The Effects of Requiring Study Group Participation Associated with Students' Attitudes and Achievements in Developmental Math

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It is widely publicized that student attitudes and achievement in math in the United States require improvement (Arem, 2003). U.S. students have shown lackluster mathematics achievement scores compared to their international peers in other developed countries (Schmidt, McKnight, Cogan, Jakwerth, & Houang, 1999).

As a former high school math instructor, I observed that the attitude of many high school students and their parents was that the student should do as much math as possible in high school in hopes of "testing-out" of college math so as to "never have to take math again." As a college math instructor, I have known students who changed their major or career choice to avoid taking math as part of their graduation requirements. One study found that math serves as a "critical filter" for many students in determining their educational, occupational, and professional opportunities (Sells, 1978). Both high school and college students are showing evidence of being math avoiders (Arem, 2003). This math avoidance closes numerous doors of opportunity for too many students.