

March 15, 2011

Prior to July 2010, we had some initial data from KapCC & MCC on how many students were actually retaking COMPASS tests and how well they were doing in ENG & Math courses they were taking based on the placement. Encouraged by that data, the UH CCs changed the retesting policy--removing the 60-day wait period and allowing students to retake COMPASS tests for a small fee (\$25)--in July 2010.

Two fears were that testing centers would be overwhelmed by large numbers of students retaking tests and that students would simply boost their placement by retaking the test again and again, then not do well in the classes in which they could then enroll. So we gathered some data soon after the policy change--in Fall 2010--to see how often students were retesting and how well they were doing in ENG and MATH courses.

We continue to monitor what is happening, so we gathered more data in Spring 2011. These data are presented in the two worksheets labeled "Summary KapCC" and "Summary LeeCC." The test-taking and course performance data were taken from these two colleges simply because they have the highest volumes of COMPASS testing among the seven UH CCs.

For each campus,

Table 1 Contains the test frequency data: the number of test SESSIONS and the number of INDIVIDUALS taking COMPASS tests. An individual may take one, two, or three tests in a session, so we need the two numbers to give us a good picture of testing activity. The number of sessions might give us a better picture of activity in the testing center while the number of individuals will tell us how many students are actually testing or retesting. For example, if ten students went into the testing center 2 times each (perhaps to do math testing on one day, then reading and writing on another day), the number of sessions would be 20 while the number of individuals testing would be 10.

Table 1 contains the numbers of individuals who take all three area tests (reading, writing, math) only once, the number who repeat all three, and the number who repeat testing in any one of the other areas.

For convenience in making comparisons, Table 1 contains the results for two periods of time: from 8/22/2009 through 10/2/2010 and from 8/22/2009 through 1/15/2011.

Table 2 Contains detailed frequency data about retesting: how many INDIVIDUALS retook a test once, twice, three, or more times.

Table 3 - 6 Contains data on how well the students did in retesting in terms of frequency and percentages. How many/what percent did or did not improve their placement. NOTE: We are counting improvement of PLACEMENT, NOT improvement of scores. If a student improves her PRE-ALGEBRA test score from 28 to 43, she would NOT have improved her placement: it would still be PRE-ALGEBRA.

So even though her SCORE improved, her PLACEMENT results would be counted as "Not Better Placement."

To make comparisons easier, Tables 3 and 4 contain the testing done between 8/22/2009 and 10/2/2010; Tables 5 and 6 the testing done between 8/22/2009 and 1/15/2011.

Table 7a Contains descriptive statistics on the time between initial testing and retesting: average, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, median. It also gives the number of individuals who retested in less than 60 (LT60), less than 30 (LT30), and less than 10 (LT10) days, as well as those who took more than 60 days to retest (GT60).

Table 7b Gives the percentages based on the frequencies in Table 7a.

Table 8 Contains data on how well the students did in terms of success rates (earning a C or better grade) in subsequent courses taken. We counted only students who

- a. Improved their placement and
- b. Took a course based on that improved placement.

For example, if a student improved his placement from basic skills to developmental writing, then took ENG 22, his results ended up in this table. If a student did not improve her placement, we did not check for ENG or MATH courses taken. If a student improved his reading placement from, say, developmental to college level reading, we did not check for any courses other than ENG that required college level reading skills.

What do these numbers show? Probably more than this, but at least . . .

1. So far, no tidal wave of retesting. The OVERWHELMING majority of students--84% at KapCC and 92% at LeeCC--are taking all three parts of COMPASS once. (See Table 1.)
2. So far, the growth in retesting parallels the overall growth in testing. The perception in some testing centers is that the change of policy has resulted in greater activity in the centers. However, in reality, it is the overall increase in COMPASS testing AS A WHOLE probably due to the growth in enrollments that has caused the increased activity. (See Table 1.)
3. A large portion of retesting is being done in math--at least at KapCC. We did not see the same "bulge" in frequencies at LeeCC. (See Table 1.)
4. So far, the OVERWHELMING majority of students are retesting twice. VERY few are retesting more than two times. (See Table 2.)
5. A significant proportion of retesters do improve their placement--better than 30% in all areas, usually 40% or more, and at KapCC, a little over 60% in writing placement. (See Tables 3-6.)
6. In general, the students who improve their placements and take courses based on those improved placements do about as well in those classes in terms of success rates as might be expected from the general success rates in those classes. But such students at KapCC and LeeCC actually do MUCH better in the writing classes than the overall success rates. And at LeeCC, the ones taking MATH classes do much better than might be expected from overall success rates. (See Table 8.)
7. But the numbers of students actually taking required courses is relatively small.

The phrase "so far" was deliberately repeated. We are looking at the results only eight months after the policy was changed. The average amounts of time between tests (60 or more days) and standard deviation values (Tables 7a and 7b) seem to indicate that students still haven't really caught on to the idea that they can retest sooner than 60 days. The picture might be very different a year from now.

Questions?

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COMPASS Placement Results KapCC
Repeat Testing

Table 1

	8/22/2009-10/02/2010	Pcnt of Individuals	8/22/2009-1/15/2011	Pcnt of Individuals	Pcnt Incr/Decr
Total Number of Sessions	5,119		6,231		21.7%
Number of Individuals Testing	3,520		4,246		20.6%
Number Taking All Tests Only Once	2,973	84.5%	3,588	84.5%	20.7%
Number Repeating the Reading Test	118	3.4%	146	3.4%	23.7%
Number Repeating the Writing Test	164	4.7%	192	4.5%	17.1%
Number Repeating the Reading & Writing Tests	101	2.9%	120	2.8%	18.8%
Number Repeating the Math Test	475	13.5%	566	13.3%	19.2%
Number Repeating All Three Tests	80	2.3%	89	2.1%	11.3%

Table 2

Times Repeated	Reading	Writing	Math
2	132	172	463
3	11	17	87
4	1	1	13
5		1	1
6	1	1	1
7	1		
8			1
Total	146	192	566

Table 3

Placement Results 8/22/2009-10/02/2010

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
Repeating the Reading Test	42	76	6
Repeating the Writing Test	102	62	8
Repeating the Math Test	216	259	37

Table 4

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
	35.6%	64.4%	5.1%
	62.2%	37.8%	4.9%
	45.5%	54.5%	7.8%

Table 5

Placement Results 8/22/2009-01/15/2011

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
Repeating the Reading Test	54	92	7
Repeating the Writing Test	118	74	9
Repeating the Math Test	257	309	40

Table 6

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
	37.0%	63.0%	4.8%
	61.5%	38.5%	4.7%
	45.4%	54.6%	7.1%

Time Between Tests

Table 7A

	Avg	StdDev	Min	Max	Med	LT60	LT30	LT10	GT60
Reading	68.2	78.1	0	314	36.5	85	70	38	61
Writing	65.6	77.4	0	316	29.0	113	97	58	79
Math	68.1	83.1	0	427	26.0	344	292	162	217

Percentage Distribution

Table 7B

	LT60	LT30	LT10	GT60
	58.2%	47.9%	26.0%	41.8%
	58.9%	50.5%	30.2%	41.1%
	60.8%	51.6%	28.6%	38.3%

Scroll down to see Table 8.

Success Rates in Courses Taken

Table 8

	Took Crs	Pass Crs	SRate
Reading	18	12	66.7%
Writing	73	54	74.0%
Math	96	54	56.3%

COMPASS Placement Results LeeCC
Repeat Testing

Table 1

	8/22/2009-10/02/2010	Pcnt of Individuals	8/22/2009-1/15/2011	Pcnt of Individuals	Pcnt Incr/Decr
Total Number of Sessions	3,891		4,889		25.6%
Number of Individuals Testing	3,422		4,213		23.1%
Number Taking All Tests Only Once	3,240	94.7%	3,909	92.8%	20.6%
Number Repeating the Reading Test	114	3.3%	219	5.2%	92.1%
Number Repeating the Writing Test	108	3.2%	133	3.2%	23.1%
Number Repeating the Reading & Writing Tests	95	2.8%	116	2.8%	22.1%
Number Repeating the Math Test	118	3.4%	151	3.6%	28.0%
Number Repeating All Three Tests	58	1.7%	73	1.7%	25.9%

Table 2

Times Repeated	Reading	Writing	Math
2	207	128	145
3	12	5	6
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
Total	219	133	151

Table 3

Placement Results 8/22/2009-10/02/2010

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
Repeating the Reading Test	53	61	11
Repeating the Writing Test	46	62	11
Repeating the Math Test	42	74	8

Table 4

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
	46.5%	53.5%	9.6%
	42.6%	57.4%	10.2%
	36.2%	63.8%	6.9%

Table 5

Placement Results 8/22/2009-01/15/2011

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
Repeating the Reading Test	102	117	19
Repeating the Writing Test	59	74	13
Repeating the Math Test	52	99	11

Table 6

	Better Placement	Not Better Placement	Worse Placement
	46.6%	53.4%	8.7%
	44.4%	55.6%	9.8%
	34.4%	65.6%	7.3%

Time Between Tests

Table 7A	Avg	StdDev	Min	Max	Med	LT60	LT30	LT10	GT60
Reading	103.9	89.3	0	425	104.0	91	71	40	128
Writing	57.0	75.4	0	407	23.0	91	74	45	42
Math	67.7	78.7	0	413	42.0	92	65	37	59

Scroll down to see Table 8.

Percentage Distribution

Table 7B

LT60	LT30	LT10	GT60
41.6%	32.4%	18.3%	58.4%
68.4%	55.6%	33.8%	31.6%
60.9%	43.0%	24.5%	39.1%

Success Rates in Courses Taken

Table 8	Took Crs	Pass Crs	SRate
Reading	31	21	67.7%
Writing	32	28	87.5%
Math	19	12	63.2%