

El Camino College Compton Center

Assessment Test Results

New Students from High School, Fall 2007 to Fall 2011

This report displays course placement rates and numbers for new high school graduate-aged students entering El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center (Compton Center) over 5 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 approximated as students aged 17 or 18 with a recent test score. Students aged 17-18 represent about 29% of all examinees who enroll in fall.

Assessment tests are offered in 5 subjects at the Center: Reading Comprehension, Writing (Sentence Skills), Mathematics, Chemistry, and English as a Second Language (ESL)¹. The Math test consists of 3 different levels: Arithmetic, Elementary Algebra and College-Level Math. Students are diverted to different levels of the math test depending on early pre-test questions and on performance following a computer-adaptive model. Two different ESL assessments are offered at Compton Center placing students into either non-credit or credit-level ESL courses.

Table 1 highlights the number of students, regardless of age, taking each test between March 1 and the September census date of each year listed. Students repeating the same test are counted only once in the unduplicated counts. These test counts overall typically mirror fluctuations in college enrollment. The number of tests decreased in 2011 after reaching a 5-year peak in 2010. This is likely due to an increase in continuing students and decrease in new students². Table 1 includes all tests administered by El Camino College, but “tested students enrolled” (last row) represent only those enrolled at the Compton Center. The decline in “tested students enrolled” may be influenced by the shift in student demographics (fewer new students) and a reduction in related course sections.

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

Test	Subject	Number of Students Taking Each Test or Level *				
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Reading Comprehension	Reading	7,706	8,506	9,219	9,489	8,606
Sentence Skills	Writing	7,703	8,491	9,196	9,481	8,604
Arithmetic	Math	5,629	6,326	6,593	6,883	6,365
Elementary Algebra	Math	7,707	8,684	9,242	9,635	8,818
College-Level Math	Math	1,872	2,061	2,289	2,380	2,097
Total Tests (duplicated)		30,617	34,068	36,539	37,868	34,490
Students Tested (unduplicated)		9,504	10,621	11,633	11,431	10,272
Tested Students Enrolled in Fall		952	1,491	1,594	1,815	1,530

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

** Slight changes in cut scores within the college-prep and basic skills math categories in Fall 2009

¹ The number of examinees in Chemistry and ESL remain too small to include in this study (2011 count < 10).

² Compared to Fall 2010, the number of new students of all ages decreased by 25% in 2011.

RESULTS

The Reading, Writing and Mathematics tests place students in a variety of levels depending on test performance. For this study, placements are grouped into categories of similarly-leveled courses. These groups are 1) transfer-level—courses that are 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 (in most cases, more than one level below transfer). The specific ECC courses within each group and their levels below transfer level are listed in the appendix of this report.

Compton Center assessment results for the 5 years of this study are summarized below in Table 2 by number and percentage in each subject and course group. Charts tracking the placement percentages and numbers of each subject begin on page 3.

Overall, Fall 2011 showed a continued rise in the rate of transfer-level placements, especially in Writing and Math. This may be due to the increase in CSU/UC-prepared students who were diverted to the Center by enrollment constraints at our California universities.

Table 2: Assessment Test Results by Test and Course Group* for “New Freshmen”

Test	2007 (n=293)		2008 (n=435)		2009 (n=424)		2010 (n=553)		2011 (n=437)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading **										
Transfer-level	41	15.4	49	12.0	86	21.6	153	29.1	130	30.8
College-prep	47	17.7	73	17.8	79	19.8	127	24.1	94	22.3
Basic Skills	178	66.9	287	70.2	233	58.5	246	46.8	198	46.9
Total	266		409		398		526		422	
Writing **										
Transfer-level	25	9.4	39	9.5	68	16.8	110	20.8	97	23.0
College-prep	147	55.1	188	46.0	214	53.0	288	54.5	254	60.2
Basic Skills	95	35.6	182	44.5	122	30.2	130	24.6	71	16.8
Total	267		409		404		528		422	
Math										
Transfer-level	1	0.4	5	1.2	5	1.3	2	0.4	15	3.5
College-prep	60	22.1	123	30.6	129	34.8	227	44.2	180	42.6
Basic Skills	210	77.5	274	68.2	237	63.9	285	55.4	228	53.9
Total	271		402		371		514		423	

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

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

** 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 page 9).

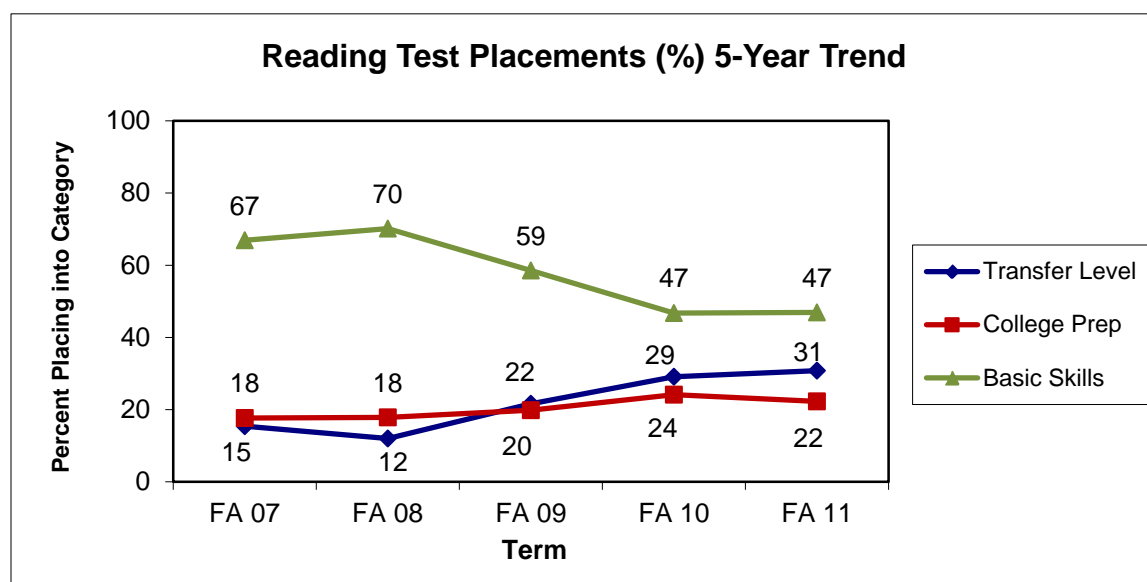
READING

Placement Rates

Reading placements into the transfer level (English 1A) increased by nearly 2 percentage points, while college-prep placements (English 84 or 7) decreased slightly by an equal number of points. On average during the 5-year period, 44% of 17 or 18 year old students placed into the college-prep or transfer level in reading.

The percentage of basic skills placements decreased over the previous 4 years, but remained constant in 2011 at 47%, with 9% of students placing at the English 80 level. On average, 57% of younger students place at the basic skills reading level between Fall 2007 and 2011.

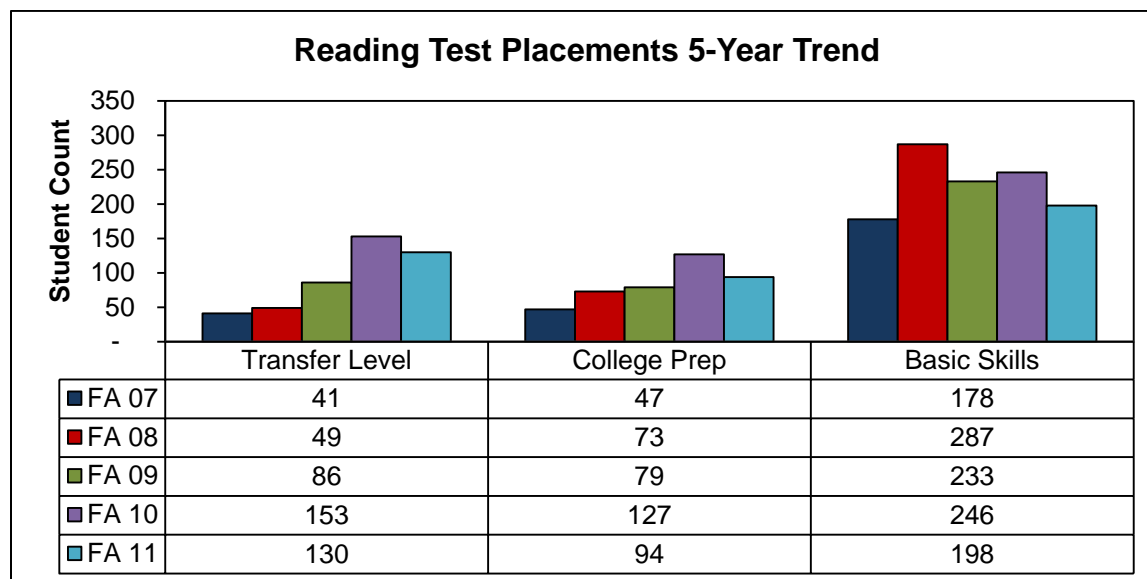
Table 3: Reading Assessment Test Placement Rates



Placement Numbers

The increase in enrollment counts is reflected in the overall increasing trend in placement numbers since 2007. In 2011, however, reading placements decreased for all 3 course groups. Transfer-level placements reduced by 15% to 130, and college-prep placements diminished by 26% to 94. Basic skills placements decreased to 198, a 20% decline from 2010.

Table 4: Reading Assessment Test Placement Numbers



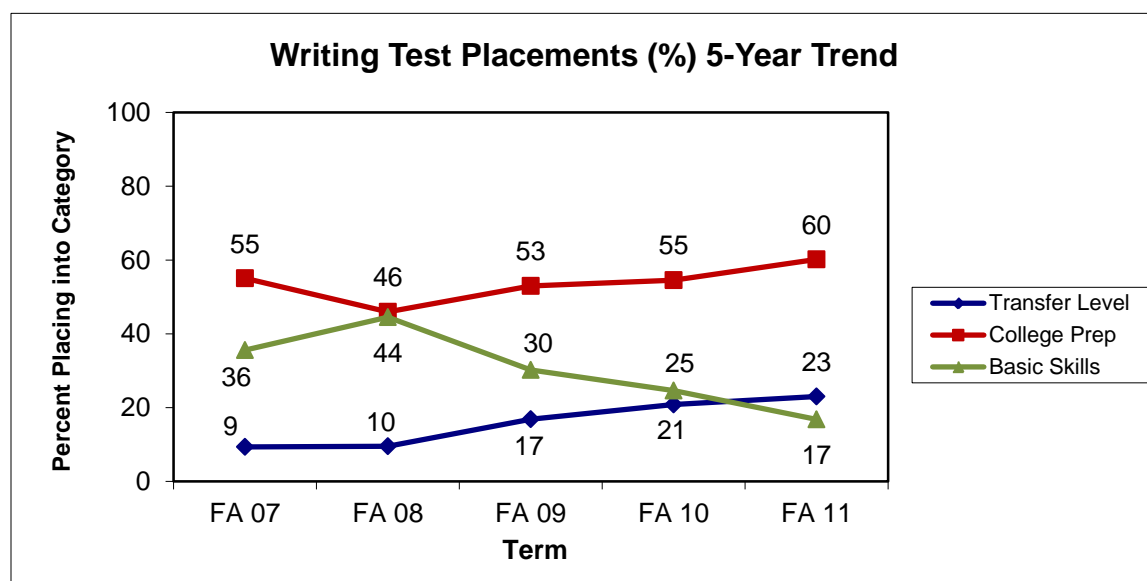
WRITING

Placement Rates

Across the 5-year period, placements into the transfer-level course (English 1A) gradually increased from 9% in 2007 to 23% in 2011. College-prep placements (English A) have also increased over the years with the most recent increase of 5 percentage points to 60%.

The percent of basic skills placements (English B and C) has consequently decreased in favor of transfer level and college prep. Peaking at 45% in 2008, basic skills placements decreased by almost 30 percentage points, reaching 17% in 2011.

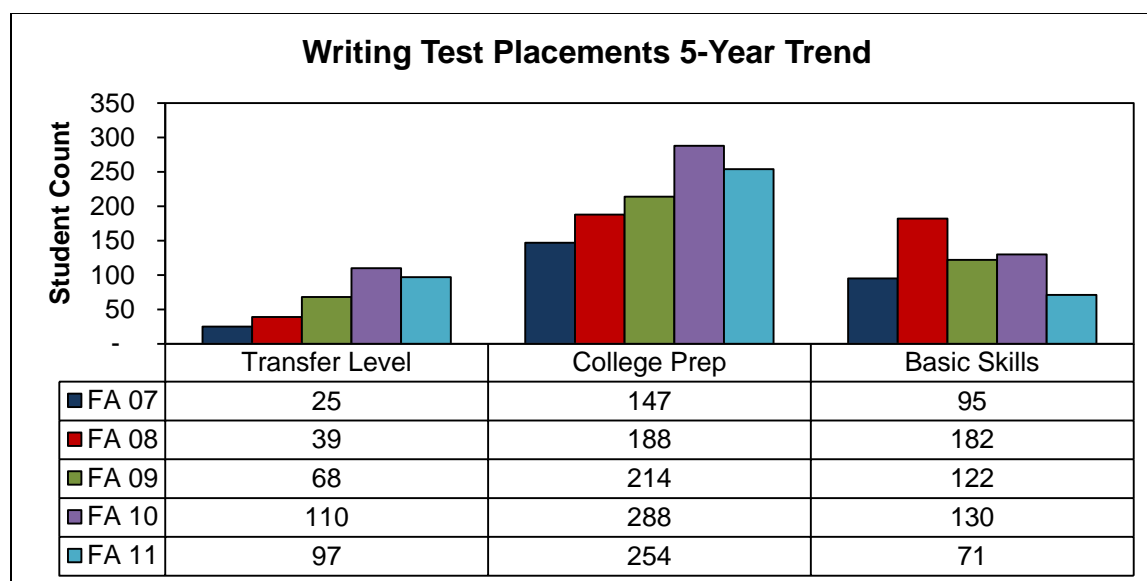
Table 5: Writing Assessment Test Placement Rates



Placement Numbers

Similar to placement trends for reading, writing placements also decreased in all 3 course groups. Placements into transfer level and college prep each decreased by 12% in 2011, yielding placement counts of 97 and 254, respectively. The number of basic skills decreased more noticeably by 45%, with a placement count of 71. Although placement numbers decreased in 2011, they were still higher than their respective 5-year averages.

Table 6: Writing Assessment Test Placement Numbers



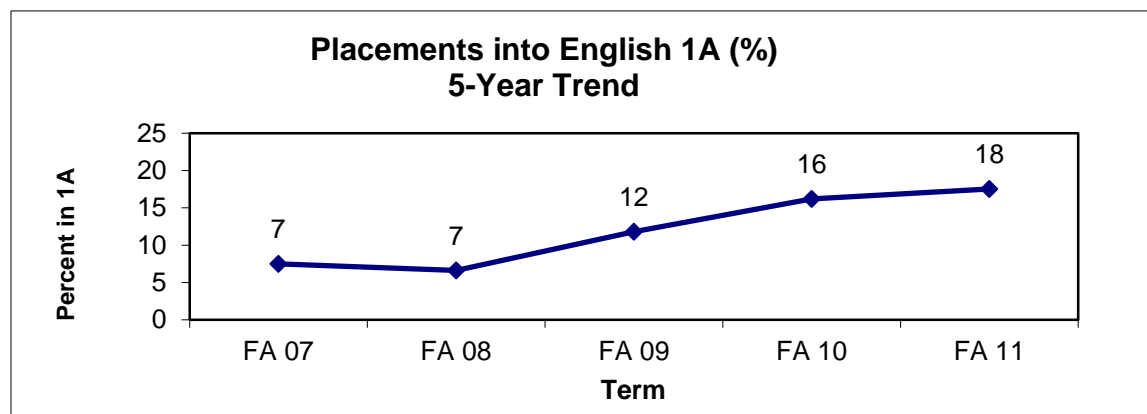
ENGLISH 1A

Placement Rates

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 in order to reflect academic preparation by subject. The table below shows actual course placement rates using both the reading and writing qualifying test scores.

The rate of new entering students qualifying for English 1A has more than doubled in the past 5 years. In 2011, 18% of new students placed into English 1A, which is higher than the 5-year average (12%).

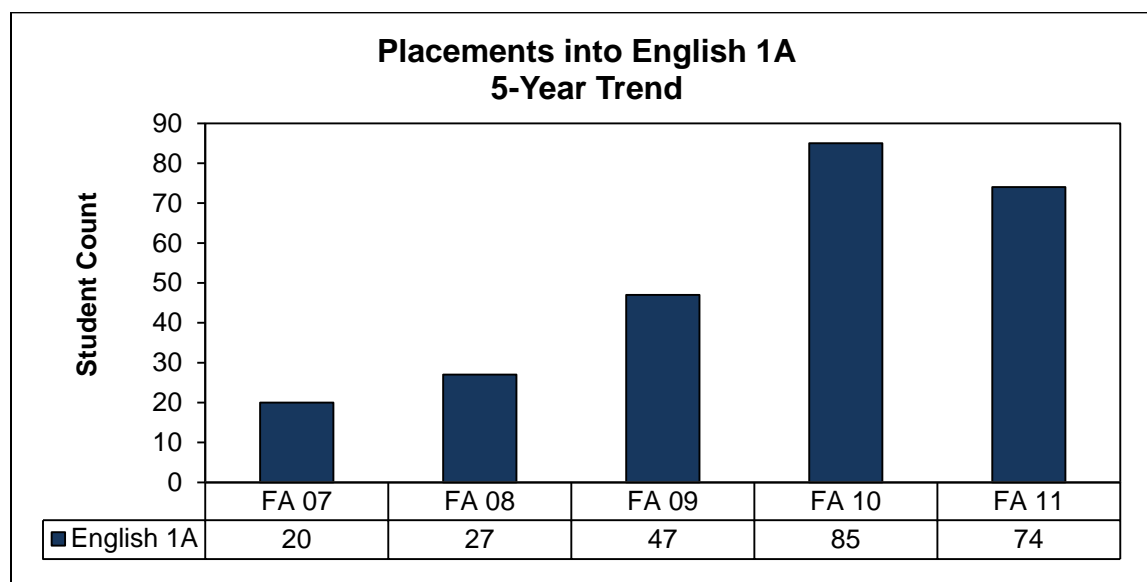
Table 7: English 1A Placement Rates



Placement Numbers

Though placement rates continue to increase, counts have decreased since reaching a 5-year peak in 2010. This may be attributed to the decrease in new students. In 2011, 74 students placed into English 1A, and the 5-year average was 51.

Table 8: English 1A Placement Numbers



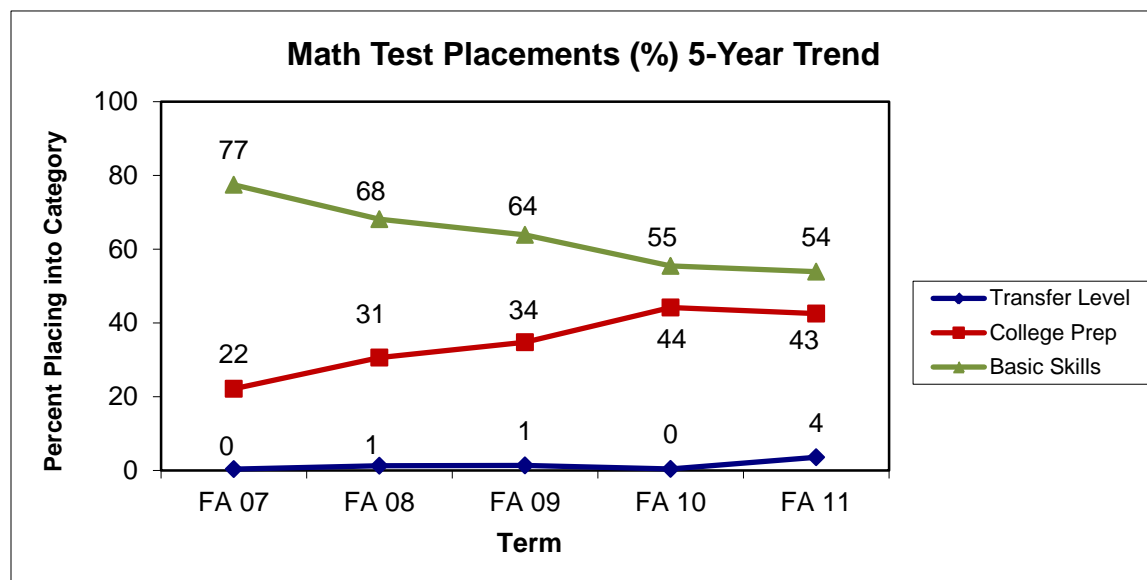
MATHEMATICS

Placement Rates

Placements into the transfer-level courses in 2011 increased by 3 points since last year, reaching a 5-year peak at 4% (see Appendix for a complete list of courses at this level). The period's average rate of placement is approximately 1%.

With the increase in transfer level placements, college-prep and basic skills placements both experienced a decrease of 2 percentage points. On average, 36% and 62% of students place into college-prep and basic skills math, respectively.

Table 9: Math Assessment Test Placement Rates

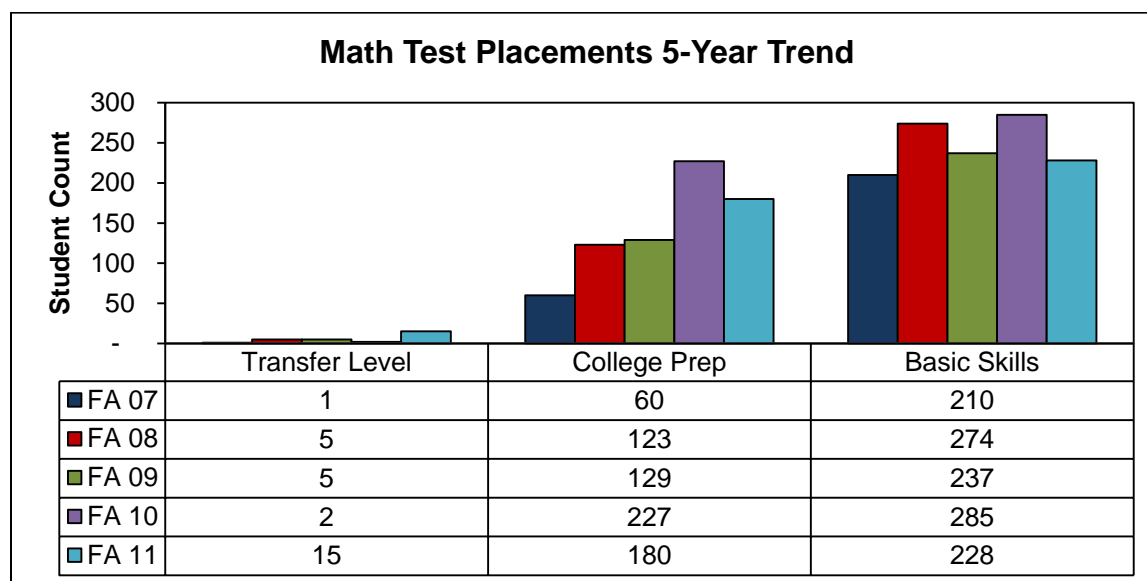


Note: New cut scores affected some basic skills and college prep courses beginning in Fall 2009.

Placement Numbers

Of the 3 course groups, the fewest numbers of tested students placed into transfer-level math. However, this is the only course group across Reading, Writing and Mathematics that experienced an increase in placements. Placements increased by 7%, yielding 15 transfer-level placements in 2011. Most students placed into the college-prep and basic skills level, both of which decreased by approximately one-fifth to 180 and 228, respectively.

Table 10: Math Assessment Test Placement Numbers



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Two different ESL assessments are offered at Compton Center. The Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) is used for placement into the non-credit ESL series. The English as a Second Language (ESL) assessment is used for placement into the *credit* ESL course series and consists of a computerized reading skills test, a questionnaire, an English writing sample, an oral interview, and an orientation to the College. However, only a very small percentage of students aged 17-18 take the two ESL tests and are thus not included in this study.

CONCLUSION

A large percentage of younger students entering Compton Center demonstrate a need for courses at the basic skills level. Close to half of tested students placed into basic skills reading and math, while 17% placed into basic skills writing. Despite the continued placement of students into basic skills, these placements have decreased if not remained constant since 2010. Meanwhile, 2011 witnessed an increase in transfer-level placements across all three subjects.

This study provided a general analysis of the Compton student coming directly from high school (or shortly thereafter). This group tends to perform the best on average than any other age group, so older students tend to be less well prepared for college, on average, compared to students with a recent high school experience. For example, the average placement rates for all assessed students into basic skills reading, writing and math were 62%, 39% and 75%, respectively. In comparison, recent high school graduates placed into the same categories of basic skills at 57%, 30% and 62%, respectively.

With the exception of transfer-level math, placement numbers have decreased for all course groups in reading, writing and mathematics. This decrease is likely a result of a change in enrolled students' demographics. Fall 2011 experienced a decrease in the number of new students of all ages and consequent increase in continuing students.

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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English C – Basic English Skills

MATHEMATICS

Course Group	Levels Below Transfer	Course
Transfer-level	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 190 – Calculus Math 160 – Business Calculus Math 180 – Pre-Calculus Math 170 – Trigonometry 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 80* – Intermediate Algebra for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics Math 73* – Intermediate Algebra for General Education Math 60 – Elementary Geometry
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 40 or 41B/43* – Elementary Algebra
Basic Skills	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 41A – Elementary Algebra, Part I Math 33* – Extended Elementary Algebra, Part I Math 25 – Pre-Algebra Review Math 23 – Pre-Algebra
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Math 10A-10B/12 – Basic Arithmetic Skills

* Math 80 replaced Math 70 (Intermediate Algebra) in Fall 2009. It is a Calculus-track algebra course.

* Math 73 was inaugurated in Fall 2009. It is a non-Calculus track algebra course.

* Math 33 and 43 (Extended Elementary Algebra, Parts I and II) replaced Math 41A and 41B (Elementary Algebra, Parts I and II) in Fall 2009.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL)

Course Group	Levels Below Transfer	Oral (Listening/Speaking) *	Reading	Writing
Transfer-level	--		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 1AX - Reading & Composition for Foreign Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 1AX - Reading & Composition for Foreign Students
College-preparatory	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 51C – (Advanced) ESL 51B – (Intermediate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 52C – (Advanced) ESL 52B – (Intermediate) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English A-X – Writing the College Essay ESL 53B – (Intermediate)
Basic Skills	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 51A – Intro to English Conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 52A – Intro to Reading and Vocab. Building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 53A – Elementary Grammar/Writing
Non-Credit Basic Skills	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 02A, 02B, 02C, 02D – Conversation and Grammar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESL 03A, 03B, 03C, 03D – Reading & Writing 	

* Although Listening/Speaking courses indicate “levels below transfer,” they do not directly lead to a transfer-level course such as English 1A.