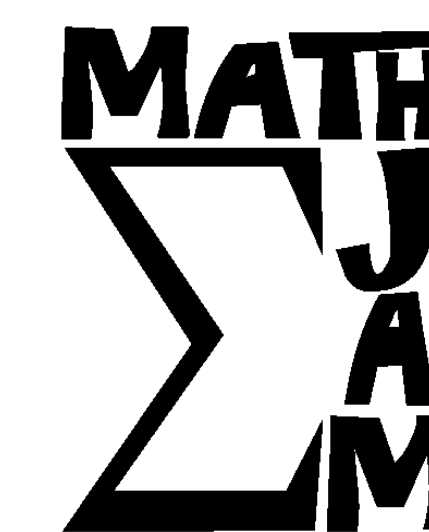




Math Jam at Cañada College

HSI Grant Program, Redwood City CA



BACKGROUND

In October, 2009 the Science and Technology Division received a two year grant from the U. S. Department of Education's Hispanic Serving Institutions Funds. The intent of the legislation was to encourage colleges to develop programs to reduce the time, and therefore the cost for a student to transfer to a 4 year university. Cañada's proposal focused on helping students progress to the transfer level math course in a much shorter time. The majority of our students place at the developmental math level when they begin at Cañada.

Current format for Math Jam/Mini Math Jam:

On the first day, each student takes an on-line evaluation test for his/her math level. MyMathTest will then give the student a list of the areas that the student should work on. The student then systematically works through the list. The instructor and the assigned tutor monitor the student's progress and make themselves available to answer questions or work through problems with the student.

PURPOSE

Math Jam had two main purposes:

1. Assist students who want to improve their math placement test results by re-taking the test, or
2. Prepare students for their next math course



- MyMathTest has an instructor module that allows the instructor to see each student's result from the evaluation test and to see each student's progress. If there seem to be common areas that the whole group needs to work on, the instructor may interrupt self-review to teach specific concepts.
- For those students at the developmental math level, we ask them to attend a one hour session on "Overcoming Math Anxiety" and on a different day, a one hour session on "How to Take a Math Exam."
- The students are reviewing their math in a supportive, work at your own pace, non-judgmental environment.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Key tool is MyMathTest software by Pearson Education, Inc.

This software can be configured to cover math content from pre-algebra to differential equations. After Math Jam, the software license is good for two more months of usage and can be used as a review tool for the student's next math course.

To date, we have offered two types of Math Jam programs. The first Math Jam was two weeks long and was held one week after the end of Spring Semester. This program attracted mostly students who want to review math with the intention of re-taking the Math Placement test. The other program, known as Mini Math Jam, was only one week long and was held just before a semester begins. This was designed primarily for students who want to prepare for their next math course. Math Jam staff consisted of instructors and student tutors. For a given math level, one instructor plus a student tutor was assigned to a group of about every 5 students for the duration of the Math Jam.

Original format for two week Math Jam:

The plan was to have math review 3 hours in the mornings and to teach college success skills such as time management, student education planning, using student support services, etc. for 2 hours in the afternoons. The students soon became frustrated with not having enough time to review math. We changed the format to allow time for more math review by making attendance for the college success skills optional.

Summer 2009 Math Jam (2 weeks):

42 students completed the program. 33 took the Math Placement test again. 93.9% of students who took the Math Placement Test again scored higher after completing Math Jam.

63.6% improved their scores enough to be placed into a higher math course than their pre-Math Jam results.

Winter 2010 Mini Math Jam (1 week):

87 students attended. 22 students took the Math Placement test again.

36.3% placed into a higher math course. [Many of these students had done poorly in their fall semester and wanted to test out of their fall math level.]

95.2% of students said that the instruction in Mini Math Jam was Effective. 75.8% rated it Very Effective.

CONCLUSIONS

Math Jam works well for Cañada students. They like the Math Jam format and appreciate the math support they receive.

The next Math Jam will be held in June of this year. A second Mini Math Jam is also scheduled for the week before fall semester. The next challenge is to figure out how to institutionalize the program.