Analysis of Cañada’s Basic Skills English Sequence

DRAFT REPORT
November 4, 2008

Office of Planning, Research and Student Success
The Cañada English Sequence

Curriculum Sequence

- Basic Reading & Composition
- Developmental Reading
- Writing Development
- Reading Strategies
- TRANSFER LEVEL ENGLISH

Course Sequence

- English 826 & Reading 826 (4.0 Units)
- English 400 (4.0 Units)
  or
- English 836 & Reading 836 (4.0 Units)
  &
- English 100 (3.0 Units)
Students Testing into English Courses
2003 – 2007

**Cañada English Placements (2003-07)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Canada Students</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>ENGL 826</th>
<th>ENGL 836</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>59.2%</td>
<td>57.7%</td>
<td>58.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40.8%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The paired figures in each blue oval highlight under-representative placement that are statistically different at the 95% significance level. Results on gender were found to be statistically different at the 90% significance level.

Data Source: San Mateo Community College District Office (October 2008).
## Placement Test Retake Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement Test Discipline</th>
<th>Retake the Placement Test</th>
<th>Score Higher on the Retake</th>
<th>Place into a Higher Course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math Placement</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>69.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Placement</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most students, nearly 85%, retake the test within a week of their first test.

These findings suggest that:

1. students are probably not properly prepared for their initial placement experience & not sufficiently aware that the placement test is a **high stakes exam**
2. Better preparation may help students improve their test performance

Data Source: San Mateo District Data Warehouse (Sept 2008). Note that findings are preliminary.
Analysis of Sequence Completion Rates

1. Single Stage: ENGL 826 – ENGL 836 Sequence

2. Two Stage: ENGL 826 – ENGL 100 Sequence
English Sequence Completion Rates by Initial Course Placement

English Course Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Placement</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 826</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>36.6%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: San Mateo District Data Warehouse (Sept 2008). Note that findings are preliminary.
English Sequence Completion Rates by Initial Course Placement

English Course Sequence

- English 826 (4.0 Units)
- English 836 (4.0 Units)
- English 100 (3.0 Units)

Percent of Students Passing College Level English within 2 to 5 Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Placement</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4 years</th>
<th>5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENGL 826</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English 836</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
<td>52.9%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: San Mateo District Data Warehouse (Sept 2008). Note that findings are preliminary.
Factors that Contribute to Improvements in Sequence Completion Rates

1. Mastery Effect

2. Concurrent Enrollment Effect
Isolating the Impact of the Concurrent Enrollment Effect

Because many grade “A” receiving students also concurrently enrolled in READ 826, the two effects are confounding interpretation of the sequence completion numbers. Using a variety of statistical tools, including risk ratios and several Mantel-Haenszel methods, we can tease out each effect from the other and determine which of the two has the greater influence on successful sequence completion.
Sequence Completion Rates for those starting ENGL 826

- **English 826**: 4.0 Units
- **Reading 826**: 3.0 Units
- **English 836**: 4.0 Units
- **English 100**:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Condition</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>3 years</th>
<th>4 years</th>
<th>5 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received an “A” Grade in ENGL 826</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concurrently Enrolled READ 826</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source & Degree of Improvement in Sequence Completion Rates over the Baseline

- Dominant Effect Impacting Successful Sequence Completion

Data Source: San Mateo District Data Warehouse (Sept 2008). Note that findings are preliminary.
Summary

1. Proportionally student placement is roughly equal across the English course sequence (826, 836, 100).

2. There is some evidence of disproportional impact by Ethnicity in placement test outcomes.

3. Although not as dramatic as the math placement profile, there is a population of students that improve their placement after retaking the placement test.

4. Across every dimension examined sequence completion rates improve only modestly with time. What does this suggest?

5. Both content mastery & concurrent enrollment improve sequence completion rates.

6. The impact of concurrent enrollment fades with time. Highest impact is achieved when students attempt to complete the sequence within two years.
Take Away

As you reflect on possible methods/approaches to refine and improve the placement process keep in mind:

1. **Our findings that suggest:**
   
   • students are probably not properly prepared for their initial placement experience & not adequately aware that the placement test is a high stakes exam
   • Better preparation may help students improve their test performance.
   • Concurrent enrollment can significantly improve sequence completion within a 2 year time window.

2. **Even modest improvements can trigger big impacts!**