

SJCC  
Spring  
2015

# SJCC Basic Skills Students

Institutional Effectiveness &  
Student Success

Spring 2015  
Briefing Report: 2015-01



San Jose • Evergreen Community College District  
Institutional Effectiveness & Student Success  
Qualitative Study of Basic Skills Students  
SJCC Focus Group Notes

The project was developed to assist the Basic Skills Committee's inquiry to learning more about students who enrolled in Basic Skills courses at San Jose City College. This study should serve as a pilot study to understand how the campus community can better serve students reach college level courses and continue to accomplish their goals.

**FOCUS GROUP INFORMATION**

Date of focus group:                    May 21, 2015 9:00 A.M.  
    May 21, 2015 10:30 A.M.  
    May 21, 2015 1:30 P.M.

Location:                                    San Jose City College  
Facilitator & Assistant:                Joyce Lui & Celina Gallegos

**PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES**

Number of participants:                Six (6)

**1. Why did you choose to attend college and/or SJCC?**

- To upgrade skill set
- The location of the SJCC campus is a convenient location

**1a. Is anyone taking classes or has taken classes at another college?**

- All classes are being taken at San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College

**2. What are your current academic goals?**

- Finishing academic goals at SJCC
- Transfer to a university

**2a. How does/will college help you think about accomplishing goals of a College Degree or Certificate?**

- Instructors are resourceful and put in extra effort with learning process
- Personality of instructors helps encourage and reflects interest student has in studies

**2b. In what ways can we support a student in order to make passing a class easier?**

- Having additional tutors available
- Making instructors available to student for more 1 on 1 learning
- Have instructions be understandable

**3. What did you know about the placement test prior to actually taking the test?**

- Knew it was required to set up the correct Pre Req classes to get a degree.
- Knew it would help test out of classes student was advanced for

#### 4. Ranking of issues in why a class was dropped.

In order to determine what issue caused students to drop classes with SJCC participants were given twelve issues and asked to indicate each issue as mild, medium or spicy (refer to black font in Table 1).

A *mild* response received a rating scale of one and indicated the issue was a factor for dropping class.

A *medium* response received a rating scale of two and indicated the issue was a factor for dropping class.

A *spicy* response received a rating scale of three and indicated the issue was a factor for dropping class.

Participants were asked to identify any other issues that affected their decision to drop the basic skills class. Participants were asked to indicate each self-identified issue as mild, medium or spicy (refer to blue font in Table 1). All the issues were aggregated and ranked, and the three highest

TABLE 1

	ISSUES	Mild	Medium	Spicy
A	The class was more difficult than I expected	4	2	
B	The class required more time than I had.	4	1	1
C	I experienced a change in my work situation.	5	1	
D	I did not have money to buy class materials	4	2	
E	I had a family or medical emergency	3	1	2
F	I did not like the class	2	1	3
G	I did not like the instructor	3		3
H	I had child care problems.	6		
I	I lost motivation to attend class.	4		2
J	I did not understand the assignment.	4	2	
K	The class was too easy.	5		1
L	My classmates made me want to drop the class.	5	1	

#### 5. What one thing could the school have done to support your success at San Jose City College?

- To not use Moodle
- To have more access to computers
- Provide homework assignments in class and not only online
- Instructors be available for office hours
- Understanding the complexities of students' lives

#### 6. If you can say anything to your basic skills instructor or dean at San Jose City College, What would you want to share with them about your experience in a basic skills course at SJCC?

- Encourage students to continue taking basic skills courses even if they do not pass