



# Simplify! A Successful Approach for Teaching Developmental Math

Presented by:  
Cindy Alder and Tammy German

## • Who are your students?

It is important to understand your students and their previous math experiences. Most are capable students who have not had any previous success with math. Some have disabilities and learning struggles. Be REAL with these students about their situation and chance to succeed. Explain your expectations, along with students responsibilities, in detail. Students are ultimately responsible for their own success.

## • Make it Visual

When teaching, find ways to make math visual for students. Use Venn Diagrams, long bar, detailed explanations (ask why you do what you do in a problem), foldables,, etc. to create a visual learning experience. Do not get too carried away and remember what kind of math classroom they will be in after yours. Try to connect the two and prepare for success even after your class.

## • Simplify - Keep it One Way

Simplify your life as well as your students by offering one way to work a particular type of problem rather than multiple ways to do the same problem. Most of the time even if the one way is a little longer, students would prefer to do it that way all the time rather than learn 10 different ways and try to figure out which way will work. Make the one way simple with steps that they can follow .

- *Fractions – wipe out method*
- *6 steps to solving equations – always follow these steps (Grouping symbol – checking your work)*
- *Multiplying polynomials – don't teach FOIL – teach one term then the next term*
- *Factoring Trinomials – ACB method*

## • Catch Phrases and Stories

- *PE(r)MDAS – Please Excuse(r) My Dear Aunt Sally*
- *Slope story - + on the way up, – on the way down, zero on the horizontal, and none (die) on the vertical.*
- *# line – students physically walk on a number line to add and subtract integers.*
- *Ok nO – Ok to have 0 on the top it is not to have it on the bottom.*
- *Plotting points – play battleship on a coordinate system.*
- *Graphing – go to the football field and each student acts as a point.*
- *Alphabet for moving decimals to percent – d to p is moving right p to d is moving left.*



## • Catch Phrases and Stories (continued)

- *Commutative Property – in a community people move around, or commute.*
- *Associative Property – your best friend is always your best friend even if you associate with other people.*
- *LCM – Leftovers*
- *Roots – Dating story*

## • 3x5 Note cards

- *Name Tag (hot dog or hamburger style)*
- *Flash Cards (memorization of multiplication facts or formulas)*
- *Test Notes (ways to teach how to study)*
- *Vocabulary Card (word on front, definition on back)*
- *Formula Card (reference card)*
- *Memory Game (on any subject)*
- *Manipulative*
- *3 x 5 Games*
- *Weekly Planning*
- *Seating Chart*
- *Start and Stop card (one side red and one side green – if they need you to stop or slow down they turn their card over)*
- *Take Notes*
- *Reading and Questions (read assignment and before class write down 3 things that you understand and 1 question that you have)*
- *Clicker (write your answer and hold it up)*

## • Math Journals

- *Teach students how to properly take math notes.*
- *Communicate with students one on one.*
- *Address concerns without discomfort.*
- *Students learn to write math.*
- *Journals can be an aid in future math courses.*

## • Other Ideas

- *Graphic Organizers*
- *Student Presentations*
- *In-class Group Testing*
  - Learn to work with others.
  - Gives a teacher a chance to see what students know by listening
  - Builds confidence.
  - Helps students determine what they know and what they don't know with a safety zone.
  - Defend your answers with reasons.
  - Better prep than a review before a test.
- *Games to reinforce concepts (Bingo, Jeopardy, etc.)*
- *Technology*
- *Teach Test Taking Strategies and Study Skills*

**Contact Us:** [cindy.alder@snow.edu](mailto:cindy.alder@snow.edu) and [tammy.german@snow.edu](mailto:tammy.german@snow.edu)