

Title: Improving Math “X”

Project Member(s): Cindy Keune, Kristy Woods

Describe the problem, issue, or area of interest and the context. (For example, what concepts were students having trouble with? What has not worked well in the past? What needed to be improved? In other words, explain why you chose this project.)

Math X is Las Positas College’s (LPC) self-paced class format. Most of our non-transfer level Math classes are offered in this format. Elementary Algebra and Intermediate Algebra students are the big consumers here.

Math X classes are a mastery learning program which requires that the student prove mastery of each chapter by passing each chapter exam with a score of 84% or better, before proceeding to the next chapter. There are no lectures in Math X. A Math instructor and instructional assistant are available for tutoring/questions.

Our department has been concerned with the poor success rates in these classes. Our project has been to work with our department as a whole to add some structure to these classes in order to improve student performance.

Define your desired goals, or “outcomes.” (List 1-3 goals that you wanted to accomplish. For example, what did you want students to be able to do, or what did you want to improve about your teaching?)

1. Gain Math Department consensus to add some structure to the Math X classes.
2. Gather survey feedback from students and instructors regarding this change.
3. Look at Math X success rates.

Describe your “indicators” of success. (What *measures* did you use to determine the outcome of your project? You should have at least one measure for each goal.)

1. Discussion in Math Department meetings. Vote to approve the class changes.
2. Online & informal surveys.
3. Success rates as reported by the college district.

Describe your project.

Add structure to Math X included the following:

1. Mandatory homework for each section. Homework is checked by Math X instructor.
2. Electronic login – log out
3. Target dates for passing exams.

Describe your results.

The Math Department approves of the changes; individual instructors report improvement. Instructors also report a general improvement in the attitude toward the course. The bottom line is, of course, student success. It is very difficult to separate all the different semester to semester factors than can impact student success. We will present the Math X data success data that we have. We will continue to monitor what happens over the years.

Describe your evaluation methods.

The evaluation methods include the following: analyze the success rates, as reported by our college district and summarize our survey and informal interview results.