COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

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Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness

English Placement Test Cut Score Validation: Fall 2013-Spring 2014

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COLLEGE OF THE CANYONS

Table of Contents

Index of Tables

Introduction

Per the requirements of the California Community College Chancellor's Office, the Office of Institutional Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness assessed the validity of Accuplacer cut scores for placement into English courses. California Community Colleges are required to perform several studies related to the validity of assessment tests when using a test from the Chancellor's Office approved list (California Community College Chancellor's Office, 2001). Specifically, content and cut-score validity studies are required every six years and disproportionate impact analyses for various demographic groups (including sex, age, racial, ethnic and disability groups) are required every three years.

Methods

To conduct the cut score validity analysis, Accuplacer Placement Test data were obtained from College of the Canyons' Management Information System (MIS) Datatel. Placement tests taken between April 1, 2013 and October 31, 2014 for English were included in the analysis. Placement data were merged with enrollment data for English (Fall 2013 and Spring 2014). Students were then matched with the grade files.

Two full time faculty members from English met with researchers November 25, 2014 and examined student success in comparison to their scores on the placement tests and made recommendations for changes to cut scores for ENGL-091/094 and ENGL-101 and also recommended cut score ranges for ENGL-089 and ENGL-096. Cut scores for ENGL-071 and ENGL-081 were not changed because those courses were archived effective fall 2015 (cut scores would no longer be needed), but the data for those courses were used to inform cut scores for ENGL-089 and ENGL-096. The faculty met again with researchers on February 4, 2015 to discuss potential adjustments to multiple measures and made additional recommendations for changes to multiple measures weighting.

Recommendations for changes to cut scores and multiple measures weighting were then presented to the English department at the English department meeting held February 23, 2015. After discussion, the recommendations were endorsed by the department for implementation with new students for the fall 2015 term.

To perform the analyses data obtained were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS 2013) and Microsoft Excel (2013).

<u>Definitions:</u>

The following definitions are used for success and validity:

- ➢ ***Course Success***: Course success reflects the percent of students successful in courses out of total enrolled in courses: Numerator = Number of students (duplicated) with an A, B, C, CR/P; Denominator = Number of students (duplicated) with an A, B, C, D, F, FW, CR/P, NC/NP, W, I. (This analysis uses the RP Group definition.) (Sources: USX files-CCCCO.

- ➢ ***Cut Score Validity***: Cut score validity assesses the degree to which the cut scores determine in which course the student is most likely to succeed.

- ➢ ***Content Validity***: Content Validity assesses the degree to which the placement items are aligned to the content of courses. For purposes of this study, content validity is delimited to assessing the degree to which there are enough items that assess the content of a course. The degree to which some course content was not assessed was not included in these analyses.

Results

Cut Score Validation

The cut score analysis is based on ratings from two full-time English faculty members in addition to further discussion with the department as a whole. Cut scores were collapsed into equal intervals, as much as possible, to aid in meaningful analysis of the pass rates and inform decisions on where cut scores needed to be adjusted. Table 1 shows the pass rates by Accuplacer score range and course.

Table 1. Pass Rates by Accuplacer Score Range and Course

English Course	Accuplacer Score Range	Pass (N)	Total Assessed (N)	Pass Rate
071	30-37	9	24	38%
071	38-47	47	79	59%
071	48-57	129	171	75%
071	58-62	64	96	69%
081	63-70	159	241	66%
081	71-78	170	237	72%
081	79-84	71	118	60%
096	63-70	107	136	79%
096	71-78	175	223	78%
096	79-84	86	107	80%
091	85-90	257	330	78%
091	91-96	285	354	81%
091	97-102	168	237	71%
091	103-105	15	22	68%
101	106-111	133	171	78%
101	112-117	53	67	79%
101	118-120	--	4	--

The participants' analyses resulted in recommendations to change cut scores for English-096, 091/94, and 101. English 071 and 081 will no longer be offered effective Fall 2015, so new cut scores were not needed for those courses. A new course, English 089, will be offered effective Fall 2015, so new cut scores for that course were developed in the context of the analysis of English 071 and English 081 cut scores. The English Accuplacer cut scores before and after the analysis of the average pass rates for each cut score range by course (shown in Table 1) are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Cut Scores for English Accuplacer Placement Test Before and After the Cut Score Validation Study

Courses	Previous Minimum Score	Previous Maximum Score	New Minimum Score	New Maximum Score
ENGL-071	0	62	N/A	N/A
ENGL-081	63	84	N/A	N/A
ENGL-089	N/A	N/A	0	54
ENGL-096	63	84	55	79
ENGL-091/094	85	105	80	100
ENGL-101	106	120	101	120

Multiple Measures

Faculty members also met March 3, 2015 and reviewed the current questions and weighting used as multiple measures to potentially adjust the raw Accuplacer scores before placement. The faculty recommended removing all negative weighting as well as removing the questions relating to reading for pleasure and expected hours of homework.

The faculty recommended keeping questions relating to last English class grade (A or B = +3%) and successfully completed AP/Honors English courses (Yes = +2%). The faculty recommended adding a question regarding overall high school GPA to increase students' score by the following: 2.5-2.9 GPA = +2%, 3.0-3.4 GPA = +3%, and 3.5 and above GPA = +4%).

Recommendations and Next Steps

Upon review of the results, the following recommendation should be taken into consideration:

- Change the cut scores for English 096, 091, and 101 and implement cut scores for 089 (new course) as indicated by the results of the faculty review.
- Change the multiple measures questions and weighting as indicated by the results of the faculty review.
- Complete additional analyses, including:
  - Disproportionate impact study
    Validation of new cut scores once implemented.
- Use these results in combination with other sources of information, such as the Chancellor's Office Common Assessment Initiative and The RP Group's Multiple Measures Assessment Project, to help inform future decisions about placement processes.

References

Chancellor's Office California Community Colleges. (2001, March). _Standards, policies, and procedures for the evaluation of assessment instruments used in the California Community Colleges._ Retrieved from http://extranet.cccco.edu/Portals/1/SSSP/Matriculation/Assessment/ApprovedGuidelinesMarch2001.pdf