

BRINGING ACCELERATED ENGLISH AND MATH TO YOUR CAMPUS

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WHY HIGH ATTRITION RATES ARE A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM

For students placing two levels below a college course in English/Math, there are 5 “exit points” where they fall away:

- Do they pass the first course?
- If they pass, do they enroll in the next course?
- If they enroll, do they pass the second course?
- If they pass, do they enroll in the college-level course?
- If they enroll, do they pass the college-level course?

Students placing three levels down have 7 exit points.

WHY HIGH ATTRITION RATES ARE A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM

Chabot College pipeline data for students beginning two levels down from college composition:

- Do they pass the first course? 55%
- If they pass, do they enroll in the next course? 76%
- If they enroll, do they pass the second course? 79%
- If they pass, do they enroll in the college-level course? 86%
- If they enroll, do they pass the college-level course? 83%

$$(0.55)(0.76)(0.79)(0.86)(0.83) = 23\%$$

HOW WOULD INCREASING FIRST-COURSE SUCCESS IMPACT OVERALL COMPLETION RATE?

$$(0.55)(0.76)(0.79)(0.86)(0.83) = 23\%$$

Try it out...

What if we got the first course to 65% success?

75% success?

85% success?

(Keep the other numbers the same)

THE INEVITABILITY OF ATTRITION IN SEQUENCES

Table 1: Illustration of the multiplication principle

| How many students will pass the college-level course? | | | |
|---|---|-----|-----|
| If this was the student's initial placement... | And these were the rates at which they passed each class and persisted to the next class in the sequence... | | |
| | 70% | 80% | 90% |
| 1 level below transfer | 34% | 51% | 73% |
| 2 levels below | 17% | 33% | 59% |
| 3 levels below | 8% | 21% | 48% |

Hern, K. & Snell, M. (June/July 2010). Exponential Attrition and the Promise of Acceleration in Developmental English and Math. *Perspectives*. Berkeley, CA: RP Group.



○ Sequence Redesign

Restructuring curricula to engage developmental students in more complex reading, writing, and thinking tasks sooner and prioritize the most essential skills and knowledge needed in college courses

- Eliminating levels in sequence and enabling students with lower scores to enroll in more advanced courses
- One-semester, open-access pre-statistics courses
- One-semester, open-access reading and writing courses

SEQUENCE REDESIGN: AN IN-DEPTH EXAMPLE

Chabot College

English 102:

Reading, Reasoning, and Writing (Accelerated)

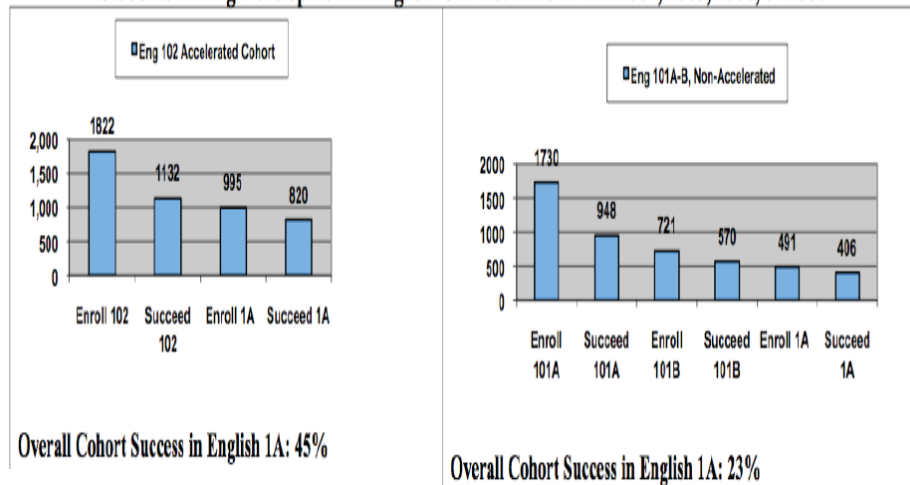
A one-semester 4-unit developmental English course leading directly to English 1A

- An alternative to two-semester, 8-unit sequence
- No minimum placement score, students self-place in either the accelerated or two-semester path
- Developed with “backwards design” from college English: Students engage in the same kinds of reading, thinking, and writing of college English, with more scaffolding and support
- College has expanded accelerated offerings in last decade: course now constitutes more than 66% of entry-level sections

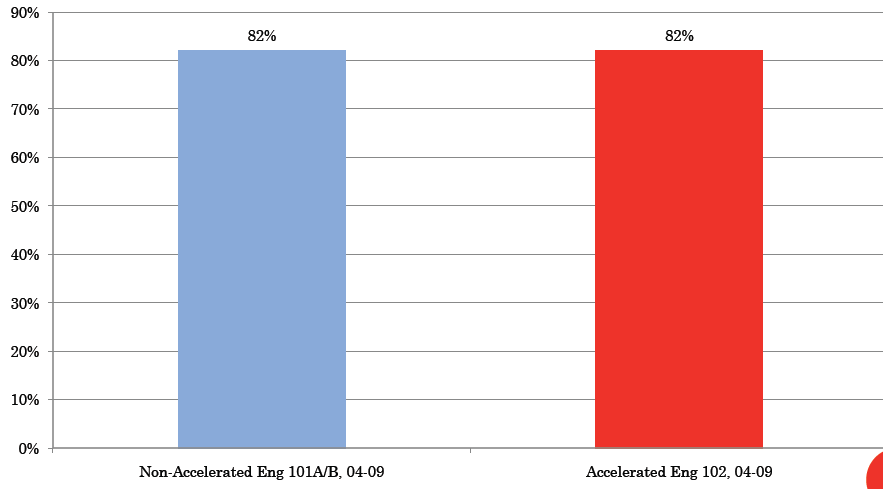
EVIDENCE ACCELERATION WORKS:

SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN STUDENTS PERSISTING TO AND SUCCEEDING IN COLLEGE ENGLISH

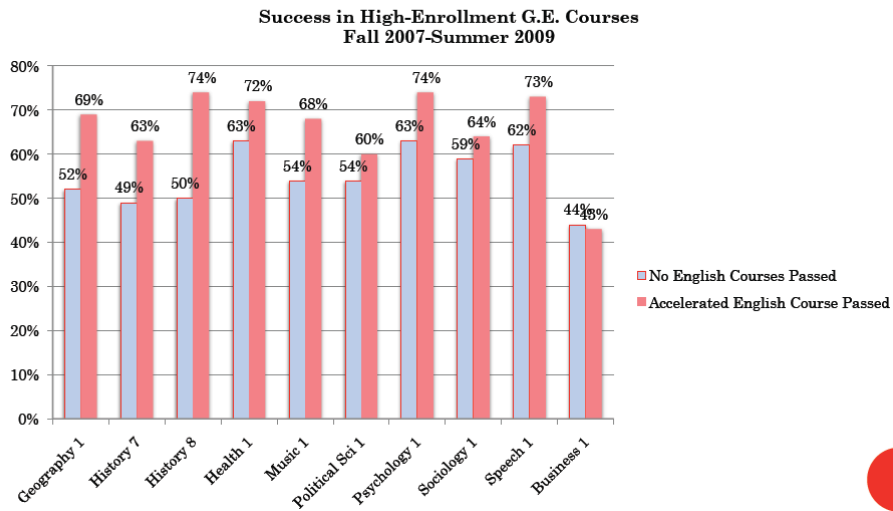
Students Taking Developmental English for First Time in Fall 2004, 2005, 2006, or 2007*



EVIDENCE ACCELERATION WORKS:
WHEN CHABOT ACCELERATED STUDENTS GET TO COLLEGE ENGLISH,
THEY PASS AT THE SAME RATE AS STUDENTS FROM LONGER TRACK
(AND TWICE AS MANY ACTUALLY GET THERE)



EVIDENCE ACCELERATION WORKS:
INCREASED STUDENT SUCCESS IN 9 OUT OF 10 COURSES ACROSS
CURRICULUM OVER STUDENTS WHO HAVE PASSED NO ENGLISH



FINAL THOUGHTS ON OPEN-ACCESS, ONE-SEMESTER CLASSES

People often have a hard time with the concept of an open-access class one-level below college English or Math:

“One semester? *No* minimum placement score?!”

“But don’t *some* students need a slower path? The ones with very low skills?”

Data from Chabot and Las Positas colleges are useful to consider here...

AT FIRST GLANCE, IT LOOKS LIKE SOME STUDENTS MIGHT NOT BE WELL-SERVED BY AN ACCELERATED PATH...

■ Success Rates in Accelerated Course

| | Students scoring below 63 on Accuplacer Reading and Sentence tests | All other students |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Las Positas College | 60% | 76% |
| Chabot College | 45% | 65% |

Below 63 on both tests = bottom-scoring 20% of Chabot population, 12% Las Positas

AND YET...
THEY DON'T DO *BETTER* ON THE SLOWER PATH

■
**Students Scoring Below 63
on Accuplacer Reading and Sentence Tests**

| | Success in Accelerated Course | Success in First Non-Accelerated Course |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Las Positas College | 60% | 59% |
| Chabot College | 45% | 46% |

Below 63 on both tests = bottom-scoring 20% of Chabot population, 12% Las Positas

THE SAME IS TRUE FOR STUDENTS WITH
EVEN *LOWER* SCORES...

**Students Scoring Below 50
on Accuplacer Reading and Sentence Tests**

| | Success in Accelerated Course | Success in First Non-Accelerated Course |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Las Positas College | 48% | 47% |
| Chabot College | 48% | 45% |

Below 50 on both tests = bottom-scoring 7% of Chabot population, 3% Las Positas

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION:
COMMUNITY COLLEGES NEED TO...

- Shorten developmental sequences and reduce exit points to increase completion of college-level English/Math.
- Redesign curricula away from front-loading discrete sub-skills toward giving students practice in the core skills and ways of thinking required at the college-level.
- Reconsider the assumption that placement score equals number of semesters remediation needed.
- Consider the model of using placement scores to identify students who might need extra support in an accelerated model, rather than to track them into a longer sequence.