



# Math SPIN News

Newsletter of the NADE Math SPIN

<http://www.nademathspin.org>

October, 2007

## Chair's Corner



Welcome to the fall, 2007 edition of the NADE Math SPIN newsletter.

It was so good to hear from so many of you following my welcome message. In this edition, you will find several types of articles. First, there are a few **“teasers” for sessions at NADE**. Let’s make sure we all show our support for fellow members who will be presenting. I will also be asking you to help out if we get word that some of our math sessions are in need of moderators. But, that will come a little later.

Another thing you will find in this issue are some possible items for discussion on our listserv. There is an article submitted by Daryl Stephens regarding how to use this feature if you are not already familiar with it. I encourage you to respond to the questions posed in this newsletter or to pose your own.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Boston in February.

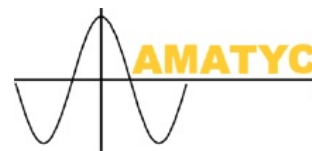
Susan McClory  
Math SPIN Chair

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## AMATYC: A Resource for Developmental Math Educators

by Irene M. Duranczyk, University of Minnesota



The American Mathematical Association of Two-Year Colleges (AMATYC) is a continuing resource for Developmental Mathematics Educators. The last issue of *AMATYC Review* (Spring, 2007) was devoted to new undergraduate standards, *Beyond Crossroads: Implementing Mathematics Standards in the First Two Years of College* (2006). The new AMATYC standards and the *AMATYC Review* are rich resources for developmental mathematics educators. Many NADE Math-Spin members are also members of AMATYC. Many NADE Math-Spin members, former NADE and NADE Math-Spin members have contributed to the revision of the standards during the five year process of revisiting *Crossroads in Mathematics: Standards for Introductory College Mathematics* (1995). Visit [www.amatyc.org](http://www.amatyc.org) and [www.beyondcrossroads.com](http://www.beyondcrossroads.com) for your own copy of the standards or for more information about the *AMATYC Review*.

Developmental mathematics will be included in the next three issues of the *AMATYC Review* (Fall 2007, Spring 2008, and Fall 2008). A series of articles will (a) highlight the components and characteristics of successful developmental mathematics education programs, (b) report on some of the results of a qualitative research study interviewing students who successfully completed developmental mathematics, and (c) focus on implications for developmental mathematics educators.

There is much cross pollination between the membership of the NADE-SPIN and AMATYC. Join AMATYC if you are not a member or at least avail yourself to the many fine publications that are research based and can contribute to more informed and reflective teaching practice. The title of the upcoming series in the *AMATYC Review* is "Successful Developmental Mathematics Education: Programs and Students" by Irene M. Duranczyk, University of Minnesota.

The research study highlighted in the next three issue of *AMATYC* was conducted at a large Midwest public university. The study draws attention to students' viewpoints regarding what, if any, aspects of the developmental mathematics program contributed to their success. How often do we wonder if we are spinning our wheel, wasting time, or really making a difference in the lives of the students we teach? Are there hidden benefits of developmental mathematics education? The upcoming report highlights some of the benefits from the students' point of view. The qualitative study was conducted three to five years after students completed their developmental mathematics course work.

Developmental educators often use immediate feedback from student to evaluate success or failure of their teaching. The longer lasting impact of our courses and discipline is worth exploring . . . so take a look at the previous and upcoming articles in the *AMATYC Review*. It just might give you an additional lens or perspective on the work of developmental mathematics education.

## **The High Cost of Developmental Math Textbooks and Online Support**

What solutions have you found to keep down the costs of textbooks and online support for students?

Many publishers now require students to purchase the rights to log onto software support each semester rather than provide or sell software to the institution. If your college provides a support lab with a computer component, which software is used?

Which textbook or support software would you recommend to provide the best framework to help students succeed?

Please post any comments or Developmental Math textbook and support lab software recommendations on the Math SPIN Listserv. Directions for joining the Listserv will be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Thank you!

*Pat Labonne  
Cumberland County College, Vineland NJ*

## **Math SPIN Listserv: A Forum for Developmental Math Faculty**

The Math SPIN Listserv was created in 1999 as a forum for members to communicate with each other about issues in developmental mathematics. Over the past eight years people have

posted messages about various topics such as placement testing, course sequencing, upcoming summer institutes, retention, and modularizing developmental math courses. The forum is hosted by Yahoo for free (which, of course, means there is a little advertisement in each e-mail—but of course, the price is right!). Feel free to use this resource to trade ideas with your colleagues. Roberta Lacefield, a former Math SPIN chair, is the moderator of this group.

To join the group, send an e-mail to [mathspin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mathspin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). To send a message to the group, write `y o u r e - m a i l t o` [mathspin@yahoogroups.com](mailto:mathspin@yahoogroups.com). Remember that replying to a message goes to everyone, so if you want to send a personal reply to someone, cut and paste that person's address into your e-mail program rather than clicking on Reply. If you wish to unsubscribe, send an e-mail to [m a t h s p i n - u n s u b s c r i b e @ y a h o o g r o u p s . c o m](mailto:m a t h s p i n - u n s u b s c r i b e @ y a h o o g r o u p s . c o m).

To see archived messages from the beginning, you need a free Yahoo account, which you can get by going to <http://groups.yahoo.com/>, clicking on "Sign Up!" and following the directions. (You can subscribe to the group without joining Yahoo, but won't be able to see the archives.)

Daryl Stephens  
East Tennessee State University

## **The Status of Intermediate Algebra**

*Beatriz M. del Castillo*  
*Associate Professor of Mathematics*  
*Baltimore City Community College*

I have been involved in a Task Force for Reform of Developmental Math in my college. Most of the work was done during the Spring Semester of 2007. But one question came up, in which I think the Math SPIN at NADE could be very helpful: It is the role of Intermediate Algebra in Developmental Math.

Intermediate Algebra is at the cusp between Developmental and College-level Math. It appears that some schools/states consider it in one category and some in the other. Some give college credit for it, some don't, etc.

In Maryland, a statewide regulation was put in place in 1996, whereby the general education math course necessary for an associate degree had to be "at or above the level of College Algebra", which was defined as a course whose prerequisite was at least Intermediate Algebra. Thus, Intermediate Algebra is considered Developmental Math. (Before this ruling it wasn't.)

I would love for the Math SPIN to survey various state chapters to find out what the policies of their schools and/or states regarding Intermediate Algebra: Are there State regulations? Is it up to the individual colleges? Can students get college credit for Intermediate Algebra? Do they need math courses that require a

prerequisite of Intermediate Algebra? Etc, etc.

I hope you find this query interesting, and I certainly appreciate your help on this. I hope other members of the Math SPIN are interested in this too. I look forward to hearing from you.

## **Tennessee Board of Regents Looks at Developmental Redesign**

*Daryl Stephens, East Tennessee State Univ.*

The Tennessee Board of Regents system has contracted with the National Center for Academic Transformation to develop innovative ways to get students through their developmental course requirements faster, cheaper, and using more technology. Colleges and universities were invited to submit proposals for grant funding. Most of the funded proposals were for community college math courses. Several of those involved breaking up the three courses (prealgebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra) into smaller modules supplemented by computer labs. Pilot testing will begin in Spring, 2008.

Other colleges and universities in the system may have the opportunity to try non-funded pilot programs. In the meantime a math subcommittee of the TBR Developmental Studies Redesign Task Force has been appointed to answer several questions about exactly what developmental math should look like in TBR institutions. Several schools in the system require probability and statistics or a contemporary math class as their

core math class for graduation rather than an algebra-based course such as college algebra or precalculus. The subcommittee is working to find out exactly what kinds of mathematics are needed by these students and how best to prepare them for those courses and other core courses for graduation (sciences, social sciences, etc.). Similar subcommittees are examining writing, reading, and

assessment.

Most members of the math subcommittee are also members of TNADE, and many are also active in NADE as well, including Marva Lucas (Middle Tennessee State University) and Daryl Stephens (East Tennessee State University).

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## Upcoming NADE 2008 Presentations

*Here are some "teasers" of sessions which will be presented in Boston at NADE 2008.*

### **A Combination for Success: Easy Access for Developmental Math Students**

This presentation will give participants the opportunity to see the components of a successful collaboration between a testing lab and a tutoring facility. Our program provides students with a centralized location to access mathematics specialists, tutoring and learning specialists, and testing. All these components focus on meeting the needs of our students, increasing their opportunities for success, and assisting them in meeting their educational goals.

*Valerie Cox  
Tonja Hester  
Amarillo College*

### **Math is Fun & GAMES**

*Presented by: Edie Carter, Assistant  
Professor, Coordinator of Developmental*

*Mathematics, Amarillo College and Gale  
Brewer, Instructor, Online Specialist,  
Amarillo College*

This stimulating, interactive workshop focuses on ways to incorporate games into developmental math courses to create a learning environment that is fun. Participants will receive a packet of activities that will engage students and increase participation in the classroom.

Students who originally dreaded the math experience will begin to enjoy the mathematics challenge.

### **Understanding Dyscalculia**

This presentation explores dyscalculia, the mathematical learning disorder. Topics covered in this presentation include:

- Definitions of dyscalculia and diagnostic criteria
- Underlying causes of dyscalculia
- Prevalence of dyscalculia

- Symptoms or warning signs of dyscalculia by age group
- Signs that difficulties with math are beyond “normal”
- Identifying dyscalculia
- Mitigative strategies to help students with dyscalculia
- References for further information

<http://www.apsu.edu/haralsonk/Dyscalculia.ppt>

The link to the presentation is listed above. Please feel free to explore other presentations available at my website:  
<http://www.apsu.edu/haralsonk>

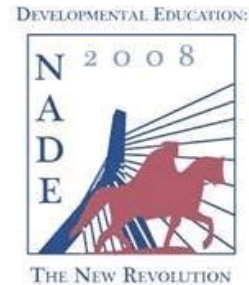
*Kay Haralson*  
 Associate Professor  
 Retention Specialist, Institutional Research  
 Austin Peay State University

### **Incorporating Ethics into the Remedial Class**

At Georgia Military College, every instructor is asked to hand out its pamphlet on student code of conduct and ethical expectations. We have found that students respond better when ethics is included in an assignment rather than being the assignment. Since plagiarism, cheating, student behavior have become issues of concern, I propose methods of sneaking ethics into class assignments.

*Joe Sersey*

*(Session information continued next page)*



**DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION: THE NEW REVOLUTION**

**NADE 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference**

**February 27 – March 1, 2008**

**Boston Marriott Copley Place**

**Boston, Massachusetts**

<http://www.nade2008.net/>

### **Your Math SPIN Website**

<http://www.nademathspin.org>

Submissions always welcome!

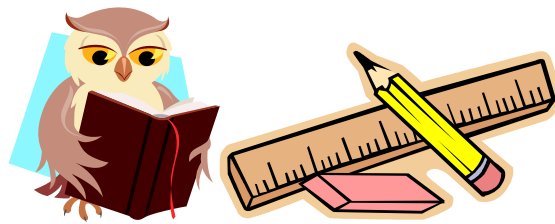
17 years of archived newsletters posted



## Learning Communities

This session is meant to share information about our learning community class (Prealgebra and Reading and Study Skills) taught in the fall 2007. Since statistics have shown that paired courses have higher student retention than individual courses, we hope this will hold true for these developmental classes. We intend to look at classroom techniques, student evaluation methods, strengths and weaknesses in pairing the courses, and student success. There will be at least 3 assignments that will overlap both courses and count for a significant part of the student grade.

**Robbin Dengler and Joan Loncich**

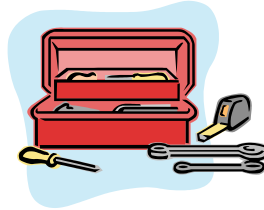


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