

Remedial And Developmental Education In New Mexico's Colleges: Which Students and What Courses?

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Executive Summary

- New Mexico faces the challenge of ensuring that high school students graduate ready for college and careers.
- Research indicates that about 47% of New Mexico high school graduates who attend the state's public colleges and universities take remedial courses in math and/or reading in 2009.
- Research indicates that college students who take remedial courses are less likely to succeed in college.
- New Mexico also faces the challenge of ensuring that many of New Mexico's 1.2 million working-age adults have the skills they need to enter the workforce or prepare for different jobs.
- The Governor and the 2011 New Mexico Legislature are currently exploring ways to improve high school students' success and college, help working-age adults invigorate the workforce and find ways to use the state's revenues more efficiently and effectively.
- One of the topics under consideration by the Governor and the 2011 Legislature is remediation in college. Having a clear understanding of which students took what courses will help inform these important discussions.

Caveat Legislator

- The data presented in this report are **estimates** based on:
 - The 2010 Fact Book From Dona Ana Community College
 - The 2010 Fact Book From Central New Mexico Community College
 - The 2010 Ready For College Report published by OEA, HED, and PED
- Although Dona Ana Community College and Central New Mexico Community College account for approximately 50% of the student credit hour production in the branch colleges and independent community colleges, we recommend a full and ongoing analyses of the remedial and developmental data available at the Higher Education Department.

Why “Which Students?” and “What Courses?” Are Important Policy Questions

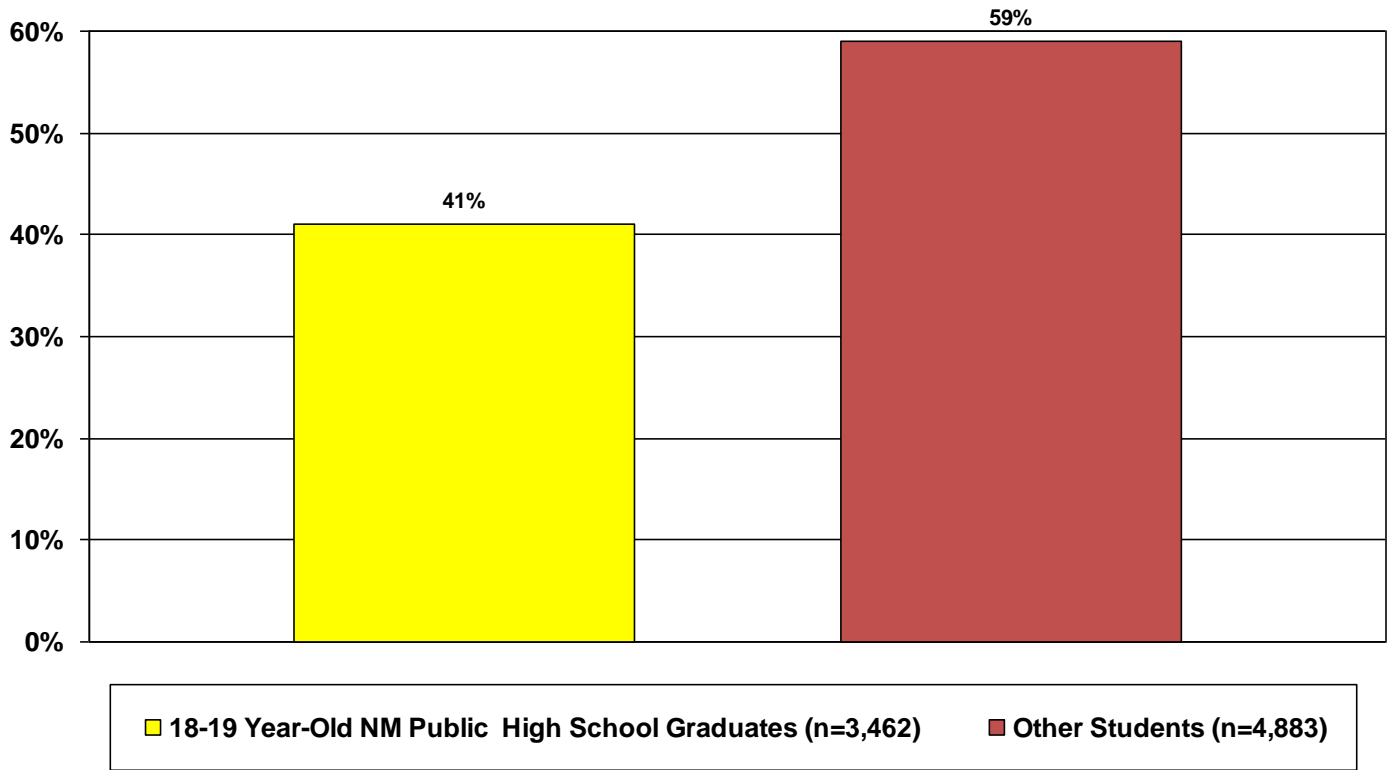
- According to a 2008 Lumina Foundation Report, New Mexico had 1,202,970 working-age adults. 843,917 (70.2%) of these adults had not completed college (associate’s degree or higher). In addition:
 - 342,499 had completed just a high school diploma but have not entered college
 - 62,549 speak little or no English
 - 268,209 are living in families whose combined incomes are less than a living wage (twice the level of poverty)
- According to Ready For College, about 47.1 % of New Mexico high school graduates who attend the state’s public colleges and universities took remedial courses in math and/or reading in 2009.
- If one of New Mexico’s policy goals is to help working-age adults who are returning to school to learn new skills or retrain for new careers, then the discussion about remedial and developmental classes may need to focus on ensuring that these supports are available.
- If one of New Mexico’s policy goals is to reduce the number of high school graduates who take remedial courses in college, then the discussion about remedial courses may need to focus on how to address the needs of the students who are in high school and college now and how to ensure that future students graduate from high school better prepared to succeed in college.

Which Students?

Recent High School Graduates vs. Working-Age Adults

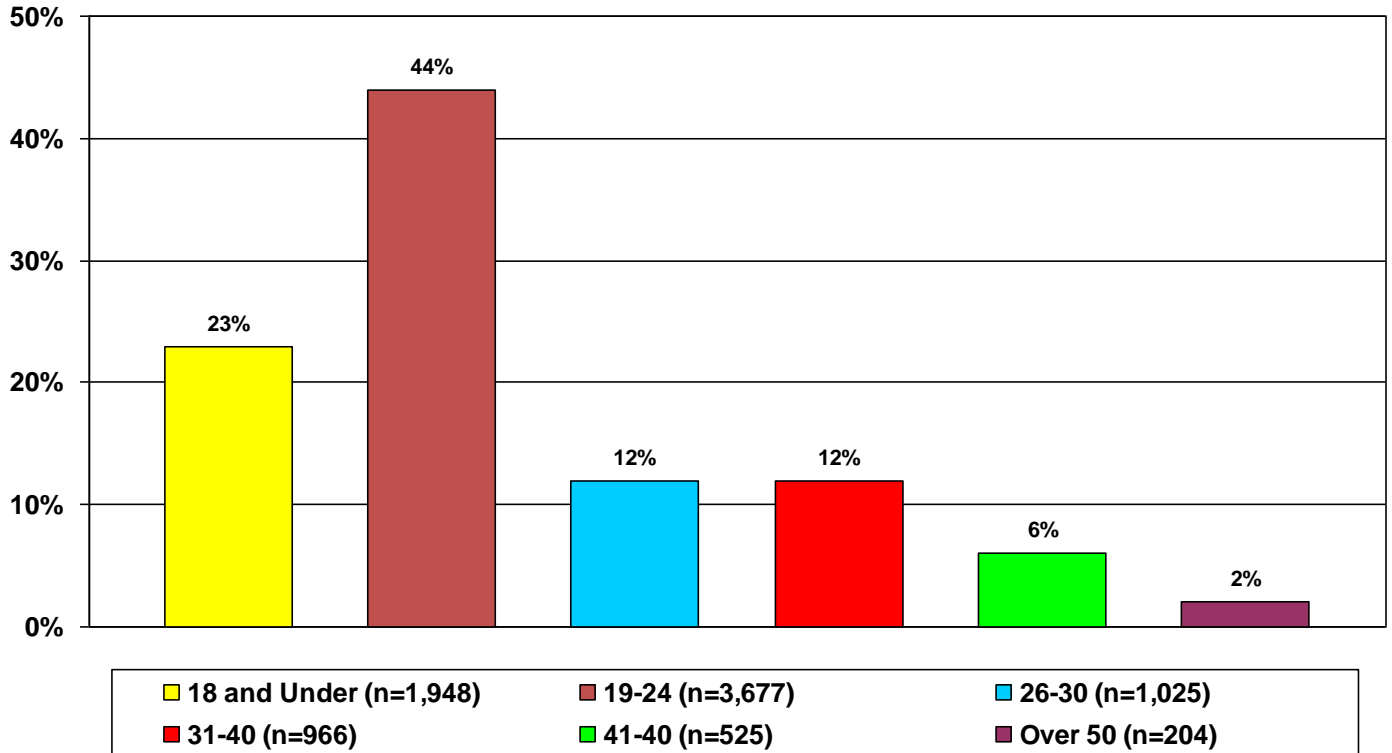
- Determining which students are enrolled in higher education remedial and developmental courses is a critical distinction in current policy discussions.
- The 2010 Ready For College Reports which show that approximately 47.1% of high school graduates take remedial courses in focused on 9,713 New Mexico public high school graduates who were 18 or 19 years old and had just graduated from high school the year before they enrolled in college.
- The Ready For College Reports made this decision because the intent of those studies was to evaluate the critical transition between high school and higher education.
- Tracking the number of recent high school graduates who take remedial courses in college is important for improving New Mexico's P-20 education system and we urge that the Ready For College Reports continue to be conducted.
- But it is also important to note that the data indicate that the majority of students who take developmental courses are **not** recent graduates from New Mexico's public high schools. Instead, these students include working-age older adults who are coming to learn new skills, displaced workers who have lost their jobs, students from other states, students with GED, and students who graduated from home schools, BIE schools, private and parochial high schools.

Fall 2009 Developmental Math Education Classes At Dona Ana Community College (DACC) and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) By 18 and 19 Year-Old New Mexico Public High School Graduates Vs. Other Students



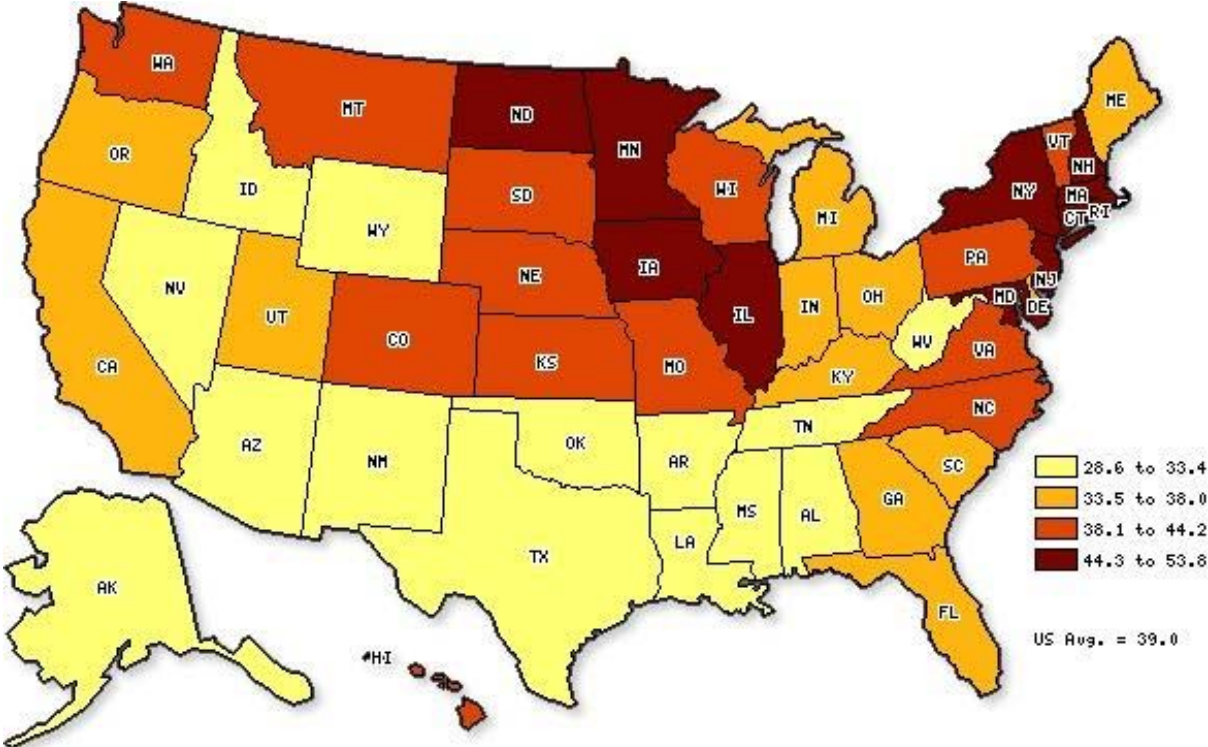
Note: These data are Estimates based on the 2010 Ready For College Report and the 2010 DACC and CNM Fact Books

Fall 2009 Developmental Math Education Classes At Dona Ana Community College (DACC) and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) By Age



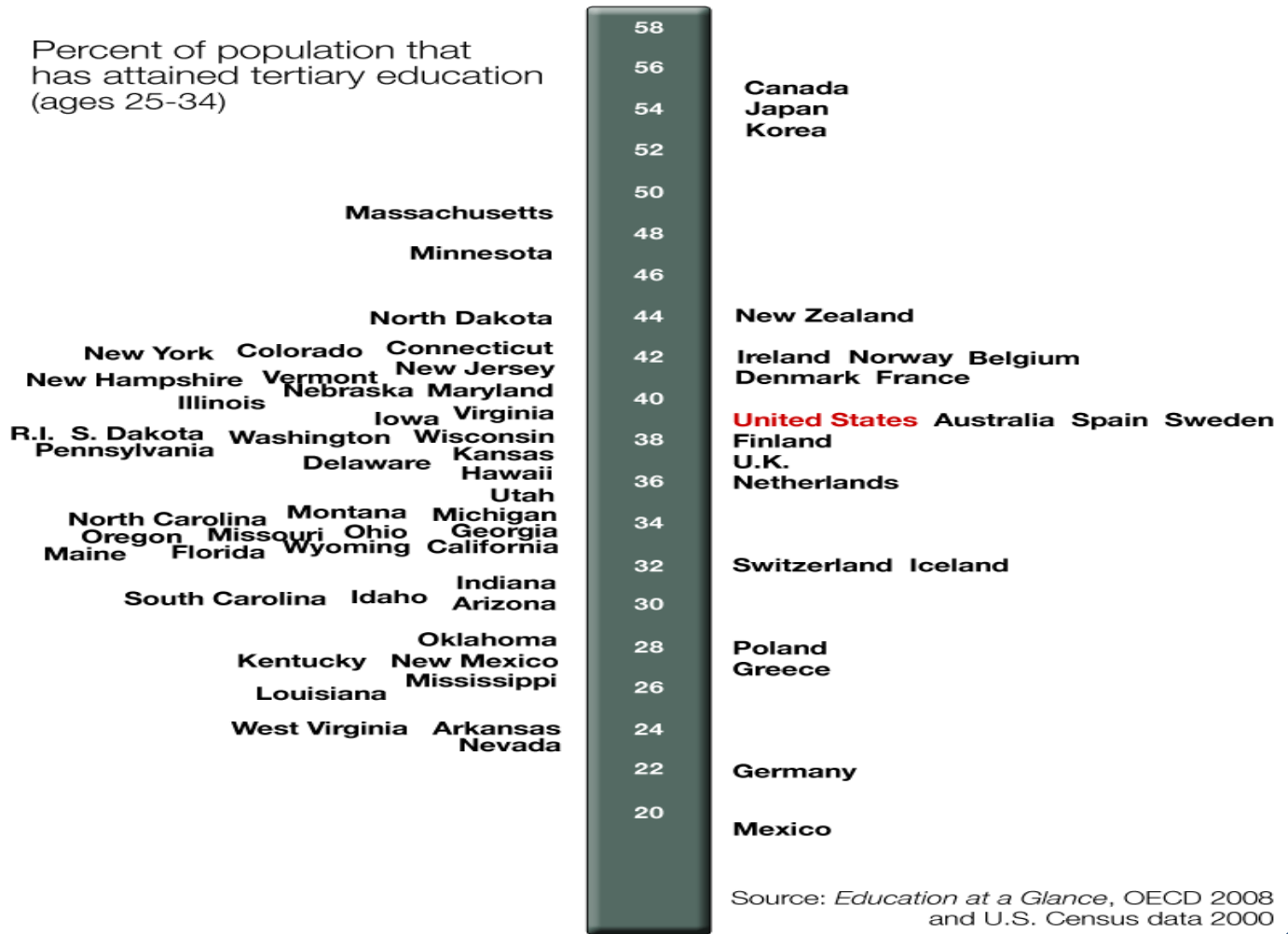
Note: These data from the 2010 DACC and CNM Fact Books

Percent of Adults 25 to 34 with an Associates Degree or Higher - 2009

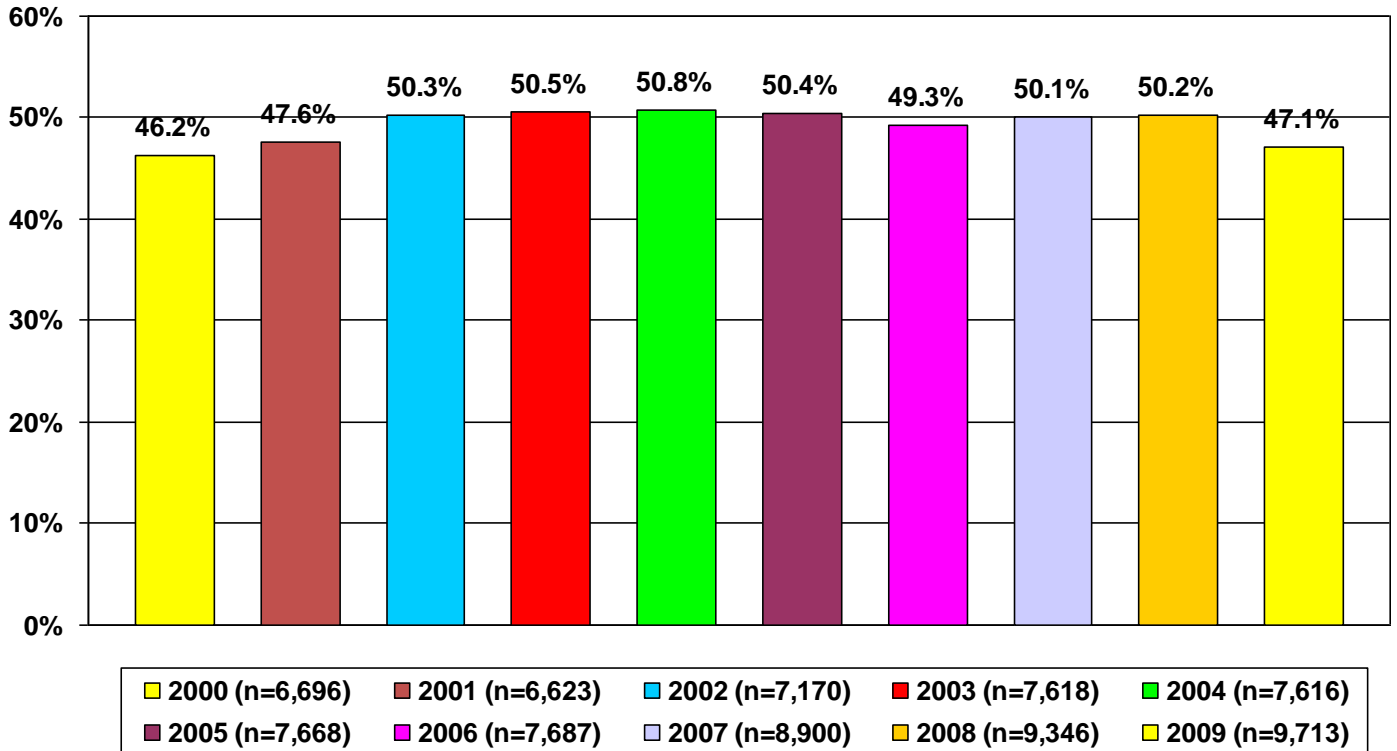


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample File

Percent of the population with a two-year or four-year college degree, ages 25-34



Percent of New Mexico Public High School Graduates Who Took Remedial Classes In Math And/Or Reading In New Mexico Colleges: 2000-2009



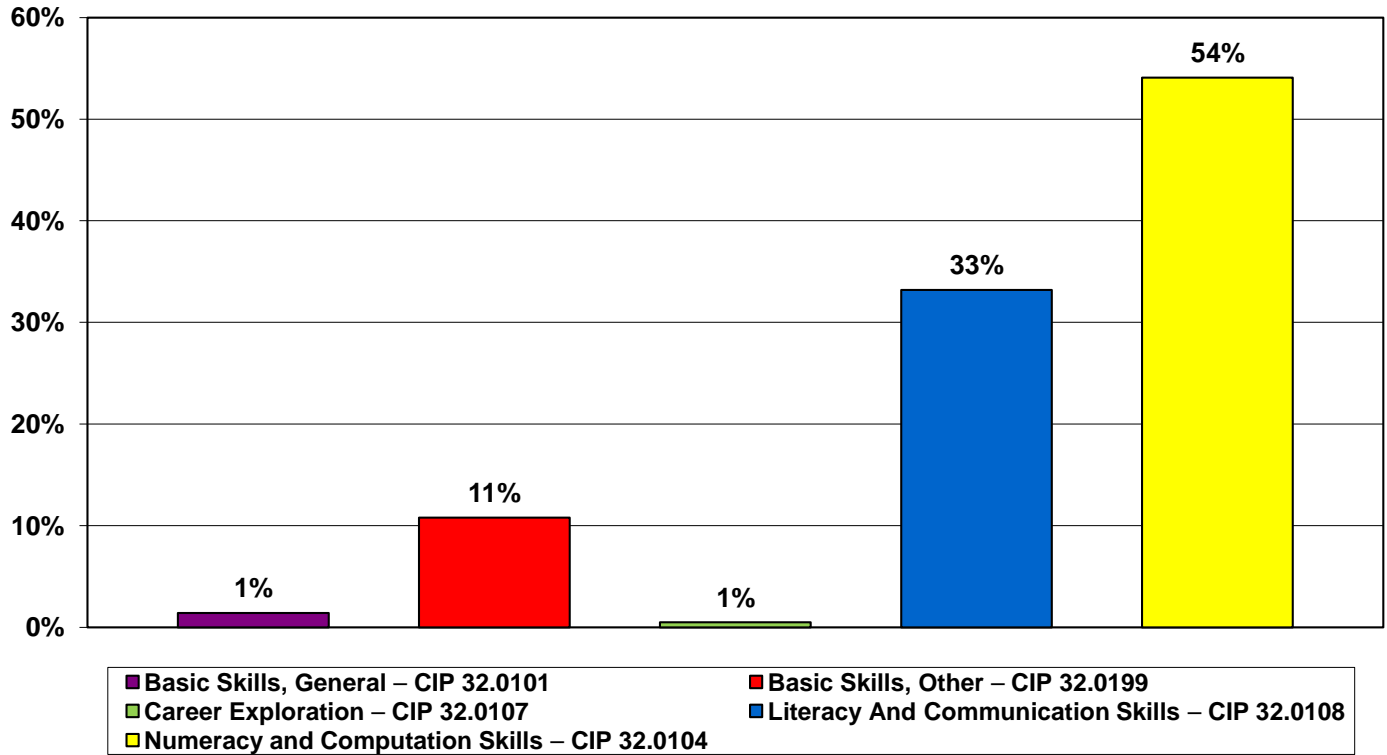
Note: These data are from the 2010 Ready For College Report and do not include charter schools or alternative schools. Those data are available in the full report.

What Courses?

Developmental Courses vs. Remedial Courses

- New Mexico's colleges and universities use the Classification Of Instructional Programs (CIP) code developed by the National Center For Education Statistics to classify courses.
- Developmental education courses usually include:
 - Basic Skills, General – CIP 32.0101
 - Basic Skills, Other – CIP 32.0199
 - Career Exploration – CIP 32.0107
 - Literacy And Communication Skills – CIP 32.0108
 - Numeracy and Computation Skills – CIP 32.0104
- The Ready For College Reports which show that approximately 47.1% of high school graduates take remedial courses used data from two types of higher education developmental courses:
 - Literacy And Communication Skills – CIP 32.0108
 - Numeracy and Computation Skills – CIP 32.0104
- We recommend an updated analyses of how colleges and universities decide which courses are classified as developmental and which courses are offered at different institutions.
- Determining which higher education courses are considered developmental and which of those are considered remedial is a critical distinction in current policy discussions.

Fall 2009 Developmental Classes At Dona Ana Community College (DACC) and Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) By CIP Codes



Note: These data are Estimates based on the 2010 DACC and CNM Fact Books.

The Ongoing Challenge Of Remedial and Developmental Classes In College

- We support New Mexico's efforts to:
 - Ensure that students graduate from high school ready for success in college and careers.
 - Help working-age adults develop the skills they need to enter or strengthen the workforce.
- We believe that high schools and colleges should:
 - Improve the alignment in standards and assessments used in K-12 education and higher education. Particular focus should be paid to the cut scores colleges use to place students in remedial classes.
 - Improve their communication about how to support students making the transition. HB70 -Education Data System, passed in 2010, calls for colleges to report freshman year outcomes back to high schools, and the Governor and Legislature should monitor the implementation and impact of these reports of carefully.
- We hope that New Mexico uses the opportunity afforded by HB70 to continue to develop reports that track the effectiveness of the education system. We suggest two:
 - Reports that track the effectiveness of remedial and development courses in helping students succeed in college and in their careers.
 - Reports that track how well prepared the high percentage of high school graduates who do not attend college are for the workplace.

The University of New Mexico Center For Education Policy Research (UNM-CEPR)

- UNM-CEPR's mission is to conduct independent, high quality research using educational data that can inform policy and practice throughout New Mexico's P-20 education system.
- UNM-CEPR has a number of key goals including:
 - Providing policymakers, educators, community members and others with data presented in ways that inform the important debates in education.
 - Fostering and sustaining a rigorous and broad-based education research program for the benefit of New Mexicans.
 - Cultivating communication and maintaining collaborative relationships with a broad-based spectrum of agencies and constituencies.
 - Assembling teams of leading policy analysts and social scientists to work with school data on key educational issues and problems facing the state.
 - Creating new venues in which practitioners, policymakers, and researchers can regularly use educational data to address current issues.
 - Cultivating a new generation of scholars focused on educational data and policy impact.
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