

## **Outcomes Assessment: 2014 – 2015 Student Preparation for Accuplacer Retests**

### **Rationale:**

This study began with the hypothesis that students did not prepare for their initial Accuplacer placement test, but would prepare before retesting in order to improve their score/placement. To begin collecting this data, a demographic question was added to the Accuplacer test in July of 2014.

How did you prepare for the placement test?

- a) I attended a Placement Test workshop.
- b) I completed a practice test or study app.
- c) I reviewed reading or math study guides or online lessons.
- d) a and b
- e) a and c
- f) b and c
- g) all of the above
- h) I did not prepare.

### **Methodology:**

A time period of January 1 – 15, 2015, was selected as the time period to provide subjects for the study. This time period was chosen because it was Spring semester rush and had the highest concentration of students paying for retests in a short time period. Participants were those who paid for a retest. Students were selected from daily rosters and identified only by S number. This initial screening resulted in 210 students being selected.

The test dates for each of these students were determined, and student records were examined using SHACRSE to be sure that students had not completed an applicable class in the time period between the first test and the retest. A completed class would be a variable that would invalidate any improvement in test scores. After this screening, 65 students (30.9%) were left in the study group.

### **Results:**

Of the 65 students examined, 6 (9.23%) had an elapsed time since their first test of 5 months or more. Five (5) students (7.69%) had an elapsed time of more than 2 months. The remaining 54 students had retested within a period of 6 weeks or less.

Of the 65 students, 13 (20%) retested Reading for English placement, 46 (70.76%) retested math and the remaining 4 (6.1%) retested both. Forty-one (41) of the 46 students retesting

math improved their score on the retest (89.1%). For those students retesting the Reading section, 12 of 13 (92.30%) improved their score. Three (3) of the 4 students (75%) who retested both sections improved both scores, while the remaining student improved the reading score, but not the math.

As stated, the original hypothesis was that the majority of students would not have prepared for their initial test, but would have prepared for the retest. This hypothesis was proven false. Only 11 of the 65 students (16.9%) indicated that they had not prepared for their initial test. Those 11 students were divided almost equally, with 6 in math, 4 in reading, and 1 who had taken the whole test answering in the negative.

Examining preparation for the retest, only 8 students (12.3%) stated they did not prepare. These students were fairly equally divided, with 3 each in math and reading, and 2 who had taken the whole test. Seven (7) of the 8 students showed improvement on their scores in the retest, even though they had not prepared. The eighth student took the whole test, but only improved on the Reading section, not the math.

The majority of the students who indicated they had prepared for either the initial test or the retest indicated they had either completed a practice test or study app (option b) or had reviewed reading or math study guides or online lessons (option c). Many students completed both options b and c. Only 4 students indicated they had attended a placement test workshop. Their attendance was combined with options b and c. (Comments from students has indicated that students are not finding the workshop particularly helpful since the format changed.)

### **Results, conclusions and Recommendations:**

This study did not examine whether students had improved their placements, only whether their scores had improved. Anecdotally, it appeared that some students, but not all, did improve their placements.

One variable that was not examined and should have been included was the amount of time students spent preparing and the question of whether the student spent more time preparing for the retest than for their initial test. Measurement of this variable could provide valuable information.

Overall, this study confirmed a trend that had been noted before. More students are preparing for the placement test. This means that more students understand the importance of the test and the impact on their future course of study. The College has been doing more to stress preparation for the test to students and these efforts are producing results.

