

Research In Brief

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ASSET Placement Test Consequential Validity Study

Introduction: Palomar College currently uses the ASSET assessment test to assist in the placement of students into appropriate English, math, and reading courses. As part of the process to renew the test's approval status on the Chancellor's List of Approved Instruments, the college conducted a study to review evidence of the ASSET's consequential-related validity. Palomar College must address, at a minimum, the following two items to meet submission standards:

Part I: After a few weeks of a course, how do students whose test scores recommend placement into a particular class evaluate the appropriateness and/or usefulness of their placement in that course? (The Standard is at least 75% affirmative endorsement by students.)

Part II: After the first few weeks of a class, how do instructors evaluate individual students (those who followed test recommendations) to undertake the material of their class. (The Standard is at least 75% judgment of proper placement by instructors.)

Methodology, Part I (Student Survey):

Students enrolled in the courses served by the ASSET were asked to participate in the study. Participation in the study involved completing a survey during class time. Palomar College uses the ASSET to place students into the following courses: English 10, 50, and 100-299 (excluding 202-203); Math 10, 50, 56, 60, 100-135, and 140; and Reading 30, 50, and 110.

For the English Student Survey, we identified a sample of 1,797 students. We received back 1,157 completed surveys for a response rate of 64%.

For the Math Student Survey, we identified a sample of 3,182 students. We received back 1,680 completed surveys for a response rate of 53%.

Due to the small number of enrollments in Reading, we were able to send surveys to all Reading students. Of the 674 Reading Student Surveys sent, we received back 463 for a response rate of 68.7%.

Analysis, Part I: To test whether or not students placed by the ASSET felt that they were enrolled in the proper course, we asked the following question:

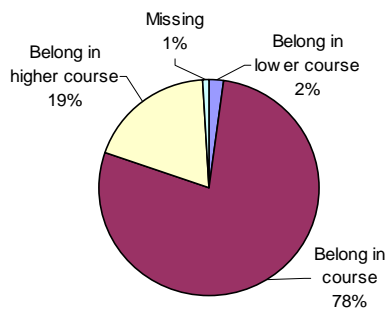
“What sentence best describes you?”

- A. *I should have enrolled in a lower course – this course is too difficult for me.*
- B. *I belong in this course – this course is about the right level of difficulty for me.*
- C. *I should have placed in a higher course – this course is too easy for me.*

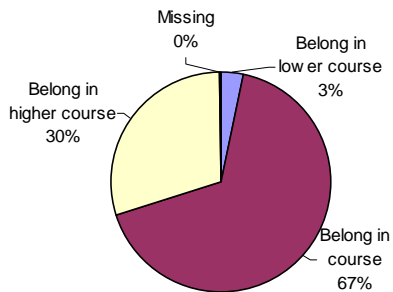
Results, Part I: Of the 675 students reporting that the ASSET placed them into their English class, 78.8% felt that they belonged in the course. Of the 745 students reporting that the ASSET placed them into their math class, 67.6% felt that they belonged in the class. And, of the 235 students reporting that the ASSET placed them into their reading class, 91.5% believed that they belonged in the course. For English and reading the results of our study exceed the Standard established by the California

Community Colleges (CCC). Math student's ratings did not exceed the Standard.

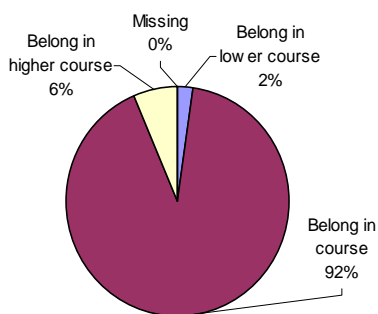
Part I: Student Perception of English Placement



Part I: Student Perception of Math Placement



Part I: Student Perception of Reading Placement



Conclusions, Part I: The results of Part I of our study suggest that in two of the disciplines served by ASSET, students believe that they are properly placed and should be enrolled in the courses recommended by their test scores. Thus, the results of Part I provide support for the renewal of the English and reading ASSET on the Chancellor's List of Approved Instruments. Ratings for math did not reach the pre-determined standard (75%) for appropriate placement. A sizable percentage of students felt that they should have been placed in a higher level math course (29.5%). However, this is

only one factor to examine when evaluating the validity of the ASSET test.

Methodology, Part II (Faculty Survey): Faculty members teaching courses served by the ASSET during Fall semester 2002 were asked to participate in the study.

For English, we sent surveys to 43 instructors covering 84 course sections. We received surveys from 35 instructors covering 61 sections.

For math, we sent surveys to 59 instructors covering 93 course sections. We received surveys from 40 instructors covering 62 sections.

For reading, we sent surveys to 9 instructors covering 24 course sections. We received surveys from 9 instructors covering 23 sections.

Analysis, Part II: During the 5th week of the Fall 2002 semester we sent out faculty surveys. The faculty surveys listed student's in each section and asked faculty members to rate each student's preparedness for the course on a 5-pt scale (1=Should definitely be placed in a lower level course; 5=Should definitely be placed in a higher level course).

Results, Part II: The English faculty judged 89.6% of their students as either "Appropriately Placed" or "Might have the ability to do well in a higher level course." If we add the faculty ratings of "Should definitely be placed in a higher level course," the positive preparedness responses increase to 91.5%.

The Math faculty judged 86.0% of their students as either "Appropriately Placed" or "Might have the ability to do well in a higher level course." If we add the faculty ratings of "Should definitely be placed in a higher level course," the positive preparedness responses increase to 87.8%.

The Reading faculty judged 91.6% of their students as either "Appropriately Placed" or "Might have the ability to do well in a higher level course." If we add the faculty ratings of "Should definitely be placed in a higher level course," the positive preparedness responses increase to 93.2%. Thus, the "positive" response rate for all three groups exceeded the Standard established by the CCC (75%).

Conclusions and Recommendations, Part II: The results of the faculty surveys provide evidence for the English, math, and reading ASSET's consequential-related validity and thus, provide support for renewal of the ASSET on the Chancellor's list of Approved Instruments.

Overall Conclusions and Recommendations:

Overall, the findings of Parts I and II of this study suggest that the ASSET possesses good consequential validity for English and reading and should thus be maintained. As revealed in Part I of this study, student's ratings of their appropriate placement into math courses (67%) did not reach the 75% standard. Notably, 29.5% of students surveyed felt they should have been placed in a higher course. However, Faculty ratings of student preparedness suggest that the ASSET is an adequate placement instrument for math. As this study represents only a small part of the renewal process, we recommend reviewing it along with other objective estimates of the test's validity, fairness, reliability, and impact of the test on various groups. Further, as the sub-committee continues to review the adequacy of the ASSET and its cut scores, we recommend keeping in mind the results of this study.

More information? Please contact the Office of Institutional Research and Planning if you have any questions about this or other research and planning issues (Ext. 2360).