

School Name	Essex Agricultural and Technical High School, Danvers, MA, North Shore Technical High School, Middleton, MA, Revere High School, Revere, MA
Course Name	ACCUPlacer Preparation
Course Format	On-ground

Key Results ACCUPlacer Preparation with ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab in three Massachusetts high schools leads to improved placement scores for 72% of students, eliminating the need for 190 remedial classes, and creating tuition savings of over \$100,000.

Submitted by

Gary Kaplan, Executive Director, JFYNetworks

Course materials

ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab

Three Massachusetts high schools contracted with JFYNetworks, a non-profit blended learning company, to better prepare students for the College Board's ACCUPlacer test. ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab directly embeds rigorous preparation for the ACCUPlacer in the high schools' curricula. The goal of the program is to enable students to score high enough on the ACCUPlacer test to begin their college programs taking for-credit courses instead of spending valuable time and money on developmental courses that carry no credit and slow down students' progress.

Implementation

The ACCUPlacer Preparation program was piloted during the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years. Each school chose a cadre of seniors to participate. They all took the ACCUPlacer test to see whether their scores indicated they were college-ready. At all three schools, ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab was then integrated into the regular curriculum each week, using students' time on task and average mastery quiz scores as part of their course grade. Essex and North Shore designate a specific day of the week when students work one hour in the math or English classes on their Learning Path in ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab. Revere offers ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab as an after-school program two days per week for two hours each day. Students at all schools work by themselves on their own personalized study plans, and they consult with teachers when questions arise. At the end of the program, students retake the ACCUPlacer.

Results and data

- Of 525 retested students, 72 percent improved their ACCUPlacer scores, averaging a 19-point increase.
- Students' improved ACCUPlacer scores obviated the need for 190 remedial classes, resulting in an estimated tuition and fee savings of \$104,500 (using the metric of \$500 per developmental course at the typical Massachusetts community college.)

"I honestly found this program very helpful. I really struggled with Algebra specifically, and I got the help I needed to pass it. I think it is a great opportunity because...every student was given the amount of attention and help they needed to succeed. I feel the program will definitely have an impact on all of our futures."

—Student

The student experience

Students' effort and overall progress are closely tied to their motivation to do well on ACCUPlacer, even for those students not planning to go to college at the time they begin the ACCUPlacer Preparation program. Offering this course early in their senior or even junior year actually helps many students focus their attention on college earlier. This program allows students to take responsibility for their own progress and to regularly see improvement. Also, requiring ACCUPlacer//MyFoundationsLab as a part of the class grade increases student motivation.

“Students’ improved ACCUPLACER scores obviated the need for 190 remedial classes, resulting in an estimated tuition and fee savings of \$104,500.”

Benefits and best practices

The success of ACCUPLACER Preparation with ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab program depends on focused time on task for students and on-going instructional support from teachers. Unequivocal administrative support is also a necessary condition of success. Teachers and mid-level administrators have to know that the principal and superintendent are committed to the program and will hold them accountable for the execution of the program plan. Onsite management, through JFYNetwork’s instructional technology consultants, was also helpful for effective execution of the program. The consultants spend time monitoring how ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab is being used and assisting students and teachers with any questions.

Last, we found it is vital to generate reports on a regular basis that measure such elements as diagnostic tests completed, time on task, number of topics assigned for work, number of topics mastered, and average mastery grade. These reports are valuable to both administrators and teachers in identifying classes and individual students not making adequate progress and indicating interventions needed to keep classes on track.

Conclusion

The results of this pilot show high levels of student participation and progress. ACCUPLACER Preparation with ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab prepares students for the actual skill demands of college and saves them (and their parents) money. It gives teachers effective, ready-to-use instructional resources to apply directly to assessed learning needs. And it gives administrators a tangible outcome that benefits students and parents and adds to the value proposition of their school.

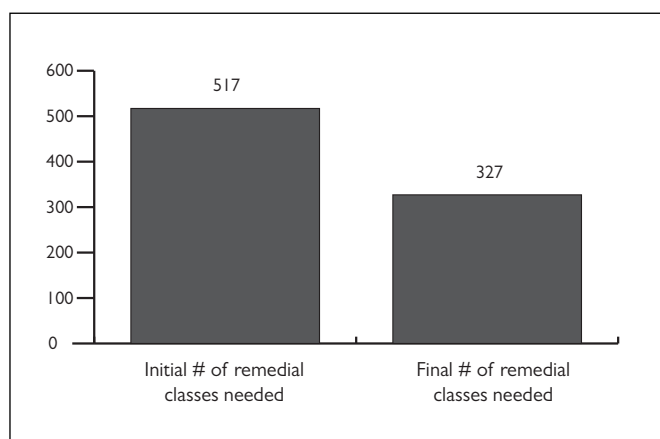


Figure 1. Remedial Classes Needed Before and After ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab Pilot

“ACCUPLACER Preparation with ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab prepares students for the actual skill demands of college and saves them (and their parents) money. It gives teachers effective, ready-to-use instructional resources to apply directly to assessed learning needs. And it gives administrators a tangible outcome that benefits students and parents and adds to the value proposition of their school.”