An early analysis of MM 4.0 at Bakersfield College

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In spring 2018, Bakersfield College began placing students via a new set of multiple measures decision rules. In particular, the requisite high school cumulative GPA required for placement into transfer-level English B1A was set at 1.90, whereas it had previously been set at 2.60, in accordance with the statewide MMAP placement decision rules. Changing the placement rule to 1.90 was intended to increase throughput. That is, it was expected based on prior research, that students who begin in the transfer-level class, even students with lower range high school GPAs, have a greater chance of successfully completing the transfer-level class than those who begin in developmental coursework. Additionally, this change was an initial step toward compliance with AB 705, which is required by fall 2019. This paper provides early results on whether the placement rule change is having the intended effect of increasing student throughput.

The population of greatest interest comprises students with a high school GPA from 1.9 to 2.59. This group is highlighted in Tables 1, 2, and 3. In Table 1, new students with HS GPAs in the specified range successfully completed ENGL B1A 33% of the time. This one-semester throughput rate is compared to the throughput rate of students in Table 2 who were placed one-level below under the MM 3.0 decision rules. Only 21% of those students had completed transfer-level English after one full year. Thus, the expectation that direct placement into transfer-level coursework would maximize student throughput was correct; 33% is twelve percentage points higher than 21%, a 57% relative increase in throughput for students in 1.9 to 2.59 high school GPA performance band.

Table 1. English B1A completion of new students who began at transfer-level in summer 2018 by HS GPA

HS GPA	N	Successes in ENGL B1A	Throughput rate	Avg. HS GPA
2.60+	122	83	68%	3.30
1.90-2.59	30	10	**33%**	2.30
<1.90	0	--	--	--
All w. GPAs	152	93	61%	3.10

Table 2. English B1A completion of new students who began at one-level below in summer 2017 by HS GPA

HS GPA	N	Successes in ENGL B1A*	Throughput rate	Avg. HS GPA
2.60+	30	13	43%	3.12
1.90-2.59	38	8	**21%**	2.33
<1.90	8	2	25%	1.54
All w. GPAs	76	23	30%	

*Within one year (i.e., by the end of spring 2018).

Table 3. English B1A completion of new students who began at transfer-level in summer 2017 by HS GPA

HS GPA	N	Successes in ENGL B1A	Throughput rate	Avg. HS GPA
2.60+	77	59	77%	3.28
1.90-2.59	21	13	**62%**	2.42
<1.90	2	2	100%*	1.52
All w. GPAs	100	74	74%	

* Sample size too small to draw reliable conclusions.

Also worth noting is that students who were placed directly into ENGL B1A in summer 2017 (see Table 3) enjoyed generally higher success and throughput rates than students in summer 2018, across all high school GPA performance bands (74% vs. 61%, overall). Students in the 1.9 to 2.59 HS GPA performance band, in particular, had higher success/throughput rates in summer 2017 vs. 2018 (62% vs. 33%).