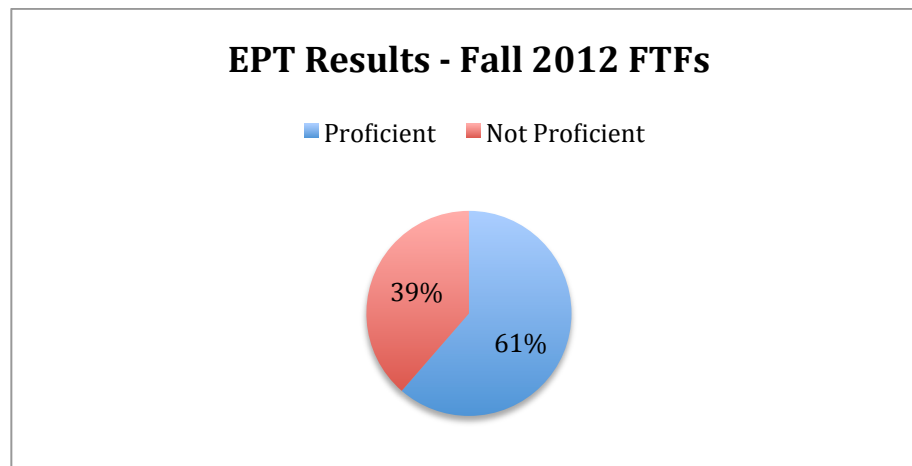


**CSU Channel Islands Composition Program  
Directed Self Placement Assessment  
2012-2013 Academic Year**

In the fall of 2012, **712 First Time Freshmen** (FTFs) were admitted to CI. Of these students, **437 (61%)** were deemed as **proficient** in English based on their scores on the CSU's English Placement Test (EPT). Conversely, **275** of these students (**39%**) were **deemed unprepared to successfully complete their first year composition (FYC) requirement without first completing remediation.**



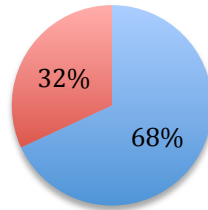
On most other CSU campuses, these students would have been placed in remedial English courses that would have earned them no units towards their college degree. Here at CI, we have no remedial writing courses, and placement in composition courses is entirely at the discretion of the student. We offer students options and allow them to decide for themselves which one best suits their level of experience and preparation as writers and researchers.

Students can choose from our two-semester **Stretch Composition Sequence (ENGL 102 & ENGL 103)** or a one-semester writing course (**ENGL 105** or **ENGL 106**). Students in Stretch must complete ENGL 103 successfully in order to fulfill their writing requirement. (While ENGL 102 is a three-unit, letter graded course, it counts as an elective for students.)

In the 2012-2013 AY, **649** students attempted to fulfill the General Education Requirement for **English Writing (A2)** by taking ENGL 103, ENGL 105, or ENGL 106. Of these, **442 students (68%)** enrolled in **ENGL 103**. In contrast, **207 students (32%)** enrolled in **ENGL 105** or **ENGL 106**. (We offered just one section of **ENGL 106**, our service learning course, this past year, which had **20** students, giving us **187** students in **ENGL 105**.)

### Composition Enrollment - 2012-2013 AY

■ ENGL 103 ■ ENGL 105/106

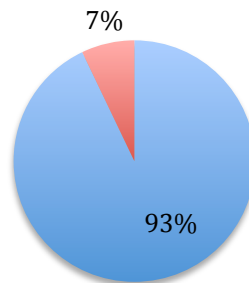


We assessed a total of **620 student portfolios** in 2012-2013 from ENGL 103, 105, and 106. All told, **30 students** enrolled in one of these courses did not submit a portfolio and thus did not pass the course or fulfill their FYC requirement.

Of the **620 portfolios** we assessed, **576 (93%)** received a score of **6 or higher**. (A 6 is the lowest score a portfolio can receive to earn the equivalent of a **C** grade). **43 portfolios** received a score of **4 of 5** (equivalent to the grade of **D**). Just **1 portfolio** received a failing score of **3** (equivalent to the grade of **F**).

### Portfolio Assessment - ENGL 103/105/106

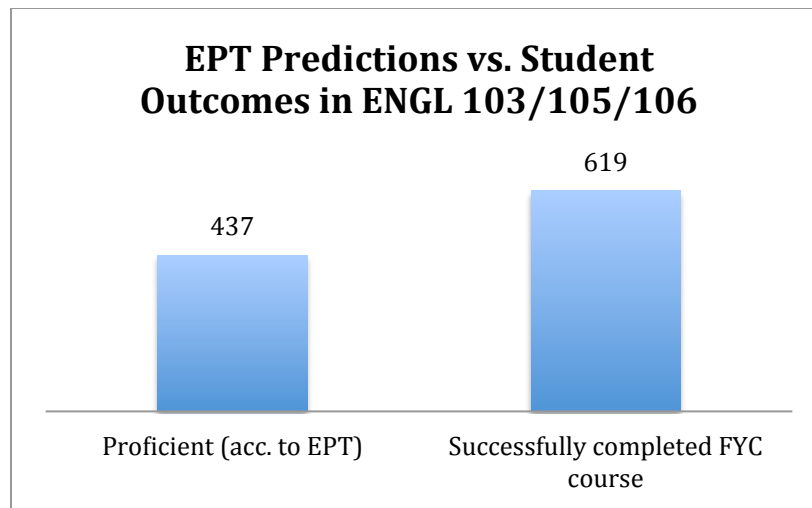
■ C or Higher ■ D or Lower



When we factor in the 30 students enrolled in ENGL 103, 105, or 106 who did not submit a portfolio at all, we still find that **95% of students who enrolled one of these courses passed the course and fulfilled the writing requirement**. This is consistent with our numbers from previous years.

If students this year were required to receive a **course grade of C** in order to fulfill the writing requirement (as future students will be), roughly **90% of students would still pass the course and fulfill the writing requirement**.

Either way, **our students are still performing well above EPT predictions that only 61% percent of our CI FTFs would successfully complete first year writing without remediation.**



When we look at **all portfolios that received a score of 6 (C equivalent) or higher, there is no significant statistical difference** between ENGL 103 and ENGL 105/106. **93%** of students enrolled in **ENGL 103** (397 total) received a score of **6 or higher**. **92%** of students enrolled in **ENGL 105/106** (179 total) received a score of **6 or higher**.

In looking at portfolios that received a **score of 5 (D equivalent) or lower, there is also no significant statistical difference** between ENGL 103 and ENGL 105/106. In ENGL 103, 28 of the 423 portfolios assessed received a score of 5 or lower (with none earning a score equivalent to a grade of F). In ENGL 105/106, 15 of the 193 portfolios assessed received a score of 5 or lower (with just one earning a score equivalent to a grade of F). In both cases, about **7% of portfolios** received a score of **5 or lower**.

With regard to students who did not submit a portfolio at all, and thus failed the course, we see that about **4% of students enrolled in ENGL 103 did not submit a portfolio** (17 out of 442 ENGL 103 students). Meanwhile, **6% of students enrolled in ENGL 105/106 did not submit a portfolio** (13 out of 207 ENGL 105/106 students).

Along those same lines, we see that **96%** of students enrolled in **ENGL 103** (425 out of 442 students) **passed the course** with a D or higher, while the same is true for **93%** of students enrolled in **ENGL 105/106** (193 out of 207 students).

If students this year were required to receive a **course grade of C** in order to fulfill the writing requirement, as future students will be, roughly **90% of ENGL 103 students would still pass the course and fulfill the writing requirement**. In that same scenario, roughly **87% of students in ENGL 105/106 would still pass the course and fulfill the writing requirement**. Again, these numbers are still well above EPT predictions for these students.

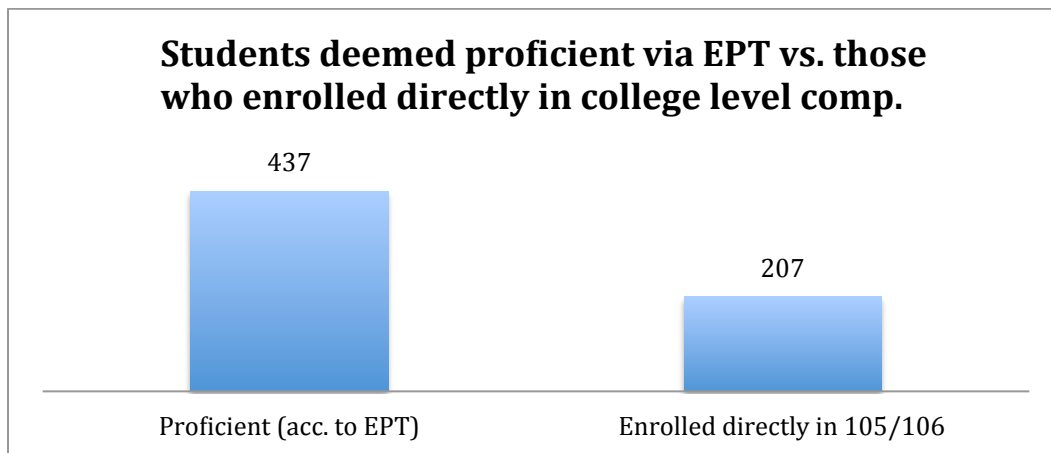
An additional point we can parse out regards differences between ENGL 105 and ENGL 106. Of the 20 students enrolled in **ENGL 106**, 4 students (**20%**) **did not submit a portfolio**.

However, of those 16 students who did submit a portfolio, **100% received a score of 6 (C equivalent) or higher**. This bi-modal performance distribution is but one indicator of ENGL 106 being an “outlier” class.

In **ENGL 105**, 9 out of 187 students (**5%**) **did not submit a portfolio**. Of the 178 students in ENGL 105 who did submit a portfolio, **92% received a score of 6 (C equivalent) or higher, while 8% received a score of 5 (D equivalent) or lower**. The lone portfolio score of 3 (**F equivalent**) also came from an ENGL 105 portfolio.

While students who complete the work in ENGL 106 do so successfully, it also seems to be more challenging for students to complete the work in ENGL 106 than in ENGL 105. It has become clear that a service learning course for first year writing students brings several challenges to an already challenging course. For this and several other reasons, we will hold off on offering additional ENGL 106 courses for the time being and concentrate on having students fulfill their FYC requirement in either Stretch or ENGL 105.

Nonetheless, as we have found in previous years, **Directed Self Placement is effective in helping students successfully fulfill their first year writing requirement without taking remedial courses**. Notably, **while the EPT would place 61% of our first year students directly into college writing classes** (courses equivalent to ENGL 105 or ENGL 106), **only 32% of students chose to enroll in such a course**. The other **68% chose to enroll in our two-semester Stretch sequence**, taking a full semester to focus on the writing process before embarking on a second semester of college-level, research-based writing.



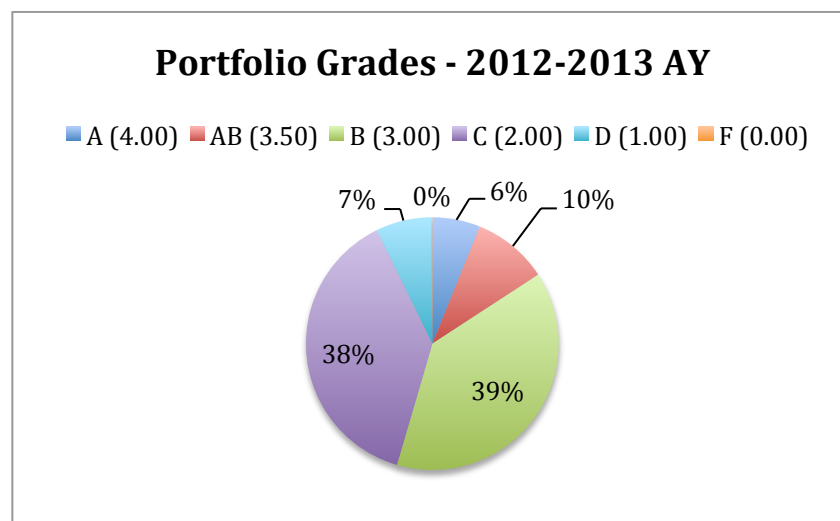
Once again, it is clear that the **EPT is a poor indicator of student readiness for college writing**, and that DSP is far more efficacious in this regard. The **self-determination of DSP** is a major factor. Students are far more likely to complete a course successfully when they make the decision themselves to enroll, and when there is **no stigma** attached to any of the options. Keeping **classes capped at 20 students** each also increases student success by allowing composition faculty to devote time and attention to each individual student’s needs. The support of the **University Writing Center** is also essential in promoting the success of our composition students, as faculty who incorporate **in-class tutoring** and encourage their students to visit the Writing Center outside of class can attest. One such faculty testimonial can be found below:

*While it's well documented that students who utilize the tutoring services at writing centers tend to succeed, I believe that having an in-class peer tutor greatly strengthens the odds in students' favor. In-class peer tutors see the same students every week and develop relationships with them, which breaks down many of the barriers - shyness, fear, discomfort - that may prevent students from seeking out help with their writing. In-class peer tutors also reinforce our message that visiting the writing center can only benefit the student, but, as the message comes from a peer, it seems to carry more of the weight of authenticity because it's the voice of experience.*

*Having in-class peer tutors allows our students to feel comfortable with an experienced peer. Many of my students who visit the writing center ask for their in-class tutor because they already have a positive relationship with the tutor, and this allows students to develop a positive relationship with the act of seeking help. – Composition Lecturer*

The **recursive** nature of the Composition Program's **holistic scoring process** also plays a significant role in both fostering and gauging the success of our students in completing the FYC requirement. Blind scoring of student portfolios by faculty other than the student's classroom instructor is a crucial assessment tool that reinforces the efficacy of DSP.

The distribution of scores across all levels of our scoring rubric reflects the objective, consistent nature of this assessment process, as illustrated below:



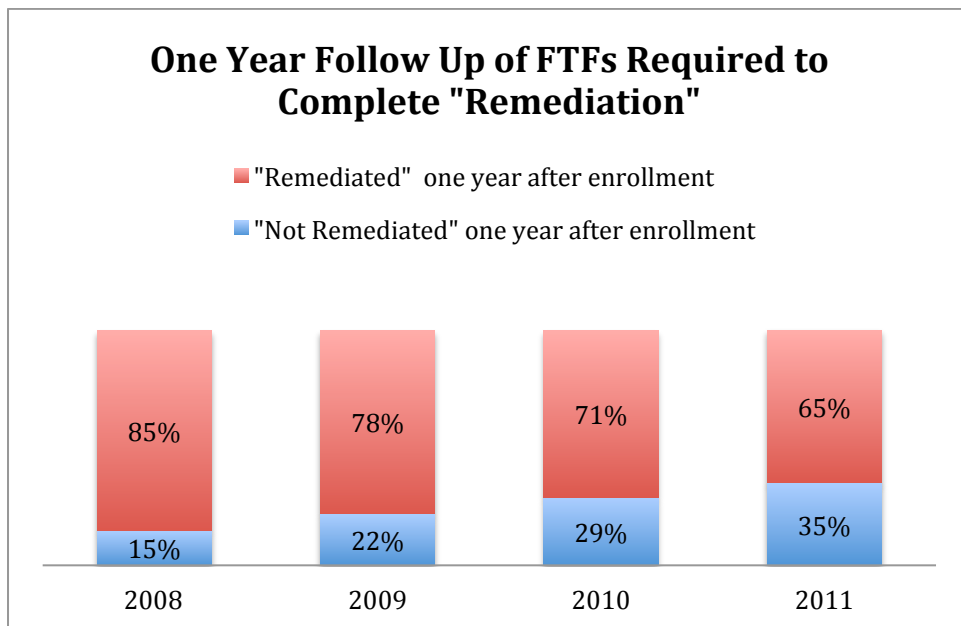
While we have fine-tuned our scoring rubric over the years (most recently in the summer of 2012) our core methods of assessment have remained consistent through the life of the program. Nevertheless, we have become more rigorous in what we ask our students to do and how we assess their work. One might assume this would decrease the success rate of our students, but this is far from the case. On the contrary, raising the bar has helped students to reach higher and to seek out help from faculty and the writing center. Composition students work harder, and achieve more, when more is expected of them, and when they are given the institutional support needed to complete challenging writing and research tasks.

The importance of **institutional support** in this equation cannot be overestimated, particularly with regard to funding. Even with DSP, first year students who are not considered

proficient in English as a result of their EPT scores are still deemed as being in need of remediation in the eyes of the CSU. Though we do not offer remedial writing courses, students who successfully complete either the Stretch sequence, ENGL 105, or ENGL 106 are considered “remediated.” This is an important designation because it determines whether a student is eligible to continue enrolling in classes after his or her first year at CI. A student who does not complete “remediation” within the first year must receive a waiver in order to register for classes.

As evidenced in the data presented, students who choose any of the options available in our Composition Program have an excellent chance of successfully completing the course and fulfilling their writing requirement. In recent years, however, **budgetary constraints** have prevented us from offering the number of sections needed to enable all students to complete their FYC requirement in their first year. In the **2012-2013 AY**, well over **100 students who enrolled in our composition courses to fulfill their writing requirement were returning students** who were unable to register for these courses as freshmen. For the **2013-2014 AY**, we currently have **80 returning students registered for Stretch or ENGL 105 in the fall**.

What this means is that students who never had the opportunity to take FYC as freshmen are identified as having **failed to complete “remediation,”** just as if they had enrolled in a writing course but received a failing grade. This trend is reflected in data that CI’s Office of Institutional Research (IR) gathers on remediation in English and Math. As seen in the chart below, **the percentage of students who had not completed “remediation” within their first year increased in the wake of the recession**, which had a direct effect on the number of composition courses we were able to offer in proportion to the number of students who needed such courses. The rise began with students who enrolled in Fall 2009 (paralleling the beginning of the CSU furlough year), increased for students who enrolled in Fall 2010 (when budget cuts became more austere), and continued to rise for students who enrolled in Fall 2011.



While 93% of students enrolled in ENGL 103, 105, or 106 are able to complete the course successfully (a number that has remained fairly consistent over the life of the Composition Program), the data show that an increasing number of students in recent years have not been able to fulfill the FYC requirement in their first year. If it is indeed important that students complete “remediation” as freshmen, then we must offer enough sections of our composition courses to make this possible. While the picture has been rosier in the 2012-2013 AY (during which time we have offered a record number of composition courses to a record number of first year students), we are still obviously seeing a carryover from prior years when budgets were more constrained. We should expect these numbers to go down for students who enrolled in 2012, which can be verified once that report is available from IR.

Fortunately, our campus is continuing to grow, and funding appears to be in place to sustain the key elements that make DSP, and the Composition Program as a whole, effective. Nonetheless, it is in the best interest of students to identify and monitor the factors that will maximize their chances of successfully completing their first year writing requirement here at CI.