Youth Leadership Summit: Cruise into College with Accuplacer Test Prep

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Published by *K20 Center*

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Time Frame 55 minutes

Essential Question(s)

- What can help me succeed on the Accuplacer Test?

Summary

The Youth Leadership Summit: Cruise into College with Accuplacer Test Prep session introduces students to the Accuplacer test: a placement exam used by colleges to assess skills in reading, writing, and math. Students will learn the purpose of the test, how scores are used, and the types of questions they can expect. The session will cover effective test-taking strategies. Students will also explore online practice tools, review sample questions, and participate in guided practice activities to build confidence. By the end of the session, students will have a clear understanding of how to prepare for the Accuplacer and maximize their performance. This session is a part of the 2-day Youth Leadership Summit.

Learning Goals

Attachments

- Accuplacer Tips and Tricks—Cruise into College - Spanish.docx
- Accuplacer Tips and Tricks—Cruise into College - Spanish.pdf
- Accuplacer Tips and Tricks—Cruise into College.docx
- Accuplacer Tips and Tricks—Cruise into College.pdf
- Excursion Posters—Cruise into College .docx
- Excursion Posters—Cruise into College .pdf
- Passport—Cruise into College - Spanish.docx
- Passport—Cruise into College - Spanish.pdf
- Passport—Cruise into College.docx
- Passport—Cruise into College.pdf
- Presentation Slides—Cruise into College.pptx
- Rose Bud and Thorn—Cruise into College - Spanish.docx
- Rose Bud and Thorn—Cruise into College - Spanish.pdf
- Rose Bud and Thorn—Cruise into College.docx
- Rose Bud and Thorn—Cruise into College.pdf

Materials

- Session Slides (attached)
- Rose Bud and Thorn handout (attached; one per student)
- Passport handout (attached; one per student)
- Accuplacer Tips and Tricks handout (attached; one per student)
- Excursion Posters (attached; one set)
- Pencil/pen

- Passport Stamp Options:
    - Four individual stickers
    - Four individual stamps with ink pad
    - Instant camera with enough film

40 minutes

Accuplacer Stations

Facilitator Note: Youth Leadership Summit

The following session was part of a 2-day event geared towards preparing college-going students for success on the Accuplacer Test. The event presented students with a variety of break-out sessions focusing on various elements of preparing for college. So, while the resources can be facilitated in any order, we recommend reviewing all of them when preparing for your own event. See our Youth Leadership Summit collection for more resources.

Use the attached **Session Slides** to facilitate this presentation. Display the title on **slide 2** then move to **slide 3** and review the Essential Question.

Display **slide 4** and pass out the Accuplacer practice questions that you created or share the links that correspond to each section of the test:

- Reading
- Writing
- Math (arithmetic)
- Math (quantitative reasoning, pre-/alg1, probability)

Explain to students that they will be taking a practice Accuplacer exam. There are four sections and students may choose the order in which they take the exam by moving to that station. Have students begin the exam. When they finish or at the end of eight minutes, explain the correct answers for that section and stamp their **Passport** handout for that section's excursion. Students will then move to the next section taking their Passport handout with them.

While they are taking each exam, display **slide 5**, which lets them know which station has which subsection exam so that they can choose which exam to take next. Remind students to take their Passport handouts with them to collect mementos from each of their excursions or stations.

10 minutes

Rose Bud Reflections

When everyone is finished, pass out the **Rose Bud and Thorn** handout and transition to **slide 6**. Introduce to students the Rose, Bud, and Thorn strategy. Give students time to write their reflections. Discuss the different areas of strength, pass-ability, and weakness.

15 minutes

Last Reminders

Move to **slide 7** and pass out the **Accuplacer Tips and Tricks** handout to students. Remind students that every college has different requirements, so they should reach out to the school they are planning to attend in order to find out their specific format requirements. Have students also identify the portion of the exam that needs further practice and to circle that test on their handout so that they can practice on their own time.

Research Rationale

A growing body of research underscores the importance of targeted preparatory instruction for high school students taking the ACCUPLACER placement exam, particularly those enrolled in Early College High School (ECHS) or dual enrollment programs. Wright (2017) highlights that inaccurate placement in remedial math courses can hinder student progress, increase dropout rates, and delay degree completion. Her findings advocate for the use of multiple measures and preparatory tools to improve placement accuracy and student success. Similarly, Welch-Jones (2020) conducted an action research study demonstrating that structured tutorial sessions—both online and in-person—can positively influence ACCUPLACER outcomes, especially in English and higher-level math domains. Although not all score improvements were statistically significant, students and instructors reported that tutorials enhanced confidence, engagement, and academic readiness.

Colleges require incoming students to take placement exams in order to take on-level classes for credit. Those students who do not meet the required score must take remedial classes. These remedial classes serve as a barrier to a student's college career both academically and financially (Hartman, 2018). Students earn no credit when taking these classes, which increases their time on campus in completing their degree. Discouraged by their lack of movement toward a degree, many drop out. Students also must pay for these classes, which only increases their costs to complete a degree (Hartman, 2018). By providing academic support in taking these placement exams, incoming college students can bypass these barriers and avoid delays in their academic progress (Barringer-Brown & Lynch, 2022).

Together, these studies provide a compelling rationale for implementing ACCUPLACER test prep sessions. They suggest that early, structured, and accessible tutorials can bridge academic gaps, reduce unnecessary remediation, and support students in achieving college readiness benchmarks. By integrating test prep into the high school curriculum or offering it as an extracurricular support, schools can better equip students for success in dual enrollment pathways and beyond.

Resources

- Barringer-Brown, C. H., & Lynch, P. A. (2022). Developmental college education courses and programs: A review of the literature. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, *6*(2), 1.
- Hartman, C. (2018). Developmental education: An overview of current issues and future directions. *Texas Education Review*, 6(1), 47-52.
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Rose, bud and thorn. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/2224
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Timer. https://timer.k20center.ou.edu/
- Welch-Jones, J. (2020). *High school students to take the ACCUPLACER for dual enrollment in a community college.* (Doctoral dissertation, Capella University).
- Wright, R. (2017). *Factors to increase placement accuracy to improve student success rates in mathematics courses at community colleges.* (Master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Platteville).