



Executive Summary

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) for Odessa College (OC) aims at improving success for students in developmental education through accelerated placement in math courses. Gaining Essential Math Skills (*gems*) is the title of the project and has been implemented in an attempt to enable more OC students to succeed in their academic careers. The *gems* QEP will reduce the number of obligatory developmental courses for students who meet the eligibility requirements of the program. Thus, the students will be on an accelerated path to a college level math course.

When students have to start in remedial courses, this extends the length of time they spend in college. At present, nearly half of all developmental math students at OC are currently not completing their math courses with a C or better. These numbers include students that have withdrawn from courses. This program will help learners in developmental math classes to acquire the skills and abilities needed to successfully complete the course and aims to increase the overall persistence and graduation rates for OC students. The *gems* pilot program focused on bubble students whose math placement score was five points or less than the “College Ready” standard, or had passed the course prior to the prerequisite with a grade of A and had a recommendation from an instructor. Based on the current procedures used at OC, the student officially placed into MATH 0375 (Intermediate Algebra). The *gems* program gave these bubble students the opportunity to bypass MATH 0375 and instead register for a special section of MATH 1314 (College Algebra). The data resulting from the pilot program proved that a majority of the *gems* students were extremely successful in MATH 1314.

The *gems* program targets students whose COMPASS math placement scores are on the cusp of placing them in a higher level math course. Students such as these who are close to a proficient score on an exam are often called “bubble” students. Students in OC’s developmental math courses can be grouped into three categories of bubble students:

- (1) Students who are placed in MATH 0371 but just missed placing into MATH 0372.
- (2) Students who are placed in MATH 0372 but just missed placing into MATH 0375.
- (3) Students who are placed in MATH 0375 but just missed being “college math ready”.

Students will also qualify for the QEP project if they passed the course prior to the prerequisite with an A and obtained an instructor’s recommendation.

The goals of this program are student-centered with learning outcomes assessed for each math course involved in *gems*. The goals for *gems* are:

1. The proportion of students who graduate with an associate’s degree will be higher for students who participate in the *gems* program than developmental math students who do not participate;
2. The percentage of developmental students who continue on to their next math course will be higher for students who participate in the *gems* program than developmental math students who do not participate;
3. At least 70% of the students participating in a *gems* program course will meet each of the Student Learning Outcomes established for that course; and
4. Students enrolled in a *gems* program course will perform as well or better than their traditional counterparts as measured by completion rates.

For more information on the *gems* program, contact Dr. Krista Cohlmiya, Professor and Chair – Department of Mathematics and Engineering, at kcohlmiya@odessa.edu.