

TALES FROM THE FIRST YEAR
IMPLEMENTING ACCELERATED ENGLISH AT
BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE,
SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE, AND
CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO



CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES' SUCCESS NETWORK
CALIFORNIA ACCELERATION PROJECT

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WHAT'S THE PROBLEM THAT ACCELERATION ADDRESSES?

- The more levels of developmental courses a student must go through, the less likely that student is to ever complete college English or Math.

Bailey, Thomas. (February 2009). Rethinking Developmental Education. *CCRC Brief*. Community College Research Center. Teachers College, Columbia University.





CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES' SUCCESS NETWORK

California Acceleration Project

Launched Fall 2010

- 80+ of the state's 112 community colleges have participated to date
- More than 25% of the state's community colleges will offer accelerated English/Math in 2011-12
- In Summer and Fall 2011, faculty from 19 colleges are participating in the first *Community of Practice in Accelerated Curriculum and Pedagogy*
- 15 additional colleges participated in Summer Leadership Institute focused on developing pilots for 2012



CALIFORNIA ACCELERATION PROJECT

CORE PRINCIPLES: STRUCTURAL

- Reduce Sequence Length & Eliminate “Exit Points”

Need to restructure long sequences in English and Math and reduce the many “exit points” where students are lost by not passing a course or not enrolling in the next course of a sequence

- Question the predictive accuracy of placement tests

- Focus on Key Student Outcome:

What percentage of students from different starting placements go on to complete college English / Math?



CALIFORNIA ACCELERATION PROJECT

CORE PRINCIPLES: PEDAGOGICAL

- Teach from a belief in Students' Capacity
- Engage Students in College-Level Content and Thinking
- Provide “Just-in-Time” Remediation instead of Front-Loading Discrete Sub-Skills



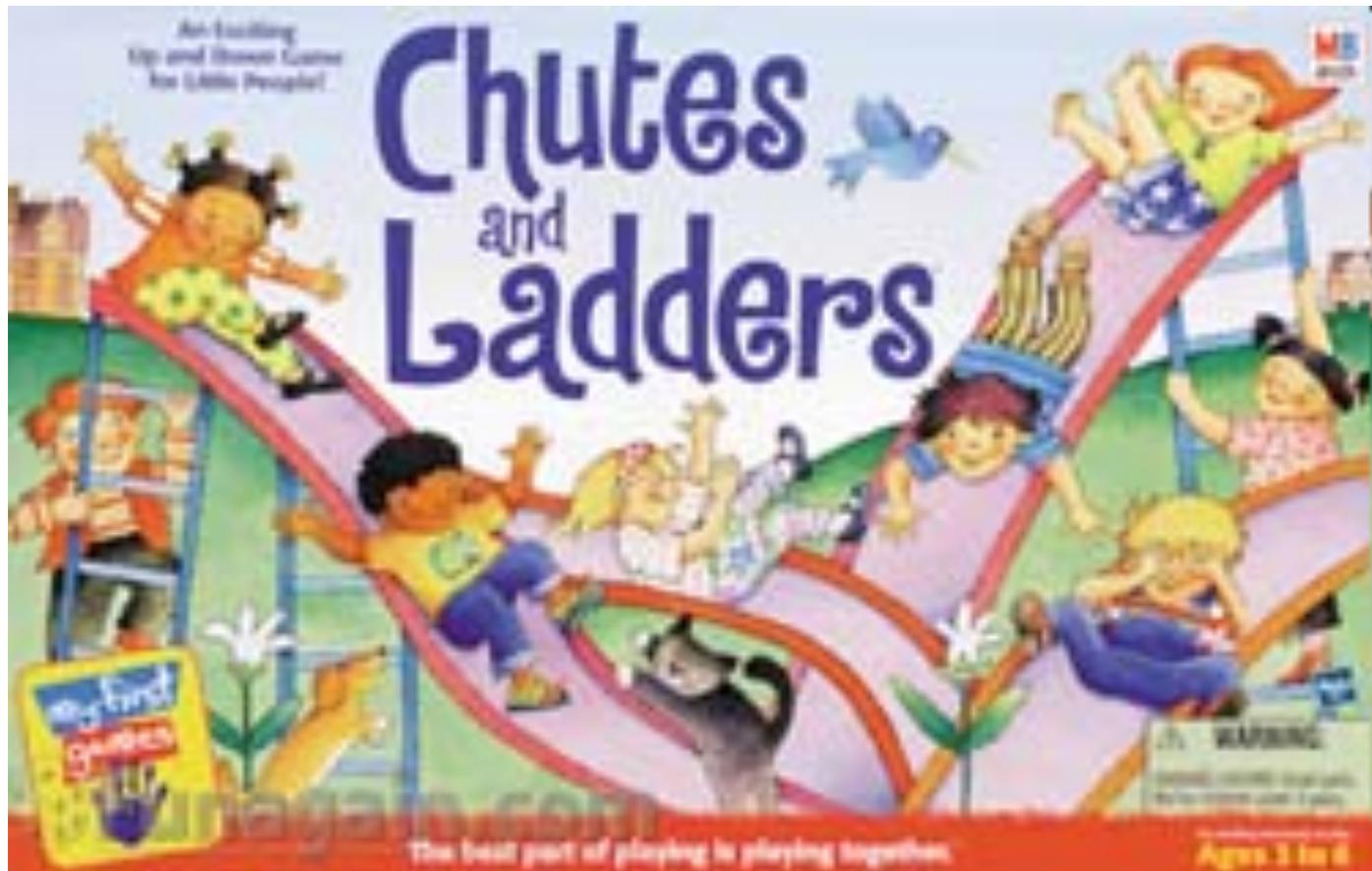
THREE MODELS OF ACCELERATED ENGLISH

- Compression/Intensity Model: City College SF
- Open-Access One-Semester Course that Integrates Reading and Writing: San Diego Mesa
- “Stretch-and-Skip” Model: Berkeley City



City College of San Francisco

“Chutes and Ladders” and Acceleration



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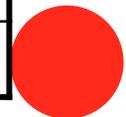
- City College of San Francisco is the largest single-administration, multi-campus community college in California, with over 100,000 students, faculty and staff
- In Credit classes the equivalent of 38,019 FTES
- The English Department is the largest credit program at the college, offering more than 240 sections of courses to more than 8,000 students per semester



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A Highly Diverse Student Body

CCSF English Class Demographics By Ethnicity Spring 2011	
African American Non-Hispanic	7.6%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.6%
Asian	37.3%
Filipino	9.5%
Hispanic/Latino	18.8%
Other Non-White	2.7%
Pacific Islander	1.9%
SouthEast Asian	4.0%
White Non-Hispanic	20.7%
Unknown/Decline to State	5.1%



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A Linguistically Complex and Diverse Student
Body

- 51.3% of all students in English courses are not native speakers of English
- 13.4% of all students in English courses are “other language dominant” in their daily lives
- From 2003-2011, the English native speaker population decreased 7% in first semester transfer-level composition



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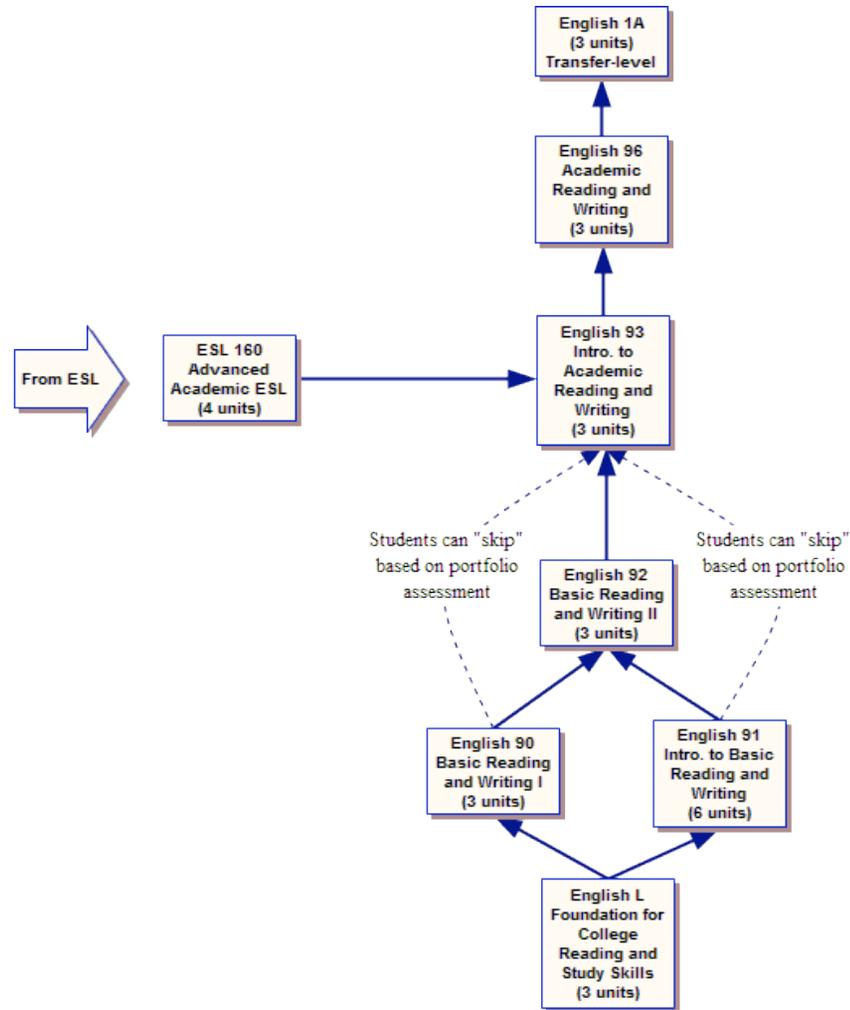
Student Placement

- There are more remedial math and English class sections at the school than college-level classes
- 90% of all students place in pre-transfer English
- 70% of all students place into English courses two levels or more below freshman college level.
- Thus the average student spends more than one full year doing developmental/remediative coursework.



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A Sequence That's Far Too Long



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A Sequence That's Far Too Long

- Was never designed to be this long
- Was the result of state intervention overturning the previous sequence circa 1993
- Despite the state intervention, the department did not take the opportunity to rethink the sequence



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We Don't Do No Stinkin' Chutes—We Only Do Ladders

- Until 2002, the English Department's only approach had been to “Add More Rungs to the Ladders” (courses and labs)
- The thinking was very traditional and conservative:
 - “Students are unprepared”
 - “Students need ‘more practice’ and ‘more time’ before they can handle the rigors and difficulties of ‘college level English’”
 - “Some students just can't do college work”
- There was a real failure by all elements of the department and the college to investigate, research, and stay abreast of alternative pedagogies and curricula



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“Pipeline Leakage” is a Major Problem

In our traditional 3 unit English classes

- We lose **20%** of our students in the first three weeks of the course
- We lose **8-13%** of our students at each level *even when students pass the course*
- While better than the attrition rates described by Bailey (2009), the “multiplication principle” (Hern and Snell 2010) means an exponential reduction of students who “make it to the end” is inevitable



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Spring/Summer 2009

- From within the English Department: a comprehensive proposal addressing the English Department sequence

October 2009

- From outside: trustee and college community pressure seeing the low student success rates as an achievement gap between at-risk student populations and a “white” faculty culture



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Spring 2010

- The Chancellor requires the English Department to commit to its proposal for accelerated courses
- He wants thirty sections of accelerated courses for Fall 2010
- English counters that is impossible given that no course outlines have been developed and the course has never been taught
- English Department commits to accelerated courses for Spring 2011 (a 6 month development period)



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The “Intensity” Acceleration Model

- The core idea was to take four classes within the sequence and collapse them down into two separate and intensive classes
- The genesis for this idea was CCSF’s experience and internal research—connected to national research and examples— that “intensive” academic structures and learning experiences lead to greater student success



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Why We Believed Intensity Could Work

- 2002-2005
- Grant-funded development of intensive and integrated six unit reading and writing course (four levels below transfer-level)
- The intensive course produces stronger results
 - Higher retention in that course and persistence in subsequent English courses
 - Better success rates in this course and in subsequent English courses
 - A means of acceleration (a “chute”)
End of course portfolio assessment allows 30-35% of all students to skip the next course in the sequence



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Its Intensity Acceleration Model

The Example of English 961A

- Placement/location in the sequence is one level below transfer-level
- A single, unified class taught to the transfer-level learning outcomes
- A student who successfully completes all those outcomes gets credit for both the last developmental English class and first semester university-level English
- Intensive scaffolded instruction: 6 hours per week
- 6 units of credit*



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Important Features of Accel English

Built on a Project-Based Learning model and pedagogical principles

Addressing pedagogy is a critical component of the CCSF acceleration model

Why invest six units in classes that rely on “traditional” or typical pedagogies that result in

- a 35 % loss in retention and
- a 68% pass rate?



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Accelerated Pedagogy:
Project-Based Learning

- Is organized around an open-ended Driving Question or Challenge. This focuses students' work and can deepen their learning by centering on significant issues, debates, questions and/or problems
- Allows students some voice and choice. The opportunity to make choices and to express their learning in their own voice, also helps to increase students engagement.
- Culminates not just in written work but also in a presentation. The student has to answer questions from the rest of the class (or even from folks from outside of class).



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Project Based Learning in Accel Classes

Some Driving Questions used during Spring 2011:

- “Can we ever achieve social equality?”
- “What defines a life worth living?”
- “How does education help us overcome adversity?”
- “Why are we so attracted to monsters?”
- “Do we have a civic responsibility?”



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Important Features of Accel English

- It's possible to earn partial credit
- A student may not meet all of the transfer-level course outcomes but can meet the developmental level outcomes. (So they get 3 units credit in the lower level traditional course)
- A major goal is to begin to minimize the “all or nothing” course model (all those rungs in the ladder) that caused a student who doesn't pass in a traditional course to have to start over from scratch and repeat a full semester of instruction
- Have non-success take them further



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Developing the Accelerated Courses

Fall 2010

- Sixteen faculty members volunteered to teach fifteen sections of accelerated courses in Spring
- Two different courses
 - 10 sections combining one level below transfer with transfer level
 - 6 sections of three levels below transfer with two levels below
- A pair of “lead faculty” for each of the two accelerated courses
- Faculty met weekly working on developing the Driving Questions/themes, structural design, pedagogical approaches, and course policies



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Developing the Accelerated Courses

October 2010

- Professional development workshop with Katie Hern
- Katie walks us through the Chabot College model of acceleration and steps us through the assignment sequence and curriculum in her accelerated class
- Faculty struggle then (and now) with letting go of “level-driven” assumptions and preconceptions



So then what happened?



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Immediate Early Results:
Initial Retention Was Up***

Average % loss of students in the first three weeks

- In traditional Developmental Courses two and three levels below
-19.3%
- In the Developmental accelerated course
-8.8% (retention increase of +10.5%)
- In traditional courses one level below and first transfer-level
-18.0%
- In the Transfer-level accelerated course
-10.1% (retention increase of +7.9%)



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Early Retention Results: Quasi-Controlling for
Instructor Quality

We assigned the accelerated faculty traditional 3 unit courses. (Teaching to the same learning outcomes)

- In the Developmental “Control” Courses
+9.6% in the accelerated sections
- In the Transfer-level “Control” Courses (sections of English 1A
No real difference



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First Semester Results: Retention at End of Term
Was Higher for Accelerated Classes

- In the Developmental Accelerated class

Retention increase **+23.0%** compared to retention in the department's traditional 3 unit classes

- In Transfer-level Accelerated class

Retention increase **+16.2%** compared to the traditional 3 unit classes



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End of Term Retention Results: Quasi-Controlling
for Instructor

- In the Developmental “Control” Courses (traditional 3 unit course)

-2.2% lower than accelerated sections at end of term

- In the Transfer-level “Control” Courses (traditional 3 unit transfer-level)

-5.7% lower than accelerated sections (at end of term)



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Assessing the Higher Accel Course

- During Fall 2010 English developed a new rubric to score essays written late in the semester in the transfer-level composition class
- A trait-specific rubric (as opposed to a holistic rubric)
- 5 traits/domains
 - Critical Thinking with College Level Texts and Ideas
 - Audience Awareness and Voice
 - Organization and Development
 - Incorporating Sources and Conventions of Academic Discourse in MLA Format
 - Grammar, Syntactic Maturity/Complexity, Usage, and Mechanics



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Assessing the Higher Accel Course

- 5 traits/domains
 - The top three traits (Critical Thinking, Rhetorical Strategies, Organization/Development) are more heavily weighted
- 4 different possible rankings within each domain

Accomplished

Satisfactory

Developing

Struggling



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Assessing the Higher Accel Course

- Faculty collected essays from their traditional transfer-level course and their accelerated course
- Essay completion window was the end of April through approximately the first week in May (two-three weeks before Final Exams)
- Random selection of 70 essays from the traditional class and 70 essays from the accelerated classes
- These were then normed and scored against anchor essays using the transfer-level 5 trait scoring rubric



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Assessing the Higher Accel Course

The number of students receiving ratings of “Accomplished” or “Satisfactory” was higher in the Accelerated class than in the traditional Transfer-level class.

This was true across every domain being assessed.



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Assessing the Higher Accel Course

- **Critical Thinking**
 - Accel class was **+6.7%** compared to trad, class
- **Audience Awareness and Rhetorical Strategies**
 - Accel class was **+11.5%** compared to trad, class
- **Organization and Development**
 - Accel class was **+18.8%** compared to trad, class
- **Incorporating sources and research materials**
 - Accel class was **+5.3%** compared to trad, class
- **Grammar, Syntax, etc.**
 - Accel class was **+7.7%** compared to trad, class



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Assessing the Higher Accel Course

- Remember that the same faculty were teaching the sections of the traditional courses
- Remember that these faculty members had never taught an accelerated course before
- They were all teaching to the same outcomes regardless of course
- The major differences were
 - **Joint planning of course parameters**
 - **Intensity of instruction (2x the contact hours)**
 - **Project-Based Learning**



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Assessing the Developmental Accel Course

- Similar success to the Higher Accel Course
- Took a batch of late essays in the term and normed and scored them.
- This group had done group scoring of a common summary at mid-term that used trait-specific scoring
- So for the late essays they just scored them using a long-established holistic rubric we use in assessing the higher level course
- These all were double read and scored



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Assessing the Developmental Accel Course

On a 4 point holistic scale

	% of Students Scoring at that level
4 Good	14.0%
3 Satisfactory	47.1%
2 Developing	45.6%
1 Struggling	1.5%

A very high inter-rated reliability rating of 90%



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Assessing the Developmental Accel Course

- So 60.1% were doing Satisfactory or better on that late essay
- The last time we used the same rubric and engaged in scoring of essays late in the semester in the higher traditional class the Satisfactory or better group was 44.6%
- That's a net gain of **+15.5% compared to the higher of the two traditional classes**
- *The lower of the two traditional classes this accelerated class subsumes has never been taught to these higher level outcomes. Those students, even if successful, face another 18 week semester and two more joints in the pipeline*



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The Bottom Line After First Semester of Accelerated
Classes

- Substantially greater retention, especially in the Developmental accelerated class when compared to its parallel traditional courses
- Student writing was assessed to be stronger using different measures
- Faculty are excited about teaching more intensively, building more community in their classes, giving students more freedom and choice, and pursuing themes and ideas that offer richer, more substantive literacy building experiences



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Some Takeaways

- Use accelerated courses and select assessments to create “chutes” that by-pass the ladders and put the high intensity beam on those rungs of the ladders that are unnecessary or impediments
- Intensity can achieve both acceleration and richer learning
- Recognize acceleration goes counter to instructor assumptions and professional experience. It produces cognitive and emotional dissonance that will take a while to assuage and dissipate



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Some Takeaways

- Sell accelerated courses as venues for pedagogical experimentation
- Embed authentic assessment into the accelerated course design from the beginning
- At many colleges there is nothing to prevent implementation and scale-up of the one level below transfer + transfer accelerated class model—nothing except faculty culture, barrier exams, state laws, and other forces of darkness



Contact Info

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Investigating Accelerated English: San Diego Mesa College

Wendy Smith, San Diego Mesa College

**National Conference on Acceleration
Baltimore**

June 18, 2011



**CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES' SUCCESS NETWORK
CALIFORNIA ACCELERATION PROJECT**

ACCELERATED READING, WRITING, REASONING

- Open-access, one-semester, 4-unit course that integrates reading and writing (based on Chabot College model)
- “Reverse-Engineered” from 1A: whole texts, “just-in-time” remediation, emphasis on argument and text-based writing, includes research paper.
- Currently part of a district-wide pilot, at two colleges in a large 3-college district (since Fall 2010).
- 8 courses taught district-wide so far.

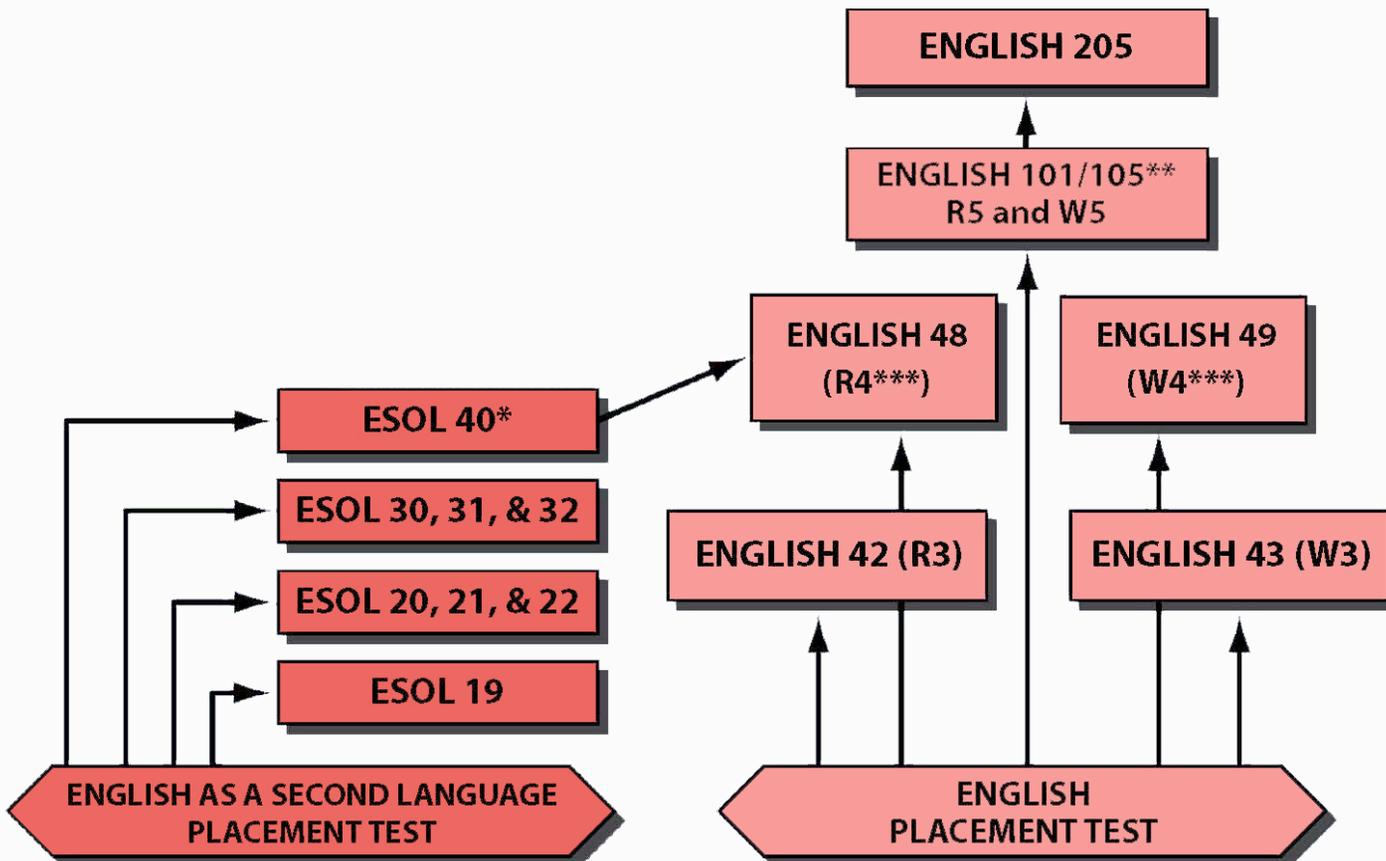


SOME COMPLICATIONS

- Mesa's English department voted that before the pilot (265B) becomes a real course (47), faculty must be able to examine student success in 1A (data currently being gathered, available in Fall 2011).
- Information will be available at:
<http://www.sdmesa.edu/institutional-research>



CURRENT ESOL/ENGLISH SEQUENCES



PRELIMINARY DATA FOR MESA FALL 2010*

	Enrollment	Retention %	Success %
Accelerated ENGL 265B	85	92%	68%
Traditional ENGL 042/043/048/049	1,688	90%	68%

Retention = Letter grade of A, B, C, P, NP, D, F, I, I*, RD / All valid enrollments as of first census

Success = Letter grade of A, B, C, P / All valid enrollments as of census

***Data collected by Susan Mun, San Diego Mesa College Campus-Based Researcher**



PRELIMINARY DATA FOR MESA FALL 2010

	Enrollment	Persistence Rate to Any Transfer- Level English
Accelerated ENGL 265B	78	45%
Traditional ENGL 048/049	944	36%

Persistence = Letter grade of A, B, C, P, NP, D, F, I, I*, RD in Fall 2010 / Letter grade of A, B, C, P, NP, D, F, I, I*, RD in any transfer-level ENGL in Spring 2011



MY FALL AND SPRING CLASSES

Fall Semester 2010

- **Enrollment at census date: 25**
- **Pass (C or higher): 17**
- **No Pass: 4**
- **Withdrawal: 4**

Spring Semester 2011

- **Enrollment at census date: 26**
- **Pass (C or higher): 18**
- **No Pass: 4**
- **Withdrawal: 4**

Grand Total: 51 students, 35 passing= 68%

College-wide average success rate for accelerated basic writing: 68%.

Average # of classes students needed to take that were replaced by one: 2.5

Total exit points eliminated: 5 per student

ENGLISH 265B, SPRING 2011

26 STUDENTS TOTAL



**IMMIGRANT AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
12 ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
2 ORIGINALLY PLACED IN ESOL SEQUENCE
IMMIGRANT, REFUGEE, AND THOSE WITH STUDENT VISAS MAKE UP 8% OF
MESA'S POPULATION**



**APARNA MUDDANA, M.S. IN ZOOLOGY,
ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY, 1991**



TALES FROM THE FIRST YEAR
IMPLEMENTING ACCELERATED ENGLISH
AT BERKELEY CITY COLLEGE



FROM 1-10 TO THE ALOHA BOWL

- Acceleration Model at Berkeley City College
- Data from the First Term
- Turning on the Lights: What the experiment revealed in student capacity, departmental policy, and teaching and learning
- Mounting Momentum and Proof of Concept/Proof of Urgency



ACCELERATION MODEL AT BERKELEY CITY

- Two Roads Converged
 - Learning Outcomes Assessment
 - Pre-transferrable Faculty Meetings
- The Portfolio Project and Its Pieces
 - Components: In-class writing, Research Paper, Reflective Paper
 - On-going Faculty Development
 - Rubric Development
 - “Dead-week” Norming and Assessment
 - Credit by Examination
 - Faculty Reassign



DATA FROM THE FIRST TERM

Data from our First Portfolio Assessment

- Total pre-transfer students scored: 312 (69)
- Total eligible for credit by examination (CBE): 29 (8)
- Total referred to skip one level to transferrable: 49 (22)
- Total transferrable students who scored below “passing”:
147 of 305

