

Houston Community College Houston, Texas

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COURSE NAME PREP for the Math College Entrance Exam; PREP Reading/Writing

COURSE FORMAT Lab

PROGRAM MATERIALS MyFoundationsLab

CONTRIBUTION OF MYFOUNDATIONS LAB TO FINAL GRADE 100%

TYPES OF DATA REPORTED Improved scores on the COMPASS Placement Exam; Accelerated Progress through Developmental Courses

IN RESPONSE TO THE HOUSTON PATHWAYS INITIATIVE, which aims to dramatically increase the participation and success of Texas students in higher education, instructors at Houston Community College designed a brief, preparatory course to help students improve their scores on the COMPASS placement exam and begin college-level studies at the highest level appropriate for them. Implemented for the first time in summer 2012, the PREP course uses MyFoundationsLab to assess and remedy students' individual skills gaps in math, reading, and writing.

PURPOSE OF THE PREP COURSE

Professor Susan Fife explains, "We especially sought to identify the many students on the 'bubble'— those students who were within 3-10 points of placing into the next level course and who, with intensive, targeted instruction, could ameliorate their discrete skill

"With students participating in the PREP course on several campuses, we tried to engineer a consistent instructional experience by implementing a common syllabus and relying on MyFoundationsLab to assess each student's individual skills portfolio and to deliver a personalized Learning Path that helps students quickly and effectively strengthen their weak skills."

—Professor Susan Fife

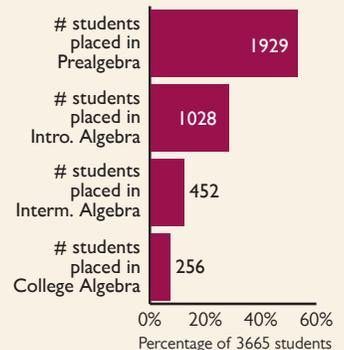
weaknesses in test-taking, math, or reading and writing. We felt that those students, with the right intervention, could place into a higher developmental course or out of the developmental sequence altogether, thereby accelerating their progress and increasing their chances to graduate. We selected MyFoundationsLab for our curriculum and began collecting student data to assess results."

Features of the PREP Math and PREP Reading/Writing course based on MyFoundationsLab:

- common syllabus
- all instructors trained in MyFoundationsLab
- students required to meet in an instructor-led class for total of 16-32 hours
- conducted in a computer lab
- two instructors in each class: one math, one reading/writing

COMPASS placement results before PREP Summer 2012

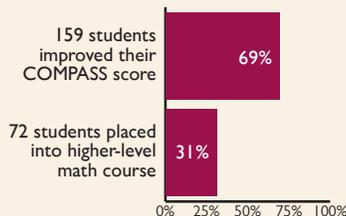
3,665 students took COMPASS placement exam from June 1-August 24, 2012



ANALYSIS:

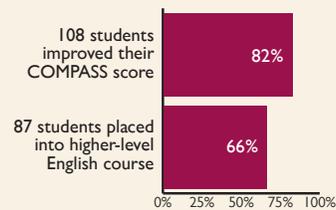
A majority of students taking the COMPASS placement exam without preparation placed into the lowest-level developmental math course.

Placement results after completing PREP Math with MyFoundationsLab Fall 2012-Spring 2013



Of 230 students completing the course, 159 improved their COMPASS score and 72 placed into a higher-level math course.

Placement results after completing PREP Reading/Writing with MyFoundationsLab Spring 2013



Of 131 students completing the course, 108 improved their COMPASS score and 87 placed into a higher-level English course.

ANALYSIS:

Students overwhelmingly raised their COMPASS scores after working in MyFoundationsLab for only a short time, with 31% of students placing into a higher math course and 66% of students placing into a higher-level English course. The Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, used to test for a difference between two samples, confirms the result: PREP with MyFoundationsLab enabled students to achieve statistically significant higher placement scores.

- students follow personalized Learning Path in MyFoundationsLab
- completion entitles students to re-take COMPASS placement exam

“Our goal is to respect students’ strengths and offer them instruction that specifically targets their areas of need,” states Professor Fife. “We don’t want students languishing in developmental courses for multiple terms to address limited skills weaknesses. We want to tailor our assessment and instruction to students’ individual needs and expedite each student’s academic progress. MyFoundationsLab is ideal for our purposes.”

“One student, whose initial COMPASS scores placed her in the lowest level of developmental math, completed PREP, re-took the COMPASS exam, and placed out of developmental math and into College Algebra—which she passed. She completed in one semester what would have taken two years under the previous system.”

—Professor Susan Fife

RESULTS

Professor Fife says, “Results show clearly that PREP with MyFoundationsLab works, especially for students who previously would have tested into the lowest level of developmental math. Many students who completed PREP were able to advance through two levels of developmental math. One student, whose initial COMPASS scores placed her in the lowest level of developmental math, completed PREP, re-took the COMPASS exam, and placed out of developmental math and into College Algebra—which she passed. She completed in one semester what would have taken two years under the previous system.”

She continues, “Our goal, in alignment with the Houston Pathways Initiative, is to provide academic preparation to enable more high school students to enter college and to offer targeted instruction that helps those students progress rapidly into credit-bearing courses and toward graduation. MyFoundationsLab’s unique personalized assessment and instruction is helping us to achieve our goal.”

REFINING THE PREP MODEL

Professor Fife states, “We continue to refine our model. We now offer an instructor-led training to help prepare students for a successful re-take of the COMPASS exam. For students placing into the lowest level of developmental math, we are now co-enrolling them in the subsequent course for the same semester. We make the assumption that they will pass and use MyFoundationsLab to make that assumption a reality.”

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test comparing placement scores before and after PREP with MyFoundationsLab Fall 2012

N	PRE-TEST PLACEMENT		POST-TEST PLACEMENT		Z	P
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
78	1.47	0.68	1.82	0.86	6.59	<.001

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For a product tour or to find out more, please visit www.myfoundationslab.com