

# Interactive Mathematics Provides Flexible Scheduling, Leading to Increased Enrollments at Brevard Community College



## Overview—Brevard Community College, Brevard County, Florida

- Flexibility of offerings has increased enrollments.
- Instructors have more focused time with students.
- The college served as an initial pilot for Interactive Mathematics nearly 10 years ago and is still using the materials to help students succeed.

Brevard Community College realized early the potential that Interactive Mathematics could have for its students. The college was one of the first five nationwide to begin working with Interactive Mathematics when Academic Systems first began offering the materials in 1992, and it hasn't turned back.

Through use of the courseware, now part of PLATO Learning, the college is meeting its goal of utilizing technology to reach as many developmental students as possible. In fact, the flexibility of the program has helped the college offer innovative combination courses—including one that combines prealgebra and elementary algebra students—that have helped increase enrollments and retention.

Today, the materials are in use at two of Brevard's campuses. The Cocoa Campus was the first to implement Interactive Mathematics, and the Melbourne Campus now has a significant PLATO Learning presence. Both campuses utilize an approach that combines lecture and lab time.

"One of the biggest benefits is the ability to work with students hands-on every day, one-on-one, much more so than I do in a lecture class," said Vicki Norwich, an instructor on the Melbourne Campus. "I like the ability to pull together small groups of students and work with them and spend very concentrated, focused time with students using this method."

Shai Neumann, mathematics department chair on the Melbourne Campus, says one of the most beneficial aspects of using PLATO Learning's materials has been the flexibility it has provided in terms of scheduling.

"What we have with Interactive Mathematics is the ability to combine classes when the expected enrollment at each individual class would be low," Neumann said. "In the past, we had to cancel those classes with low enrollment or offer fewer options for courses at the beginning."

**INSTITUTION:** Brevard Community College is located on Florida's Space Coast and has five campuses that are located in and serve Brevard County, home to the nation's manned space program on the Atlantic Ocean. Approximately 66 percent of credit-seeking students are enrolled in the college's associate in arts degree program, which paves the way to a four-year degree. The college also offers more than two dozen associate in science degree programs and approximately 45 certificate programs, both of which prepare students for a wide array of technical and professional careers.

**SIZE:** Offering both credit and non-credit classes, the college annually serves more than 42,000 Brevard County residents, which includes approximately 20,000 credit students.

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MATHEMATICS INSTRUCTOR

So, for example, instead of offering a night class one evening per week, the college can now offer students a night course three times a week because that course is combined with courses of other levels, giving students choices.

“If we only offer the course one night, we lose students. By combining classes, we can get two small groups to become one bigger group and keep those students coming. The software

program enables us to do that,” Neumann said.

Neumann also reports that this flexibility has helped the math department keep its enrollments up while the college’s enrollments have been down.

“Our numbers were up, and I attribute at least some of that to our flexible offerings,” he said. “It’s helped our enrollments increase by being able to serve more students.”