

School Name **Somerset Community College, Somerset, KY**  
 Course Name **Improved College Reading; Reading for the College Classroom**  
 Course Format **Hybrid, accelerated**

► **Key Results** With MyReadingLab and a redesigned developmental reading program, 68 percent of students passed the course and 57 percent accelerated through one or more course levels or tested out of the developmental sequence completely.

**Submitted by**  
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**Course materials**  
*The Master Reader*, Henry; MyReadingLab

We redesigned our developmental reading courses in response to the Kentucky Community and Technical College System’s (KCTCS) general directive to create courses that could accelerate students’ progress through remediation and on to college-level work. This initiative, a response to Senate Bill 1 (2009) urging all Kentucky schools to carefully examine how to improve postsecondary retention rates, asked each school to devise an accelerated developmental education curriculum as part of a general effort to assist underprepared students.

**About the Course**

For the last three years, both Improved College Reading (RDG 20) and Reading for the College Classroom (RDG 30) have been taught in hybrid courses with students spending one class period a week in the computer lab using MyReadingLab and one class period a week in the classroom. The redesigned courses retain the existing course syllabus but now allow students the option to accelerate to the advanced reading course or to test out at midterm by retesting on the Compass Reading Test. Students are placed into RDG 20 with Compass scores of 49–69 and into RDG 30 with Compass scores of 70–82; students in both courses are now combined into one physical classroom, but they work through different tracks within MyReadingLab (Intermediate and Advanced).

The following chart details course placement and acceleration options:

<b>RDG 20</b> Compass at Midterm	≥85	Reading requirement completed	<b>RDG 30</b> Compass at Finals	≥85	Reading requirement completed
	83-84	Accelerate to College Reading (RDG 185) for second half of semester or next semester (or continue in second half of RDG 30)		80-84	Reading requirement completed with grade of A, B, C
	70-82	Accelerate to RDG 30 for second half of semester or next		≤79	Retake RDG 30 again
	≤69	Continue in RDG 20 for remainder of semester*			
<b>RDG 20</b> *Compass at Finals	≥85	Reading requirement completed			
	80-84	Take RDG 185 or RDG 30 next semester			
	70-82	Take RDG 30 next semester, providing grade is A, B, C			
	≤69	Take RDG 20 again			
<b>RDG 30</b> Compass at Midterm	≥85	Reading requirement completed			
	83-84	Accelerate to RDG 185 or stay in 30 and retest at finals			
	≤82	Continue in RDG 30 for remainder of semester*			
<b>RDG 30</b> *Compass at Finals	≥85	Reading requirement completed			
	77-84	Reading requirement completed with grade of A, B, C			
	≤76	Retake RDG 30			

**Assessments**  
 33.3 percent Attendance and participation  
 33.3 percent In-class assignments, homework, and quizzes  
 33.3 percent MyReadingLab modules (16)  
 Pass/Fail Final exam / Compass reading test\*

\*Passing grades of A, B, and C will be awarded only to students who pass the Compass with a score of 70 or above.

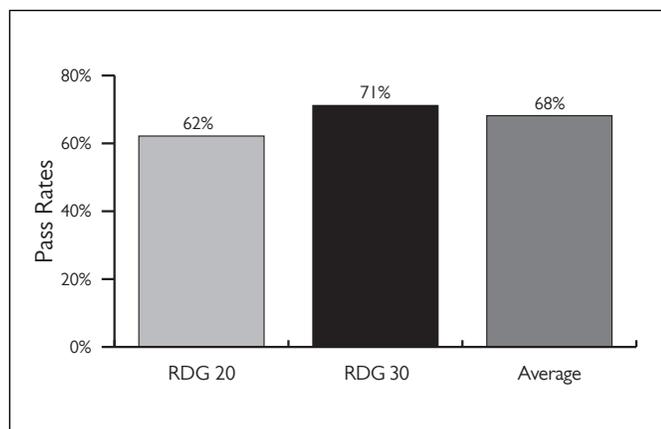


Figure 1. Fall 2013 Pass Rates, RDG 20 (n = 140), RDG 30 (n = 228)

## Implementation

During the first half of the semester, students focus on seven key Reading Skills modules as well as material on Reading Level and Test-Taking Skills in MyReadingLab during lab days and cover corresponding topics in their text during classroom days. The goal is to prepare the students to score higher on their Compass retest at midterm and move immediately on to the next course in the sequence or to have completed their reading requirement and be ready for college-level work. During the second half of the semester, they work on vocabulary development and gain extensive practice reading non-fiction texts typical of material assigned in academic courses across the college curriculum. During this segment of the semester, students also work through nine additional modules in MyReadingLab. To demonstrate mastery on the MyReadingLab modules, students must score at least 70 percent, and they have two chances to get their best score. We provide a pacing guide so students know when the assigned modules must be completed.

## Results and Data

- Students' Compass scores improved an average of 9.09 points in fall 2013, an excellent improvement rate allowing 250 students (of 368) to pass the redesigned courses (Figure 1).
- At midterm, 44 students advanced one or more levels and 43 students tested out of developmental reading completely (Figure 2).
- At the end of the term, 70 students advanced one or more levels and 46 tested out of developmental reading completely. Six students accelerated through the two courses in one semester. In all, the redesign enabled 209 students to accelerate through one or more courses, saving them significant time and money (Figure 2).

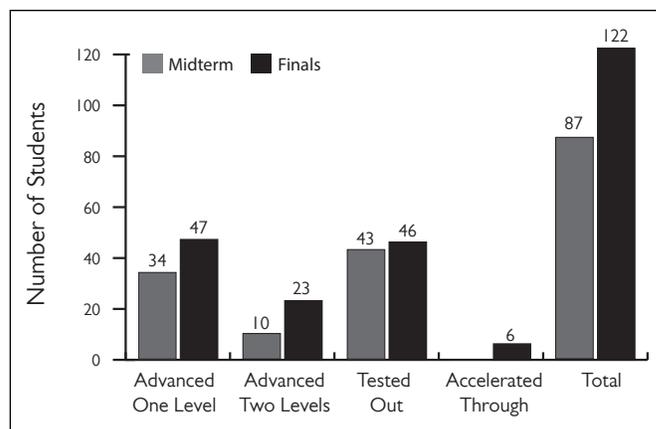


Figure 2. Number of Students Accelerating Through the Redesigned Developmental Sequence, Fall 2013 (n = 209)

## The Student Experience

Because many of the students who are required to take developmental reading also have jobs, family, or other life obligations, the opportunity to complete RDG 20 or 30 in 8 weeks is an attractive option. It motivates students to apply themselves vigorously to the assigned coursework. Also, the redesigned courses help students save money: many of them now do not have to pay for as many developmental courses, and our Pearson rep works with us to provide one MyReadingLab access code and a single textbook that accommodate both RDG 20 and 30.

## Conclusion

Our redesign was a team effort, spearheaded by a colleague with a background in assessment who drafted the plan we implemented. Our associate dean was also very supportive. Although it has taken some time and effort to get the entire staff on board, we tweak these courses as we go and make accommodations when appropriate. We will be meeting again at the end of this semester to evaluate the redesigned program and discuss other possible adaptations that might improve it further.

We are pleased with our results from fall 2013. We have seen clear evidence that our students can accelerate through or even test out of developmental reading in 8 weeks, and the time and money they save motivates them to push forward. Academic departments across our campus are eagerly waiting to enroll these students into a wide variety of credit-bearing courses, and with our accelerated format, more and better-prepared students are now moving into those courses sooner.

*“In all, the redesign enabled 209 students to accelerate through one or more courses, saving them significant time and money.”*