



## FOOTHILL COLLEGE

### Institutional Research and Planning

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DATE: November 19, 2015

TO: Basic Skills Workgroup

FROM: Liz Leiserson, Research Analyst

RE: Math 105/English 1A and Repeatability

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#### Overview

The Basic Skills Workgroup (BSW) requested an analysis of students who demonstrate multiple attempts of Math 105 and English 1A. As both courses are considered critical to degree completion and transfer preparation, it is important to increase the success rates among students on their first attempt. Repeatability rules limit students to three attempts in a class, so students who are unsuccessful after two attempts become particularly important to track, especially if additional support can facilitate these students' success on their third attempt. A key concern among the BSW members is the perception that students who progress along the basic skills pathway are negatively impacted because they earn more nonsuccess grades in Math 105 and English 1A.

There are roughly 115 to 120 students who are repeating Math 105 or English 1A in Fall 2015. Preliminary analysis suggests that students who begin their math and English coursework at the basic skills level appear more likely to repeat Math 105 and English 1A compared to their counterparts whose first math and English course attempt is at the transfer level.

Among the 32 students in Fall 2015 who are attempting Math 105 for the third (or fourth<sup>1</sup>) time, 80% have enrolled in at least one basic skills course at Foothill College. Of the basic skills students currently enrolled in Math 105, 41% are repeating the course.

In English 1A, there are currently enrolled 18 students who are attempting the course for the third time (or fourth). Note that over half of these 18 students have enrolled in a basic skills course. Among basic skills students, the rate of third attempts is twice that of their peers who have never taken a basic skills class.

These findings suggest that students who have enrolled in basic skills courses are more likely to be unsuccessful on their first attempt at college-level math and English. It is important to note that this analysis did not distinguish between what basic skills course(s) the student previously attempted. Despite this limitation, it seems that students who attempted any basic skills course at Foothill are less likely to be successful in Math 105 or English 1A on their first attempt compared to their counterparts;

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<sup>1</sup> In order to enroll in a class for the fourth time students must submit a petition and request an exception to the limit.

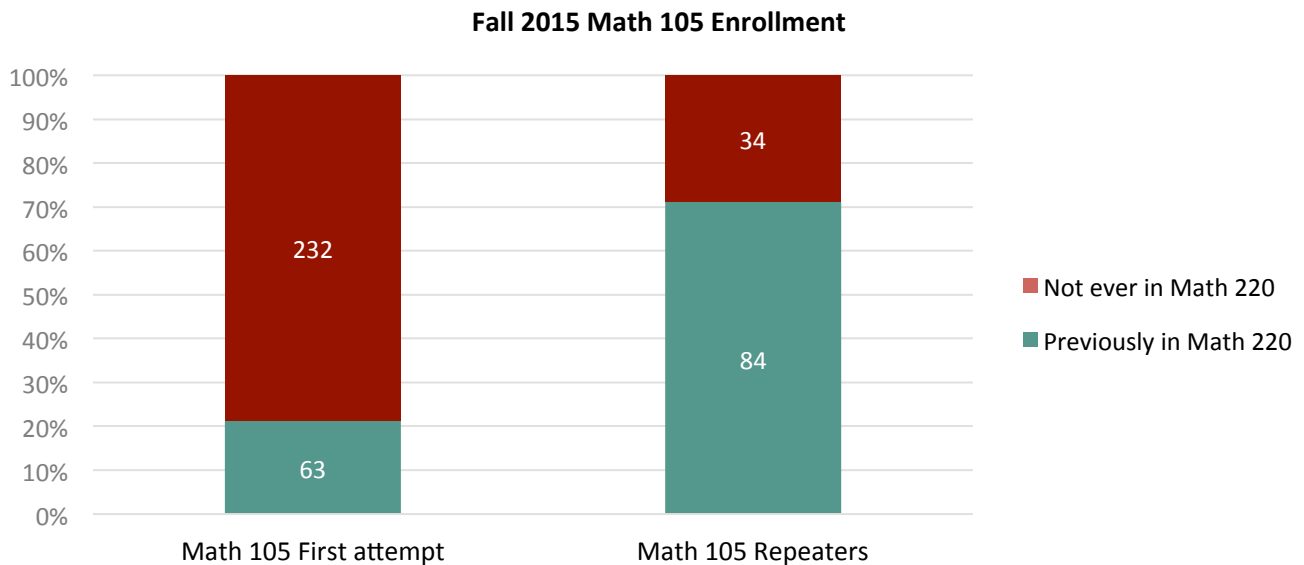
the first attempt success rate gap appears especially large in Math 105 (difference of 30 percentage points).

*Table 1. Math 105 and English 1A attempts by basic skills.*

Fall 2015 Math 105 Enrollment	Ever in Basic Skills?			
	No		Yes	
Number of attempts	#	%	#	%
First	157	90%	128	59%
Second	12	7%	74	30%
Third	5	3%	25	10%
Fourth			2	1%
Total	172	100%	229	100%

Fall 2015 English 1A Enrollment	Ever in Basic Skills?			
	No		Yes	
Number of attempts	#	%	#	%
First	454	92%	302	83%
Second	35	7%	62	15%
Third	7	1%	10	2%
Fourth	1	0%		
Total	497	100%	374	100%

Among all students enrolled in Math 105 in Fall 2015, 36% have previously enrolled in Math 220. But among students repeating Math 105, students who have taken Math 220 are overrepresented (71%).



*Table 2. Enrollment in Math 105 and previous enrollments in Math 220.*

Fall 2015 Math 105 Enrollment	Count of attempts in Math 220				
Number attempt in Math 105	None	One	Two	Three	Four
First	232	43	7	3	
Second	22	40	20	3	1
Third	11	11	5	3	
Fourth	1		1		

#### Methodology

This analysis included students who are currently enrolled in Math 105 or English 1A, identifying repeaters as students who have received a transcriptable grade in the same class in a previous term. “Basic skills students” are students who have ever been enrolled in a basic skills class at Foothill College, in any subject. For example, a student with multiple Math 105 attempts may not have enrolled in any basic skills math courses, but may have progressed through the English or ESLL pathway.

Source

- Enrollment - FHDA IR&P ODS [Registration\_Analysis]
- Ever basic skills - FHDA IR&P ODS [SS\_Student\_Term\_Attributes]