ENGWR PLACEMENT AND SUCCESS AT SACRAMENTO CITY COLLEGE WITH AB 705 IMPLEMENTATION – A FOCUS ON FIRST-TIME NEW STUDENTS FALL 2018 COHORT

Prepared by Lan Hoang

AB 705 requires colleges to use placement methods that "maximize the probability that [students] will enter and complete transfer-level coursework in English and mathematics in a one year timeframe" and to only place students in a remedial course when they are "highly unlikely to succeed" in transfer level coursework. In light of the AB 705 requirements, the English Department at Sacramento City College (SCC) has been working with the PRIE Office in studying students' placement and success in English Writing (ENGWR) as the English Department implements its ENGWR curriculum innovation. This brief report summarizes preliminary data on placement and success with a focus on first-time new students at Sacramento City College.

ENGWR Placement and Curriculum Innovation

Figure 1 below illustrates the placement and course sequence from Fall 2016 to Fall 2018. Multiple Measures Placement include assessment tests (ACUPLACER and essays). The ENGWR 300-108 combo was introduced in Fall 2016, allowing students who either successfully completed the two-level below transfer course (ENGWR 51) or who were placed in one-level below transfer to enroll in the transfer level course (ENGWR 300) with a concurrent support course (ENGWR 108).

Figure 1. SCC English Writing (ENGWR) placement and course sequence Fall 2016--Fall 2018
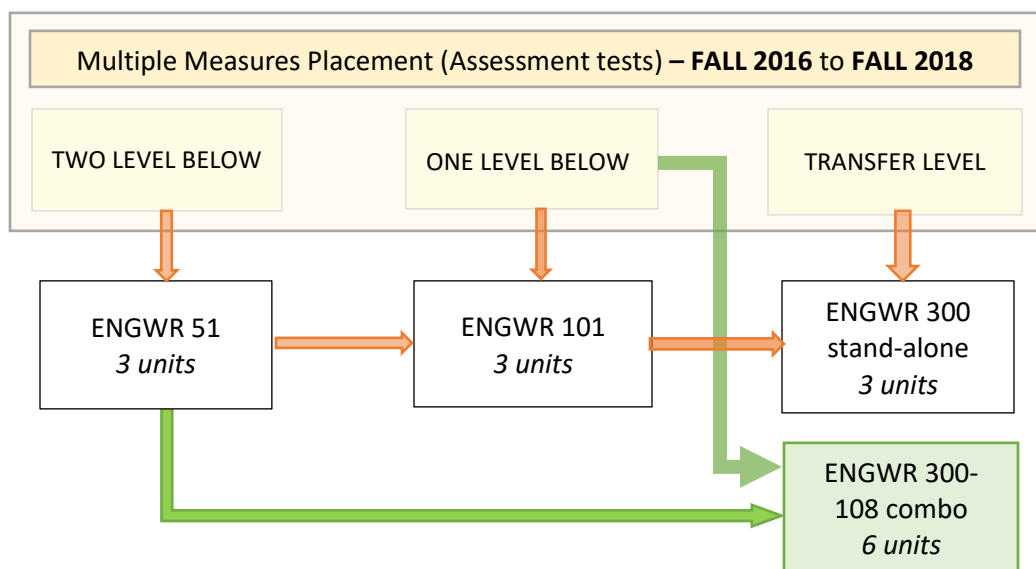
Figure 2 depicts the placement and curriculum change in Spring 2019. Students are no longer placed into two-level below transfer. High school GPAs are used in Multiple Measures Placement. Students with high school GPA lower than 1.90 would be placed in one-level below transfer course, which is ENGWR 110 with 4 units, and are required to take half a unit of lab support. Students with high school GPA between 1.90 and 2.99 would be able to take the ENGWR 300-108 combo with 6 units. Students with a high school GPA of 3.00 or above are placed directly into transfer level course—ENGWR 300 with 3 units.

Figure 2. SCC ENGWR placement and course sequence Spring 2019
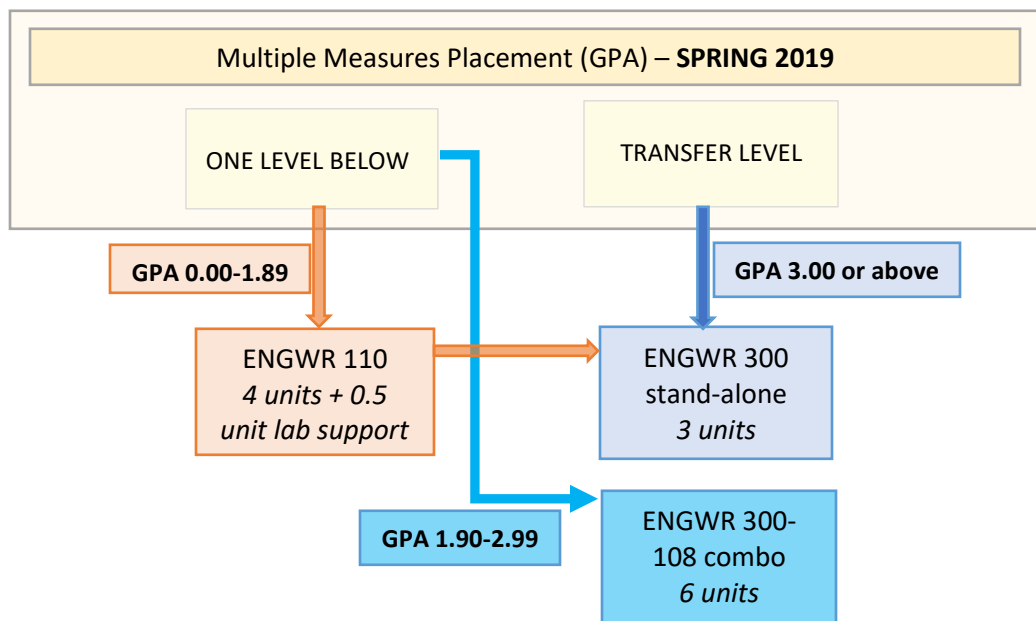


The data

The report focuses on first-time new students[1] in Fall 2018 at Sacramento City College, although some longitudinal data will be presented. The rationale is two-fold—this allows us to examine students' first ENGWR course placements and outcomes, and Fall 2018 offers the most students with high school GPA and ENGWR course outcomes.

---

[1] Self-reported first-time new students

ENGWR Placement, Fall 2014 to Fall 2018

ENGWR placement into transfer level of first-time new students has been increasing since Fall 2014. In Fall 2018, with AB 705 implementation, a majority of ENGWR placement was at transfer level. Figure 3 and Table 1 present ENGWR placement levels of first-time new students at SCC from Fall 2014 to Fall 2018.

Figure 3. SCC ENGWR placement trend, first-time new students, Fall 2014 - Fall 2018
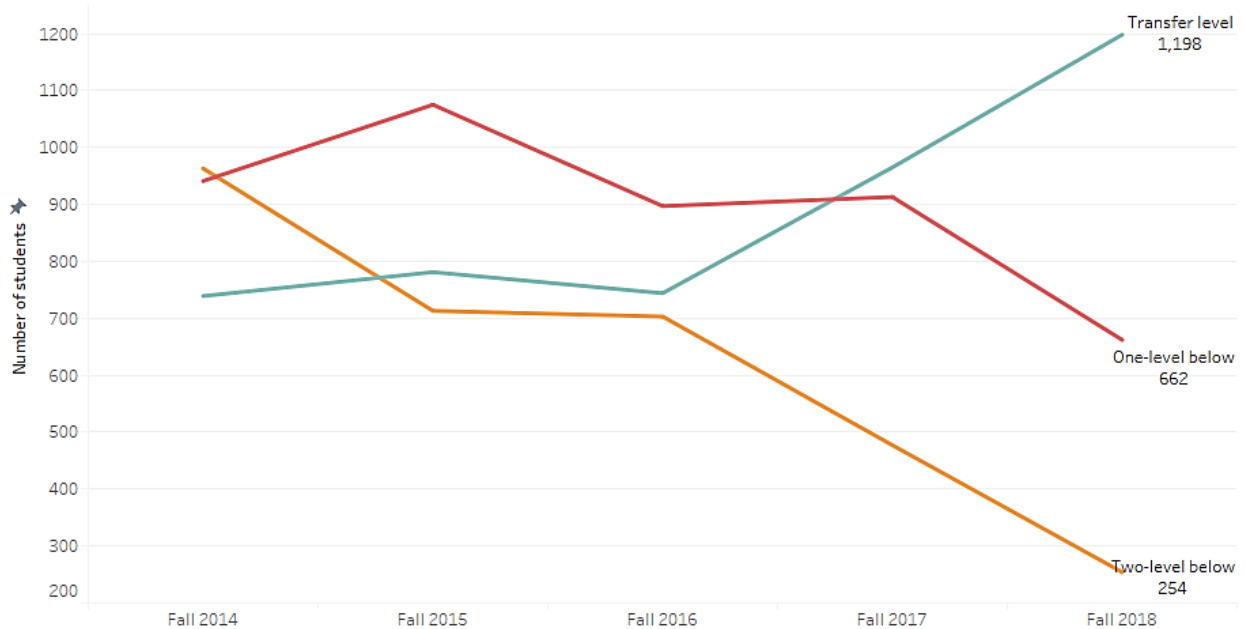
Table 1. SCC ENGWR placement data, first-time new students, Fall 2014 - Fall 2018

ENGWR	Semester									
	Fall 2014		Fall 2015		Fall 2016		Fall 2017		Fall 2018	
Placement	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Transfer level	739	28.0%	781	30.4%	744	31.7%	965	41.0%	1,198	56.7%
One-level below	941	35.6%	1,075	41.8%	897	38.3%	913	38.8%	662	31.3%
Two-level below	963	36.4%	713	27.8%	703	30.0%	477	20.3%	254	12.0%
Total	**2,643**	**100.0%**	**2,569**	**100.0%**	**2,344**	**100.0%**	**2,355**	**100.0%**	**2,114**	**100.0%**

Source: SCC Research Data

Table 2 shows first-time new students' transfer-level placement in ENGWR by equity measures from Fall 2014 to Fall 2018. The gaps in transfer-level placement in some groups are bigger between Fall 2017 and Fall 2018 (African American, Hispanic/Latino, and male), the numbers of students who were placed into transfer-level ENGWR have increased for all groups (with the exception of Veterans but there are traditionally very few of them) between these two semesters. The gaps seem to persist or widen for some groups as their transfer-level placements have not increased at the same rate as that for the overall first-time new student population.

Table 2. SCC first-time new students' transfer-level placement by equity measures
Fall 2014 – Fall 2018

	Fall 2014		Fall 2015		Fall 2016		Fall 2017			Fall 2018		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	F17 Gap	N	%	F18 Gap
Overall	**739**	**28.0%**	**781**	**30.4%**	**744**	**31.7%**	**965**	**41.0%**		**1,198**	**56.7%**	
African Am.	43	12.5%	55	17.7%	49	16.3%	76	27.0%	-14.0%	83	38.1%	-18.6%
Asian	82	24.4%	101	28.9%	96	30.8%	135	38.2%	-2.8%	207	67.2%	10.5%
Filipino	15	25.4%	24	35.8%	16	30.8%	25	54.3%	13.3%	36	69.2%	12.5%
Hispanic/Latino	237	23.6%	242	23.7%	242	26.4%	321	34.4%	-6.6%	428	49.3%	-7.4%
Multi-Race	80	36.2%	91	43.1%	103	48.8%	102	48.6%	7.6%	106	62.4%	5.7%
Native Am.	*		*				*			*		
Pacific Islander	*		*		*		*			13	54.2%	-2.5%
White	269	44.2%	257	47.5%	232	45.9%	294	59.0%	18.0%	316	69.0%	12.3%
Female	365	27.7%	353	28.1%	332	27.6%	484	39.1%	-1.9%	702	61.8%	5.1%
Male	359	28.3%	397	32.4%	381	35.2%	463	42.7%	1.7%	482	50.6%	-6.1%
DSPS	18	13.0%	26	17.0%	24	20.0%	25	19.5%	-21.5%	58	54.2%	-2.5%
Low Income	487	23.4%	513	25.8%	475	26.6%	606	34.8%	-6.2%	842	52.8%	-3.9%
Veteran	20	34.4%	22	42.3%	*		18	47.4%	6.4%	12	66.7%	10.0%

* N ≤ 10.
Source: SCC Research Data

A focus on Fall 2018

First-time new students' high school GPA, ENGWR placement assessment, Fall 2018 enrollment, and course outcome data in this section were prepared using data queries created by District Research Office based on the District's AB 705 Workgroup's inputs in Summer 2019. It is done in coordination with the District's Workgroup to facilitate cross-college comparison.

SCC first-time new student sample includes a total number of 1,294 enrollments in different levels of ENGWR, from transfer-level to two level below transfer. Because the two-level below level is phasing out with the implementation of AB 705 (i.e. students are no longer placed into two-level below transfer), ENGWR 51 enrollments are the lowest among the levels, accounting for only 7% of the student sample, having a success rate of about 23%. For approximately 15% of the students (198 students) who enrolled in one-level below transfer (ENGWR 101), nearly half of them completed the course successfully. Close to 20% of the students (247 students)

enrolled in transfer-level with support course (ENGWR 300-108 Combo) achieved a success rate of 64.5%. A majority of the students (757 students, 59%) were in the transfer level course (ENGWR 300 Standalone) and achieved a success rate of over 70%.

Table 3. SCC first-time new students' ENGWR enrollments and success, Fall 2018

Level	Two-level below	One-level below	Transfer-level with support	Transfer-level	
Course	ENGWR 51	ENGWR 101	ENGWR 300-108 Combo**	ENGWR 300 Standalone	Total
Enrollments					
#	92	198	247	757	1,294
%	7.1%	15.3%	19.1%	58.5%	100%
Success rates*	22.8%	49.0%	64.5%	70.1%	62.4%

* Success rates calculations excluded the EW, MW, and RD grade notations.
** Success rate for the ENGWR 300-108 is the ENGWR 300 course outcomes of students who took the combo. It is not the success rate of ENGWR 108.

Table 4 below shows enrollment and success rates by ethnicity and gender. African American students in the ENGWR 300-108 combo outperform those in the ENGWR 300 standalone course (65% success rate compared to 51%). Hispanic/Latino students' success rates are about the same in the two courses, although in the ENGWR 300 standalone course, there is a 4.4% gap in their success rate compared to that of the overall first-time new students.

Table 4. SCC first-time new students' ENGWR enrollments and success by Ethnicity and Gender, Fall 2018

Level	Two-level below		One-level below		Transfer-level w/ support			Transfer-level		
Course	ENGWR 51		ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108 Combo		Equity Gap	ENGWR 300 Standalone		Equity Gap
	# students	Success %	# students	Success %	# students	Success %		# students	Success %	
Overall	92	22.8%	198	49.0%	247	64.5%		757	70.1%	
African Am.	20	20.0%	29	41.4%	37	64.9%	0.4%	51	51.0%	-19.1%
Asian	*		25	52.0%	14	71.4%	6.9%	124	76.6%	6.5%
Filipino	*		*					17	76.5%	6.4%
Hispanic/Latino	41	31.7%	82	46.3%	136	64.7%	0.2%	283	65.7%	-4.4%
Multi-Race	*		*		17	58.8%	-5.7%	62	72.6%	2.5%
Native Am.	*				*			*		
Pacific Islander	*		*		*			*		
Unknown			*					*		
White	*		42	54.8%	31	58.6%	-5.9%	206	76.1%	6.0%
Female	48	31.3%	84	52.4%	134	66.2%	1.7%	425	71.2%	1.1%
Male	43	14.0%	112	47.3%	111	62.7%	-1.8%	325	68.3%	-1.8%

* N ≤ 10

In the following analysis, we will examine student success by high school GPA (HS GPA). This analysis does not include the two-level below transfer (ENGWR 51) because students will no longer be placed into this level. The exclusion of ENGWR 51 leaves our sample with 1,202 students, of whom 1,160 (about 97%) have a high school GPA. Table 5 shows first-time new students' success rates by high school GPA range. Students in a higher GPA range are more likely to succeed in their ENGWR courses. In the transfer level course, students in the 3-and-above GPA range are highly likely to succeed (74% likelihood). ENGWR 300-108 students in the 1.9-2.99 GPA range have a success rate of about 62% while students in the same GPA range who took ENGWR 101 have a success rate of 49%.

Table 5. SCC first-time new students' ENGWR success rates by high school GPA, Fall 2018**

	One-level below		Transfer level with support		Transfer level	
	ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108		ENGWR 300	
GPA Range	# students	Success %	# students	Success %	# students	Success %
0-1.89	*		15	40.0%	*	
1.9-2.99	172	49.4%	187	61.6%	114	49.6%
3 and above	12	58.3%	32	81.3%	620	73.9%
Total	189	49.7%	234	62.9%	737	70.2%

* N ≤ 10

** Only includes students with high school GPA

For SCC, the ENGWR placement decision rules from Spring 2019 specify that students whose high school GPAs are in the range of 1.9-2.99 would be placed in the transfer level with support course while students with high school GPAs of 3 and above would be placed directly in the transfer level course. As the District and the college are considering lowering the GPA cutoff for direct placement into transfer level, we are interested in examining the 2.6-2.99 GPA students' success in the ENGWR 300 Standalone course compared to those in the same GPA range in the ENGWR 300-108 combo. As presented in Table 6, students in the 2.6-2.99 GPA range have a higher success rate in the combo course than in the standalone course (64% compared to 58%). However, the 2.6-2.99 GPA students in ENGWR 300 are not highly unlikely to succeed. At 58% success rate, they are still more likely to succeed than fail.

Table 6. SCC first-time new students' ENGWR success rates by new high school GPA cutoffs, simulated, Fall 2018

	ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108 Combo		ENGWR 300 Standalone	
GPA Range	# students	Success %	# students	Success %	# students	Success %
1.9-2.59	89	41.6%	97	58.9%	55	40.7%
2.6-2.99	83	57.8%	90	64.4%	59	57.6%

Students in the sample in the analysis above were placed based on either GPA or the previous multiple measures assessment that included an ACUPLACER test and a writing sample. To refine our analysis, we narrow our focus by examining just those students whose ENGWR placements were determined by high school GPA while excluding those who were placed via a multiple measures assessment test.[2] There were very few students in the 2.6-2.99 GPA band placed directly in the transfer-level course. Students in the 2.6-2.99 GPA range who might have been placed into the transfer-level with support course based on their high school GPA had a success rate of about 64%. See details in Table 7 below.

Table 7. SCC Fall 2018 ENGWR success rates of first-time new students who might have been placed by high school GPA

|	One-level below		Transfer level with support		Transfer level	
	ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108		ENGWR 300	
GPA Range	# students	Success %	# students	Success %	# students	Success %
0-1.89			*			
1.9-2.59	68	44.1%	79	57.1%	*	
2.6-2.99	83	57.8%	85	63.5%	*	
3 and above	12	58.3%	32	81.3%	620	73.9%

* N ≤ 10

Grade distribution

Figure 4 (next page) shows grade distributions in ENGWR 300-108 combo and ENGWR 300 standalone courses by SCC first-time new students in Fall 2018. ENGWR 300 standalone students seem to perform better with more A and B grades. However, students who took the combo course had a lower rate of withdrawal.[3] We could not break down the data further by students' high school GPA because of small numbers.

---

[2] Specifically, we included students who meet both criteria as follows: (1) having a high school GPA, and (2) if the student also have assessment test data, their HS GPA places them at a higher level than the assessment test.
[3] Count as withdrawal if they had a W in the 300 portion of the combo

Figure 4. Grade distributions in ENGWR 300-108 combo and ENGWR 300 standalone courses, SCC first-time new students, Fall 2018
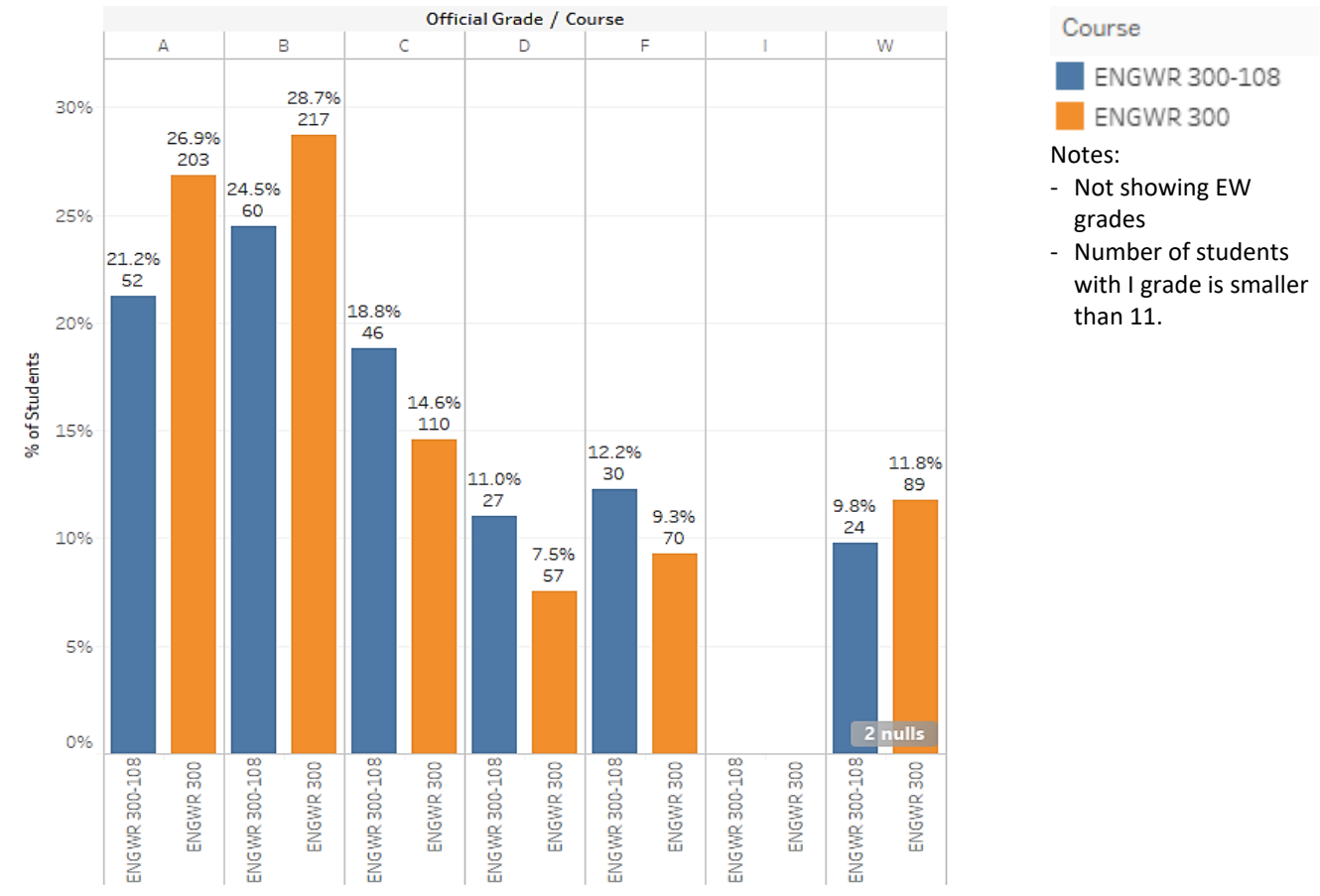
Persistence to Spring Semester [4]

Students in the ENGWR 300-108 combo and ENGWR standalone indicate similar likelihood of returning during the following Spring semester (Fall-to-Spring persistence rate of 85-86%) (Table 8). ENGWR 101 has a lower persistence rate at about 75%.

Table 8. SCC ENGWR first-time new students' Fall-to-Spring persistence rate, AY 2018-2019

	Course				
ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108		ENGWR 300	
#	%	#	%	#	%
148	74.7%	211	85.4%	649	85.7%

---

[4] Persistence to any Los Rios colleges

In the 2.6-2.99 high school GPA range, students who took the ENGWR 300-108 combo demonstrate a slightly higher Fall-to-Spring persistence rate (a difference of about 4 percent). Nevertheless, students in both courses are highly likely to return in the following Spring (88% vs 85%) (Table 9).

Table 9. SCC ENGWR first-time new students' Fall-to-Spring persistence rate by high school GPA, AY 2018-2019

	Course					
	ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108		ENGWR 300	
GPA Range	#	%	#	%	#	%
0-1.89	*	*	13	86.7%	*	*
1.9-2.59	67	75.3%	77	79.4%	43	78.2%
2.6-2.99	64	77.1%	79	87.8%	50	84.7%
3 and above	*	*	29	90.6%	538	86.8%

Note:

* N ≤ 10

Not showing students without high school GPA data

Table 10 shows Fall-to-Spring persistence rates by ENGWR official grade in Fall 2018. Students who successfully completed either ENGWR 300-108 or ENGWR 300 (i.e. with grades A, B, or C) achieve the highest Fall-to-Spring persistence rate. Students with W grade in ENGWR 300-108 have a slightly lower Fall-to-Spring persistence rate than those in ENGWR 300, but the difference is marginal (2%; 46% vs 48%). Students in ENGWR 101 generally have a lower persistence rate than those in the higher-level course.

Table 10. SCC ENGWR first-time new students' Fall-to-Spring persistence rate by Fall 2018 ENGWR official grade, AY 2018-2019

	Course					
	ENGWR 101		ENGWR 300-108		ENGWR 300	
Official Grade	#	%	#	%	#	%
A	12	80.0%	50	96.2%	190	93.6%
B	32	80.0%	59	98.3%	203	93.5%
C	36	85.7%	45	97.8%	100	90.9%
D	31	83.8%	20	74.1%	51	89.5%
F	*	*	21	70.0%	54	77.1%
I			*	*	*	*
W	28	62.2%	11	45.8%	43	48.3%

Note:

* N ≤ 10

Not showing students with EW grade.

Of the 87 students who were unsuccessful in the ENGWR 300-108 combo in Fall 2018, 17 students (19%) retook the ENGWR 300 component in Spring 2019 with a success rate of 41% (7 students). As for the ENGWR 300 standalone course in Fall 2018, there were 226 students who were unsuccessful, of whom 69 (31%) retook the course in Spring 2019 with a success rate of 38% (26 students) (see more in Table 11).

Throughput

Table 11 shows throughput number and percentage of Fall 2018 ENGWR first-time new students at SCC. The overall throughput rate of first-time new students in the Fall 2018 cohort is approximately 18%, with 760 students successfully competing transfer-level English in two semesters out of 4349 first-time new students in Fall 2018.

Table 11. SCC first-time new students Fall 2018 cohort, two-semester ENGWR throughput

Course	Fall 2018 Cohort enrollment	Successfully completed transfer-level in Fall 2018	Successfully completed transfer-level in Spring 2019	**Total**
ENGWR 101	198	-	39	**39 students**
ENGWR 300-108	247	158	7	**165 students**
ENGWR 300	757	530	26	**556 students**
Total	**1,202**	**688**	**72**	**760 students**
Throughput number	**760 (out of 4349 first-time new students in Fall 2018)**			
Throughput rate	**17.5%**			

Summarizing preliminary findings

To summarize, we examined a sample of first-time new students at SCC who took ENGWR in Fall 2018. Note that the numbers are small in many cases so generalization should be made with cautions and further analysis need to be conducted following additional data collection. Below is a list of the preliminary findings in this report.

- Transfer-level placements have been increasing over the years. Fall 2018 experiences the highest increase, with over half of the students having direct transfer-level placements.
- The number of students placed at transfer level has increased for most groups but the gaps in transfer-level placement have widened for some (eg. African American,

Hispanic/Latino) (as their transfer-level placements are not increasing at the same rate as some other groups').

- Course success rate is highest in the transfer-level course (ENGWR 300, 70%). Success rate in the transfer-level with support course is about 65%.
- By equity measures, African American students have a higher success rate in the transfer-level with support course than in the transfer-level course (65% vs. 51%). Hispanic/Latino students have similar success rates in these two courses (65% vs. 66%).
- By high school GPA:
    o Students in higher HS GPA range are likely to have higher success rates.
    o For students in the 2.6-2.99 range:
        - Students in the 2.6-2.99 HS GPA range have a higher success rate in the transfer-level with support course than in the transfer-level standalone course (65% vs 58%). Nevertheless, the 2.6-2.99 HS GPA students are still more likely to succeed than not in the transfer-level standalone course.
        - Students in this HS GPA range in both co-req and standalone courses are highly likely to return in the spring semester (88% and 85% Fall-to-Spring persistence rate).
- By course official grades, there is a higher proportion of students with A and B grades in the transfer-level standalone course than in the co-req combo. However, the percentage of W grades is lower in the transfer-level with support course than in the standalone course.
- Fall-to-Spring persistence rates are similar for both transfer-level with support and transfer-level standalone courses (about 85-86%).
- The throughput rate of first-time new students in the Fall 2018 cohort is approximately 18%, with 760 students successfully competing transfer-level English in two semesters.