

ACCUPLACER®

Case Study

Enhancing College Readiness Before High School Graduation

Montgomery County Public Schools Rockville, Maryland

Target Students: 12th Graders

Pilot Duration: 36 weeks

Implementation Model:
Independent Study

Executive Summary

Montgomery County Public Schools used ACCUPLACER®/MyFoundationsLab® with 12th-grade students to enhance their college readiness before high school graduation. Results from pre-testing and post-testing demonstrated that a majority of students improved their course placement as well as test scores.

Implementation Details

In 2009, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) began a partnership with Montgomery College (MC) to increase the number of graduates who were considered college ready and, therefore, reduce the number of students needing developmental education. In 2011, MCPS tested selected 12th-graders with ACCUPLACER diagnostics and used the data to develop and deliver targeted interventions with impressive gains in college readiness. In 2012, MCPS implemented a technology-based intervention in four high schools. Twelfth-graders were assessed with ACCUPLACER placement tests, with those placing into MC's developmental courses given the opportunity to voluntarily participate in an intervention program using MyFoundationsLab. At the conclusion of the pilot program, a review of the data showed that students who used the intervention tool for a minimum of one hour showed significant improvement in both placement and domain scores, compared to those without access.

“College readiness is a huge issue right now—one that we as community college administrators, faculty and staff have to grapple with. ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab helps with student completion.”

— Dr. Beverly Walker-Griffea, Senior Vice President for Student Services, Montgomery College, MD

Students Using MFL > 1 Hour	Average Domain Score Increase Pre- to Post-test	Percent of Students Showing Improvement
Arithmetic	2.0	51.9%
Elementary Algebra	2.3	55.6%
Reading Comprehension	1.7	61.1%
Sentence Skills	4.4	63.0%

Table 1 Use of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab produces measurable achievement gains in pretest to posttest scores as measured by ACCUPLACER diagnostics, even for students using the intervention for a short time.

Improvement of Placement Levels	Overall % of Students Improving	% Improving Using MFL	% Improving Without MFL
Reading Comprehension	70%	64%	36%
Sentence Skills	48%	71%	29%
Elementary Algebra	43%	67%	33%
College Level Math	41%	68%	32%

Table 2 Use of ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab produced stronger results than other intervention strategies with a significantly higher percentage of students demonstrating gains in placement levels.

Lessons Learned

- Targeted instruction delivered by ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab delivers strong gains in student achievement as measured by pre- and post-ACCUPLACER placement testing.
- High school students perform better when instruction is delivered in a structured setting, such as in a classroom as compared to independent study.

Implementation Model

- Independent Study
- Independent Study with Guidance
- Lab Class
- Blended Instruction

Measure of Success

- Improvement in Scores
- Improvement in Placement Levels
- Improvement in Proficiency Levels
- Performance in Subsequent Courses

Location

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- Online

Implementation Model

Independent Study (IS)

Instructional model allows students to work completely on their own in the ACCUPLACER//MyFoundationsLab online intervention curriculum. There is no provision for dedicated class time or access to hardware; students must provide their own computer and must manage their own learning without access to a teacher/instructor..

Measure of Success

Improvement in Scores

Pilot program sites were able to report average score gains for their cohort of students by comparing students' scores from pre- to post-assessment. In addition, they were able to compare score gains in each of the five domains on each diagnostic test.

Improvement in Placement Levels

Pilot program sites were able to identify the percentage of students who improved their course placement and the number of courses bypassed by comparing students' placement levels from pre- to post-assessment. Pilots used the ACCUPLACER placement test as the pre- and post-assessment measure.

Improvement in Proficiency Levels

Pilot program sites were able to report improvement in performance for their cohort of students by comparing students' proficiency gains from pre- to post-assessment. Pilots used the ACCUPLACER diagnostic test as a pre- and post-assessment tool to determine the percentage of students who advance to a new proficiency level: Needs Improvement to Limited Proficiency to Proficient.

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