



Rancho Santiago Community College District Student and Teacher Ratings of Appropriateness of Course Placement Using Multiple Measures

Compiled by the RSCCD Research Department, October 2008

Background

Matriculation regulations mandate the use of multiple student assessment measures in making course placement recommendations. Based on research done in Fall 2006, faculty in each of the basic skills subject areas identified sets of multiple measures they believed to correlate most highly with potential course success.

During the 4th week of the Fall 2008 semester, English and Math department faculty and students were asked to rate those placement recommendations. Only students who 1) were administered the RSCCD placement test(s) in Summer 2008, and 2) enrolled in the recommended course(s) in the Fall 2008 semester were included in these analyses, and counselors refrained from overriding these recommendations based on other criteria.

655 students' test scores were compiled; of those, 215 students were actively enrolled in the recommended coursework in Fall 2008 (at the 3rd week). Students and corresponding instructors (n=92), were asked to rate the appropriateness of these placements using the scales below:

Students

1. This course is too easy for me.
2. This course is the right level for me.
3. This course is too difficult for me.

Faculty

1. Could have been placed at a higher level.
2. Is well placed; has a good chance of success.
3. Is properly placed; can succeed with appropriate effort.
4. Can succeed in this course only with a great deal of effort.
5. Should have been placed in a lower level course.

Summary of Findings

- Over eighty percent of students and instructors agreed with the placement recommendations into English coursework (85% and 84%, respectively).
- About three-quarters of students and instructors agreed with the placement recommendations into Math coursework (79% and 74%, respectively).
- Students are more optimistic than their instructors: 15%-21% of students believed the course to be too easy for them; about the same percentages of teachers believed the courses to be too difficult. None of the students believed the courses they were placed into were too difficult.

Recommendations

It is recommended that this research activity be ongoing so that sufficient sample sizes may be compiled to allow analysis by course level.

	Ratings of Appropriateness of Placement			
	English		Math	
	Student ratings	Teacher ratings	Student rating	Teacher ratings
	n=32	N=32	N=38	N=38
This course is too easy	15%	7%	21%	5%
This course is the right level	85%	84%	79%	74%
This course is too difficult	0%	10%	0%	21%
Agreement between student/instructor rating	80%		74%	
Average Student Rating	1.85	2.53	1.79	2.66

