DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION PLACEMENT
PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENTAL ENGLISH: UNITED STATES

Percentage of United States community college students who took one or more developmental English courses, by demographic and enrollment characteristics

DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM WHEN FIRST ENROLLED

FULL-TIME/PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

GENDER
What Is Measured?
The percentage of U.S. community college students who took one or more developmental English courses from entry through spring 2009, by demographic and enrollment characteristics

Who Is Counted?
First-time college students who first enrolled in U.S. community colleges in the 2003-04 academic year as of spring 2009

What It Tells Us
Some 15 percent of U.S. community college students took at least one developmental English course within six years of enrolling. Students who started in a certificate program were more likely to do so (18 percent) than students who started in an associate degree program (15 percent) or students not working toward a degree or certificate when they first enrolled (13 percent). Students in the lowest income group (22 percent) also were more likely to take at least one developmental English course than their counterparts in higher income groups (12–14 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 education courses: coded as remedial based on a transcript notation indicating that the course was remedial, the course numbering system, the course description, and/or the number of credits awarded for the course. For more information, see the complete 2010 College Course Map (CCM: 2010): http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pets/ccm.asp.

Race/ethnicity: Other includes Native American, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and individuals who indicated Other or Two or more races. Race categories exclude Hispanic/Latino origin unless specified.
Income percentile rank: calculated separately for dependent and independent students and then combined. Each ranking thus compares the respondent only to other respondents of the same dependency status. Uses parents’ income if respondent is dependent and uses respondent’s own income if respondent is independent.

Full-time/part-time enrollment: indicates student’s cumulative enrollment through 2009. Full-time is defined as 12 or more credit hours per semester.

DATA SOURCE