

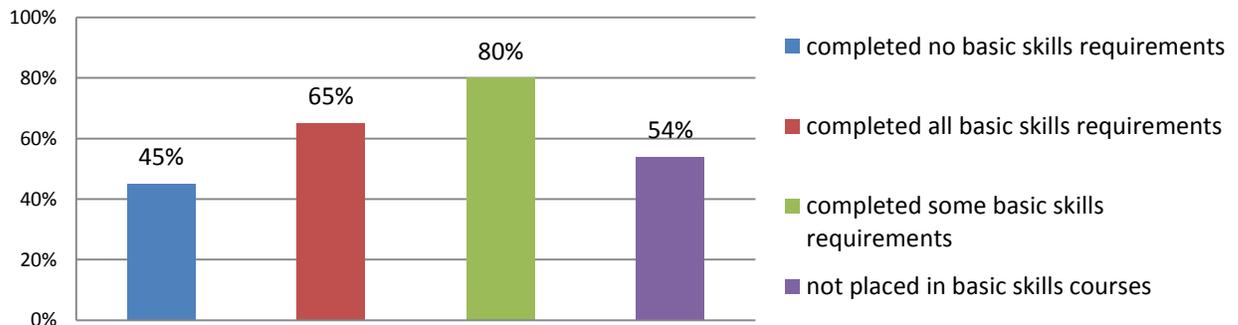
This issue's topic: Research Indicating the Importance of Taking Basic Skills Courses during the First Year of College

Overview: The following report summarizes data on the enrollment and progress of students placed in basic skills courses in community colleges participating in the Achieving the Dream project. The goal is to increase the success of community college students, especially students of color and low-income students. The project has state policy teams in 15 states (not including California) and 200 participating colleges, including some California community colleges.

Summary of Findings:

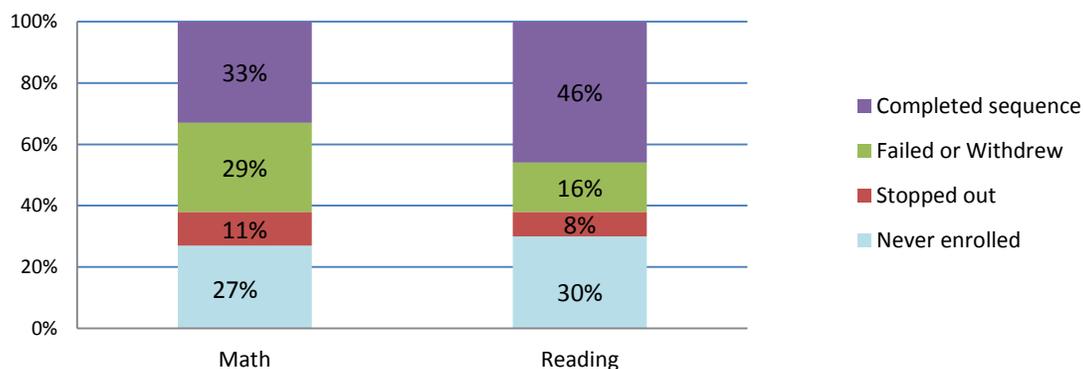
- Students who complete some or all of their basic skills courses are much more likely to persist to the next academic year than students who do not complete any of their basic skills courses in their first year,¹

Figure 1: Likelihood of Persisting to Second Year of College



- Almost 40% of developmental education students do not finish their basic skills sequence not because they fail a course, but because they don't enroll²
 - Large percentages (30% for reading and 27% for math) of students placed in basic skills courses never enroll in those course(s).
 - An additional 11% (math) and 8% (reading) pass one course, but don't enroll in the next course
 - Almost twice as many students fail a math course as fail a reading course (29% vs. 16%)
 - 33% of students complete their math basic skills sequence, compared to 46% for reading

Figure 2: Enrollment Patterns in Basic Skills Courses



¹ Clery, S., and Topper, A. (2008). Developmental education: Completion status and outcomes. *Data Notes*, Volume 3(4). Achieving the Dream, July/August 2008.

² Bailey, T., Jeong, D. W., & Cho, S. W. (2009). Referral, enrollment, and completion in developmental education sequences in community colleges. Working paper, Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.