

## 8.0 Orientation

Welcome to the Community College of Rhode Island Math Lab. During the next few minutes, I will discuss, what for many of you, may be a new learning experience. In a traditional class your instructor lectures, gives notes, and decides when to schedule tests. In the Math Lab, instructors will help you master your work by answering your math questions, suggesting various study techniques, and directing you to available audiovisuals while you are working on your individual course.

If you haven't obtained the following three Math Lab items, please stop the tape and ask for them: (1) a schedule of Math Lab hours, (2) an Interview Card, and (3) a beige sheet entitled "Learning Mathematics In The CCRI Math Lab." This sheet will provide you with the highlights of the Math Lab, and also a checklist of items to help you get started.

I will discuss Math Lab procedures with you now, but for a more detailed discussion of Math Lab procedures and how to be successful, you may check the Mathematics Department Web Site found at the bottom of "Learning Mathematics In The CCRI Math Lab" (the beige sheet). Be sure to also check

your CCRI “pipeline” e-mail account frequently. Many study suggestions and notices are provided throughout the semester.

Please note that for students in Arithmetic and Elementary Algebra, these courses are non-credit and therefore do not carry credit toward graduation. They do, however, count as 3-credit hours toward being a full-time student, receiving Financial Aid and/or Veteran’s Benefits, and eligibility for sports programs. All of the other courses in the Math Lab do carry credit.

After listening to this “orientation” tape, you will talk to an instructor and you will also be receiving a course-content/pacing sheet, which provides you with the name of the textbook to purchase, the pages to study for each test, all of your homework assignments, and guideline testing dates. Look it over very carefully and mark in your book any sections or pages that have been omitted by the Math Department. This will save you from studying material not required for your test. Attach your course-content / pacing sheet to the inside cover of your textbook so that you can refer to it regularly.

On the left side of your course-content sheet is a pacing schedule to help you complete the course on time. Each date is a guideline, not a deadline. You may

go faster than the schedule indicates, but if at all possible, try not to go slower. Otherwise, you may not finish the course on time. If you fall behind, don't rush through your work; strongly consider attending extra hours in the Math Lab, in addition to your regularly scheduled hours. If you are unable to spend more time or if you think that you are spending an unreasonable amount of time, discuss this situation with your instructor. Your instructor is available not only to help you learn the material, but also to advise you of your options, if you should encounter a special situation.

If you should finish your course early, you are not required to attend any more Math Lab classes. However, if you have a sequential Math Lab course to take, you may begin this next course the very day you complete the current one.

Another item you will receive is a bookmark. The front side shows your name, your class number, (which you will be assigned shortly after the add/drop period ends), your course number and section number, the date you began the course, the course you placed in, the initials of the instructor who interviewed you, and your schedule of Math Lab hours. Be sure to memorize your class number when it is assigned; you will need it when you fill out attendance slips and test-answer sheets. Also on your bookmark there are two notes: one reminds you that you

may attend the Math Lab extra hours, in addition to your scheduled hours; the other note states that you must reserve at least two hours for testing. The reverse side of the bookmark shows your name, class number, and an unofficial record of your test grades. You should bring your bookmark with you each time you come to the Math Lab, especially when you want to take a test.

Each time you attend the Lab, whether it be for assistance with the textbook, your homework, video and/or computer instruction, or for testing you are required to hand in an attendance slip. The time you spend taking a test as well as studying in the Math Lab should be included in your total time. You must round to the nearest half-hour. For example, you will record one hour for 50 minutes, one-half hour for 20 minutes, one-half hour for 40 minutes, etc. If you take a test and forget to hand in an attendance slip, you will receive credit for one hour. Regular attendance in the Math Lab is extremely important; poor attendance almost always results in poor grades. In addition, attendance is one of the criteria used for obtaining an incomplete continuing (IC) grade. This grade is used for students who do not finish all of the required work by the end of the session in which they originally registered for their math course. The IC grade is earned by evaluating the number of tests completed and the number of Math Lab hours attended. The criteria are fully explained in the grading section of the student manual. The IC

grade allows you to continue to work on your course during the next session without reregistering or re-paying. The course, however, must be completed by the end of the next session. Keep in mind that completing the course should be your goal, not earning an IC grade.

We will now consider how you should be studying for your Math Lab course.

**Step 1:** If videotapes are available for your course, you should be viewing them as you would be viewing the instruction in a traditional lecture class: that is, take notes and ask questions. The only difference is that the mathematics instructor on the TV won't be answering your questions; your Math Lab instructor will.

**Step 2:** Read the entire development of each topic in your textbook, working out each sample problem with pencil and paper.

**Step 3:** Keep a notebook for all assigned homework problems. Start by writing down the page number, then write the question and attempt to solve each problem, showing all steps.

**Step 4:** When completed, check the answer in back of the book. If your answer doesn't match the book's answer or you couldn't arrive at any answer, then re-read the development of the topic and any notes you may have taken. If this doesn't solve the problem, then leave some space under the unsolved problem and ask your instructor for help. When you receive help, try to express in your own words, and write in your notebook next to the problem the key concept that you have learned. This will help you remember important facts and to avoid errors on your graded test.

Note: Some students find it very helpful to transfer certain notes to index cards for quick reference.

**Step 5:** Now continue to solve the problem in your notebook.

Now, let's consider the testing procedure. If you have been keeping a notebook of all the exercises as indicated by NOTE (1) on your Course Content Sheet, and you are able to get correct answers to these problems without relying on sample problems and/or answers in back of the book, you should do very well when you take your test. When you have carefully reviewed all of the material and are ready to request a test, bring your bookmark, a CCRI picture ID, and wait outside the testing-room door. If you have previously taken a test on the same material,

please inform the proctor. Allow yourself at least 2 hours for your test. When you have been seated, you must remove all non-testing items such as attendance slips, pocketbooks, etc. from the top of your desk. If you forget to do so, the proctor will remind you. Please do not be offended; they're only doing their job.

When you test, you will be provided with an answer sheet. There are two frames or spaces provided for each answer. You should write your answer in the top frame of each numbered box. After the test is corrected you will be given a chance to correct problems you have wrong, provided your first-try score is at least 44 %. It is on the second try that you put your new answer in the bottom frame. That's right; you have more than one chance on a test to improve your test grade. This should help to reduce test anxiety. After each try, you must return all your testing materials to the Test-Return Tray and return to your seat. After your test is corrected, the proctor will call you back to get your testing packet. You should carefully examine the testing section of the Math Lab Student Manual to be sure you fully understand the entire testing procedure, especially the scoring policy. But for now, remember two things, you must get at least 44% on the first try to get a second try, and you must score at least 60% on the second try to accept the grade. If you score less than 60% on the second try, you must retake

the test on another day after restudying the material. However, the failing grade does not count and will not be averaged into your final course grade.

So if your score is less than 60% you must retest on another day. If you should score 60 or better, you will be given an opportunity to talk to an instructor, and retest on another day to better your grade. Note that with each retest there is an upper limit placed on your grade. Let's say on test 1 you attained a grade of 76, you decided to retest, and you attain a 92. Your official grade will be recorded, or capped as 90. Suppose, however, instead of a 92, your retest grade was a 72. Your official grade would be the higher of 72 and the 76, or 76. If, however, your second retest grade was above 80, your official grade would be capped at 80. To summarize: Your first retake is capped at 90, your second is capped at 80, your third is capped at 70; your fourth and any others have a minimum cap of 60.

You must pass all 6 tests to finish the course; you are not allowed to take 5 out of 6 tests, even in non-credit courses. Only the six passing grades are used to determine the final grade in your course. Students in some programs, such as Nursing, Allied Health, etc. may have to obtain a specific grade to qualify; be sure to check with an advisor.

Before attending each class you should check your pipeline e-mail account. Each time you come to the Math Lab you should check the bulletin board. E-mail and

notices on the bulletin board are used to communicate with you. It is your responsibility to check both.

We have covered a lot of material during the last few minutes. I hope this will help you have a successful session. Make sure you read the on-line Math Lab student manual. Refer to it and, if you have any questions on Math Lab policies, you should ask the lab assistant or one of the instructors.

One last note: Many students who have taken a course offered through the Math Lab are enthusiastic about their experience and truly feel the Math Lab has greatly benefited them. But you do have to be disciplined; you do need to attend class. However, if you feel that you would prefer a more traditional method of instruction where an instructor teaches an entire class as a group, discuss with your instructor the possibility of switching your schedule to a lecture class if one is available. If this is an individual orientation, please follow the sample interview card and instructions found near your recorder.

One final reminder, check your pipeline e-mail, the Math Department web site and the bulletin board regularly. Download and read a copy of the Student Manual and this orientation.

Thank you for taking math courses at the Community College of Rhode Island.

Good luck, and if we can be of any help, please do not hesitate to ask.

.

Revised 04/25/2005  
mathlab2\orient:orientation8.doc/