COMPASS Retesting at KapCC and LeeCC
8/22/2009 Through 9/1/2011
Explanation of the Tables and Some Observations

For each campus,

Table 1  Contains the test frequency data: the number of test SESSIONS and the number of INDIVIDUALS taking COMPASS tests. An individual may take one, two, or three tests in a session, so we need the two numbers to give us a good picture of testing activity. The number of sessions might give us a better picture of activity in the testing center while the number of individuals will tell us how many students are actually testing or retesting. For example, if ten students went into the testing center 2 times each (perhaps to do math testing on one day, then reading and writing on another day), the number of sessions would be 20 while the number of individuals testing would be 10.

Table 1 contains the numbers of individuals who take all three area tests (reading, writing, math) only once, the number who repeat all three, and the number who repeat testing in any one of the other areas.

For convenience in making comparisons, Table 1 contains the results for three periods of time: from 8/22/2009 through 10/2/2010, from 8/22/2009 through 1/15/2011, from 8/22/2009 through 9/1/2011.

Table 2  Contains detailed frequency data about retesting: how many INDIVIDUALS retook a test once, twice, three, or more times.

Table 3-8  Contains data on how well the students did in retesting in terms of frequency and percentages. How many/what percent did or did not improve their placement. NOTE: We are counting improvement of PLACEMENT, NOT improvement of scores. If a student improves her PRE-ALGEBRA test score from 28 to 43, she would NOT have improved her placement: it would still be PRE-ALGEBRA.

So even though her SCORE improved, her PLACEMENT results would be counted as "Not Better Placement."

To make comparisons easier, Tables 3 and 4 contain the testing done between 8/22/2009 and 10/2/2010; Tables 5 and 6 the testing done between 8/22/2009 and 1/15/2011; Tables 7 and 8 the testing done between 8/22/2009 and 9/1/2011.

Table 9a  Contains descriptive statistics on the time between initial testing and retesting: average, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, median. It also gives the number of individuals who retested in less than 60 (LT60), less than 30 (LT30), and less than 10 (LT10) days, as well as those who took more than 60 days to retest (GT60).

Table 9b  Gives the percentages based on the frequencies in Table 9a.

Table 10  Contains data on how well the students did in terms of success rates (earning a C or better grade) in subsequent courses taken. We counted only students who

a. Improved their placement and

b. Took a course based on that improved placement.
For example, if a student improved his placement from basic skills to developmental writing, then took ENG 22, his results ended up in this table. If a student did not improve her placement, we did not check for ENG or MATH courses taken. If a student improved his reading placement from, say, developmental to college level reading, we did not check for any courses other than ENG that required college level reading skills.

What do these numbers show?

1. Still, no tidal wave of retesting. The OVERWHELMING majority of students--84% at KapCC and 91% at LeeCC--are taking all three parts of COMPASS once. (See Table 1.)

2. But the rate of retesting seems to be increasing. We have been looking at irregular periods of time—first about 14 months (8/22/2009 – 10/02/2010), then just 3 months later (8/22/2009 – 1/15/2011), then 8 months later (8/22/2009 – 9/1/2011). The last counts coming about a year after the first counts.

   We might expect the numbers of tests to double (100% increase) from the first 14 year period to the next year. And so it has at Leeward, up about 99% (from 3,891 to 7,750), but not quite at Kapi‘olani, up about 77% (from 5,119 to 9,078).

   At KapCC, the increases between the first period (8/22/2009 – 10/02/2010) and the last period (8/22/2009 – 9/01/2011) range from about 75% to 93%.

   LeeCC has experienced much larger increases. Between the numbers taken for the first period and those for the last period, we see a 254% increase in the number of those retaking the Reading test, a 167% increase in those taking the Writing test, a 201% increase in those repeating Math testing, and a 162% increase in those retaking all three tests. (See Table 1.)

3. Where the largest numbers retesting at KapCC are doing so in Writing and Math, the largest numbers at LeeCC are in Reading and Math. But the Math “bulge” at KapCC is conspicuous. (See Table 1.)

4. The OVERWHELMING majority of students are still retesting only twice. VERY few are retesting more than two times. (See Table 2.)

5. A significant proportion of retesters continue to improve their placement. At Leeward, the percentage usually falls in mid-40% range in all areas. At Kapi‘olani, the percentages vary. The percentage improving their writing placement is conspicuous: about 62%. The rate for reading is a little low: about 37%. For math, the rate is similar: about 45%. (See Tables 3-8.)

6. In general, the students who improve their placements and take courses based on those improved placements do about as well in those classes in terms of success rates as might be expected from the general success rates in those classes. But such students at KapCC and LeeCC actually do MUCH better (about 70% at KapCC, 79% at LeeCC) in the writing classes than the overall success rates (about 56%). They also tend to do better in the MATH classes (57% and 65%) than might be expected from overall success rates (ranging from 41% to 51%). (See Table 8.)

7. But the numbers of students actually taking required courses is relatively small.