

Achieving the Dream Report Series



January 27, 2009

The Effect of Taking Developmental Courses Immediately Upon Receipt of Assessment Results on Three-Year Positive Persistence Rate – Three Cohorts

This study follows a series of publications^{1, 2} on the effect of students' taking developmental courses immediately upon receipt of assessment results. The study follows students from both the Fall 2004 and Fall 2005 semesters using the Achieving the Dream cohorts submitted to JBL Associates, Inc. This report provides a comparison between the two fall terms with the data organized into three cohorts whereas the first two reports provided the data organized into two cohorts.

Cohort 1: Students who assessed into one or more of the developmental courses (Writing, Reading or Basic Algebra 2) and then registered for and completed the course with a grade of A through C (excluding C-) in the fall term immediately following their assessment.

Cohort 2: Students who assessed into one or more of the developmental courses and then registered for and completed the course with a grade less than C, or withdrew from the course in the fall term immediately following their assessment.

Cohort 3: Students who assessed into one or more of the developmental courses and did not take the course in the fall term immediately following their assessment.

All of the reports in this series follow student cohorts over three years to determine their respective Positive Persistence Rate (PPR). The PPR is a measure that combines the positive outcome of graduation, transfer to a 4-year college and remaining students enrolled after a three-year period.

In both years of the study, more Basic Writing and College Reading students appear in Cohort 1 than in the other two cohorts. In 2004 more Basic Reading students were in Cohort 2; however, in 2005 more Basic Reading students were in Cohort 1. Both studies showed the highest proportion of Basic Algebra 2 students in Cohort 3.

Students were more likely to take the course and complete it successfully when they assessed into Basic Writing, Basic Reading or College Reading while they were more likely to not take the course at all when they assessed into Basic Algebra 2.

Overall, this study shows less than half of students proceeding to their second semester having completed one or more of the developmental courses they assessed into (See **Table 1**).

¹ http://www-dev.necc.mass.edu/achievingthedream/docs/atd_071214_effects_dev_course.pdf
² http://www.necc.mass.edu/achievingthedream/docs/IRP_111808_AtDDevCourse.pdf

Table 1.

Fall 2004

	Assessed into Developmental Course in Fall 2004	COHORT 1		COHORT 2		COHORT 3	
		Took Course & Completed Successfully in Fall 2004 (Grade A-C)		Did Not Complete Course Successfully in Fall 2004 (Grade <C or Withdrew)		Did Not Take Course in Fall 2004	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Basic Writing	218	106	49%	69	32%	43	20%
Basic Reading	187	64	34%	67	36%	56	30%
College Reading	125	55	44%	33	26%	37	30%
Basic Algebra 2	636	166	26%	171	27%	299	47%

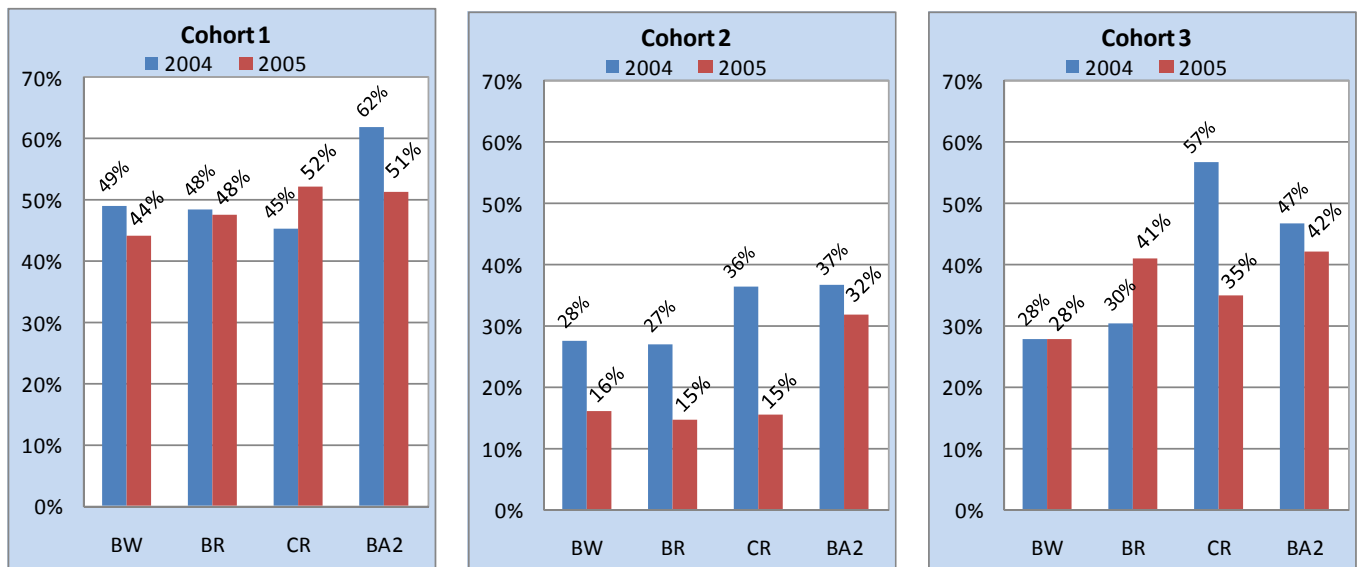
Fall 2005

	Assessed into Developmental Course in Fall 2005	COHORT 1		COHORT 2		COHORT 3	
		Took Course & Completed Successfully in Fall 2005 (Grade A-C)		Did Not Complete Course Successfully in Fall 2005 (Grade <C or Withdrew)		Did Not Take Course in Fall 2005	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Basic Writing	263	122	46%	87	33%	54	21%
Basic Reading	197	86	44%	55	28%	56	28%
College Reading	146	67	46%	39	27%	40	27%
Basic Algebra 2	792	235	30%	220	28%	337	43%

The success rates (PPR) were highest for Cohort 1 in all developmental courses with the exception of College Reading in the 2004 study. In Fall 2004, students in Cohort 3 attained the highest success rate for College Reading.

The success rates were lowest for students who did not complete their developmental course successfully (Cohort 2), with the exception of Basic Writing in the 2004 study. In Fall 2004, Basic Writing students in Cohort 2 attained the same rate (28%) as students in Cohort 3 (See **Figure 1**).

Figure 1.



The studies also looked at the number of earned credits and the overall GPA of the three cohorts for each developmental course. These measures are detailed in **Table 2**.

Students who completed the course successfully in the fall term immediately following assessment (Cohort 1) earned the highest average number of

credits per student and overall GPA for all four developmental courses. Students who did not complete the course successfully or withdrew from the course they assessed into (Cohort 2) earned significantly less average credits per student and achieved overall GPAs that were 1 or more full grade points less than their counterparts in Cohort 1.

Table 2.

Cohort 1	2004			2005		
	Cum. Credits Earned (as of Sp07)	Avg Credits Earned per Student	Overall GPA (as of Sp07)	Cum. Credits Earned (as of Sp08)	Avg Credits Earned per Student	Overall GPA (as of Sp08)
Basic Writing	3,388	32	2.6	4,341	36	2.5
Basic Reading	2,177	34	2.5	2,955	34	2.4
College Reading	2,041	36	2.6	2,904	43	2.7
Basic Algebra 2	6,267	38	2.7	9,410	40	2.8

Cohort 2	2004			2005		
	Cum. Credits Earned (as of Sp07)	Avg Credits Earned per Student	Overall GPA (as of Sp07)	Cum. Credits Earned (as of Sp08)	Avg Credits Earned per Student	Overall GPA (as of Sp08)
Basic Writing	630	9	0.9	1,026	12	1.1
Basic Reading	612	9	1.1	563	10	1.0
College Reading	462	14	1.4	433	11	1.0
Basic Algebra 2	3,178	19	1.6	3,828	17	1.4

Cohort 3	2004			2005		
	Cum. Credits Earned (as of Sp07)	Avg Credits Earned per Student	Overall GPA (as of Sp07)	Cum. Credits Earned (as of Sp08)	Avg Credits Earned per Student	Overall GPA (as of Sp08)
Basic Writing	580	13	2.2	798	14	1.7
Basic Reading	1,205	22	2.2	1,430	26	2.0
College Reading	1,059	29	2.6	906	23	2.2
Basic Algebra 2	7,964	27	2.4	9,363	28	2.2

Previous papers in this series established that timely completion of developmental course work appears to increase rates of student success. The breakout of Cohort 3 in this study shows that taking the course in a semester other than the first or not taking it at all yields a lesser rate of student success than Cohort 1, but a more positive rate of student success than Cohort 2. Further study is needed.

Interpretations of these findings as well as suggestions for further analysis are always welcome. Please direct questions and comments to Thomas Fallon, Dean of Institutional Research and Planning, via phone at 978-556-3866 or email at tfallon@necc.mass.edu.



<http://www.necc.mass.edu/irp/planning/dream.php>