your physics courses. If a wooden block is pushed horizontally across a table (Figure 5), the horizontal force \( T \) required to initiate the movement is given in Equation (1) where \( \mu \) is the coefficient of static friction between the block and the table and \( N \) is the normal force. The friction angle \( \phi \) is related to \( \mu \) (\( \tan \phi = \mu \)). In terms of stress, Coulomb’s law for sand is expressed

\[
T = \mu N
\]

\[
(\sigma_n)_f = \tau_f
\]

Figure 4. An astronaut inserts a soil sample module into the MGM apparatus in the Space Shuttle middeck. (NASA)

Figure 5. (a) Slip of a wooden block, (b) A slip plane in a soil mass (Budhu, 2000).
as Equation (2) where \( \tau_i \) is the shear stress when the slip plane is initiated (\( \tau_i = T/A \), where \( T \) is the shear force at impending slip and \( A \) is the area of plane parallel to \( T \)), and \( \sigma_n \) is the normal stress on the plane on which slip is initiated (\( \sigma_n = N/A \), where \( N \) is the resultant normal force acting on the slip plane). Failure does not necessarily mean collapse but the initiation of movement of one rigid body relative to another.

**Direct Shear Test**

Civil engineers use standard procedures such as conventional triaxial test, direct shear test (DST), and simple shear test to measure the shear strength of soils. Such procedures require special apparatuses that meet certain standards. This educational brief illustrates the standard direct shear test to determine the shear strength of soils. The standard procedure is modified to enable students (grades 9-12) to perform experiments using materials available at local hardware stores.

*Note: This experiment should only be used for educational demonstrations because it uses non-standard equipment. The results will not be valid in a real-world civil engineering application.*

The DST apparatus consists of a horizontally split box (Figure 6) and a frame to apply a horizontal shear load \( (T) \) under constant normal load \( (N) \). It is known as a shear box. Soil is placed in the shear box, where the top half is moved relative to the horizontal plane \( (AB) \). Normal (or vertical) force \( (N) \) is applied through a platen or plate resting on the top of the soil. The shear force \( (T) \) is applied through a motor for displacement control or by weights through a pulley system for load control. Usually, three or more tests are carried out on a soil sample using three different constant vertical forces. Failure is determined when the soil cannot resist any further increment of horizontal force (*i.e.*, when the upper box slips). If you plot shear stress versus normal stress, you get a straight line with a slope equal to \( \phi \) (Figure 7).

\[
\begin{align*}
T &= \mu N \quad (1) \\
\tau_i &= \sigma_n \tan \phi \quad (2)
\end{align*}
\]

Figure 6. Shear box (*Budhu, 2000*).

Figure 7. Coulomb shear stress versus normal stress relation.
DST apparatus

Follow these steps to build the DST apparatus (Figures 8-10; see the materials list on page 8):

- Wear workshop goggles to protect your eyes. Use all tools responsibly.

- Use wood available at local hardware stores to build the bottom half of the shear box with one side closed having internal dimensions of $80 \times 80 \times 40$ mm with wall thickness of 12.7 mm (1/2 inch). Wall thickness may vary from 3/8 to 1.0 inch depending on what is available in the store. Do not use plywood; it will fragment when nails or screws are inserted through the edges.

- Build the top half of the box with internal dimensions of $80 \times 80 \times 60$ mm with the same wall thickness as step 1.

- Put the two parts of the box together. Drill two centered 3.18 mm (1/8 inch) diameter holes through the walls of the top half of the box. Next, drill holes 12.7 mm (1/2 inch) deep in the bottom half wall.

- Place very thin spacers, such as toothpicks, on the four sides of the shear box (with thickness larger than the diameter of the largest sand particle or approximately 0.5 mm thick). Put the top half of the shear box on the bottom half and attach it using pins, screws, or nails.

- Cut the shear box cap. It is a piece of wood that measures $79 \times 79 \times 50$ mm. It should fit inside the shear box as shown in Figure 9.

- Attach the bottom half of the shear box to a table or a laboratory bench using a piece of wood or another method (i.e., angles, screws, C-clamp, etc.).

- Attach an eye hook to the center of one face in the top half of the box.
- Attach the string, pulley and weight platform to the eye hook on the top half of the shear box.

### Materials list and estimates prices for shear strength of sand experiment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Price /Unit</th>
<th>Total Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medium density fiberboard (0.5 in. x 2 x 2 ft.)***</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) 12.7 x 105.4 x 105.4 mm (0.5 x 4.15 x 4.15 in.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 12.7 x 105.4 x 40 mm (0.5 x 4.15 x 1.57 in.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 12.7 x 80 x 40 mm (0.5 x 3.14 x 1.57 in.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 12.7 x 105.4 x 60 mm (0.5 x 4.15 x 2.36 in.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) 12.7 x 80 x 60 mm (0.5 x 3.14 x 1.57 in.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box of metal pins ~3 x 85mm (1/8 x 3.3&quot;; only 2 needed)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pack of .5mm shims</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood block 79mm x 79mm x 50mm</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pack (100) 1&quot; phillips screws</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pack of eye hooks</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulley</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small bucket (weight platform)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 lb bag of sand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screw driver</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll of string</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood glue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>37.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Some items must be purchased in a bag even though only one or two are needed for this project. You may vary sizes if they perform the same function. ** Example prices only. Actual prices may vary with location. *** Some stores will cut to requested size. Because this is a classroom demonstration, variations from exact dimensions are OK. What is more important is following the procedure.
Experiment Procedure

Record all data on the data sheet at the end of this brief.

• Obtain a sample of about 3000 grams (~6.5 lb) of dry, clean sand. You can purchase it from local hardware stores or from swimming pool supply stores (uniform sand is used as a filter material in many applications).

• Weigh the cap and record its mass (M\text{cap}).

• Assemble the direct shear box, and mount it on the laboratory bench (Figure 10).

• Measure the depth, H_2, of the shear box and the height, H_3, of the top cap as shown in Figure 11. Record these measurements.

• Weigh the dish filled with the sand to be tested. Place the sand in a container (e.g., beaker or dish) then weigh the dish with the sand and record the weight.

• Pour the sand slowly into the shear box while the pins hold the two parts of the shear box together. Compact the sand with a rubber tamper or gently vibrate the table with your fist. The shear box should be filled with enough material so that the depth of sand in the shear box is above the slip or failure plane (i.e., about 80 mm deep).

• Weigh the container with the leftover sand not poured into the box to determine the weight of the sand used in the test.

• Level the sand surface inside the shear box, put on the cap.

• Put a mass (M_N, approximately 500 grams or any mass you choose) on the top of the cap.

• Measure the initial height, H_0, of the sand specimen by measuring the distance, H_1, as shown in Figure 11. Record this measurement.

• Carefully remove the shims and the pins.

• Weigh the weight platform (this can be a small bucket) and record the weight. Attach it to the shear box using a string (Figure 12).

• Gently add weight in 50-gram increments to the weight platform (add sand to the bucket to apply the weight increments) and watch if the top half of the shear box moves or not. Keep adding weights until the top half of the shear box starts sliding along the shear plane (Figure 10).

• Record the mass (M_s) that caused the shearing.
• Take the shear box apart and clean the sand.

• Repeat the test (steps 3 through 14) for at least two other MN values using sand samples that have a weight close to that of the first sample.

Calculations

• Calculate the initial volume of the sand specimen \((V_0)\) as: 
  \[ V_0 = 0.08 \times 0.08 \times H_0 \]

• Calculate the specimen cross-sectional area, \(A\), as: 
  \[ A = 0.08 \times 0.08 = 0.0064 \text{ m}^2 \]

• Calculate the sand dry unit weight \((\gamma_d)\) as: 
  \[ \gamma_d = \frac{(\text{mass of sand in kg}) \times g}{V_0}; \quad g = 9.81 \text{ m/sec}^2 \]

• Calculate the Normal force \((N)\) as: 
  \[ N = (MN + M_{\text{cap}}) \times g \]

• Calculate the shear force \((T)\) as: 
  \[ T = (MN + \text{platform mass}) \times g \]

• Calculate the normal stress \((\sigma_n)\) as: 
  \[ \sigma_n = \frac{N}{A} \]

• Calculate the shear stress at failure \((\tau_f)\) as: 
  \[ \tau_f = \frac{T}{A} \]

• Repeat for all \(N\) values (you need at least three experiments with similar sand unit weights).

• Plot \(\sigma_n - \tau_f\) relation as shown in Figure 3 and fit a straight line through the data points. Calculate the value of the sand friction angle \((\phi)\) in degrees?

Extensions

Repeat the experiments with sand under different conditions and compare with the original tests:

1. Sand that has been **tamped** down by gently hammering on the cap.

2. Sand that has been settled by vibrating for several minutes (for example, by pressing the side of a power tool against the box with the tool on; leave the cap atop the sand).

3. Sand that has water added. Do this in discrete increments (i.e., add water equal to 5 percent of the mass of the sand, then 10 percent).

4. Tamp the wet sand to squeeze out as much water as possible and repeat.
LABORATORY DIRECT SHEAR TEST DATA SHEET

Date: 

Tested by: 

Description of the sample: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[A] Specimen Data: Specimen no.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mass of the cap ( M_{\text{cap}} ), g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mass of the dish with sand, g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Mass of the dish and leftover sand, g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mass of the sand specimen [i.e., ( (2) - (3) )], g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mass of the weight platform, g.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Measure ( H_2 ), mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Measure ( H_3 ), mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Measure ( H_1 ), mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Calculate ( H_0 ) ( [H_0 = H_1 + H_2 - H_3] ), mm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Calculate the specimen area, ( A, M_{\text{cap}} )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Calculate the initial volume, ( V_0 ), ( m^3 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Calculate specimen dry unit weight, ( g_d ), ( kN/m^3 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>[B] Stress Data</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Normal mass ( (M_N) ), g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Calculate normal force ( (N) ), kN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Calculate normal stress ( (\sigma_n) ), kN/m²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Shear mass ( (M_s) ), g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Calculate shear force ( (T) ), kN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Calculate shear stress ( (\tau_f) ), kN/m²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

coefficient of static friction — a dimensionless constant representing the static (stationary) friction between two objects; the value of this coefficient depends on the objects involved and on the condition of their surfaces
cohesion — the intermolecular force that holds together the molecules in a solid or liquid
confining pressure — initial normal stress
effective stress — the average stress carried by the soil particles
electromagnetic force — an attraction or repulsion between two charged particles that are in relative motion; one of the fundamental forces of interaction which influences charged entities
electrostatic force — an attraction or repulsion between two charged particles that are not in motion
external loading — an external force applied to an existing object
friction — The resistance to relative motion between two surfaces in contact
friction angle — an index value to measure the friction property of soils
geometric interlocking — the connection of two or more particles based on their shape
interparticle friction — the friction between two adjacent particles
liquefaction — the conversion of a solid or a gas into a liquid
load — anything that must be supported or moved
microgravity — an environment in which the apparent weight of a system is small compared its actual weight due to gravity.
normal force — the component of support force perpendicular to a supporting surface; this force acts at right angles to the surface
normal stress — the load per unit area on a plane normal to (at right angles to) the direction of the load
packing density — the mass of particles that can be placed within a specific volume
shear force — a tangential force acting on one face of an object while the opposite face is held fixed
shear strength — the maximum internal frictional resistance of a soil to applied shearing forces
shear stress — the load per unit area on a plane parallel to the direction of the shear force
shearing — a type of deformation that occurs when a body is subjected to a force tangential to one of its faces while the opposite face is held in a fixed position by a force of friction
tamp — to pack down tightly by a succession of blows or taps

References

Youd, T. L. (1977), “Packing Changes and Liquefaction Susceptibility,” ASCE Journal of Geotechnical Engineering, 103:918-922. (Figure 1)

Web Links

Putting the squeeze on sand will expand understanding of soil mechanics (Jan. 6, 1998), http://science.nasa.gov/newhome/headlines/msad06jan98_1.htm
Soil mechanics experiment makes clean sweep (Feb. 4, 1998) http://science.nasa.gov/newhome/headlines/msad04feb98_1.htm
Microgravity research at NASA, http://microgravity.nasa.gov
NASA education web site: http://education.nasa.gov/

Acknowledgements

Concept creation, text, photos: Dr. Khalid Alshibli, MGM Project Scientist & Assistant Professor, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Louisiana State University – Southern University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803 (225-578-9179; Fax 225-578-8652; Alshibli@lsu.edu).
Editing, layout, design, illustrations, prototype DST box: Dave Dooling, Twila Schneider, Chris McLemore, Stephen Chemsak, Infinity Technology, Huntsville, AL
Using Space for a Better Foundation on Earth
Mechanics of Granular Materials
Teacher Reply Card

To help America achieve its goals in Educational Excellence, it is NASA’s mission to develop supplementary instructional materials and curricula in science, mathematics, and technology. NASA seeks to involve the educational community in the development and improvement of these materials. Your evaluation and suggestions are vital to continually improving NASA educational materials.

Please take a moment to respond to this questionnaire. Please respond by mail. Future versions will allow you to respond through the Internet at http://ednet.gsfc.nasa.gov/edcats/teacher_guide
The page will instruct you on how to enter your responses.

1. With what grades did you use the teacher’s guide?

Number of teacher/faculty?

- _____ K-4
- _____ 5-8
- _____ 9-12

Community college
College/university-undergraduate
College/university-graduate

Number of students?

- _____ K-4
- _____ 5-8
- _____ 9-12

Community college
College/university-undergraduate
College/university-graduate

Number of others?

- _____ Administrators/staff
- _____ Parents
- _____ General public

Professional groups
Civic groups
Other:

2. What is your home or school 5- or 9-digit Zip code? _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. How was the quality of this teacher’s guide?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Poor
- Very poor

4. How did you use this teacher’s guide?

- Background information
- Critical thinking tasks
- Demonstrate NASA materials
- Demonstration
- Group discussions
- Hands-on activities
- Integration into existing curricula
- Interdisciplinary activity
- Lecture
- Science and mathematics
- Team activities
- standards integration

- Other. Please specify: ____________________________________________

5. Where did you learn about this teacher’s guide?

- NASA Education Resource Center
- NASA Central Operation of Resources for Educators (CORE)
- Institution/school system
- Fellow educator
- Workshop/conference
- Other. Please specify: ____________________________________________

6. What features of this teacher’s guide did you find particularly helpful?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

7. How can we make this teacher’s guide more effective for you?

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

8. Additional comments:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Today’s date: ______________

Fold along line and tape closed.