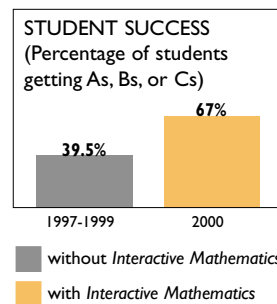


Student Success Is on the Rise at Barton County Community College with Help from Interactive Mathematics



Overview—Barton County Community College, Great Bend, Kansas

- Of students taking Basic Algebra with Interactive Mathematics in the fall of 2000, 67 percent scored a C or better, compared with only 39.5 percent of students taking the same class without Interactive Mathematics between the spring 1997 and summer 1999 semesters
- Engages students with interactive, multimedia lessons and activities
- Gives students the flexibility to work in class or at home
- Allows students to work at their own pace
- Promotes coordination and scheduling among faculty



Improving student success rates within the developmental mathematics program has always been a top priority at Barton County Community College. So in the spring of 2000, faculty at Barton County turned to PLATO Learning's Interactive Mathematics (formerly delivered by Academic Systems), an innovative multimedia program designed to enhance student achievement in an interactive, engaging way.

"Interactive Mathematics was a new technique that we had never seen or heard about before," said Brian Howe, mathematics instructor at Barton County. "We were in a rut in terms of student success rates, but after diving into the program, our test scores went up."

Positive Student Results

Today, all students who enroll in developmental math classes at Barton County Community College use Interactive Mathematics in the classroom. While some students are apprehensive about using a computer-based program, most students like the flexibility and independence Interactive Mathematics offers. "If a student is doing really well, they can always move ahead," said Kathy Dewey, mathematics instructor at Barton County. "I've had some students finish a course in two weeks using the program—it gives the students greater flexibility."

As part of a study conducted in the fall of 2001, students were asked how they liked using Interactive Mathematics. Overall, results were very positive:

INSTITUTION: Accredited by the Higher Learning Commission, Barton County Community College has provided educational services for residents of seven central Kansas counties since 1969. This two-year comprehensive community college offers more than 425 associate degrees and certificate programs that enrich the lives of students, as well as benefit the region as a whole.

SIZE: Approximately 5,000 students enroll in classes each year at the main campus in Great Bend and the satellite campus in Fort Riley.

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"PLATO Learning helps students down the road to becoming independent learners."

DR. GILLIAN GABLEMANN,
ASSOCIATE DEAN

“The explanations were clear. They told you what you needed to know. You were able to go back over the material and find what part you needed more practice with.”

“It helped me concentrate and stay focused.”

“I really enjoyed learning math on the computer. Before this, I could never make myself pay attention in order to learn.”

“This was a good way to learn at your own pace because you could use the CDs at home if you needed to. I liked that.”

“I can go as fast and slow as I want.”

Higher Academic Achievement

Students at Barton County like using Interactive Mathematics, and their test scores show improvement as well. According to the study conducted in 2001, 67 percent of students taking Basic Algebra in the fall of 2000 scored a C or better, compared with only 39.5 percent of students taking the same class without Interactive Mathematics between the spring 1997 and Summer 1999 semesters. What’s the secret to success? “I believe it improves student engagement in the learning process,” said Dr. Gillian Gablemann, associate dean of math, English, and essential skills. “It’s really hands on and gives the students lots of examples. And it

helps them to become independent learners, which is sometimes a struggle to do.”

Meeting Faculty Goals

Interactive Mathematics’ computer-mediated instruction provides additional structure and coordination among the high number of adjunct faculty teaching at Barton County. The program is flexible enough to be used according to the instructor’s teaching style, but at the same time it gives them a schedule to follow. And for some teachers like Kathy Dewey, the structure of Interactive Mathematics has also affected student behavior. “When I walk into a classroom, my students are already working. You just don’t get that in a lecture-based classroom,” she said.

“We were in a rut in terms of student success rates, but after diving into the program, our test scores went up. And I like the fact that students are engaged with Interactive Mathematics. It’s much more hands-on than a lecture-based course.”

BRIAN HOWE,
MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTOR