

Polk State College – Quality Enhancement Plan - Executive Summary

Title of QEP	Math: The Bridge To Success
Name of Institution	Polk State College
QEP Contact	Kaye Betz - QEP Director - KBetz@polk.edu

Polk State College's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), Math: The Bridge to Success, reflects an institution-wide process that aims to improve student learning in Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033) and the learning environment for MAT 1033 students. In the development, the QEP Committee, consisting of students, faculty, deans, and staff, reviewed input from the college community and key issues that emerged from institutional assessment to determine the area most in need of improvement.

Signifying an area of high impact on how the College accomplishes its mission was a 2008 report from the Florida Department of Education, wherein Polk State College students ranked last (41%) among the 28 community/state colleges in successful completion of Intermediate Algebra (MAT 1033). Because only 15% of the students place above MAT 1033, the statistics were alarming given that the course is a prerequisite to all college-level math courses required for the associate in arts (AA) degree and associate in science (AS) degrees.

Further research and data analysis was supported by the *Community College Survey of Student Engagement*, which stated in 2008: "Student learning and student retention are correlated strongly with student engagement." Therefore, this QEP endorses a college-wide transformation in *how* mathematics is taught rather than *what* is taught while maintaining the focus on four main outcomes: Students will demonstrate competence in MAT 1033 learning outcomes, they will successfully complete MAT 1033 on the first attempt, they will be successful in the subsequent math courses, and they will graduate in their selected degree programs.

Recent research in best practices, such as Blumberg's (2009) rubrics, will be utilized to enable faculty to transition toward the first goal of the plan: more learner-centered teaching. The rubrics, based on Weimer's (2002) five dimensions of learner-centered teaching: *Function of Content*, *Role of the Instructor*, *The Responsibility for Learning*, *The Purposes and Processes of Assessment*, and *The Balance of Power* will be pilot-tested with two MAT 1033 sections during fall 2010. The actual rollout begins in spring 2011 and will increase until all MAT 1033 sections are infused with learner-centered practices. Dr. Blumberg will initially train all faculty involved and return each summer to provide training for new faculty and more comprehensive training for current faculty. In addition, faculty will attend various professional conferences.

The second goal of the plan will institute a more supportive learning environment. In addition to changing the environment in the classroom, this goal involves many areas of the College, including tutoring centers, student services, and libraries. Demonstrating the college's capability to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP, its resource requirements are supported with recurring funds for professional development, decreased class sizes, marketing, and other activities outlined in the proposal. These resources will be available for the duration of the QEP and are designed to become part of operational resources for increased student learning.

The assessment design is fully integrated with the college's Educational Program Assessment (EPA) model and the assessment and accountability targets defined by the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) metrics of the college's strategic plan. Evaluation activities include summative assessment of student learning outcomes in MAT 1033, longitudinal comparative student performance measures, student perceptions of instruction and educational support, self-evaluations of faculty across learner-centered dimensions of instruction, and many auxiliary measures. Results will be correlated and reported annually to continuously improve the QEP.