



## MAINE CTE PROMISING PRACTICES MINI CASE STUDY

Region 9 School of Applied Technology

Mexico, ME

Director: Brenda Gammon

### ***PROMISING PRACTICE: Making Math Rigorous, Relevant, and Credit-Worthy***

The year before last, a position was approved to have a full time math instructor at the Region 9 School of Applied Technology. The position was funded through a combination of Perkins and local resources and was designed to strengthen the math component of Region 9's CTE programs where students received a math credit from their sending high school. Although math had been integrated into many of the CTE programs in the past, the role of this person was to ensure rigor and relevance in the math instruction provided at the center.

Cindy Kelley, who taught in the adult education program and was an ed tech in the computer technology program, took the position beginning with the 2007–08 school year just as new director Brenda Gammon took on her new role. Kelley worked with six programs on a daily basis, teaching a total of five math classes each day as a 45 minute chunk of the time students spent in these CTE programs. Kelley taught math concepts relevant to each program area using that program's materials. (NOTE: The center works on a full day every other day schedule. Two programs with smaller enrollments — coop and computer science — were combined into the same class. The center has three sending schools, all on an alternating block schedule.)

Gammon says that even though the instructors got a prep period when Kelley was in teaching their classes, many stayed in the classroom during math. Kelley tried to teach the same mathematical concepts that the CTE instructors would have taught, but this way all students were exposed to the material. Although some of the students were resistant at first, "once they could see a connection to what they were doing in their program and what they'd be doing outside of school, once she was able to open their eyes to the connection, I think it went smoother."

#### **What difference is it making?**

According to Gammon, the format "really supported those students receiving the math credit to improve math skills. It also allows students to attend Region 9 and receive a math credit who may not be able to participate in a program because they could not work a math class into their schedules at their sending high schools."

Kelley tested all students using the math section of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to get an initial read on where students were in terms of their mathematical knowledge and skills. She used the same test as a post-test in the spring and found 90% gained at least one grade level in math according to the assessment. Gammon is clear: "My overriding goal for students is to gain math skills. I really think it's a weak area for our students and I want whatever we do to benefit the students."

#### **Next steps:**

The center is in the process of determining if they will continue the program in this format, institute a PLATO Math Lab, or some combination of both. Although they were pleased with the results, they are trying to decide the best way to support students to meet the dual goal of getting math credits and improving math skills. At issue are key questions: Should all students take math at the center? Or just those who need a math credit? How would we make this relevant if PLATO is used? How can we release Kelley to also work with CTE instructors on a weekly basis? What assessment data will they use to monitor program success? Can they use the NWEA data they are starting to receive from sending schools?

*For more information, contact Brenda Gammon at [brendagammon@region9school.org](mailto:brendagammon@region9school.org)*

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