

Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College
QEP Title: A Paradigm of Success
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Executive Summary

Because the majority of the students who enroll at Southeast Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKCTC) arrive significantly underprepared to be successful in college-level mathematics, improving student success in developmental mathematics is the ultimate goal of SKCTC's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP). After much consideration and consultation with faculty and administration, the QEP committee developed a Paradigm of Success and a definition of student learning. Then, utilizing instructional research, the definition of student learning, and a review of the best practices in developmental education, the QEP committee articulated the following goals: 1) to improve student performance in developmental math and subsequent college-level math courses, 2) to enhance student involvement in the process of learning math, and 3) to improve students' attitudes about learning math.

The Paradigm of Success, a result of the committee's research into best practices of developmental education, graphically presents the student depicted within a circle, encompassed by another circle just beyond the first boundary, containing strategies that Southeast can use to help students learn. Three primary factors within the circle with the student are things the student brings to the college experience: attitude, attendance, and ability to benefit, which are the result of his or her prior experiences with mathematics education and affect the student's approach to mathematics. These factors can be either inhibitors to success or the keys to opening any barrier to success in student learning. Each of Southeast's strategies for change addresses one or more of these factors.

To be successful, students must believe that math, at any level, is a subject that can be learned with effort and persistence. However, students too often view mathematical skill as a "gift" that one is born knowing, or they see math as some arcane skill, which no matter how hard they try, cannot be mastered. In addition to negative thinking regarding math, many students have had negative experiences with academics as a whole. Both of these factors affect a student's vision of success which, in turn, affects course attendance. Attendance is a key factor for student success. Too often students who are already convinced they are going to be unsuccessful have erratic attendance patterns that practically ensure they will be unsuccessful. Some stop attending all together. The final factor is the student's ability to benefit from Southeast's programs and services. Do students and advisors understand the significance of the placement tests? Do students and advisors understand that moving in a timely manner through the correct sequence of courses is beneficial? Are students placed accurately? Can students move quickly and efficiently through the developmental sequence? Can students benefit and thus learn under current scheduling practices, class size, use of technology, tutoring services, and advising services?

Success can be reached when the students, the faculty, and the College work together to address the primary factors of attitude, attendance, and ability to benefit. It encompasses a wide variety of strategies, including enhancing instructional strategies, enhancing faculty development, more effectively utilizing technology, strengthening relationships with adjunct faculty who provide the majority of instruction in developmental math, increasing student use of tutorial services, utilizing uniform training for tutors, strengthening ties with P-12 institutions, and evaluating scheduling and placement practices. A primary concern is to work with the whole student, not just provide skill remediation.

While the QEP will primarily impact math curriculum, it will involve all aspects of the college community as we seek to enhance the college experience for our least prepared students and to ensure success in an area where our students have traditionally met with little success.