

“Access without completion is a hollow promise.”—heard at ATD conference in Dallas

A 2004 study of over 250,000 students at 57 community colleges across the country found that 59 percent were referred to developmental math...at Lane 84% in the ATD 2006-2010 cohort were referred to developmental math.

Math Success Metrics

Math Placement: LCC courses vs. ATD Coding

		Math Placement - ATD Scaling					TOTAL	Valid %	Cumulative %
		at or above program level	1 level below	2 levels below	3 levels below	4+ levels below			
LCC Math Course Initial Placement	ABSE				119	317	436	4%	4%
	MTH010A			873	52	2159	3084	28%	32%
	MTH020		452	24	214	1098	1788	16%	48%
	(Q)MTH052	37	4	44	109		167	1%	49%
	MTH060	617	73	380	1806		2876	26%	75%
	MTH065	38	26	202			266	2%	77%
	MTH070	14	8	51			73	1%	78%
	MTH095	411	1359				1770	16%	94%
	MTH111	685					685	6%	100%
Total		1802	1922	1574	2300	3574	11145		
Valid %		16%	17%	14%	21%	32%			

NOTES: 22% of Cases Excluded above due to No Initial Placement or Program Requirement

All ATD students in Fall Cohorts 2006 – 2010

From “A Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success”

Large numbers of students are being assessed and placed into developmental education. Of SENSE respondents 82% (N=23,470) reported their placement test results indicated they needed developmental education, and also reported they were required to take at least one developmental education course in their first semester.

Making sure that students take the right classes is a multistep process. Colleges should create opportunities for students to participate in review or brush-up experiences before placement tests to minimize the amount of remediation students need. Then, after students have been assessed, those who still need remediation should be placed into developmental pathways where they will have a stronger chance to succeed rather than multiple opportunities to fail.

Only 28% of students reported they used online or printed materials to prepare for the placement test, 10% reported participating in a brief, intensive review to prepare, and 9% participated in a multi-day or multi-week brushup or bootcamp to prepare for the placement test.

from Clayton, “Do High-Stakes Placement Exams Predict College Success?”

...students are generally uninformed about placement assessments (Venezia, Bracco, & Nodine, 2010). The study found that test preparation resources varied from college to college, that staff sometimes downplayed the consequences of the exams, and that some students even thought it would be “cheating” to prepare. The authors quote one student who reported, “[The woman at

Placement – Data Sheet for SSLT, 3/6/2012

the test center] said, ‘It doesn’t matter how you place. It’s just to see where you are.’ Looking back, that’s not true. It’s really important”

If remediation does not substantially improve remediated students’ probabilities of success, then this exacerbates the cost of underplacement mistakes and may lead policymakers to prefer strategies that place more students directly into college-level courses, even if the percentage succeeding there decreases as a result...

Given that students ultimately succeed or fail in college-level courses for many reasons beyond just their performance on placement exams, it is questionable whether their use as the sole determinant of college access can be justified on the basis of anything other than consistency and efficiency. Allowing more students directly into college-level coursework (but perhaps offering different sections of college-level courses, some of which might include supplementary instruction or extra tutoring), could substantially increase the numbers of students who complete college-level coursework in the first semester, even if pass rates in those courses decline...

Figure 2

Categorizations Based on Predicted Outcomes and Placement Decisions

Placement Decision	Predicted to Succeed in College-Level Course?	
	Yes	No
Placed into developmental ed.	(1) false negative Type II error (underplaced)	(2) accurately placed
Placed into college-level	(3) accurately placed	(4) false positive Type I error (overplaced)

Figure 5

Probability of Gatekeeper Success, by Math Part 2 Scores

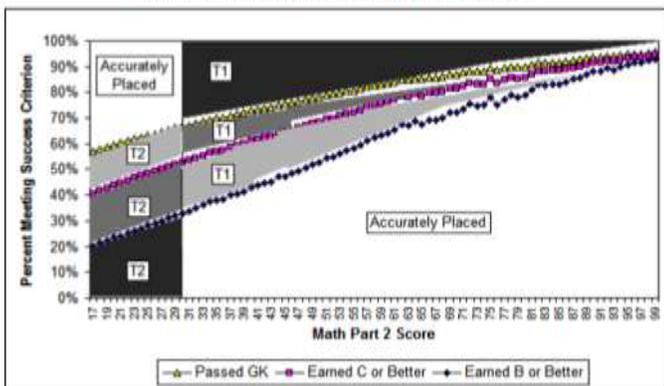


Figure 3

Probability of Gatekeeper Success, by Math Part 2 Scores

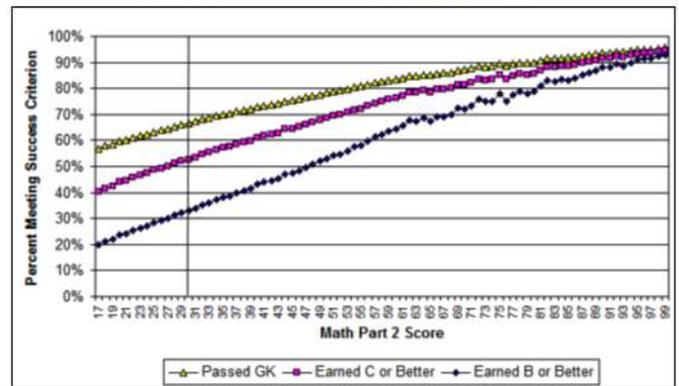


Table 3
Predicted Placement Accuracy Rates Using Placement Test Scores,
Versus Placing All Students in College Level or Remedial

	Accuracy Rate, Using Placement Test Cutoffs	Accuracy Rate, All Students in Developmental	Accuracy Rate, All Students in College Level	Incremental Validity vs. All Dev Ed	Incremental Validity vs. All Coll. Lev
Math					
Earned B or higher in GK	0.695	0.695	0.305	0.000	0.390
Earned C or higher in GK	0.582	0.505	0.495	0.077	0.087
Passed GK (D- or higher)	0.453	0.361	0.639	0.131	-0.146

“I’ve always been good in every subject I’ve taken, so it was a shock to me that I was right on the borderline.” — Student

“I have no idea why I got placed where I was.” — Student

“My developmental class is ridiculously easy.” — Student