Spotlight Strategy: Integrate Literacy and Numeracy Strategies into CTE

Somerset County Technology Center

Recognizing the importance of strong math skills for all students and the need to increase student performance on the math PSSA as part of the Perkins accountability system, Somerset County Technology Center (SCTC) maintains a strong focus on numeracy. In 2006, SCTC began a math team teaching initiative designed to help students improve their academic and technical math skills.

To support this effort, SCTC employs a full-time, certified math instructor to team teach math with technical instructors. All enrolled students – regardless of their math scores - are required to learn both technical and academic math in the SCTC classroom. The academic component relates directly to the career and technical education lesson being taught that day, but is taught in the manner students will see math on the PSSA.

The math teacher meets regularly with CTE instructors to review the math that is embedded in technical lessons. From those meetings, the math teacher creates a lesson plan incorporating the academic math, as it would appear on the PSSA, with a specific technical application. For example, a lesson in triangles and solving for sides knowing a particular angle may be used with determining the pitch of a roof and the construction of trusses. Simple multiplication of fractions may be covered along with converting a recipe to yield more or less than the original recipe.

These team-taught lessons, which occur weekly or bi-weekly, depending on the technical program, are in addition to the math taught within the technical program by the CTE instructor and are considered supplemental to the math courses students take at their sending school.

The students are given worksheets and quizzes to check for understanding. The team is considering developing a pre-test and post-test to further assess student improvement. While SCTC's PSSA scores are not yet at the level of the state standard, they have been steadily improving.

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Somerset County Technology Center is located in Somerset, Pennsylvania. As a part-time career and technology center, it enrolls approximately 395 students in grades 10 through 12 and offers 17 career and technical education programs. SCTC serves eight school districts, and students from these districts attend SCTC at no cost. An additional district may send students on a tuition basis.