

CHAPTER 3: HIGH SCHOOL COURSE SELECTIONS

In grade 9, students select the courses they wish to complete in their first year of high school. Students can choose either general or academic level courses in three subject areas: mathematics, sciences and English language arts. The general courses were designed to meet the needs of students who are experiencing difficulties in that particular subject. The academic courses are intended for the majority of students and particularly those who intend on pursuing a post-secondary (i.e., university or college) education. Table 3.1 lists the names of the general and academic level courses in these subject areas.

The selection of a general level course in Grade 10 (or Level I) does not necessarily mean a student will have to complete general courses in Levels II or III. Students can choose to complete an academic course at a later date. Also, students experiencing difficulties with academic level courses can request a transfer to the general level course. However, if students continue to complete these general courses in their second and third year of high school, they are on the way to graduating with a general diploma.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on enrolment in first year general level courses in mathematics, science and English language arts. This is because these subjects will affect the type of diploma they receive upon graduation.

Table 3.1: Course types

Subject area	General	Academic
Mathematics	Mathematics 1202	Mathematics 1201
Science*	Science 2200	Science 1206
English Language Arts	English 1202	English 1201

* In Level I, a student who starts on a general program will usually choose Science 2200. If they are following the academic science program, students will usually start with Science 1206 in Level I.



Enrolment in level I general courses

Figure 9 shows the percentage of students enrolled in a general level course in mathematics, science and English Language Arts. These percentages are calculated by dividing the number of students in the general level course by the total number of students in the general and academic level courses combined. For example, in 2012/13, there were 5,751 students completing one of the two first level mathematics courses. Of these, 17.8% (or 1,024) were enrolled in the general course (Mathematics 1202).

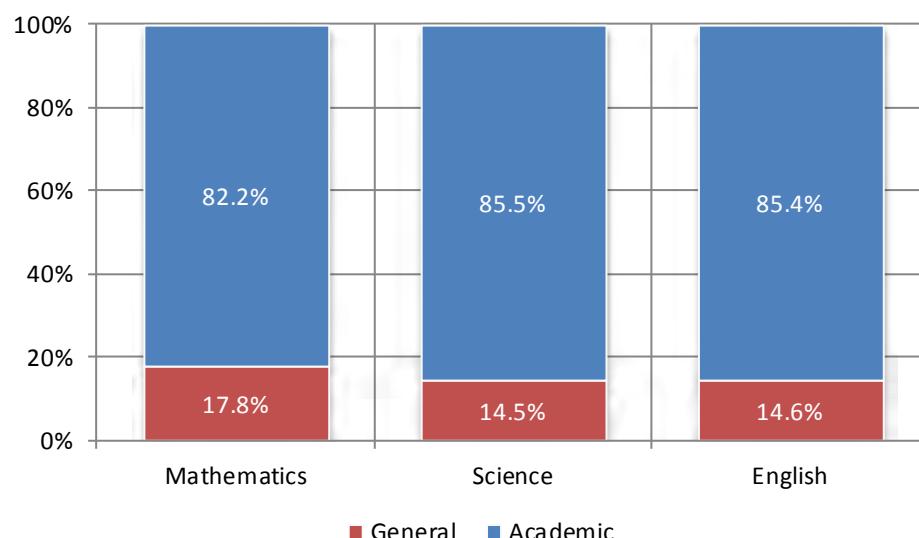
Mathematics had a slightly higher percentage of students enrolled in the general level course (17.8%) compared to science and English (see figure 9a). In addition, the percentage of males enrolled in the general level course was approximately nine percentage points higher than females in each subject area (see figure 9b).

Over the past five years, the percentage of students enrolled in the science and English general level courses declined each year. In mathematics, the pattern was somewhat different. A decline occurred each year between 2008/09 and 2010/11 followed by an increase of 6.3 percentage points in 2011/12. The following year, the percentage of students enrolled in the general level mathematics course decreased again (see figure 9c).

As shown in figure 10, the majority of students pass the general level courses. The percentage of successful students ranged from 86.0% in English to 90.1% in science.

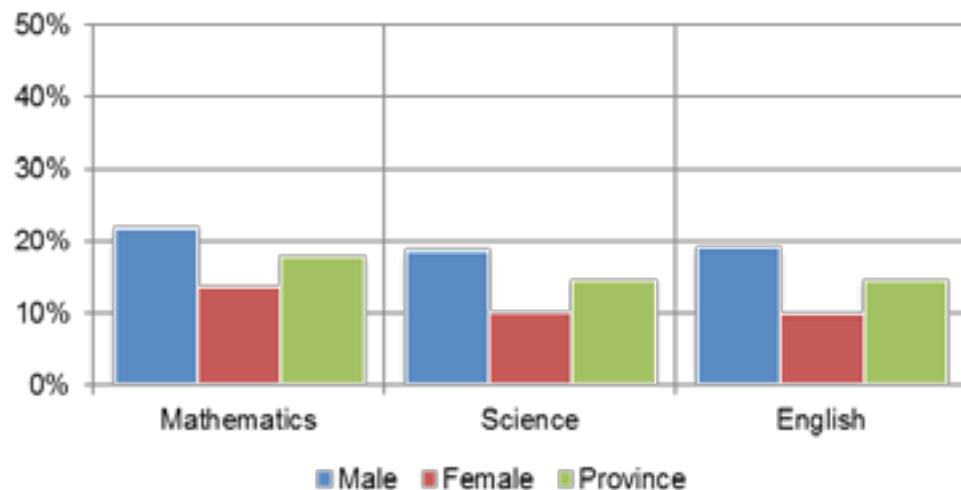
Figure 9: Percentage of students enrolled in Level I general courses

(a) By subject

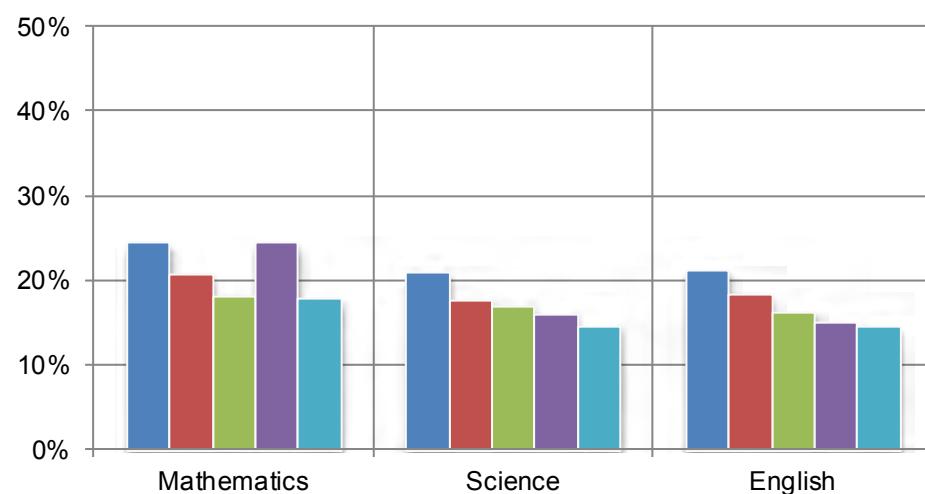




(b) Gender breakdown and provincial percentages (2012/13)



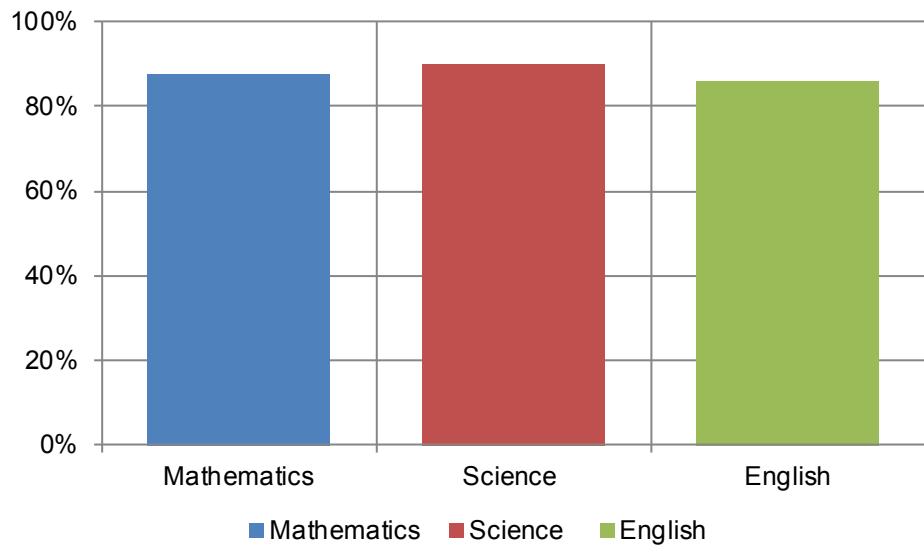
(c) Trends in general level course enrolment (2008/09 – 2012/13)



(Source: Table 9)



Figure 10: Student success rate in general level courses (2012/13)



(Source: Table 10)

