College Readiness in California's Community Colleges

November 10, 2016

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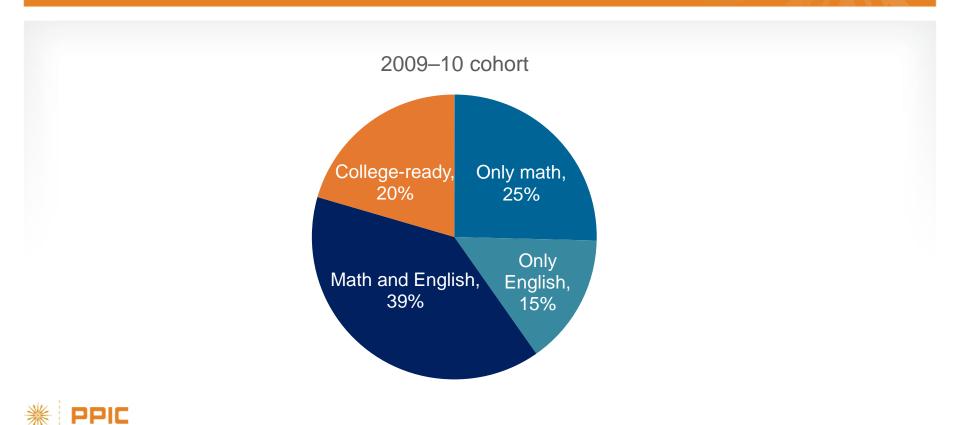


Developmental education is a major challenge facing community college students

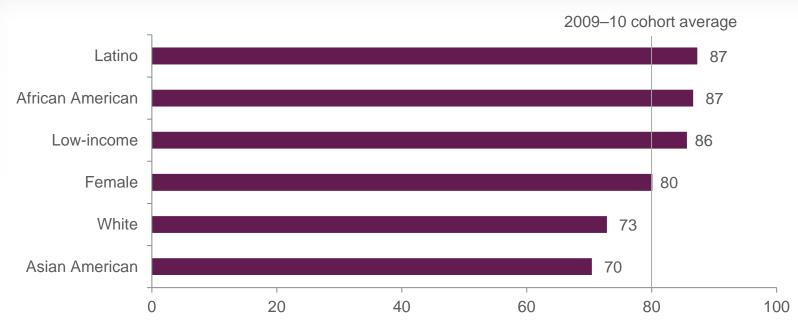
- California Community Colleges (CCC) system is big and diverse
 - Educates almost half of the state's undergraduates, especially underrepresented students
 - Critical to the state's production of bachelor's degrees
- Our research questions:
 - Is developmental education successfully preparing students?
 - How do colleges determine which students are college ready?
 - What are colleges doing to improve in these two areas?



Most students enroll in at least one developmental course



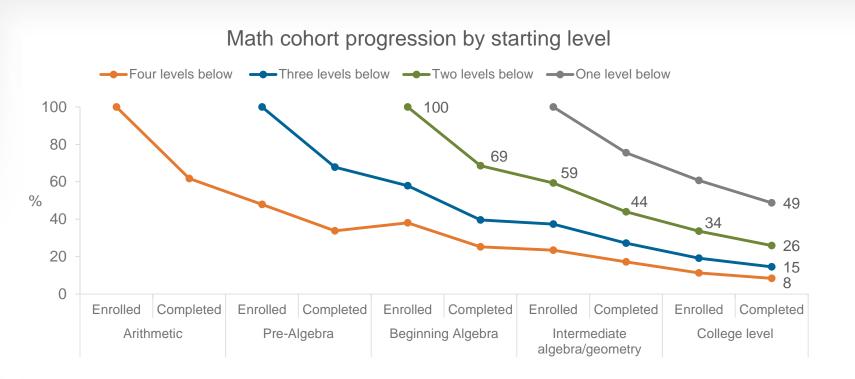
Latino, African American, and low-income students are overrepresented in developmental education



Share of students in developmental education by demographic group (%)

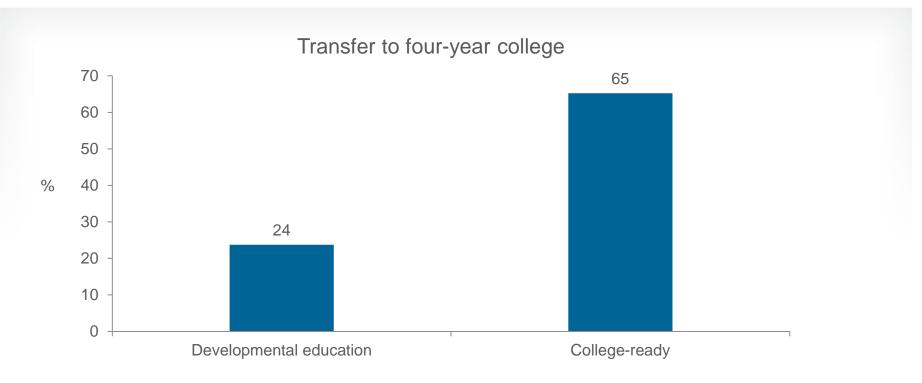


High attrition is a big concern





A large share of developmental education students never achieve their academic goals



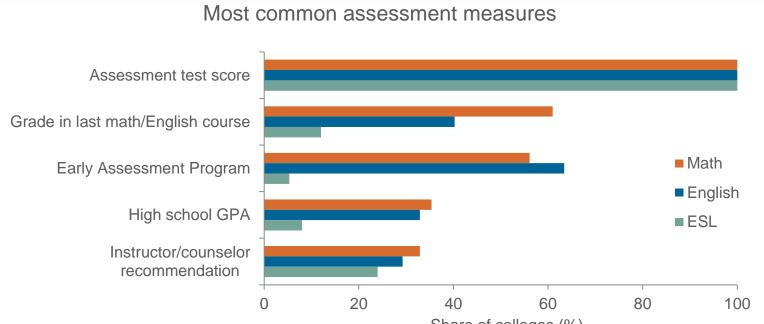


Assessment and placement play a major role in students' college trajectory

- Assessment and placement policies govern where students begin their college journey
 - There is little clarity about how colleges assess and place students
- PPIC developed a survey of CCC policies
 - Assessment and placement into transfer-level math and English, and the highest level of ESL
 - 73% response rate (82 colleges)
 - 2014–15 academic year



Colleges rely heavily on assessment tests



Share of colleges (%)



Minimum scores for placement into transfer-level courses vary considerably

- Over half of colleges used Accuplacer to assess college readiness in math
 - But cut scores ranged from 25 to 96 out of 120
 - Half of colleges considered a score of 58 or higher to be college ready
- Access determined not only by student performance, but by where students enroll
- Students of color may face stricter access to transfer-level math



Ongoing reforms aim to promote more consistent and accurate placement policies...

- Common Assessment Initiative
 - Will establish a common assessment system
 - Placement will continue to be locally determined
- Multiple Measures Assessment Project
 - Aims to improve consistency in colleges' use of multiple measures
- Colleges are discussing reforms, but ESL needs more attention
 - ESL students may be disadvantaged by current policies
 - Fewer colleges are discussing changes in ESL policies



... and improve developmental course sequences

- Reforms to redesign developmental courses focus on:
 - Reducing exit points where students drop out
 - Aligning sequences to students' programs of study
- Two-thirds of colleges offer redesigned math courses
 - But enrollment in these courses was less than 10% of total developmental math enrollment in 2014–15
 - Limited research on the effectiveness of reforms



Colleges are moving in the right direction, but more work needs to be done

- Developmental education is an obstacle to student success
- Colleges vary in how they identify college-ready students
- Colleges have started implementing promising reforms
 - PPIC will evaluate the effectiveness of reforms
 - Next step will be to scale up successful efforts



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Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.

