

El Camino College

Assessment Test Results

New Students from High School, Fall 2008 to Fall 2012

This report displays course placement rates and numbers for new high school graduate-aged students entering El Camino College (ECC) over 5 years. Because graduation date information is not complete and new students to El Camino College can be of any age, the “direct from high school” cohort is approximated as students aged 17 or 18 with a recent test score. The report includes results for these Fall-enrolled students, who represent a little over half of all examinees who enroll in Fall.

Assessment tests are offered in 5 subjects at ECC: Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Chemistry and English as a Second Language (ESL). The Math test consists of 3 different levels: Arithmetic, Elementary Algebra and College-Level Math. Accuplacer’s computer-adaptive model diverts students to different levels of the math test depending on early pre-test questions and on performance. 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 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 typically mirror fluctuations in college enrollment. The number of students tested continued to decrease in 2012, which is likely due to a decrease in enrollments at the main Torrance campus. Table 1 includes all tests administered at both ECC and Compton Center, but “tested students enrolled” (last row) represent only those enrolled at the main Torrance campus. Although there was a decrease in “students tested” in 2012, the number of “tested students enrolled” remained fairly stable.

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

Test	Subject	Number of Students Taking Each Test or Level				
		2008	2009*	2010	2011	2012
Reading Comprehension	Reading	8,506	9,219	9,489	8,606	8,386
Sentence Skills	Writing	8,491	9,196	9,481	8,604	8,406
Arithmetic	Math	6,326	6,593	6,883	6,365	5,944
Algebra	Math	8,684	9,242	9,635	8,818	8,565
College-level Math	Math	2,061	2,289	2,380	2,097	2,245
Chemistry	Chemistry	113	98	92	87	86
English as a Second Language	ESL	575	259	547	499	422
Total Tests (duplicated)		34,756	36,896	38,507	35,076	34,054
Students Tested (unduplicated)		10,621	11,633	11,431	10,272	9,945
Tested Students Enrolled in Fall		5,668	5,625	4,992	4,710	4,652

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

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 ECC as 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.

Placement results for the 5 years in 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 begin on page 3.

Overall, Fall 2012 showed a consistent rate of transfer-level placements in Reading, Writing and Math. Overall placement numbers exhibited a decreasing trend in the last several years and stabilized in 2012.

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

Test	2008 (N=3,215)		2009 (N=2,970)		2010 (N=2,629)		2011 (N=2,478)		2012 (N=2,522)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Reading **										
Transfer-level	1,215	40.0	1,281	45.9	1,220	49.2	1,095	46.3	1,110	46.5
College-prep	700	23.1	637	22.8	543	21.9	543	23.0	489	20.5
Basic Skills	1,121	36.9	871	31.2	719	29.0	725	30.7	786	33.0
Total	3,036		2,789		2,482		2,363		2,385	
Writing **										
Transfer-level	975	32.1	1,061	38.0	987	39.8	955	40.4	953	39.8
College-prep	1,587	52.2	1,357	48.7	1,208	48.7	1,129	47.8	1,173	49.0
Basic Skills	476	15.7	371	13.3	287	11.6	280	11.8	267	11.2
Total	3,038		2,789		2,482		2,364		2,393	
Math										
Transfer-level	272	8.9	269	9.8	253	10.1	236	9.9	258	10.6
College-prep	1,705	55.7	1,540	56.4	1,481	59.0	1,364	57.1	1,389	57.3
Basic Skills	1,084	35.4	923	33.8	777	30.9	788	33.0	776	32.0
Total	3,061		2,732		2,511		2,388		2,423	

Note: 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.

* 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 only. 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 11).

READING

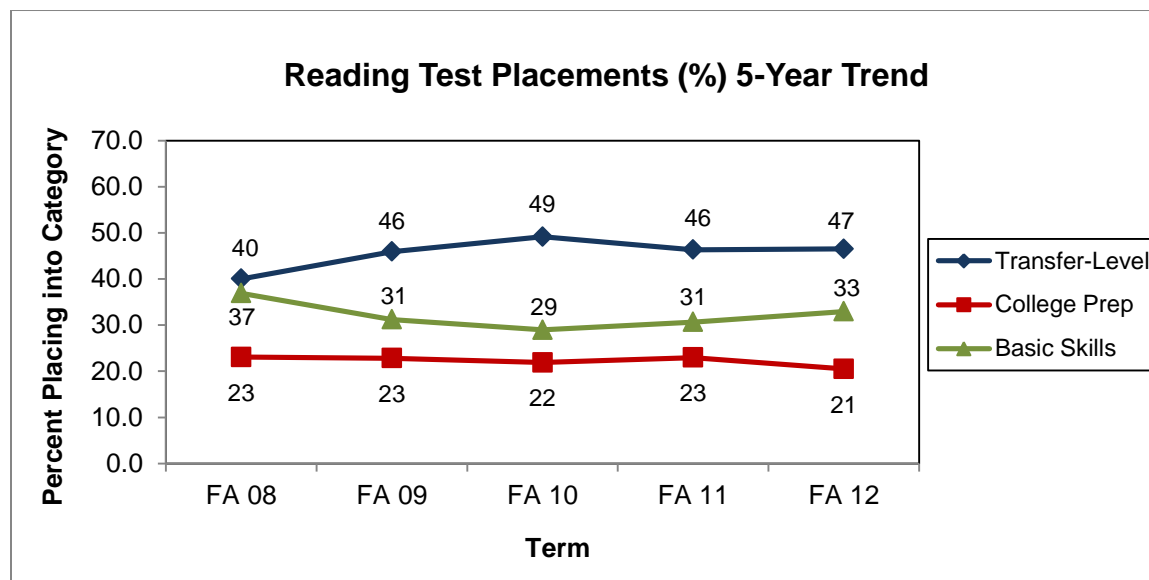
Placement Rates

Placements into reading courses were variable over the past 5 years. Placements into the transferable level (English 1A) stabilized in 2012, increasing by 1 percentage point to 47%. The 5-year average transfer-level placement rate for the period is 45%.

College-preparatory placements have remained level over the last 5 years. The average placement rate into college-prep courses (English 84 or 7) is 22%.

The percentage of basic skills placements continued to steadily increase in the last several years, reaching 33%. This category consists of 2 basic skills courses (English 80 and English 82). About 3% of students placed at the English 80 level, down from 5% in 2008. The 5-year average placement rate into basic skills reading courses is approximately 32%.

Table 3: Reading Assessment Test Placement Rates

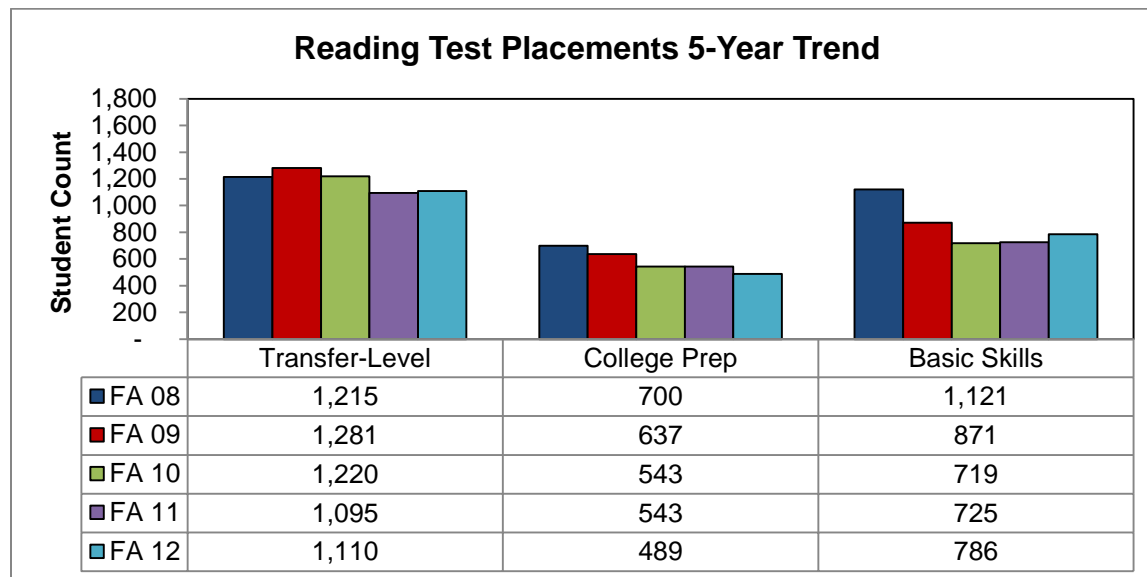


Placement Numbers

The decline in enrollment counts is reflected in the overall decreasing trend in placement numbers during the 5-year period. Transfer-level placement counts peaked in 2009 but leveled off after a period of decline. Placements increased slightly from last year, yielding a placement count of 1,110.

Placements for college prep and basic skills have remained somewhat stable over the last several years. The 2012 counts are lower than the 5-year averages, which are 582 and 844, respectively.

Table 4: Reading Assessment Test Placement Numbers



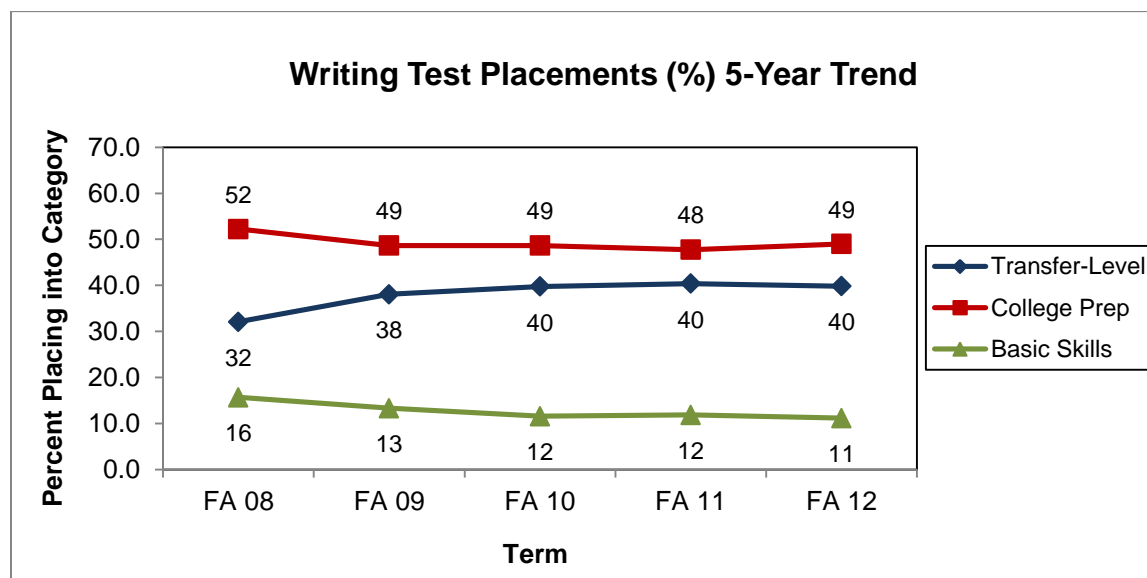
WRITING

Placement Rates

During the last 3 years, transfer-level (English 1A) course placements remained steady, yielding a placement rate of 40% over the last 3 years. Placements into college prep (English A) and basic skills (English B) have also stabilized at 49% and 11%, respectively. Basic skills placements have declined progressively over the last 5 years by a total of 5 percentage points.

Five-year average placements into transfer-level, college-prep and basic skills writing courses were 38%, 49% and 13%, respectively.

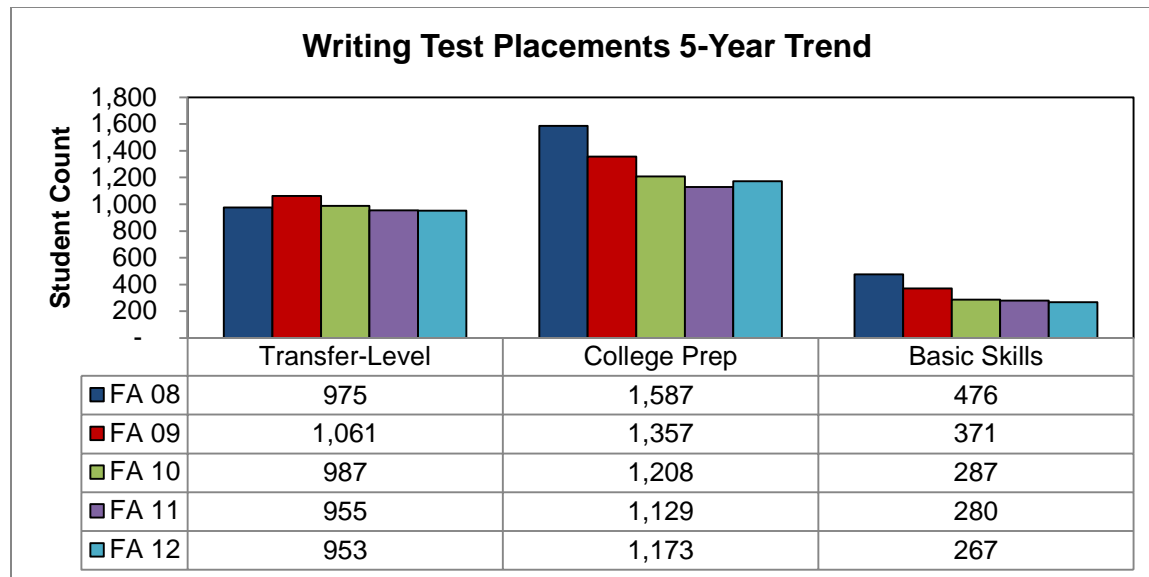
Table 5: Writing Assessment Test Placement Rates



Placement Numbers

Counts for assessment test results have gradually declined for all 3 course groups over the last 5 years. The number of placements into transfer-level remained nearly the same from the previous year at 953 while college prep increased 4% to 1,173. Basic skills placements decreased slightly in 2012, yielding a placement count of 267.

Table 6: Writing Assessment Test Placement Numbers



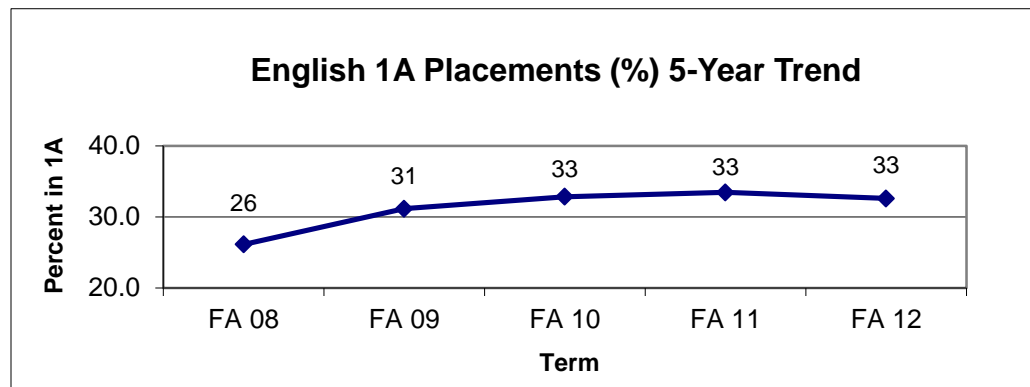
ENGLISH 1A

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. Tables 3 and 5 above reflected placement rates into the transfer-level course (English 1A) based only on one of these two criteria in order to show academic preparation by subject. The table below reflects actual course placement rates using both the reading and writing qualifying test scores.

Placement rates have remained steady during the last 3 years at approximately 33%, which is higher than the 5-year average rate of 31%.

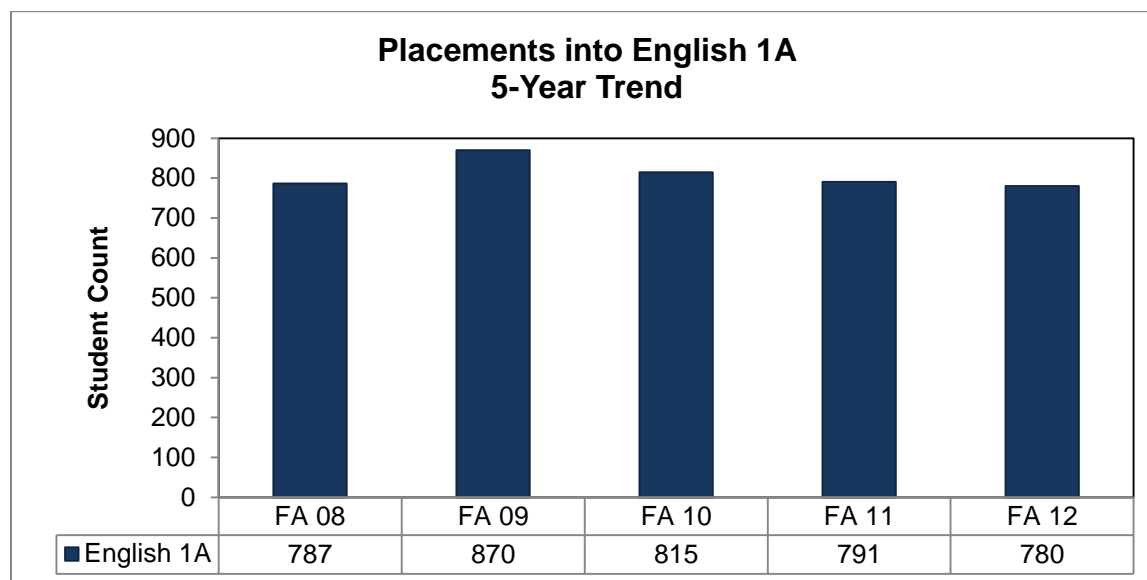
Table 7: English 1A Placement Rates



Placement Numbers

Though placement rates continue to increase, counts have decreased slightly since reaching a 5-year peak in 2009. This may be attributed to the decline in student enrollment. In 2012, 780 students placed into English 1A.

Table 8: English 1A Placement Numbers

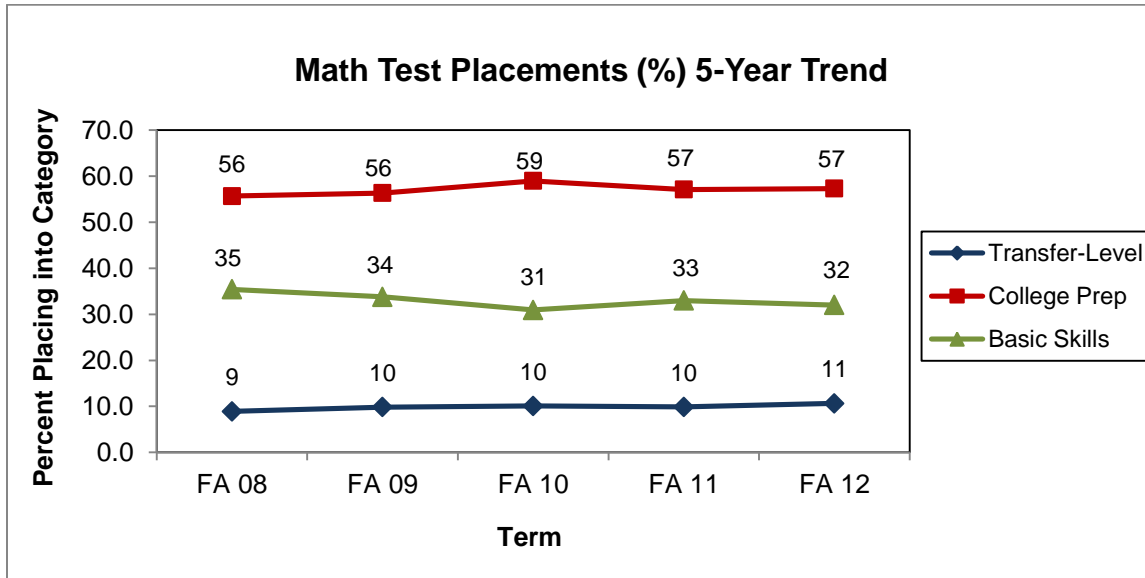


MATHEMATICS

Placement Rates

Placements into the transfer-level courses remained stable for the last 5 years. The placement rate increased by 1 percentage point, reaching a 5-year high of 11% (see Appendix for a complete list of these courses). Conversely, basic skills decreased by the same amount to 32%. Rates for college prep did not change and leveled at 57%. Average placement rates into college-prep and basic skills math courses were 57% and 33%, respectively.

Table 9: Math Assessment Test Placement Rates



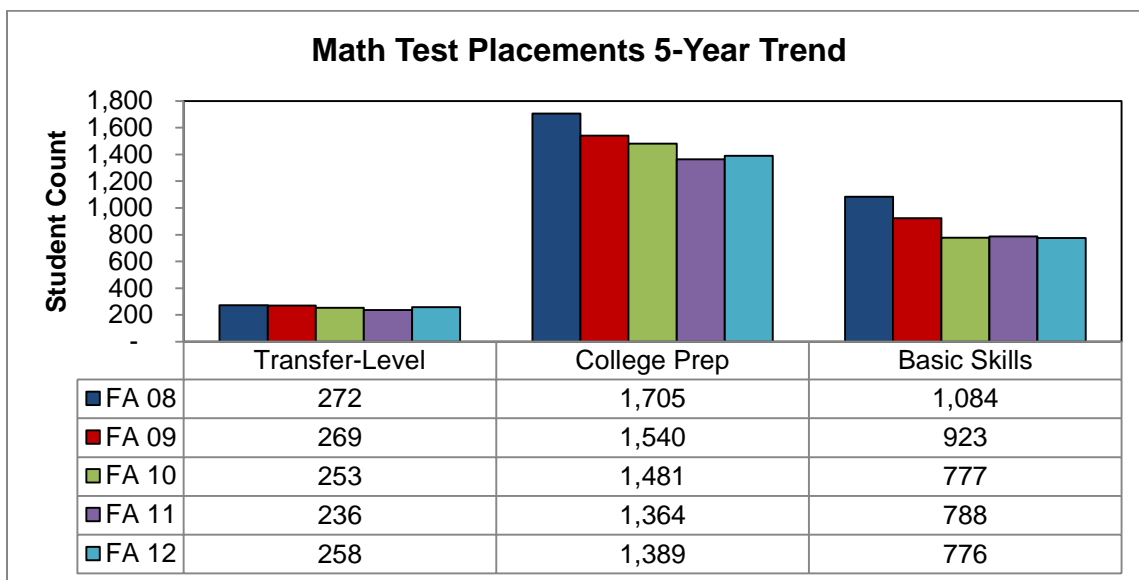
Note: New cut scores affected some basic skills and college prep courses beginning in Fall 2009.

Placement Numbers

Of the 3 course groups, the fewest number of tested students placed into transfer-level math. Placements into this level have increased since last year, with 258 placements in 2012. The count is also the 5-year average for transfer-level placements.

Most students placed into the college-prep level, and this number remained stable since last year, increasing slightly to 1,389 by the end of the 5-year period. Basic skills placements also remained consistent, decreasing slightly to 776. On average, 1,496 and 870 students placed into college prep and basic skills, respectively.

Table 10: Math Assessment Test Placement Numbers



CHEMISTRY

The Chemistry placement test is a paper and pencil test offered only one time to students. In other words, students cannot retake this test as with other placement tests. The test measures students' knowledge of basic chemistry, including laboratory skills and mathematics. Not all students are required to take this placement test. Only students interested in enrolling in Chemistry 1A (General Chemistry I) must take the Chemistry placement test, unless they successfully completed Chemistry 4 (Beginning Chemistry) in the past.

Results for the Chemistry placement tests are outlined in Table 11. More students continue to place into the higher course, Chemistry 1A. Placements into Chemistry 4 decreased to a 5-year low. Average placement rates during this timeframe for Chemistry 4 and Chemistry 1A were 39% and 61%, respectively.

Table 11: Assessment Test Results by Chemistry Course

Placements	2008 (n=3,215)		2009 (n=2,970)		2010 (n=2,629)		2011 (n=2,478)		2012 (n=2,522)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Chemistry 1A	23	63.9	21	63.6	20	60.6	13	52.0	18	64.3
Chemistry 4	13	36.1	12	36.4	13	39.4	12	48.0	10	35.7
Total	36		33		33		25		28	

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

The English as a Second Language (ESL) assessment consists of a computerized reading skills test, a questionnaire, an English writing sample, an oral interview, and an orientation to the College. The comprehensive ESL assessment places students into Listening/Speaking (Oral), Reading and Writing courses. These courses are listed by level in the Appendix. A 5-year trend of placement results is found in Table 12 below.

Similarly in previous years, a very small percentage of students aged 17-18 ($\leq 3\%$) took the ESL test in 2012. After a 4-year increase, college-prep placements decreased by 10 points from 2011. As a result, basic skills oral placements peaked in 2012 at 15%. Reading also showed considerable fluctuations, with both transfer-level and basic skills decreasing while college-prep increased. Transfer-level writing placements also decreased, thus increasing placements into college-prep and basic skills. During the 5-year period, younger students placing into basic skills ESL courses ranged from 5%-15% for oral, 15%-19% for reading and 12-27% for writing.

Table 12: Assessment Test Results by ESL Test Category and Course Group

Placements	2008 (n=3,215)		2009 (n=2,970)		2010 (n=2,629)		2011 (n=2,478)		2012 (n=2,522)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Oral										
College-prep	73	89.0	58	92.1	68	93.2	54	94.7	46	85.2
Basic Skills	9	11.0	5	7.9	5	6.8	3	5.3	8	14.8
Total	82		63		73		57		54	
Reading										
Transfer-level	0	0.0	1	1.5	3	3.4	2	3.1	0	0.0
College-prep	72	84.7	52	80.0	69	78.4	51	79.7	46	85.2
Basic Skills	13	15.3	12	18.5	16	18.2	11	17.2	8	14.8
Total	85		65		88		64		54	
Writing										
Transfer-level	0	0.0	1	1.5	3	3.8	2	3.3	0	0.0
College-prep	62	72.9	56	86.2	58	73.4	52	85.2	48	87.3
Basic Skills	23	27.1	8	12.3	18	22.8	7	11.5	7	12.7
Total	85		65		79		61		55	

*To place into transfer-level Reading and Writing, examinees must achieve a qualifying score on both the Reading and Writing portions of the assessment test (see page 12).

CONCLUSION

Over the last five years, transfer-level placement rates have progressively increased. Since the previous year, these rates remain steady. Basic skills placement rates have conversely decreased over the years, but showed an increase in 2012 in Reading. It is not clear why a greater percentage of students placed into basic skills Reading.

This study provided a general analysis of El Camino College 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 34%, 16% and 39%, respectively. In comparison, recent high school graduates placed into the same categories of basic skills at 32%, 13% and 33%, respectively.

Placement counts overall have decreased throughout the 5-year period. This is likely a result of student enrollment trends, which peaked in 2008-09 and progressively decreased thereafter.

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 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 1A - Reading & Composition for Foreign Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English 1A - 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.