

Rethinking Placement

How Pennsylvania Institute of Technology Utilizes EdReady to Improve Student Outcomes

The NROC Project and Pennsylvania Institute of Technology (PIT)



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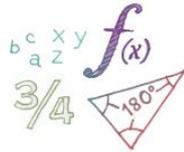
HOUSEKEEPING

- Use the Q&A area to submit questions as they arise, and our team members will be actively managing questions in the Q&A and Chat boxes.
- This webinar will be archived at [NROC.org](https://www.nroc.org), and you'll receive a follow-up email with a link to the recording and slides.
- Do you need help with Zoom? Email [community@NROC.org](mailto:community@nroc.org).

WELCOME POLL

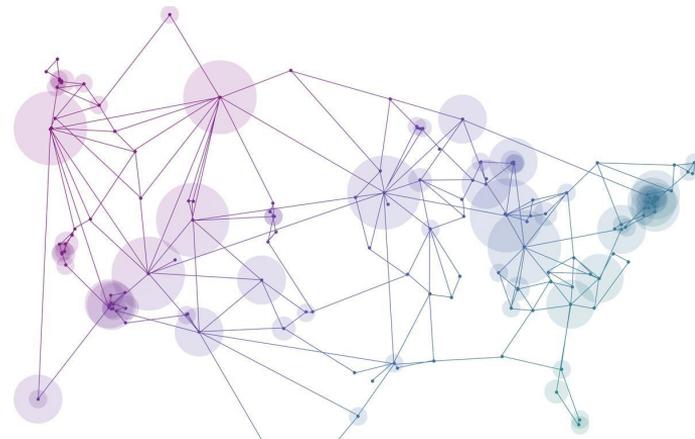
- We'd like to know who's joining us today! Please put your name, institution and current role in the chat. Welcome!

THE NROC PROJECT



Developmental Math
AN OPEN PROGRAM

EdReady®
Powered by NROC



2003



Algebra 1
AN OPEN COURSE



Developmental English
AN INTEGRATED PROGRAM



2025

NROC
founded

OER creation
and distribution

Adaptive learning
development

Diversification and
refinement

Scaling for equity
and impact



EdReady Supports:

- Just-in-time learning and accelerated learning
- Grade-to-grade transitions
- Dual Enrollment / early college / P-TECH programs
- High school completion
- College and career readiness
- Low-stakes, formative assessment for placement
- Co-requisite education
- HSE / GED, CASAS, ACT / SAT, TABE or NRS preparation
- Teacher preparation
- Corrections Education
- Adult Education

Mastery Status of Learning Objectives (Unit and Topic Level)



Untested: this material was not covered by the diagnostic



Not Ready: student has mastered less than 50% of included learning objectives



Needs Review: student has mastered 50-99% of included learning objectives



Doing Well: student has mastered 100% of *tested* learning objectives... but not everything has been tested yet



Mastered: student has mastered 100% of included learning objectives

TABE 9-10 Math - Easy-Medium
updated 07/21/2020 20:11


Show Details



Use Shapes



Not Assessed



Not Ready



Needs Review



Doing Well



Mastered

Units you should study:
Topic Status:

Note: You have not been tested on every topic in the unit(s) below. Click on any unit at any time to check your mastery more fully.

	Whole Numbers			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Fractions and Mixed Numbers		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		
	Decimals									
	Measurement			<input type="checkbox"/>						
	Geometry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>						
	Concepts in Statistics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>	Real Numbers	<input type="checkbox"/>								

[View Study Path](#)

PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Rethinking Placement Tests

Academic Affairs

Vance Gray, Ph.D.

Thursday, February 26, 2026

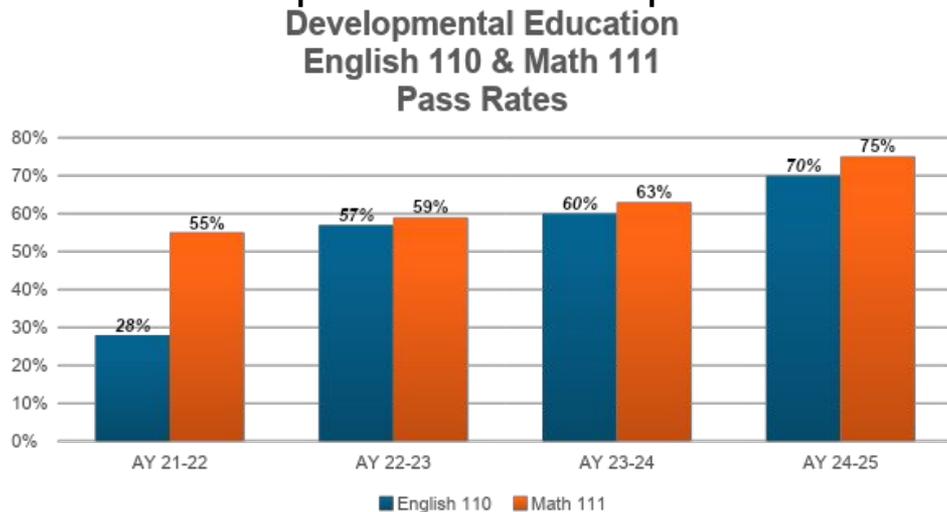
What is Placement For?

1. Are we trying to sort students efficiently?
2. Are we trying to identify who needs support?
3. Are we trying to accelerate into credit bearing work?
4. Are we trying to protect the rigor of our gateway (Hurdle) courses?

Purpose: *What problem are we actually trying to solve?*

Validity and Reliability Do our Measures Work?

1. How well do our current placement tests predict success in first-year English or Math?

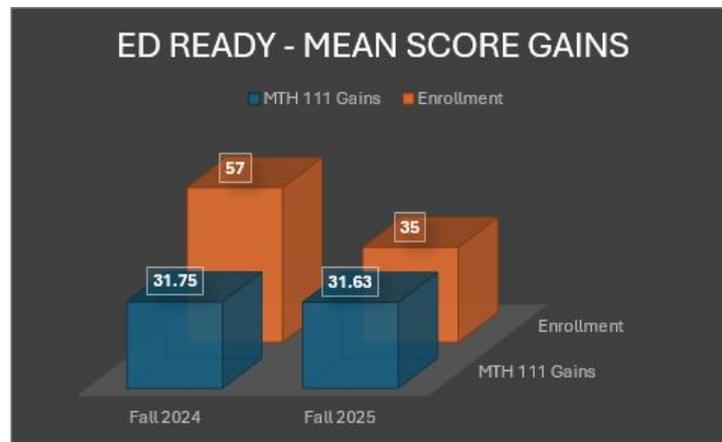
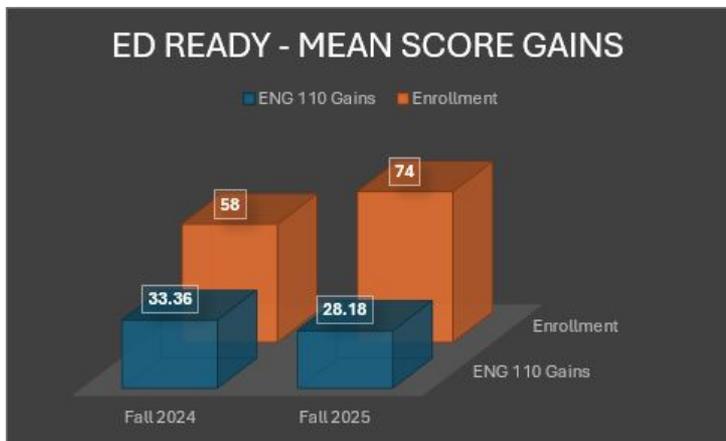


2. Do alternative measures like high-school GPA, Coursework, or portfolios – actually do a better job?
3. What trade-offs are we willing to accept?

Equity, Bias, and Differential Impact

1. Placement is not neutral.
2. We know that standardized tests often reflect difference in prior opportunity more than differences in ability.
3. We know that first-generation students, multilingual students, and students from under-resourced schools are disproportionately placed into remedial courses.
4. We know that remediation, as traditionally designed, can become a barrier rather than a bridge.
5. *How do we design a placement system that supports equity rather than reduce inequity?*

Central Tendency Score Gains



What the Charts Suggest:

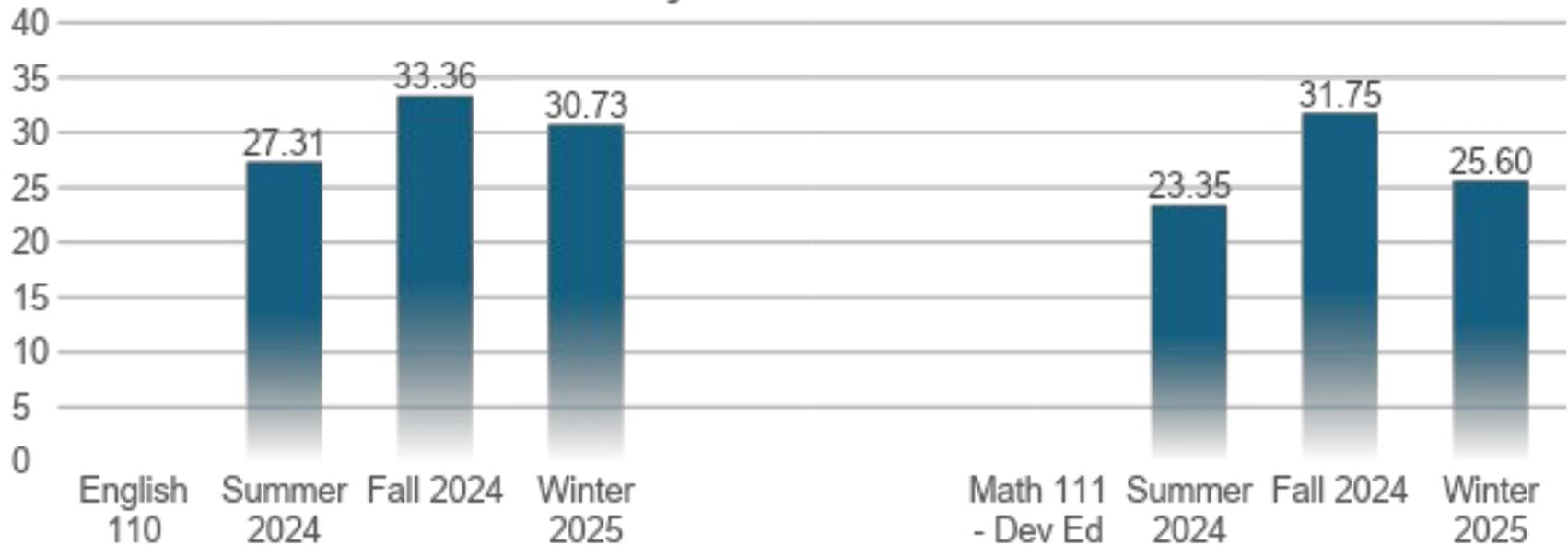
EdReady is producing strong learning gains in both disciplines

Even with year-to-year variation, the reported gains remain substantial:

- ENG 110 gains are still near 28 points on average in Fall 2025.
- MTH 111 gains are steady at about 32 points across both years. This pattern is consistent with a mastery-based model where students close skill gaps between diagnostic and final assessment.

Equity, Bias, and Differential Impact

Ed Ready - Mean Score Gains



Alignment with High School Preparation

Placement is often a proxy for the disconnect between K-12 and Higher education.

You can explore:

- Whether high school transcripts or coursework should carry more weight
- How to build alignment with local high school districts
- The risks of over-relying on GPA when grading standard vary widely

This helps academics see placement as part of a larger ecosystem

Alternatives to Traditional Testing

This is where you can open the door to innovation:

- Directed self-placement, for example, gives students agency and often leads to more accurate placement.
- Multiple-measures models blend quantitative and qualitative indicators.
- Corequisite support allows students to enter credit-bearing courses immediately while still receiving help.
- Diagnostic assessments can inform instruction rather than gatekeep access.

The point isn't to pick one model—it's to recognize that we have more options than we used to.

Institutional and Operational Realities

Changing placement isn't just a pedagogical decision—it's an institutional one.

- It affects advising workload, course scheduling, seat availability, faculty training, and data systems.
- It affects time-to-degree, retention, and resource allocation.

So, any placement reform must be paired with operational planning. Otherwise, even the best-designed system will falter in practice.

Faculty Involvement and Governance

Placement touches on academic freedom, departmental identity, and long-standing traditions.

- Who gets to decide how placement works?
- How do we balance consistency across the institution with disciplinary autonomy?
- And how do we build buy-in for change?

This is often the hardest part—but it's also where the most meaningful progress happens.

Faculty Involvement - Voice

Math Faculty:

Do we have a planned cut off score?

Will the test be proctored?

Will students be able to complete the lessons to improve their scores? (or Can they study and then retake the entire test?)

English Faculty:

I reviewed the placement test and believe it reflects the changes and suggested materials we discussed as a team. I agree with the other feedback that has been shared. I was able to complete the test in about 30 minutes. However, some passages require focused reading, so students should be encouraged to find a quiet space and allow at least an hour to complete the test. A few of the answer choices—particularly those related to identifying the main idea—could potentially be confusing. Some formatting or alignment may have contributed to that, though that could have just been my experience.

I noticed a strong emphasis on reading questions and fewer grammar-specific items.

I intentionally skipped a few questions to see how the test progressed and was wondering whether the assessment is adaptive. Overall, I think this is a solid indicator for placement moving forward.

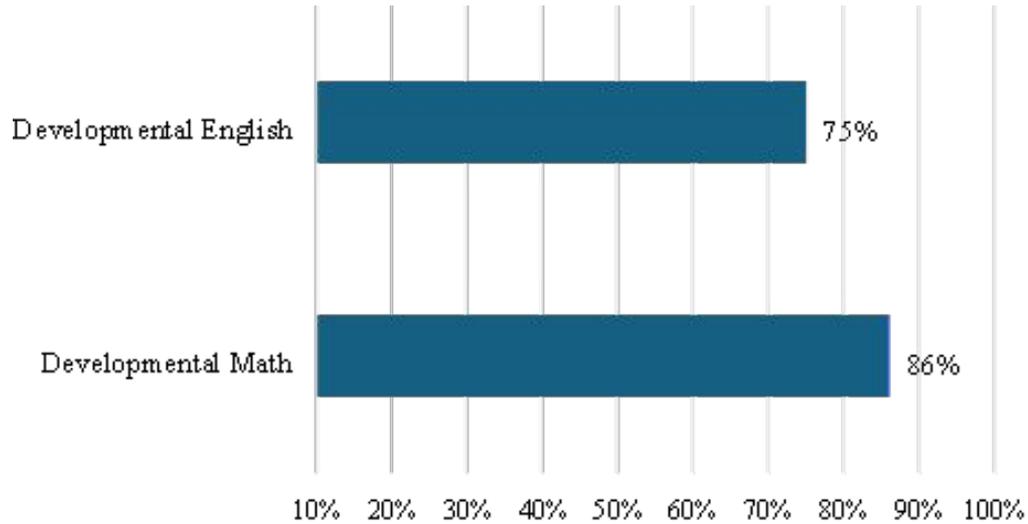
Rethinking Placement Tests

So those are the seven themes:

1. Purpose,
2. Evidence, Measures
3. Equity, Bias, and Differential Impact
4. Alignment,
5. Alternatives to Traditional Testing
6. Institutional Operations
7. Faculty Involvement and Governance

None of them can be solved in isolation.

Developmental education plays a critical role in preparing students for success in college-level coursework. In 2024–25, P.I.T. assessed Developmental Math and Developmental English to evaluate the effectiveness of these pathways in building essential foundational skills and to inform concrete changes in course structures and expectations.



PENNSYLVANIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

Rethinking Placement Tests

THANKS!

Vance Gray, Ph.D.
Thursday, February 26, 2026

Questions?

Please put any questions you have in the Q&A comments box, and we'll get to them in the order received!

Upcoming Events

Meet with our team members at upcoming events to talk more about what EdReady can do for your students!

*Be sure to join us for our **upcoming March webinar, 'Dismantling Math Barriers for Future STEM Leaders with EdReady'** with Audrey Thompson from The Engineer Factory, **March 18th at 11am PT / 2pm ET!** Check our website for further details!*



Thanks for joining us today!

GET IN TOUCH

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Book a Demo:



Prepare your students for what's next.

