DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT
PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENTAL COURSES: CALIFORNIA

What Is Measured?
Participation in developmental courses by developmental subjects

Who Is Counted?
First-time students enrolled in fall 2002, excluding dual-enrolled high school students, who enrolled in at least one developmental course

What It Tells Us
About half of students enrolled in one or more developmental courses, and mathematics was the most common among them. The most common combinations of courses were developmental math and writing (34 percent) and developmental math only (32 percent), followed by developmental math, reading, and writing (14 percent each) and developmental writing only (13 percent). Relatively few students took developmental math and reading (3 percent each), developmental reading and writing (3 percent), or developmental reading only (2 percent).

Why It’s Important
For students in need of developmental education, enrolling in specific courses mandated by the placement test is the first step toward advancement to a college-level program. Many students never enroll in developmental courses at the level at which they are assessed, however (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). Because placements are not always binding, many students enroll in higher- or lower-level courses. Some may skip courses in the remedial sequence or skip developmental education altogether (Bailey, Jeong, & Cho, 2010). As a result, the rates at which students enroll in developmental courses provide an incomplete picture of the need for remediation. Placement information, however, is rarely available, leaving enrollment rates as the only measure for gauging students’ college readiness.

ABOUT THE DATA
Developmental math courses: courses below college mathematics (defined as all math courses that fulfill the general education math requirement in the California State University and/or University of California systems). Developmental math courses include Basic Arithmetic (four levels below college math), Pre-Algebra (three levels below), Beginning Algebra (two levels below), and Intermediate Algebra/Geometry (one level below).

Developmental reading courses: courses that offer content to improve reading skills for students who are skill deficient in reading.

Developmental writing courses: courses that offer content to improve writing skills for students who are skill deficient in writing.

Percentages were calculated by the author. Total does not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

DATA SOURCE