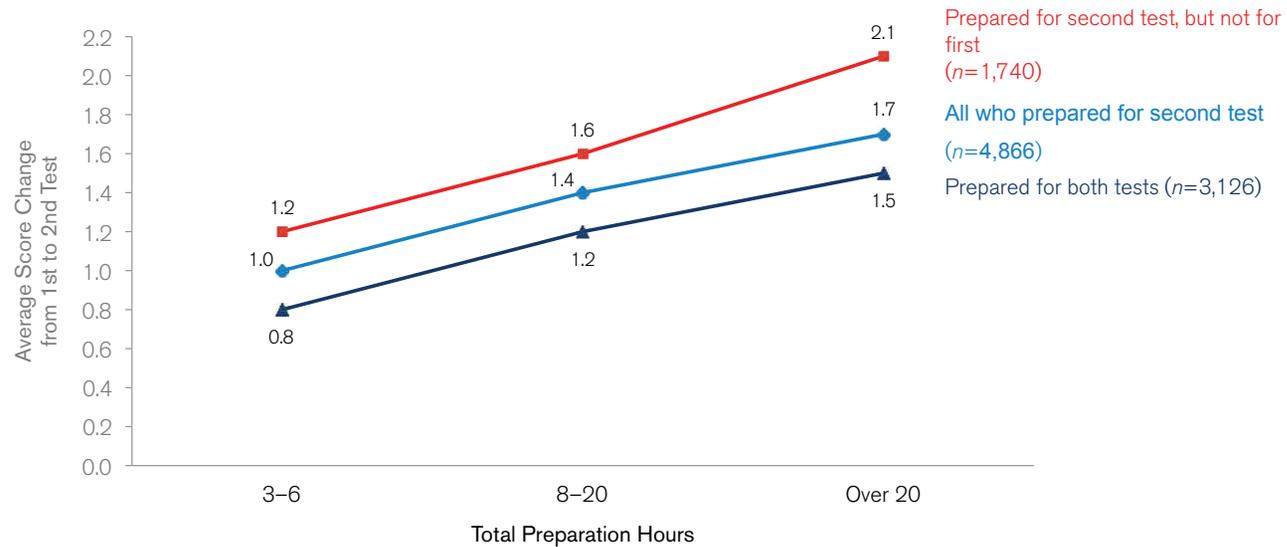


How the Amount of Time Spent on Test Preparation Relates to ACT Scores

JEFF L. SCHIEL AND MICHAEL J. VALIGA

Composite Score Changes of Students Who Took the ACT on Two Occasions



Note: These findings are based on data from 9,654 students who took the ACT twice, either for the first time in spring 2012 and the second in fall 2012, or for the first time in fall 2012 and the second in spring 2013. The students also completed a survey of their test preparation activities.

Among students who took the ACT twice, those who reported preparing for over 20 hours for the second test earned ACT Composite scores about 0.7 points higher on average than students who reported preparing for 3–6 hours.

¹ See Information Brief 2014-6.

² We asked students how many hours they spent on each of the following test-preparation activities: ACT's free preparation booklet, ACT's web-based preparation program (ACT Online Prep[®]), other web-based preparation programs, *The Real ACT Prep Guide*, another test-preparation workbook, test-preparation courses or workshops offered by a high school or local colleges or universities, commercial test-preparation courses, working with a private tutor or consultant, working one-on-one with a high school teacher, and test-preparation software.

Previously, we showed that students who reported preparing for a second ACT[®] college readiness assessment earned Composite scores on that test about 1.4 points higher on average than their scores on the first test.¹ Here we investigate how the amount of time students spent preparing relates to their scores.

Among students who took the ACT twice, the more time students spent preparing, the higher the average ACT Composite score change from the first to the second test. Students who reported preparing for over 20 hours for the second test earned Composite scores about

0.7 points higher on average than those who reported preparing for 3–6 hours.²

Moreover, students who reported preparing for over 20 hours for only the second test earned Composite scores on that test about 0.9 points higher on average than did students who reported preparing for 3–6 hours. Students who reported preparing for both tests experienced relatively small changes in Composite scores, irrespective of the number of hours reported preparing. ■