



California Acceleration Project

Supporting California's 114 Community Colleges

To Transform Remediation to Increase Student Completion and Equity

www.AccelerationProject.org

CAP Recommendations for English Composition & ESL, Post-AB 705 August 2018

Many who have attended CAP programs over the past year have asked for CAP's recommendations in areas related to AB 705 compliance. Below, you will find our answers to frequently asked questions about setting up corequisite courses and reforming placement practices.

- **AB 705 restricts colleges from offering traditional remedial courses but allows for concurrent support while students enroll in transfer-level courses. What design do you recommend?**
CAP recommends keeping your transfer-level course unchanged and creating a new basic skills course that can be hard-linked to certain sections of college composition. This course should be open to all students, with no minimum test score or high school GPA. In many cases, a 5-unit package will work best (3 transfer-level units + 2 basic skills units OR 4 transfer-level units + 1 basic skills unit); however, it is important to consider your local context, such as the teaching load for composition classes and how part-time faculty can reach a .67 FTE maximum load. Consult CAP's Corequisite Information sheet for details about existing models in CA (lecture/lab units, links to course outlines, etc.). Some colleges have created new 5-6 unit enhanced 1A courses (no linked coreq), but UC/CSU articulation timelines mean that changes to transferable courses will not be approved in time for Fall 2019. We do not recommend exceeding 6-units total package (transfer level and support). Existing models have been successful with just 5-6 total units, and AB 705 specifies that colleges limit the cost/number of units required.
- **The Chancellor's Office AB 705 guidelines (March 2018) say that concurrent support "should be considered" for students with a HS GPA between 1.9 and 2.6 and "should be provided" for students with a HS GPA below 1.9. I'm not sure how this translates to placement on my campus.**
CAP recommends that students with HS GPAs of 2.6 and above go directly into standard transfer-level composition, with no additional support required. Students with GPAs below 1.9 should go into transfer-level with required concurrent support (e.g., 3-unit English 1A with 2-units linked corequisite course). For students with GPAs 1.9-2.6, colleges have discretion. One option is to use guided self-placement to empower students to choose. Data from early corequisite models in CA suggests that this group does succeed in college composition at higher rates in corequisite models than in standard transfer-level courses. Some colleges have also seen reductions in, or elimination of, racial equity gaps in corequisite models.
- **What about guided self-placement?**
AB 705 requires colleges to place students into courses that give them the best possible chance of completing a transfer-level course within one year. To date, research has not identified a single group of students who have higher completion when starting below transfer-level. Given this, colleges should not be guiding students into stand-alone basic skills classes. The only guided placement options should be transfer-level composition or transfer-level composition with support.
- **What about adult students who've been out of high school for more than 10 years?**
We recommend using guided self-placement to empower adult students to choose between transfer-level English composition and transfer-level with additional support. Statewide data from the Multiple Measures Assessment Project (MMAP) is limited to ten years after graduation, but there is no evidence that high school background stops being predictive after this point. Returning adults tend to be highly self-directed and successful, and, as with all students, there is no evidence that stand-alone remedial courses make returning adults more likely to complete college English.

- I've heard we can keep stand-alone basic skills classes for students who choose to take them even though we can't place any students there under AB 705. Does CAP recommend retaining sections of these courses for students who wish to take them?**

CAP does not recommend retaining stand-alone basic skills classes, even if they are optional. Enrolling in a stand-alone remedial course – including an accelerated course – reduces a student's likelihood of earning a degree. Retaining these courses means that some students – particularly less confident and less privileged students – will under-place themselves, often without understanding the consequences. It also opens the door to implicit bias, as well-intentioned counselors and instructional faculty may steer certain students to these classes in a misguided belief that lower-level classes would be better for them.
- What should we do about our separate reading department, which includes faculty who don't meet the minimum qualifications to teach English?**

Under AB 705 colleges can no longer require students to enroll in stand-alone developmental reading courses before college composition, raising concerns about the role of reading faculty under the new law. We believe that teaching English composition well requires integrated reading and writing pedagogy, and that either Reading or English faculty can provide a rich, integrated learning experience. CAP recommends that colleges revise their course outlines to specify that English OR Reading faculty meet the minimum qualifications to teach college composition, and that they provide professional development to help both reading and English faculty teach with integrated pedagogy (e.g., through the California Acceleration Project, Reading Apprenticeship, and locally developed cross-training).
- What happens in corequisite college English classrooms?**

Corequisite courses provide additional class time for activities that scaffold students' success in the transfer-level class (e.g., just-in-time remediation, collaborative work with class texts, drafting time, one-on-one conferences, and peer review). Additionally, instructors can attend to their students' affective domain and facilitate community-building activities. Often, these activities are not different from what instructors would do in a stand-alone class; the corequisite course simply provides more time to do them.
- How do we handle placement for English language learners who attended U.S. high schools?**

MMAAP research included ESOL students with four years of high school transcript data. For these students, colleges should use high school grades for placement into transfer-level English or transfer-level with concurrent support, following the same placement rules used for native speakers. MMAAP has not yet conducted analyses of students with less than four years of high school transcript data. Colleges might consider guided placement to help them choose between college composition (regular or corequisite) or a credit ESL course. Overall, CAP recommends offering ESOL-designated sections of composition (regular and corequisite) taught by ESL faculty who can provide targeted language support for students. Colleges should revise their course outlines to specify that English OR ESL faculty meet the minimum qualifications to teach college composition, and create opportunities for ESL and English faculty to collaborate on how to effectively teach the course to both native English speakers and ESOL learners.
- What does AB 705 require for our ESL course sequences?**

For students enrolling in credit ESL courses, AB 705 requires colleges to maximize students' likelihood of completing transfer-level English within three years. The implementation deadline is Fall 2020. An AB705 ESL advisory committee is working with the Chancellor's Office on guidelines that will include changes to placement, curricular design, and articulation policies. While those guidelines are developed, we recommend colleges develop a corequisite model of transfer-level composition taught by ESL faculty and begin curricular redesign that streamlines credit students' pathway to English composition (e.g., moving toward integrated reading, writing, and grammar courses; backwards-designing ESL curriculum with the transfer-level composition course requirements in mind; and reducing the number of required levels and courses in the credit ESL sequence). We also recommend pursuing CSU transfer articulation credit for your ESL course one-level-below transfer composition under Area C2 (foreign language).