

**Stopping the Math Meltdown:
Monterey Institute For Technology and Education
Launches Developmental Math Solutions Project**

MONTEREY, Calif., March 10, 2009 – Making math easier to learn could change the world. Nearly three-quarters of freshman entering community colleges have to take remedial math. Less than half of them pass. Getting into and through college is key to the future of these students, but math is often an insurmountable hurdle for many of them. Change is on the way though. A new planning project, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is designed to find ways to retool math education to overcome this obstacle to success. The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education (MITE), known for innovation in online learning, is meeting with school administrators, teachers and students across the nation to find new and practical ways to tackle this issue.

Gary Lopez, MITE's executive director said, "These focus groups span the educational system from middle school through high school and into community colleges. We want to find out what works and get it into the hands of people who need it."

Ground-breaking online technology will form the backbone of the program, giving students and teachers diverse and affordable ways to access math concepts and applications. Plus the program will target previously overlooked parts of math education, such as reading and comprehension.

"We know community college students don't come in one form or fashion, the project will look at multiple variables to help students be successful as they move through math remediation and into college level studies," said Stella Perez, project advisory board member and vice-president at the League for Innovation in the Community College.

Early focus group results are showing that it's critical to make math relevant to the lives of contemporary students by using examples and problems that they can relate to. Additionally, students and teachers agree that offering graphical interfaces and interactive learning opportunities are preferable to providing information simply through text.

Administrators bring a different perspective to the focus groups. While it's crucial for them to find materials that make it easier for teachers to teach and students to learn, they also have concerns about keeping costs within budget, ensuring that state requirements are fulfilled and guaranteeing that the content can be distributed through their systems.

Josh Jarrett, senior program officer at the Gates Foundation said, "MITE brings a depth of expertise and experience in developing instructional materials that work for students and can be easily adopted by institutions, allowing them to remove the stumbling block of failing math from the path of many students as they strive to graduate from community college and go on to success in work and life."

Ultimately, the developmental math coursework will be distributed through MITE's highly respected library of web-based content, the National Repository of Online Courses (NROC), which is accessible to individual learners free of charge online at www.hippocampus.org. NROC is an Open Educational Resource, part of a movement fueled by the belief that everyone is entitled to an education, regardless of their financial or social circumstances.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and its partners are working to ensure that all students graduate from high school prepared for college and go on to successfully earn a postsecondary credential with real value in the labor market, with a focus on low-income and minority students. Since 2000, the foundation has invested more than \$2 billion to this end, supporting more than 2,600 schools in 45 states and the District of Columbia. Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. www.gatesfoundation.org

The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international organization dedicated to catalyzing the community college movement. The League hosts conferences and institutes, develops Web resources, conducts research, produces publications, provides services, and leads projects and initiatives with member colleges, corporate partners, and other agencies in continuing efforts to make a positive difference for students and communities. www.league.org

The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education is a non-profit educational organization committed to helping meet society's need for access to effective, high-quality educational opportunities in an era of rapid economic, social and personal change. The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education was founded in 2003 as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Learn more at www.montereyinstitute.org

Organization Contact

Gary Lopez, Ph.D., Executive Director
Monterey Institute for Technology and Education
(831) 642-9459
glopez@montereyinstitute.org
www.montereyinstitute.org
www.hippocampus.org