

**Assessment Test Results
New Students from High School
El Camino College Compton Center, Fall 2006 to Fall 2008**

This report displays course placement rates for new high school graduate-aged students entering El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center (Compton Center) over the last 3 years. Because graduation date information is not complete and new students to Compton Center can be of any age, the “direct from high school” cohort is defined as students aged 17 or 18 with a recent test score. The report includes results for these students from tests administered between March 1 and the September census date of each year. Students aged 17-18 represent about 30% of all examinees who enroll in fall.

Placements at the Compton Center are advisory only since no test validation has yet been conducted. Validation studies for all assessment instruments administered at the Compton Center are currently underway.

Assessment tests are offered in 5 general subjects at the Center: Chemistry, Mathematics, Reading, Writing and English as a Second Language (ESL).¹ The Math test consists of 3 different levels: Arithmetic, Algebra and College-level math. Students are diverted to different levels of the math test depending on performance on early test questions following a computer-based adaptive format.

Table 1 highlights the number of students taking each test or test level at El Camino College or Compton Center between March 1 and the September census date of each year (separate location breakdown not available). Students repeating the same test are counted only once. These test counts typically mirror fluctuations in college enrollment. The number of tests reached a low point in 2004 and has since climbed to a 5-year high in 2008, due to both ECC enrollment growth and the addition of Compton Center test administrations. Tests administered at El Camino College are included for all years, but enrolled students (last row) represent only those at Compton Center.

Table 1: Number of Students Taking Placement Tests by Test, March-September

Test	Subject	Number of Students Taking Each Test or Level *				
		2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Arithmetic	Math	4,310	4,237	4,671	5,629	6,326
Algebra	Math	5,742	5,967	6,621	7,707	8,684
College-level Math	Math	1,389	1,518	1,688	1,872	2,061
Reading Comprehension	Reading	5,601	5,826	6,514	7,706	8,506
Sentence Skills	Writing	5,614	5,835	6,516	7,703	8,491
Total Tests (duplicated)		22,656	23,383	26,010	30,617	34,068
Students Tested (unduplicated)		6,921	7,072	7,817	9,200	10,258
Tested Students Enrolled in Fall		n/a	n/a	447	954	1,491

* Repeats of the same test by the same student have been excluded.

¹ Results from the Chemistry and ESL tests are excluded from this analysis. ESL results will be published later in a separate report.

Results

The Reading, Writing and Mathematics tests place students in a variety of levels depending on test performance, ranging from 3 to 7 levels of course work. For this study, placements are grouped into categories of similarly-leveled courses. These groups are 1) transfer-level courses that are transferable and equivalent to courses at a 4-year institution, 2) college-preparatory—courses that immediately precede transfer-level courses, and 3) basic skills—courses defined by El Camino College as developmental or basic skills courses. The specific ECC courses within each group and their levels below transfer level are listed in the appendix of this report.

Placement results for the 3 years of this study are summarized in Table 2 below by number and percentage in each subject and course group. Charts tracking the placement percentages of each begin on page 3.

Placements into English 1A (transfer-level) highlighted in both Table 2 and in further discussion below refer only to satisfactory preparation for English 1A in either reading or writing. A satisfactory score on both the Reading Comprehension and Sentence Skills (writing) portions of the English test is recommended in order to enroll in English 1A. The number and percentage of students who actually placed into English 1A is discussed in a special section below.

Table 2: Assessment Test Results by Test and Course Group *

Test	2006 (n=130) **		2007 (n=293)		2008 (n=435)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading ***						
Transfer-level	12	10.0	41	15.4	49	12.0
College-prep	19	15.8	47	17.7	73	17.8
Basic Skills	89	74.2	178	66.9	287	70.2
Total	120		266		409	
Writing ***						
Transfer-level	12	9.9	25	9.4	39	9.5
College-prep	54	44.6	147	55.1	188	46.0
Basic Skills	55	45.5	95	35.6	182	44.5
Total	121		267		409	
Math						
Transfer-level	0	0.0	1	0.4	5	1.2
College-prep	27	22.9	60	22.1	123	30.6
Basic Skills	91	77.1	210	77.5	274	68.2
Total	118		271		402	

* Specific courses under each “Course Group” are listed in the Appendix of this report.

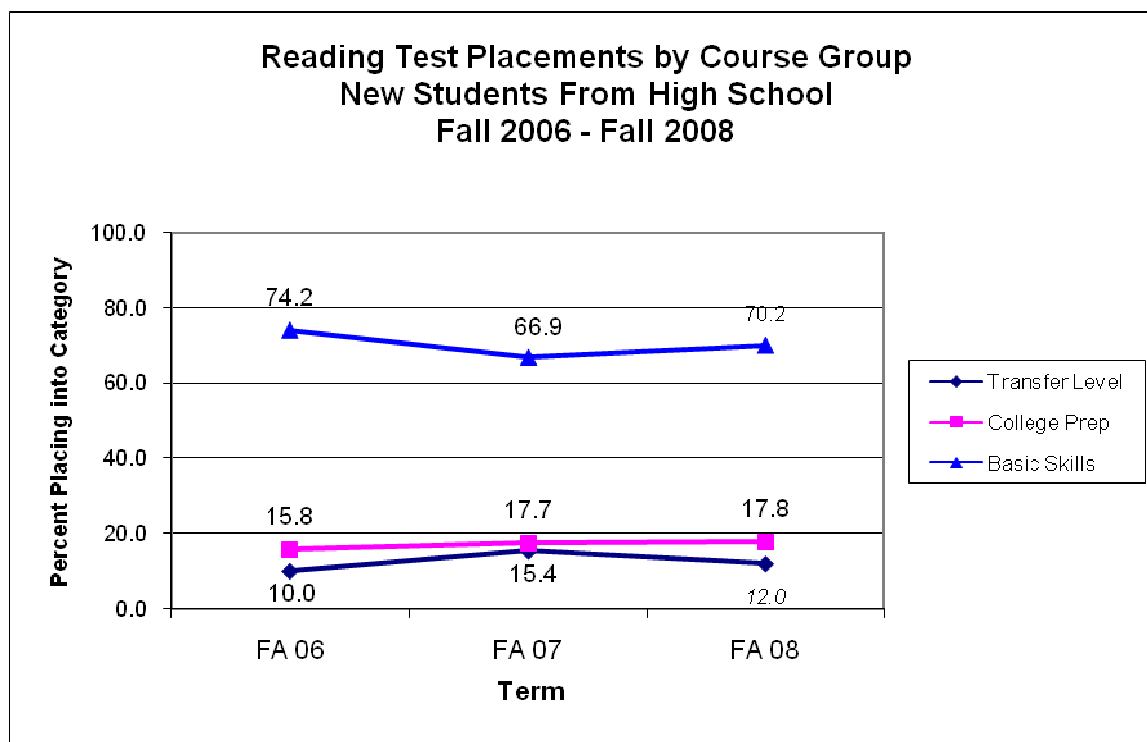
** The “n” figures at the top represent the total number of students aged 17 or 18 who took assessment tests between March 1 and the September census date in the year noted.

*** Transfer-level placements for Reading and Writing reflect only that portion of the test, and thus, general preparation in reading and writing. To qualify for *enrollment* in English 1A, examinees must achieve a qualifying score on both the Reading and Writing portions of the assessment test (see pages 3-4).

Reading

Reading placements into the transferable level (English 1A) declined by over 3 points, while the college-prep reading (English 84 or 7) remained unchanged. On average, 30% of younger students place into the college-prep or transfer level in reading.

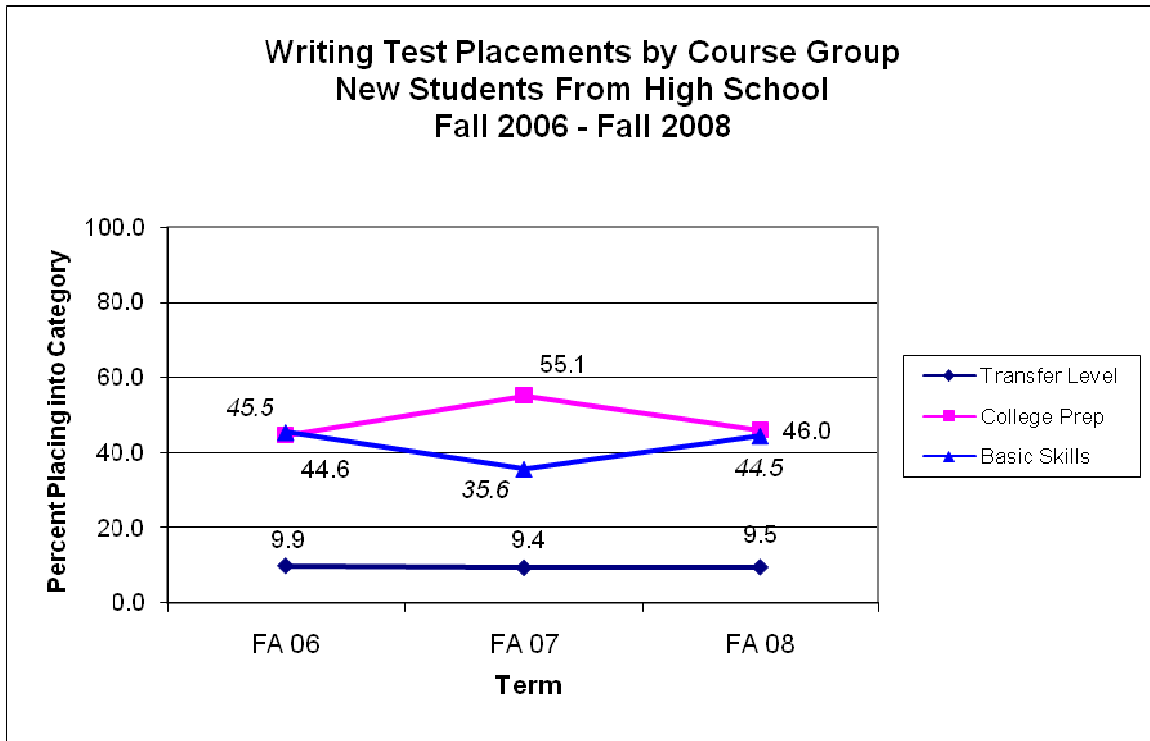
Beginning in Fall 2007, the basic skills category now consists of 2 courses (English 82 and English 80). However, no adjustment was made to the English 82 placement cut score. Basic skills placements increased by 3 points in 2008; nearly all of this increase was associated with English 80 placements. About 15% of students placed at the English 80 level in fall 2008. On average, about 70% of younger students place at the basic skills reading level.



Writing

Across 3 years, placements into the transfer-level course (English 1A) remained stable at levels between 9% and 10%.

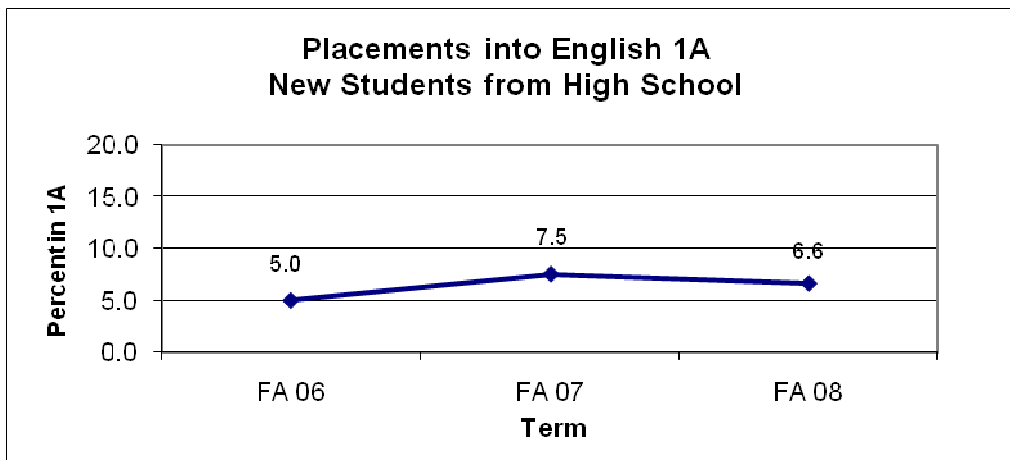
In contrast, placements in college-prep (English A) group decreased by 9 percentage points to 46%, with a corresponding increase in basic skills placements (English B), which climbed 9 points to 45% in 2008.



English 1A

To qualify for English 1A (transfer-level reading and writing), examinees must pass both the Reading and the Writing portions of the assessment test. The two tables above reflected placement rates into the transfer-level course (English 1A) based only on one of these two criteria to reflect academic preparation by subject. The table below shows actual course placement rates using both the reading and writing qualifying test scores.

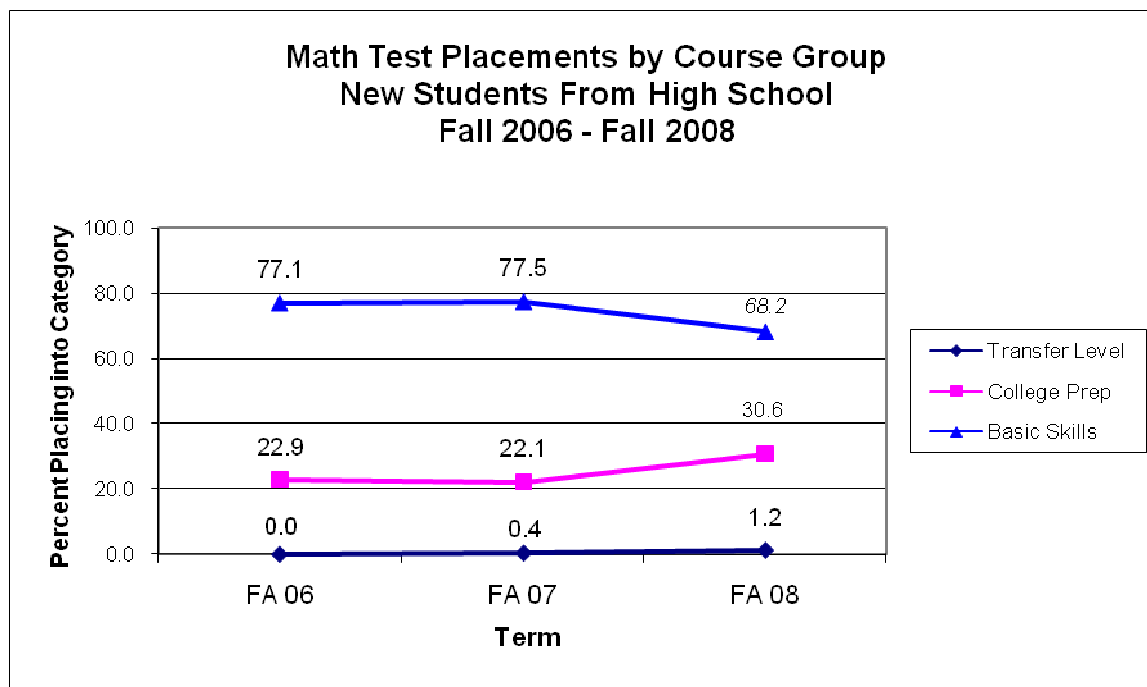
Placement rates declined slightly in 2008, with 27 students (nearly 7%) qualifying for English 1A.



Mathematics

Placements into the transfer level courses in 2008 increased slightly over last year (see Appendix for a complete list of courses at this level), but still represent a very small percentage of total math placements.

Placements into college-preparatory math courses increased by nearly 9 points in 2008 to 31%. Basic skills placements correspondingly declined to 68%.



Conclusion

A large percentage of younger students entering Compton Center demonstrate a need for courses at the basic skills level. Over two-thirds of tested students place into basic skills reading and math courses, while 45% place into basic skills writing.

Overall, 2008 witnessed large swings in basic skills placements. Reading and writing placements increased (dramatically so for writing), while basic skills math placements saw a dramatic decline over the past two years. The math decline was accompanied by increases in placements into both the transfer-level and college-prep courses.

This study provided a general analysis of the Compton student coming directly from high school (or shortly thereafter). Follow up studies are planned that will examine the placements of students over 18.

Appendix – Courses by Group

READING & WRITING

Course Group	Levels Below Transfer	Reading	Writing
Transfer-level	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 1A – Reading & Composition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 1A – Reading & Composition
College-preparatory	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 84 (formerly Engl-2R) – Developmental Reading & Writing English 7 – Speed & Power Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English A – Writing the College Essay
Basic Skills	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 82 (formerly Engl-R) – Introduction to Reading Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English B – Introduction to the Composing Process
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 80 – Basic Language Skills 	

MATHEMATICS

Course Group	Levels Below Transfer	Course
Transfer-level	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 190 – Calculus Math 160 – Business Calculus Math 170 – Trigonometry Math 180 – Pre-Calculus Math 150 – Elem. Probability & Statistics Math 140 – Finite Math Math 130 – College Algebra Math 120 – Nature of Math Math 115 – Prob. & Stats for Elementary Teachers Math 110 & 111 – Math for Elem. Teachers Computer Science 1, 5, 10
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College-preparatory	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 70 – Intermediate Algebra Math 60 – Elementary Geometry Math 40 or 41A – Elementary Algebra
	2	
Basic Skills	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 25 – Pre-Algebra Review Math 23 – Pre-Algebra Math 10A/12 – Basic Arithmetic Skills
	4	