Identifying and Incorporating Multiple Measures
for Placement into RSCCD English Courses
Summer, 1999

Matriculation regulations state that assessment for course placement must be comprised of more than one measure in determining student skills.

In a continuing effort to determine the most predictive combination of assessment measures to use for placement into RSCCD English courses, the items included on the RSCCD Needs Assessment form completed for native-English speakers in the assessment/advisement process were studied (new students, Fall 1998), in combination with the Descriptive Test of Language Skills (DTLS)(used for placement into English courses). Those multiple measures on the form are as follows:

- grade point average in high school
- years of English studied in high school or college
- grade in last English class completed
- RSCCD general education classes taken
- RSCCD general education grade point average
- importance of college to student
- length of time out of school
- last math class completed
- grade in last math class completed
- length of time since last math class
- hours per week student plans to attend classes
- hours per week student plans to work.

First, Pearson correlations were calculated between the test score and the additional measure, and between the final course grade and the additional measure . Table 1 lists those items ("Additional Measures") for each course which were found to be significantly predictive of course success.

Table 1: Correlation of Needs Assessment Measures with English Course Success

Fall 1998 English Course	Additional Measure(s)	Correlated with Course Success		
		Count	Pearson Corr. Coef.	Signif.
English 050	Length of time out of school	119	-.202*	.027
	Last Math Class Completed	120	-.217*	.017
English 060	Placement Test Score (DTLS)	434	-.124**	.010
	Years of English in High School	434	-.092	.056
English 061	Placement Test Score (DTLS)	401	-.203**	.000
English 101	Placement Test Score (DTLS)	323	-.168**	.002
	Units in RSCCD General Ed. Classes	221	.198**	.003
	GPA in RSCCD General Ed. Classes	68	.307*	.011
	Last Math Class Taken	319	-.136*	.015

* significant at the .05 level
 ** significant at the .01 level

Note that for English 050, the DTLS was not significantly predictive, and for English 061, **only** the DTLS was found to be predictive.

Based upon the Pearson correlations shown in Table 1, logistic regressions were used to predict the probability of receiving a successful grade (successful=A,B,C,Cr; non-successful=D, F, NCr). Those data (Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5) are shown below. The tables also compare actual course success rates to predicted course success rates.

Table 2: Model Classification Table (English 050/n=86)

Actual Outcome	Predicted Outcome	
	Successful (A,B,C,Cr)	Non-Successful (D,F,NCr)
Successful	22	22
Non-Successful	16	26
Overall probability of successful prediction=56%		

C   The bolded cells of the table show the number of students for whom both teir predicted and actual course success were the same. For example, for English 050, the logistical regression analysis predicted that 38 (22+16) students would be successful and 48 (22+26) would be unsuccessful. In actuality, 44 students (22+22) were successful and 42 (16+26) were unsuccessful.

Table 3: Model Classification Table (English 060/n=332)

Actual Outcome	Predicted Outcome	
	Successful (A,B,C,Cr)	Non-Successful (D,F,NCr)
Successful	248	2
Non-Successful	79	3
overall probability of successful prediction=76%		

Table 4: Model Classification Table (English 061/n=325)

Actual Outcome	Predicted Outcome	
	Successful (A,B,C,Cr)	Non-Successful (D,F,NCr)
Successful	269	0
Non-Successful	56	0
overall probability of successful prediction=83%		

Table 5: Model Classification Table (English 101/n=47)

Actual Outcome	Predicted Outcome	
	Successful (A,B,C,Cr)	Non-Successful (D,F,NCr)
Successful	38	0
Non-Successful	8	1
overall probability of successful prediction=83%		

Using the measures listed in Table 1 on page 2 provides high (over 76%) predictive ability for all course except English 050, for which 56% of the cases were predicted accurately.

Data for the group of students for whom test scores were not sufficiently high to meet the cut score for the course into which they enrolled, but for whom counselors considered additional measures for placement into that course, were then examined. At the English 060 level, findings support the use of "years of prior English study" as a measure to use in conjunction with the placement test; 74% of those students (who had a significant number of years of prior English study) successfully completed the course. Looked at in this way, several other measures (used in 65-70% of these types of placements) appear to be good predictors of course success (Table 6). However, low sample size dictates further study.

Table 6: Students Who Tested Below Cut Score

Course Enrolled In	Additional Measure Used by Counselor for Fall 1998 placement	Course Success		
		Count	Successful (A,B,C,Cr)	Non-Successful (D,F,NCr)
English 060	Years of English study	72	74%	26%
English 061	Years of English study	48	73%	27%
	Grade in last English class	44	73%	27%
	Importance of college to student	8	88%	12%
English 101	Years of English study	21	71%	29%
	Grade in last English class	20	85%	15%

Due to the transition to a new assessment instrument (TELD) for English as a Second Language course placement for Fall 1999, the use of additional measures for the placement of students into ESL courses will be studied at a later time.