

El Camino College Compton Center

Assessment Test Results

New Students from High School, Fall 2009 to Fall 2013

This report displays course placement rates and numbers for new high school graduate-aged students entering El Camino College Compton 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 26% of all examinees who enrolled at Compton Center between fall 2009 and fall 2013.

Assessment tests are offered in 5 subjects at Compton 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. To determine a student’s math placement, students are first asked pre-test questions to assess the student’s math background and select an initial level of math difficulty. Using this information, students complete an Accuplacer assessment, which uses a computer-adaptive model to vary the difficulty of questions based on the student’s responses to previous test questions. Scores from the Accuplacer test are used to determine the student’s math placement. The Chemistry Test (California Chemistry Diagnostic Test) is a paper and pencil test that is used to place students into the appropriate transfer-level chemistry course, provided they also meet a math prerequisite. The ESL assessment places students into listening/speaking, reading, and writing courses.

Table 1 highlights the number of students, regardless of age, taking each test between the opening of the application window 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 typically mirror fluctuations in college enrollment. The number of tests continued to decrease in 2013, in contrast to the slight enrollment increase in fall. Table 1 includes all tests administered at both ECC and Compton Center, but “tested students enrolled” (last row) represents only those enrolled at Compton Center. The number of assessed students who enrolled at Compton Center also continued to decline after reaching a 5-year peak in 2010.

Table 1: Number of Students Taking Placement Tests by Test, Fall Application and Enrollment Window

Test	Subject	Number of Students Taking Each Test or Level				
		2009*	2010	2011	2012	2013
Reading Comprehension	Reading	12,081	11,599	10,710	10,207	9,697
Sentence Skills	Writing	12,081	11,601	10,707	10,200	9,699
Arithmetic	Math	8,940	8,638	8,045	7,385	6,951
Algebra	Math	12,063	11,727	10,801	10,425	9,861
College-level Math	Math	2,705	2,705	2,386	2,578	2,357
Total Tests (duplicated)		47,870	46,270	42,649	40,795	38,565
Students Tested (unduplicated)		14,735	14,043	12,819	12,113	11,423
Tested Students Enrolled at Compton Center in Fall		1,917	2,125	1,831	1,673	1,553

¹ The number of examinees in Chemistry and ESL remain too small to include in this study (2013 count < 10).

RESULTS

The following sections focus on only students considered “new students from high school,” as defined above. The Reading, Writing, and Mathematics tests place students in a variety of levels depending on test performance. For this report, 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 the following page. Compared to 2009, a greater percentage of students were placed into transfer-level Reading, Writing, and Mathematics courses. Since 2010, transfer-level placements rates have remained relatively stable.

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

Test	2009 (n=458)		2010 (n=565)		2011 (n=453)		2012 (n=453)		2013 (n=463)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reading **										
Transfer-level	89	20.2	158	29.4	138	31.6	131	30.0	125	27.8
College-prep	83	18.8	130	24.2	95	21.7	96	22.0	90	20.0
Basic Skills	269	61.0	249	46.4	204	46.7	210	48.1	235	52.2
Total	441		537		437		437		450	
Writing **										
Transfer-level	69	15.6	113	21.0	99	22.7	100	22.9	98	22.1
College-prep	231	52.4	293	54.4	264	60.6	235	53.8	233	52.6
Basic Skills	141	32.0	133	24.7	73	16.7	102	23.3	112	25.3
Total	441		539		436		437		443	
Math										
Transfer-level	7	1.6	5	1.0	15	3.4	18	4.1	14	3.1
College-prep	147	34.1	233	44.3	189	43.0	176	40.5	200	44.4
Basic Skills	277	64.3	288	54.8	236	53.6	241	55.4	236	52.4
Total	431		526		440		435		450	

Note: The “N” figures at the top represent the total number of students aged 17 or 18 who took assessment tests between the opening of the application window (first week of January for this report) and the September census date in the year noted.

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

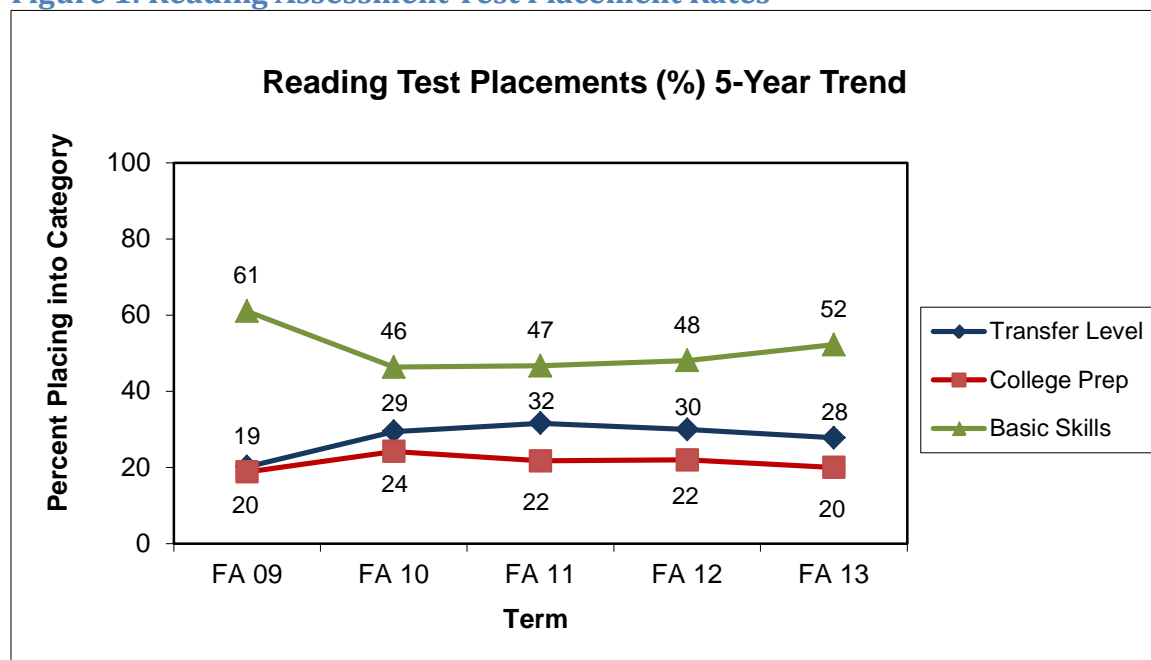
** Transfer-level placements for Reading and Writing reflect only that portion of the test, and thus, general preparation in reading and writing. To qualify for *enrollment* in English 1A, examinees must achieve a qualifying score on both the Reading and Writing portions of the assessment test (see Appendix).

READING

Placement Rates

Across all five years, the most common Reading placement was at the basic skills level (Figure 1). Since 2010, Reading placements have remained relatively stable. However, there has been a slight increase in basic skills placements between 2012 and 2013. This also corresponds with a slight decrease in transfer-level (English 1A) and college preparatory placement rates. On average during the 5-year period, 49% of 17 or 18 year-old students placed into the college-prep or transfer-level in reading, with 51% placing into basic skills Reading.

Figure 1: Reading Assessment Test Placement Rates

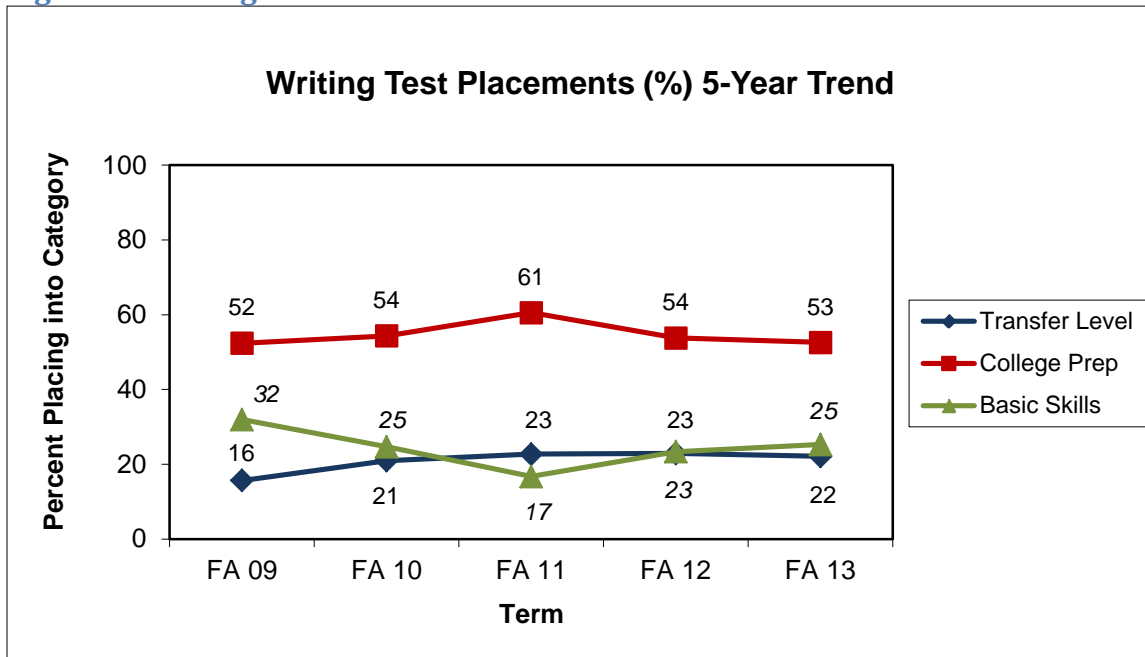


WRITING

Placement Rates

As can be seen in Figure 2, the most common writing placement was at the college preparatory level (English A). Aside from a peak in 2011, the college preparatory placement rate has remained steady around 53%. Across the 5-year period, placements into the transfer-level (English 1A) gradually increased from 16% in 2009 to 22% in 2013. After a dip in 2011, basic skills placements have returned to encapsulate approximately 25% of all of the Writing placements.

Figure 2: Writing Assessment Test Placement Rates



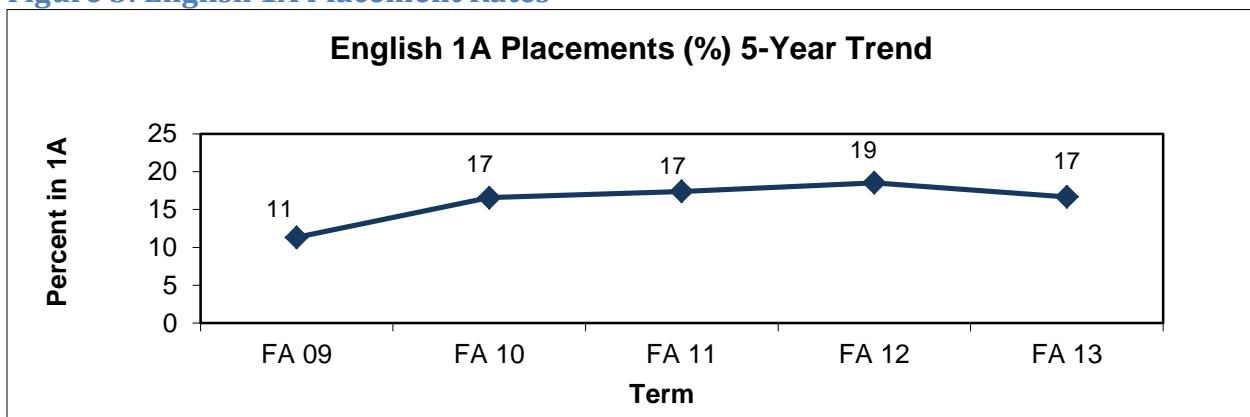
ENGLISH 1A

Placement Rates

To qualify for English 1A (transfer-level reading and writing), examinees must place into transfer-level in both the Reading and the Writing portions of the assessment test. Figures 1 and 2 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. Figure 3 below reflects actual course placement rates using both the reading and writing qualifying test scores.

The rate of new entering students qualifying for English 1A has plateaued after increasing 6 percentage points between 2009 and 2010, with rates ranging between 17 and 19 percent.

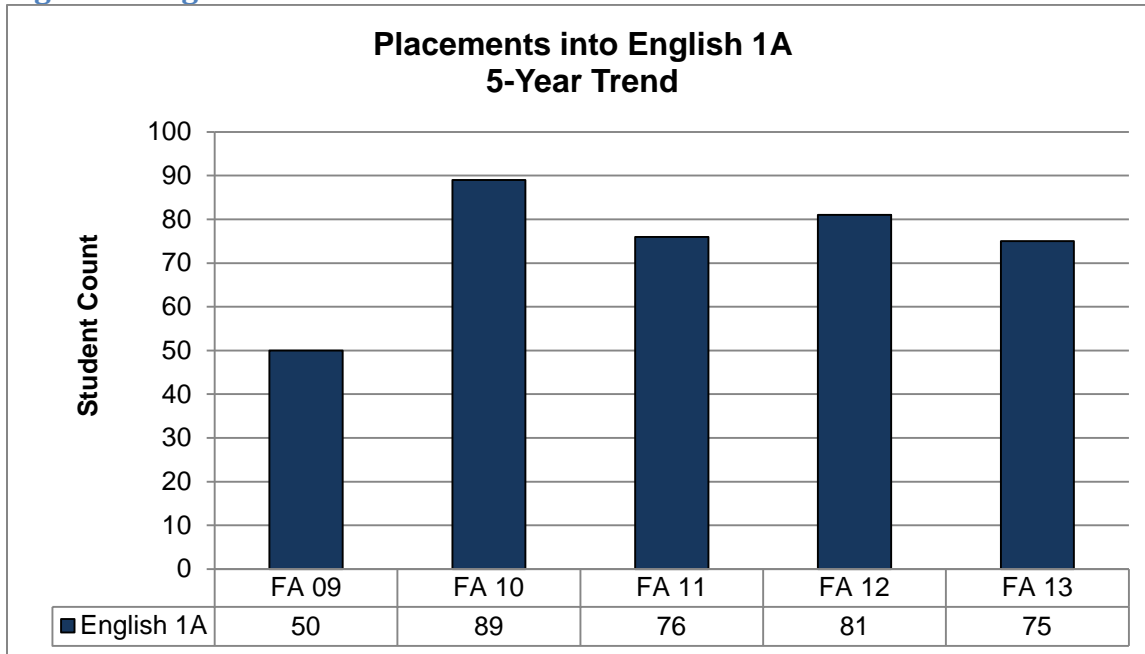
Figure 3: English 1A Placement Rates



Placement Numbers

As a whole, the number of students who placed into English 1A for reading and writing has increased relative to 2009, but decreased relative to the previous four years. The 5-year average was 74.

Figure 4: English 1A Placement Numbers

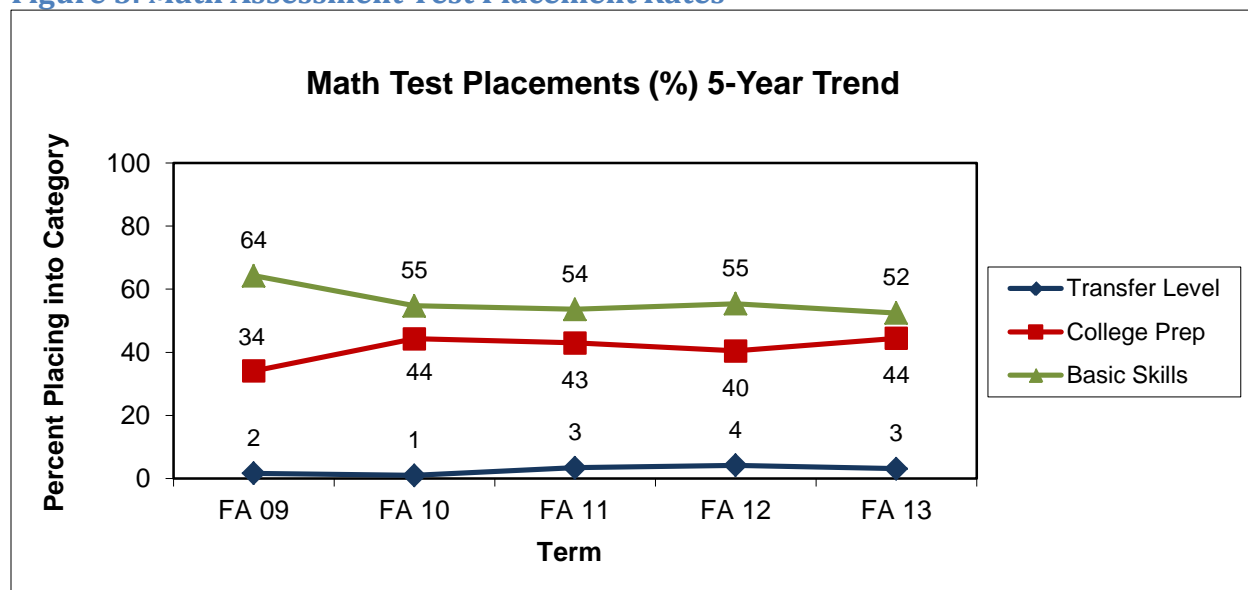


MATHEMATICS

Placement Rates

In contrast to the reading and writing assessments, only a small minority of students who took the math placement exam qualified for transfer-level mathematics. Placement rates have remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2013. New students continue to place into transfer-level math at 3-4% (see Appendix for a complete list of courses at this level). Average placement rates into transfer-level, college-prep, and basic skills math courses were 3%, 41%, and 56%, respectively.

Figure 5: Math Assessment Test Placement Rates



ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The English as a Second Language (ESL) assessment is used for placement into the 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 ESL tests and are thus not included in this study.

CONCLUSION

This study provided a general analysis of El Camino College Compton Center students coming directly from high school (or shortly thereafter). This group tends to perform the best, on average, than any other age group; older students tend to be less prepared for college 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 54%, 33%, and 71%, respectively. In comparison, recent high school graduates placed into the same categories of basic skills at 51%, 24%, and 56%.

There are several interesting findings from this report. First, a large percentage of younger students entering Compton Center demonstrated a need for courses at the basic skills level. More than half of tested students placed into basic skills reading and math, while 25% placed into basic skills writing. Second, overall, basic skills placements have decreased over the last five years. Finally, the wide variety of placement rates across Reading, Writing, and Mathematics underscores that ECC Compton Center serves a student body with varied levels of college preparation.

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
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

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

** To place into transfer-level Reading and Writing (English 1AX), students must achieve a qualifying score on both the Reading and Writing portions of the assessment test. For ESL, students must place into ESL 52C for Reading, and English 1AX for Writing.