I have to take a remedial course
Does that mean I’m not going to make it at college?

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The upfront bottom line

Having to do coursework to be ’college ready’ turns out not to be much of a barrier to you graduating. As you will see below, students who needed remediation in English, mathematics, or both graduated at rates close to that of students who didn’t need any remediation. You should think of remediation as guidance about what you should be working on to further your college education, not as an assessment of whether you are going to succeed.

Never give up on a dream just because of the time it will take to accomplish it.
Time will pass anyway.

Earl Nightingale

Evidence from the 2009 cohort

We studied students entering college for the first time in Fall 2009 (n=4032).

![Graph showing graduation rates for students with remediation in English, Math, or both](image)

As you can see, graduation rates are highest (55.7%) for students who tested ready for college level English and math. But the graduation rate is barely lower (53.8%) for those needing English remediation only. For these students, being assessed as needing remediation in English did not say very much about whether or not they would graduate.

With math there is a larger effect. Students assessed as needing remediation in math had a 7% lower graduation rate (48.6%) than students who didn’t need any remediation.

Among students who needed remediation in both English and math, the graduation rate was still 41.4%. This is clearly lower than the other figures, but by fewer than 15 percentage points. Based on real, SF State data, we can safely say that your chances of graduation are good regardless of how much remediation you might need.

We’ve changed how we handle remediation

We’ve changed how we think about remediation since 2009 when the cohort described above entered SF State. ’Remediation’ today isn’t really about catching students up to their peers. Rather, we use assessment to make informed guesses about what will launch students into a successful academic trajectory.

Back in 2009, every new student was assessed for their college readiness in mathematics and written communication in English. Students had to take the Entry Level Mathematics test and the English Language Placement test to see if they needed remediation. The ELM had 80 possible points and students were placed as follows depending on their score:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELM score</th>
<th>Placement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50 or higher</td>
<td>Students may enroll in a GE Quantitative Reasoning course. Consult an adviser for placement in an appropriate level course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-42</td>
<td>Students must take and complete MATH 70, Algebra I (3 units), with a grade of C- or better during their first semester of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-50</td>
<td>Students must take and complete MATH 60, Algebra I (3 units), with a grade of C- or better during their first semester of enrollment, and take and complete MATH 70 with a grade of C- or better during their second semester of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 and below</td>
<td>Students must take and complete MATH 59, Algebra I with Pre-calculus (4 units), in their first semester of enrollment with a grade of C- or better, and must take and complete MATH 70 with a grade of C- or better during their second semester of enrollment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of course students could also be exempt from taking the ELM if they had already done an alternative assessment that could be used to place them in an appropriate math class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACCEPTABLE ELM EXEMPTIONS</th>
<th>SCORE/GRADE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Augmented Mathematics California Standards Test, i.e., the CSU Early Assessment Program (EAP) taken in grade 11</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augmented ELM, i.e., the CSU Early Assessment Program (EAP) has successful completion of a Senior Year Mathematics Experience (SYME)</td>
<td>Conditionally Exempt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Board SAT I mathematics section or College Board SAT Subject Test Mathematics Test Level I, II (calculator), III, or IV (calculator)</td>
<td>550 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT Mathematics Test</td>
<td>23 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Board Advanced Placement Calculus Examination (AB or BC) or Statistics Examination</td>
<td>3 or above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion and transfer of a course that satisfies the General Education Breadth/Intergeneral General Education Transfer Curriculum (IGETC) quantitative reasoning requirement</td>
<td>Grade of C or better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similarly, students needed to score 151 or better on the EPT in order to enroll in English 114. Otherwise, they had to take either English 104-105 or English 106. And, of course, students could be exempt from taking the EPT if they had already done a written English assessment.

Going forward

In August of this year, Chancellor White issued an executive order aimed at refocusing our efforts on getting students on the path to college success. His order can be found at http://www.calstate.edu/EO-1110.html. In brief, the order’s goal is to get every student through entry level math and English in their first year. Our job going forward is to advise students how best to meet those requirements based on their interests and abilities.
Main Finding

For non-Ethnic Studies majors, passing AFRS, RRS, ETHS, LTNS, AA and AIS courses is a significant predictor for graduation.

* More students who dropped out did not enroll in Ethnicity Studies classes.

Our finding is consistent with other qualitative and quantitative studies in a variety of educational contexts

Several studies have shown that students’ cultural and linguistic identification with course content increases engagement in the curriculum and the educational community in high school and college:


Media articles on the topic:


“Ethnic Studies Courses Benefit All Students”, *The San Diego Union Tribune*, September 26, 2015

The Numbers

Proportions of Graduates in Relation to Number of Ethnic Studies Courses Taken

How might you incorporate this finding into your role as teacher and advisor?

- What are some easy ways to modify your course curriculum to ensure students “see themselves” in class content?
- How could your department devote more attention to ethnic studies within the overall major experience?
- How might this finding affect your undergraduate student advising?
- How does the study of ethnic and cultural practice build community within the classroom and across the university?

SAPP Participants

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Jennifer Summit

Stick your ideas here!
Main Finding

Numbers of first-time freshmen who failed the “Golden Four” courses (Oral Communication, Written Communication, Critical Thinking, Quantitative Reasoning) were small. However, when they failed these courses, it had significant impact on the likelihood of graduation.

The “Golden Four”

- Oral Communication (GE Area A1)
  Typically met by taking COMM 150 or ENG 210 (multilingual)
- Written Communication (GE Area A2)
  Typically met by taking ENG 114, 104/105, or ENG 209 (multilingual)
- Critical Thinking (GE Area A3)
  Typically met by taking PHIL 110 or a class offered through Ethnic Studies
- Quantitative Reasoning (GE Area B4)
  Typically met by taking (pre)calculus or statistics class

The Data

n = 4,032 first-time freshmen from the Fall 2009 cohort were analyzed using Logistic Regression. O.R. = odds ratio.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fail</th>
<th>Pass</th>
<th>O.R.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Graduate</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>4.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Graduate</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>1879</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Graduate</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>1659</td>
<td>3.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1686</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Graduate</td>
<td>564</td>
<td>1452</td>
<td>1.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>1615</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How might you incorporate this finding into your role as teacher and advisor?

Students that pass Oral Communication on their first try are more than 4.5 times as likely to graduate.

Students that pass Written Communication on their first try are more than twice as likely to graduate.

Students that pass Critical Thinking on their first try are more than 3 times as likely to graduate. Those that failed more than once did not graduate.

Students that pass Quantitative Reasoning on their first try are more than 1.5 times as likely to graduate.

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Related Findings

Our findings compliment internal SFSU analysis of major declaration status and timing which also suggested that major exploration and changes even into the 3rd year can be advantageous to students. Contrary to commonly held assumptions that prolonging major declaration can negatively impact a student’s likelihood of graduating, the 2014 SF State Six-Year Student Outcomes by Declaration Status and Change of Major report found the “highest six-year graduation rate was among those [2007 FTF] who entered with an undeclared major but declared one later (75%),” compared to a 50% graduation rate among those who entered with a declared major. The study also examined timing of declaration; students who declared in their 2nd and 3rd years had higher graduation rates than those who came in undeclared and declared in their first year. The study also cites additional CSU and other national evidence which suggests students can benefit from major exploration and changes, and particularly in the 2nd and 3rd years (SFSU, 2014).

Some institutions have implemented “meta-majors”, where students are guided into broad academic and career areas (sometimes with corresponding course pathways) as they enter the university to introduce them to the field of study while allowing for exploration (Complete College America, n.d., Georgia State University, 2017).

Research Question: Are FTF who change majors more likely to graduate? (not those who start as undeclared, but those who come in declared and then change)

When Students Change Major Matters

Of the students who changed majors, among those who changed in their 1st year: 7.2% did not graduate vs. 3.5% who did.

However, those who changed majors in the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years graduated at higher rates than those who changed in their 1st year. 3rd year difference is most pronounced.

Additional analysis is needed (e.g. qualitative analysis of advising support that may contribute to the patterns found).

2nd year change: 26.3% no vs. 28.6% grad
3rd year change: 27.3% no vs. 28.4% grad
4th year change: 26.6% no vs. 23.4% grad

Share your ideas here!

How might we, as faculty and staff, respond institutionally to these findings (e.g. advising changes, first year experiences)?

Change of Major Period

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change of Major Period</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Graduated</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
<th>Did Not Graduate</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Year</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Year</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Year</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Year</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Year</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th Year</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>95.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments: Changing majors during 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year are significant predictors for graduation.

Most of students who graduated changed their major during the 3rd year (followed by 2nd and 4th yrs)

* Changing majors during the 3rd and 5th years had no significant effect on graduation

Some institutions have implemented “meta-majors”, where students are guided into broad academic and career areas (sometimes with corresponding course pathways) as they enter the university to introduce them to the field of study while allowing for exploration (Complete College America, n.d., Georgia State University, 2017).

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San Francisco State University. (2014). How might we, as faculty and staff, respond institutionally to these findings (e.g. advising changes, first year experiences)?
**Main Findings**

Each additional NC received tends to lower the 6-year graduation rate by 4-5 percentage points.

Students receiving 2 or more NCs have much less success graduating within 6 years than those receiving 0 or 1 NC.

Exactly half the cohort that entered SFSU as first-time freshman in 2009 graduated within 6 years. The table on the right can be looked at in two ways (see below).

1. Strong differences exist between those who graduate and those who do not in terms of the number of NCs received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of NCs</th>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>2+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>1,743</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>2,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Graduate</td>
<td>1,502</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>2,016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,245</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>4,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those who graduate, only 13.5% have 2+ NCs; Among those who don’t graduate, 25.5% have 2+ NCs.

2. There’s a large difference in the 6-year graduation rates between those who received 0-1 NCs and those who received 2 or more NCs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of NCs</th>
<th>0-1</th>
<th>2+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Graduate</td>
<td>46.3%</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among those with 0-1 NCs, 54% graduate in 6 years; Among those w/ 2+ NCs, only 35% graduate in 6 yrs.

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# Probation and Graduation Rates among Undergraduates at SF State

## Academic Probation Previously

*Students are placed on probation when their campus (SF State) and/or total (from all colleges/universities attended) GPA falls below 2.0. Students on probation for two consecutive semesters with very low GPAs are subject to disqualification (at or below 1.50 for freshmen, 1.70 for sophomores, 1.85 for juniors, and 1.95 for seniors).*

Students on probation or subject to disqualification are not permitted to enroll in classes for the next term until they have met with their major advisor and completed the department’s reinstatement process. Then they are permitted to enroll in 13 or fewer units during the next term.

## How Big of an Issue is Probation?

Gershenfeld, Hood, & Zhan (2016) found that low first-semester GPA was a statistically significant factor in explaining why underrepresented students did not graduate within a 6-year time frame.

SF State data from Fall 2006 – Fall 2010 demonstrate significant links between probation and graduation, such that probation negatively predicts a student’s chance of graduation.

## Probation in 1st Semester & 1st Year Persistence & Graduation

[Table showing 6-Year Graduation Rates for students entering 2006-2010, with columns for Not Probation & URM and Probation & URM, and rows for different years and cohorts.]

## We considered 4,032 SF State FTF (Fall 2009 Cohort) to determine how frequency of probation was linked to 6-year graduation rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Terms on Probation &amp; Associated Graduation Rate</th>
<th>0 Terms</th>
<th>1 Term</th>
<th>2 Terms</th>
<th>3+ Terms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES Grad</td>
<td>53.00%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>32.00%</td>
<td>19.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO Grad</td>
<td>47.00%</td>
<td>76.00%</td>
<td>68.00%</td>
<td>81.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graduation Rates are similar among students with *no history* of being on probation. Of these students (*n* = 3,548):

• 53% students with zero semesters on probation graduated, whereas
• 47% students with zero semesters on probation *did not* graduate

We see larger differences in graduation rates when students experience 1 or more semesters on probation.

Of the 321 students sampled with 1 semester on probation:

• 24% graduated from SF State, whereas
• 76% *did not* graduate from SF State.

## Changes at SF State

In 2016-2017, Academic Senate passed a policy for probation and disqualification (S17-275) and grade forgiveness (F16-248):

Under the new policy:

• Academic advising is required in both the fall and spring semesters for all students on probation
• Students will not be disqualified from SF State as long as their term GPA is at or above a 2.0 (can continue on probation for multiple semesters)
• Students with less than 30 units earned can raise their GPA to 2.0 in three semesters to raise their GPA before being disqualified
• Undergraduate students may repeat a maximum of 16 units of coursework taken at SF State for the purpose of excluding the original grade from the GPA.
• When a course is repeated, up to the 16-unit limit, the lower of the two grades is forgiven from the GPA calculation.

**References available upon request**
Stepping up to the major

Completing the first class in the major contributes significantly to retention

Four majors, four colleges

2009 cohort – student enrollment after taking 0 to 9 required courses in major

Findings:

- A significant proportion of students who left had not taken a course in the major.
- In three of the four majors, students became increasingly less likely to leave as they took more courses in the major.

Questions for further research

- Does a lack of lower division classes in the major discourage students?
- If the major includes lower division coursework (as these four do), why are students leaving without taking it?
- If there are lower division courses in the major, are the courses offered frequently and are there enough seats for freshmen and sophomores to get into the courses?
- How do majors determine the right number of lower division courses to include?

Possible Strategies to Support Student Success

- Majors may want to include some lower division courses
- Offer exploratory courses with the major prefix to fulfill general education requirements
- Assure that there are sufficient seats offered to meet student demand in lower division courses
- Improve articulation of lower division major courses to support transfer students