DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT

ENROLLMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL MATH: ACHIEVING THE DREAM

Among first-time degree-seeking students enrolled in Achieving the Dream colleges in fall 2003 to fall 2004, percentage who were referred to developmental math and enrolled in a developmental math course within three years.

What Is Measured?
Percentage of students enrolled in developmental math within three years

Who Is Counted?
First-time credential-seeking students who enrolled in Achieving the Dream colleges from fall 2003 to fall 2004 and who were referred to developmental math

What It Tells Us
About three-quarters (73 percent) of students who were referred to developmental math at Achieving the Dream colleges enrolled in a developmental math course within three years. Students referred to a math course three levels below the college level enrolled in a developmental math course at a greater rate (84 percent) than students either referred to courses one level or two levels below college level (64 percent vs. 77 percent).

Why It's Important
Assessment for college readiness to determine the appropriate placement in a subject is particularly important for community colleges. Such assessment is needed because their open-access admissions policies and outreach to nontraditional students mean that a much larger proportion of their students take developmental education courses than do students in other sectors of higher education (Provasnik & Planty, 2008). For students needing developmental education, enrolling in the developmental course mandated by the placement test is the first step toward completion. Most institutions select from a handful of standardized assessments to place students in developmental education, but tremendous variation still exists across and within states and even institutions on which tests and cutoff scores are used (Bailey, 2009; Collins, 2008).

ABOUT THE DATA
Achieving the Dream: includes 57 public two-year institutions in Connecticut, Florida, Ohio, New Mexico, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia.

Among the Achieving the Dream institutions, 9 offered one level of developmental math, 9 offered two levels of developmental math, and 35 offered three or more levels of developmental math. Participating institutions were given the following instructions on how to determine whether a student should be considered as referred to remedial math or reading: “Student was referred for remedial needs in mathematics [reading]. Remedial courses are instructional courses designed for students deficient in the general competencies necessary for a regular postsecondary curriculum and educational setting. The student can be referred through a counselor, a developmental office, etc.” Institutions with multiple levels of remedial education were asked to report the level to which the student was initially referred.

Estimates for “not enrolled” were calculated based on data from original source.

DATA SOURCE