

College Readiness in California's Community Colleges

November 10, 2016

Olga Rodriguez, Marisol Cuellar Mejia, and Hans Johnson

Supported with funding from The Sutton Family Fund



PPIC

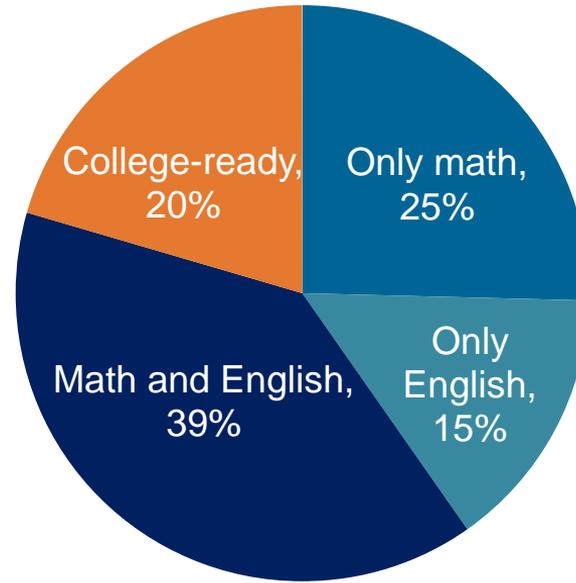
PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

Developmental education is a major challenge facing community college students

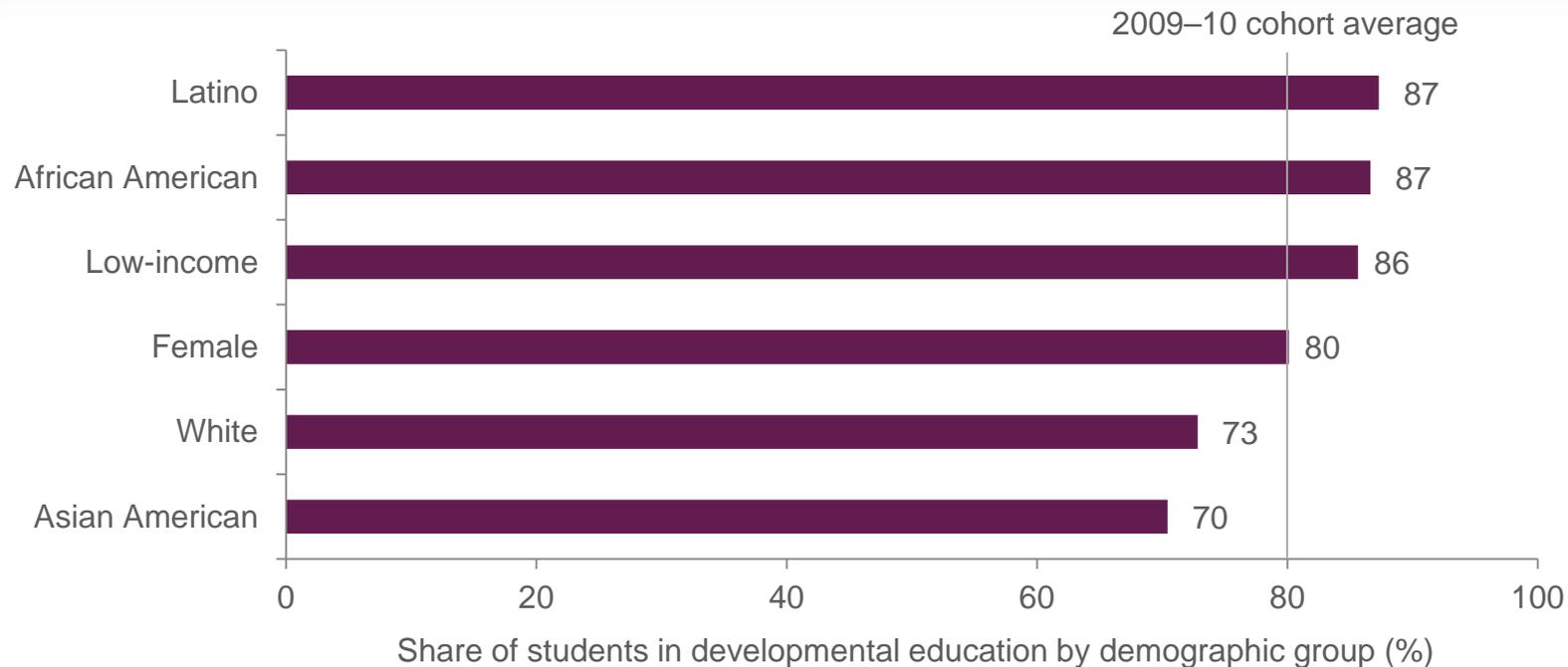
- California Community Colleges (CCC) system is big and diverse
 - Educates almost half of the state's undergraduates, especially underrepresented students
 - Critical to the state's production of bachelor's degrees
- Our research questions:
 - Is developmental education successfully preparing students?
 - How do colleges determine which students are college ready?
 - What are colleges doing to improve in these two areas?

Most students enroll in at least one developmental course

2009–10 cohort

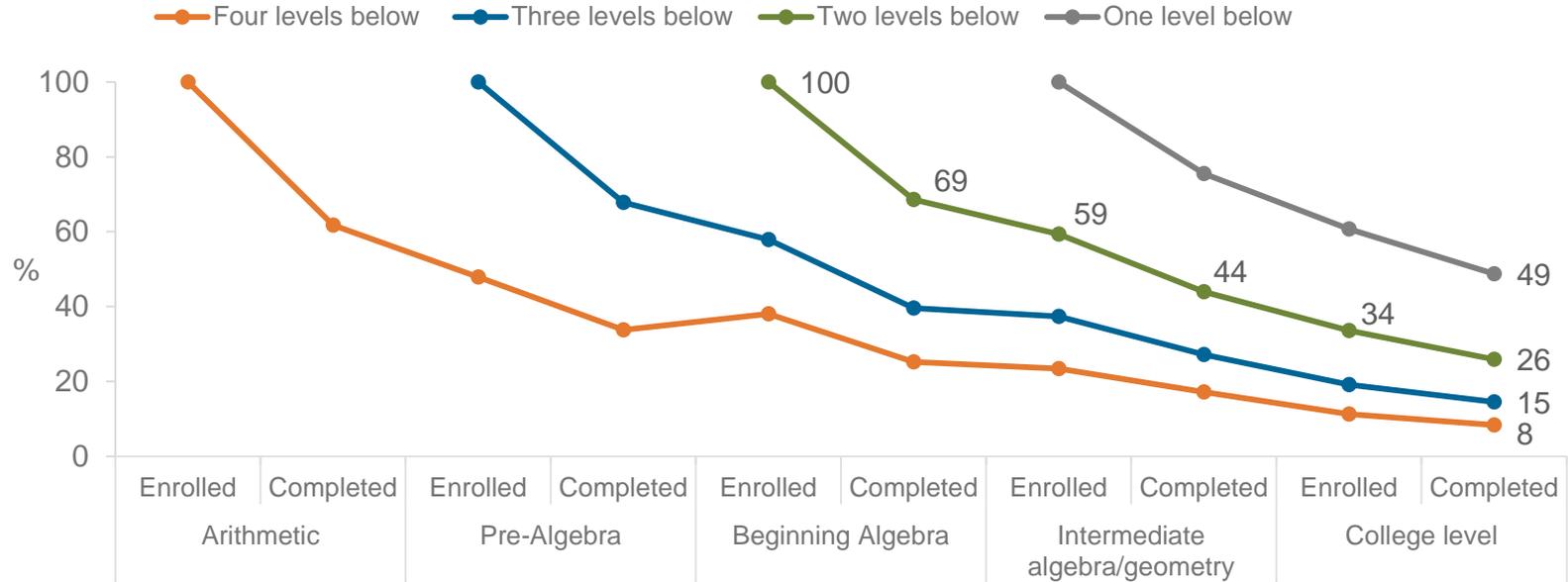


Latino, African American, and low-income students are overrepresented in developmental education

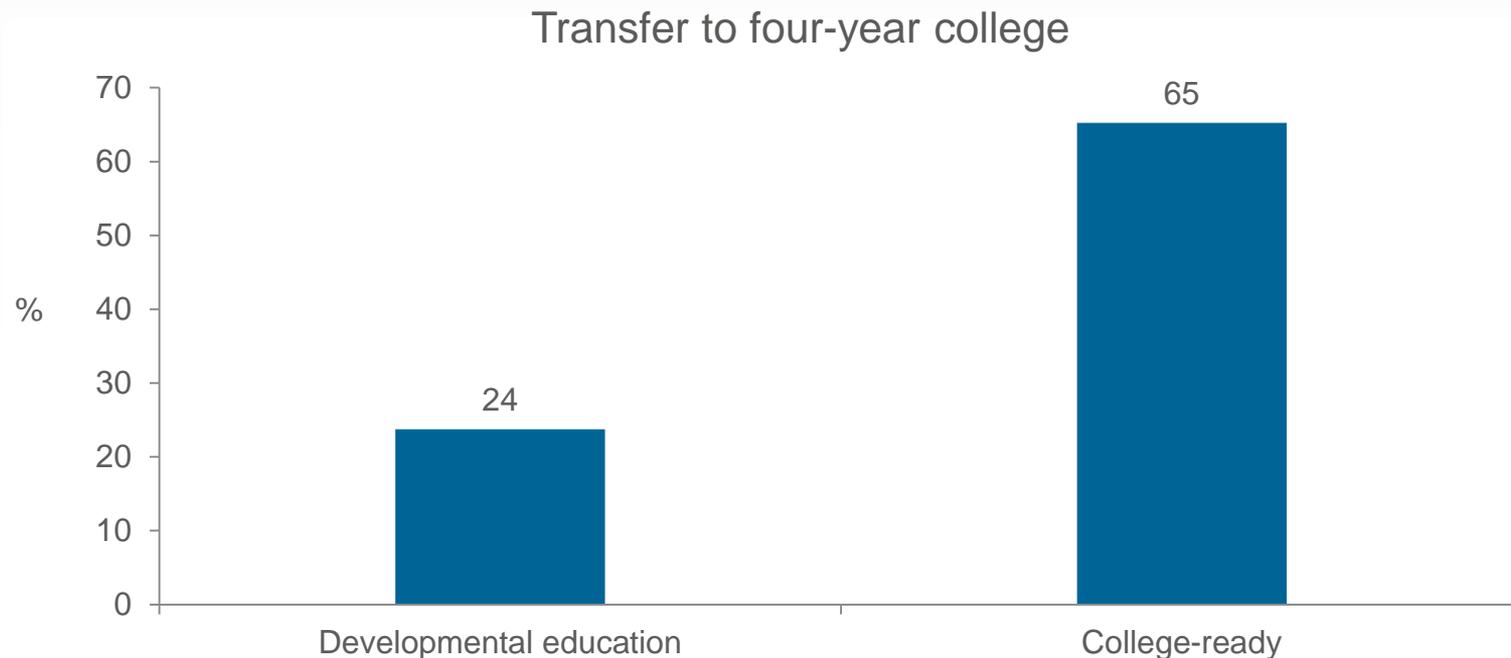


High attrition is a big concern

Math cohort progression by starting level



A large share of developmental education students never achieve their academic goals

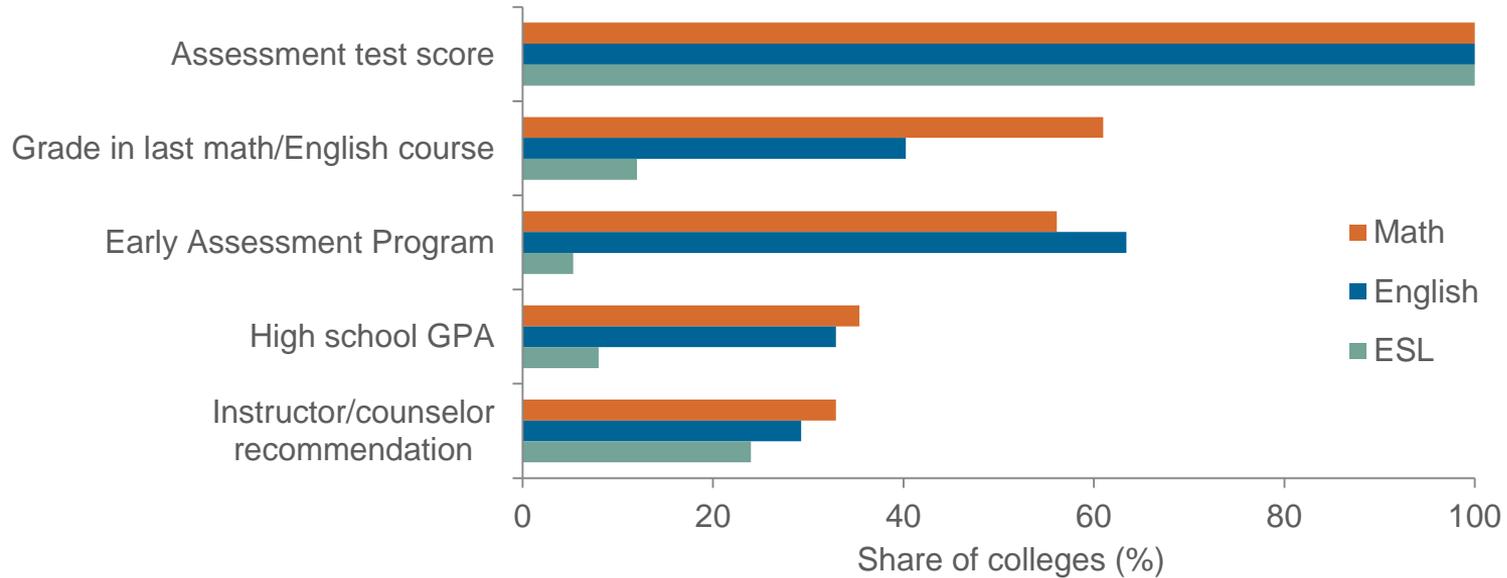


Assessment and placement play a major role in students' college trajectory

- Assessment and placement policies govern where students begin their college journey
 - There is little clarity about how colleges assess and place students
- PPIC developed a survey of CCC policies
 - Assessment and placement into transfer-level math and English, and the highest level of ESL
 - 73% response rate (82 colleges)
 - 2014–15 academic year

Colleges rely heavily on assessment tests

Most common assessment measures



Minimum scores for placement into transfer-level courses vary considerably

- Over half of colleges used Accuplacer to assess college readiness in math
 - But cut scores ranged from 25 to 96 out of 120
 - Half of colleges considered a score of 58 or higher to be college ready
- Access determined not only by student performance, but by where students enroll
- Students of color may face stricter access to transfer-level math

Ongoing reforms aim to promote more consistent and accurate placement policies...

- Common Assessment Initiative
 - Will establish a common assessment system
 - Placement will continue to be locally determined
- Multiple Measures Assessment Project
 - Aims to improve consistency in colleges' use of multiple measures
- Colleges are discussing reforms, but ESL needs more attention
 - ESL students may be disadvantaged by current policies
 - Fewer colleges are discussing changes in ESL policies

... and improve developmental course sequences

- Reforms to redesign developmental courses focus on:
 - Reducing exit points where students drop out
 - Aligning sequences to students' programs of study
- Two-thirds of colleges offer redesigned math courses
 - But enrollment in these courses was less than 10% of total developmental math enrollment in 2014–15
 - Limited research on the effectiveness of reforms

Colleges are moving in the right direction, but more work needs to be done

- Developmental education is an obstacle to student success
- Colleges vary in how they identify college-ready students
- Colleges have started implementing promising reforms
 - PPIC will evaluate the effectiveness of reforms
 - Next step will be to scale up successful efforts

College Readiness in California's Community Colleges

November 10, 2016

Olga Rodriguez, Marisol Cuellar Mejia, and Hans Johnson

Supported with funding from The Sutton Family Fund



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

Olga Rodriguez (rodriguez@ppic.org; 415-291-4457)

Thank you for your interest in this work.