

Implementing Corequisite College Algebra at Black Hawk College

The Situation

Black Hawk College began implementing corequisite support in 2020, starting with Statistics and General Education math courses. This early work laid the groundwork for launching a corequisite model in College Algebra in Fall 2022. Prior to the shift, the institution struggled with inconsistent placement practices—relying on Accuplacer scores, standardized test results, and GPAs—which often resulted in students being placed into courses that were too advanced and led to poor outcomes. Additionally, student registration for corequisite courses was confusing, and faculty workload challenges made scheduling difficult.

The Process

With support from Almy Education and internal leadership, Black Hawk launched its College Algebra corequisite model. Several key changes enabled this transition:

- **Placement Reform:** Black Hawk adopted ALEKS PPL to better assess student readiness. Students who mastered pre-algebra and basic algebra via ALEKS could enroll in the corequisite; those with full mastery entered college-level courses directly.
- **Registration Redesign:** To simplify enrollment, corequisite and college-level math courses were given matching section numbers and a “C” designation, reducing confusion for students and advisors.
- **Faculty Scheduling Adjustments:** Instead of offering separate corequisite classes, instructors began teaching blended College Algebra sections that included both students in and out of the corequisite. This resolved scheduling inefficiencies while ensuring students received just-in-time remediation.

The Results

The outcomes of these changes were significant. Since launching the pilot in Fall 2022:

- Retention increased from 67.6% to 90.9%.
- Success rates (passing A/B/C/P) jumped from 48.6% to 90.9%.
- While course enrollment dropped from 37 to 11 students, the quality of placement and student success improved dramatically.

Faculty also reported anecdotal improvements in student performance and engagement, attributing success to the ALEKS placement tool and structured remediation support. Black Hawk College now serves as a strong example of how targeted registration, accurate placement, and faculty flexibility can drive success in gateway math courses.



Getting Started With Your Gateway Redesign

If your institution is exploring how to redesign gateway courses or ready to lead broader transformation, Almy Education is here to help. Our expert-led sessions prioritize faculty engagement and momentum, paving the way for collaborative redesign that drives student completion and institutional success. Whether launching your first initiative or scaling existing reforms, you'll leave with a strategic blueprint for advancing your gateway course redesign and sustaining positive impact even after our engagement ends.

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