

# Achieving the Dream Report Series



December 10, 2009

## *A Comparative Analysis on the Effect of Age on Course Completion Rates For Developmental and Gatekeeper Courses*

This AtD report provides an updated look at our previous analysis of the effect of age on course completion rates for developmental and “gatekeeper” courses. In this report all 5 years of AtD cohort data are compared. The cohorts include all degree-seeking students who are first-timers to NECC.

The age groups used for the purposes of this study are students age 25 or younger ( $\leq 25$ ) and students over age 25 ( $> 25$ ). In terms of course completion, “success” is defined by a final grade of C or better (C- is excluded).

Overall, younger students complete course work less successfully than older students with a few exceptions: younger students completed developmental Reading (REA 021) more successfully in Fall 2004 and Fall 2007 and they also completed college-level Math (MAT 120/130) more successfully in Fall 2005 and Fall 2008.

In comparing the two most recent years of data, the highest level of improvement among NECC’s younger students was observed in Basic Writing (WRT 010) where a 19% increase occurred. English Comp (ENG 101) and college-level Math also present increased success between Fall 2007 and Fall 2008, 8% and 9% respectively.

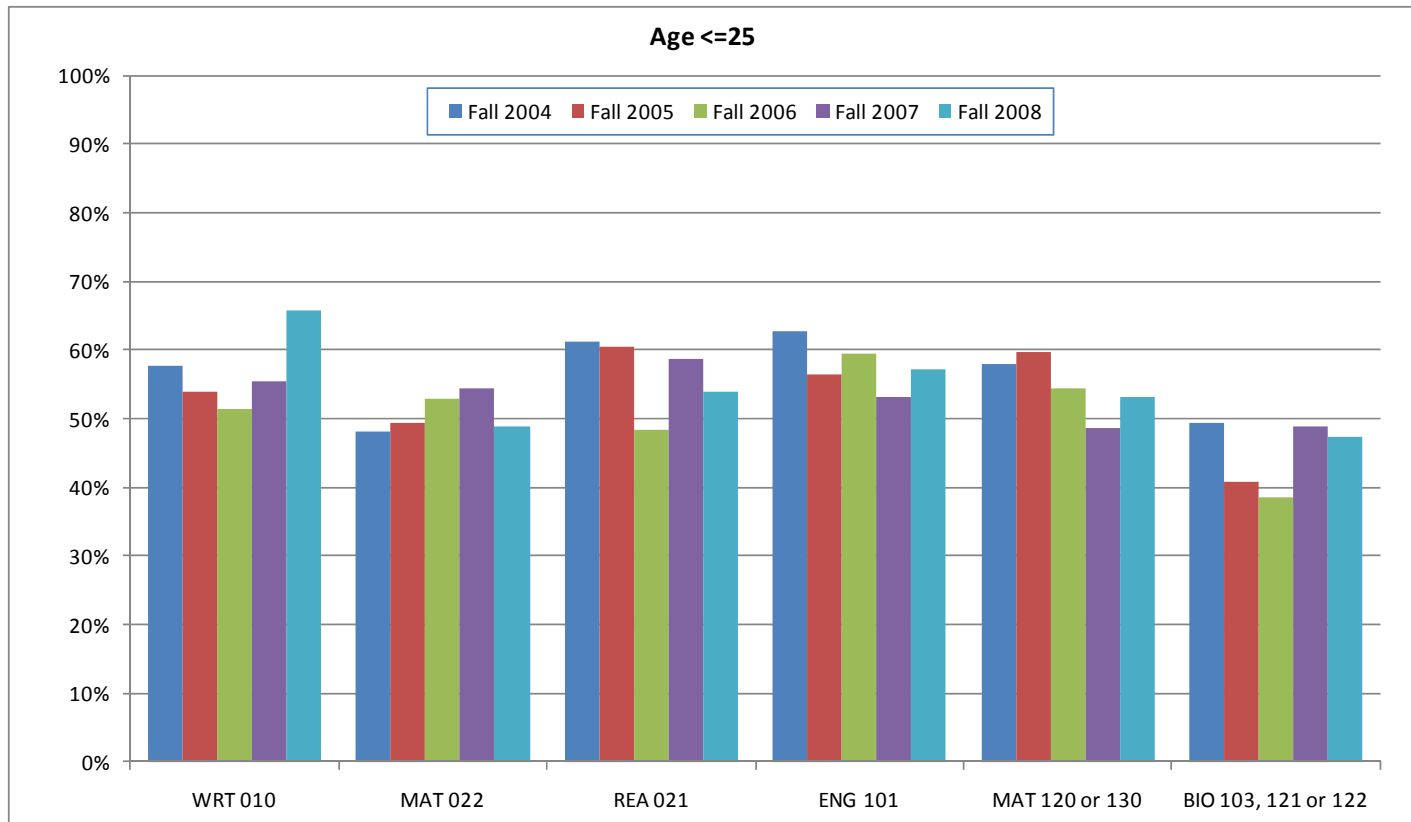
Students in the older age group not only outperformed their younger counterparts overall, they also experienced a greater level of increase in successful completion rates. In the last 2 years, the completion rates for students over age 25 increased substantially in developmental Reading (REA 021, 61%), English Comp. (ENG 101, 17%) and developmental Math (MAT 022, 6%).

*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](mailto:tfallon@necc.mass.edu).*

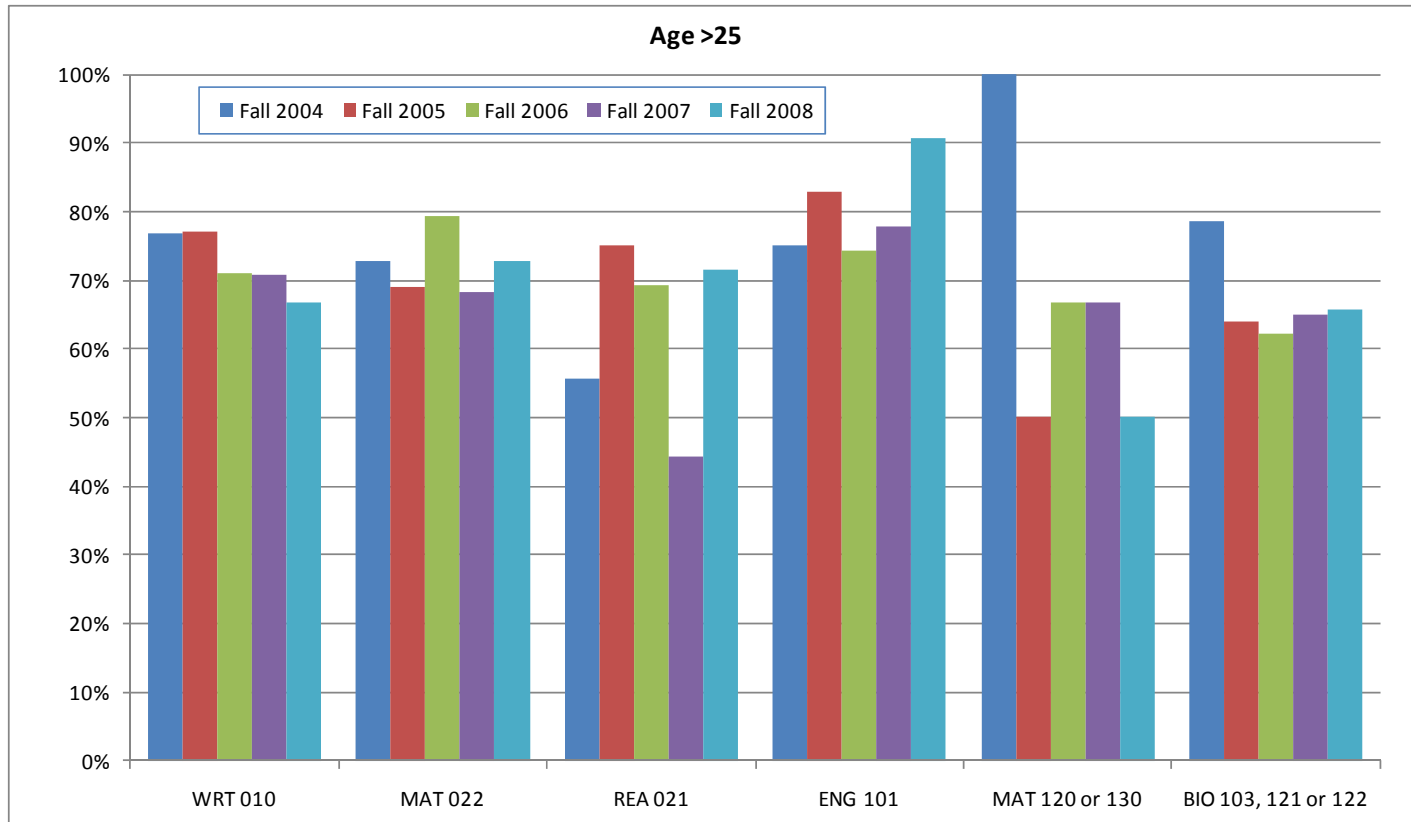


<http://www.necc.mass.edu/irp/planning/dream.php>

**Course Completion Rates by Age** (Grades A-C, C- is excluded)  
Fall 2004 – Fall 2008



	Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006		Fall 2007		Fall 2008	
	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete
WRT 010	163	58%	189	54%	235	51%	255	55%	370	66%
MAT 022	347	48%	453	49%	489	53%	464	54%	514	49%
REA 021	111	61%	116	60%	116	48%	148	59%	139	54%
ENG 101	447	63%	536	57%	518	59%	516	53%	480	57%
MAT 120 or 130	50	58%	57	60%	35	54%	39	49%	47	53%
BIO 103, 121 or 122	81	49%	86	41%	70	39%	90	49%	93	47%



	Fall 2004		Fall 2005		Fall 2006		Fall 2007		Fall 2008	
	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete	# Enrolled	% Complete
WRT 010	39	77%	35	77%	45	71%	41	71%	36	67%
MAT 022	33	73%	42	69%	34	79%	41	68%	33	73%
REA 021	9	56%	8	75%	13	69%	9	44%	7	71%
ENG 101	40	75%	35	83%	39	74%	27	78%	32	91%
MAT 120 or 130	2	100%	2	50%	3	67%	3	67%	2	50%
BIO 103, 121 or 122	42	79%	36	64%	45	62%	40	65%	32	66%