

## Computer-Aided College Algebra: Learning Components that Students Find Beneficial

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### Abstract

A mixed-method study was conducted during the Fall 2008 semester to better understand the experiences of students participating in computer-aided instruction of College Algebra using the software MyMathLab. The learning environment included a computer learning system for the majority of the instruction, a support system via focus groups (weekly class meetings), and tutorial services.

Emerging themes for the best way to learn College Algebra were (1) use of resources (45.6% indicated View an Example, Video, or Textbook); (2) soliciting help from others (44.7% indicated tutors, time in tutoring lab, or attending Focus Group); and (3) "practice, practice, practice" (approximately 30%). Least beneficial resources identified were textbooks (traditional and electronic), videos, and focus groups.

Combining the two most mentioned computer-only resources, View an Example and Help Me Solve This, accounted for 82.3% of the responses; only 14.8% identified these singly. Interestingly, combining the single effects of Help Me Solve This and tutoring, accounted for 21.0% of the responses; students appeared to value a computer resource coupled with a face-to-face resource over strictly computer resources.

The results of this study suggested that students preferred resources that directly helped them with individual homework problems, rather than those emphasizing major concepts.

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