



Peralta Community College District
Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, Laney College, Merritt College

**Consequential Validity Survey Preliminary Report
ESL Reading and Writing Course Placement
Spring and Fall 2015**

Office of Institutional Research

November 2015

Introduction

A preliminary consequential validity study was conducted in Spring and Fall 2015 terms to evaluate the accuracy and validity of the ESL reading and writing course placement process (i.e., consequence of placement). During the fifth week of classes, a survey was administered to students and instructors in the reading and writing ESL courses at Berkeley City College, College of Alameda, and Laney College (see Appendices A and B for the student and instructor surveys). Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the placement into their ESL reading and writing course by indicating whether the class was 1) the right level, 2) too difficult, or 3) too easy. Instructors were asked to assess whether the first-time students in their classes were: 1) appropriately placed, 2) should have enrolled in a lower level class, or 3) should have enrolled in a higher level class. The standard set by the chancellor's office is at least 75% of students surveyed need to perceive themselves as properly placed in their classes and instructors need to rate at least 75% of students are appropriately placed.

Four levels of ESL reading and writing courses were assessed: High Beginning (285A), Intermediate (222A), High Intermediate (223A), and Advanced (52A). Several classes from each level were randomly selected to be surveyed from each college (See Table 1 for a description of the sample).

Students who took the ESL writing assessment test at one of the Peralta colleges were included in evaluating the appropriateness of their placement. Enrollment records were matched with assessment data and only students who took the placement test after August 1, 2014 (when the new ESL writing scoring rubric was implemented) were included in the analysis. Most of the other students in the classes were continuing in the ESL sequence and did not take the placement test or they took the placement test outside Peralta colleges.

Instructors were asked to rate all first-time students in their classes. First-time students were chosen because they were most likely to have recently taken the ESL writing assessment test. Student self-ratings were obtained from the students in attendance on the day of the survey. The instructor and student surveys were conducted in class using paper surveys.

Results for Three Colleges Combined

A description of the sample characteristics is given in Table 1. Participation rate was high (94%), with 59 classes responding out of 63 classes requested to participate in the survey. Of the 595 first-time students in the 59 classes, a total of 492 students completed the survey and 56 instructors rated 527 first-time students in their classes (3 instructors did not rate their students, but their students completed the student survey).

Table 1: Description of Participating Reading and Writing ESL Courses

Courses	# of Sections Surveyed	Total Enrolled	# of Student Ratings	# of Instructor Ratings
ESL 285A (High Beginning)	17	230	196	213
ESL 222A (Intermediate)	12	116	93	94
ESL 223A (High Intermediate)	15	137	113	124
ESL 52A (Advanced)	15	112	90	96
Total	59	595	492	527

Students were generally satisfied with their placement (See Table 2). All 4 levels of ESL courses had a higher than 75% agreement rate that the course was the right level, ranging from 81.6% to 92.2%. Overall, only 6.7% of the students reported that they were not qualified for their class (too difficult), with the highest percentage of students in 285A (10.7%). Similarly, 7.5% of students reported that they were overqualified for their class (too easy), with the highest percentage of students in 223A (9.7%).

Table 2: Student Rating of Placement Accuracy

ESL		Qualified	Under Qualified	Over Qualified	Total
285A	n	160	21	15	196
	%	81.6	10.7	7.7	100.0
222A	n	82	3	8	93
	%	88.2	3.2	8.6	100.0
223A	n	97	5	11	113
	%	85.8	4.4	9.7	100.0
52A	n	83	4	3	90
	%	92.2	4.4	3.3	100.0
Total	n	422	33	37	492
	%	85.8	6.7	7.5	100.0

As can be seen in Table 3, instructors were generally favorable in the placement of the students. All 4 levels of ESL courses had rates higher than 75% agreement that the students were appropriately placed, ranging from 77.4% to 87.5%. Overall, 15.7% of the students were thought to be under-prepared by the instructors and only 3.2% of the students were considered over-prepared.

Table 3: Instructor Rating of Placement Adequacy

ESL		Prepared	Under Prepared	Over Prepared	Total
285A	n	172	36	5	213
	%	80.8	16.9	2.3	100.0
222A	n	75	12	7	94
	%	79.8	12.8	7.4	100.0
223A	n	96	23	5	124
	%	77.4	18.5	4.0	100.0
52A	n	84	12	0	96
	%	87.5	12.5	0.0	100.0
Total	n	427	83	17	527
	%	81.0	15.7	3.2	100.0

In sum, both students and instructors reported acceptable levels of satisfaction with the ESL reading and writing course placement process.

Results for Each College

Analyses were conducted for each college to explore potential variation in students' and instructors' satisfaction with the placement process across the colleges for Spring and Fall 2015 terms. **Given the small sample size of the students at each college, the results for each college should be interpreted with caution.**

College of Alameda

Seventeen ESL reading and writing classes participated in the survey at Alameda (100% participation rate, see Table 4). Of the 136 first-time students, a total of 105 students completed the survey and 17 instructors rated 126 first-time students in their classes.

Table 4: Description of Participating Reading and Writing ESL Courses at Alameda

Courses	# of Sections Surveyed	Total Enrolled	# of Student Ratings	# of Instructor Ratings
ESL 285A (High Beginning)	6	74	60	71
ESL 222A (Intermediate)	4	32	25	28
ESL 223A (High Intermediate)	4	18	10	15
ESL 52A (Advanced)	3	12	10	12
Total	17	136	105	126

Students at Alameda were generally satisfied with their placement (See Table 5). All 4 levels of ESL courses had a higher than 75% agreement rate, ranging from 80.0% to 90.0%. Overall, only 3.8% of the students reported that they were underqualified for the course (too difficult); while 10.5% felt they were overqualified (too easy). Given the small sample size of the students, especially in the higher level courses, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 5: Student Rating of Placement Accuracy at Alameda

ESL		Qualified	Under Qualified	Over Qualified	Total
285A	n	53	3	4	60
	%	88.3	5.0	6.7	100.0
222A	n	20	0	5	25
	%	80.0	0.0	20.0	100.0
223A	n	8	0	2	10
	%	80.0	0.0	20.0	100.0
52A	n	9	1	0	10
	%	90.0	10.0	0.0	100.0
Total	n	90	4	11	105
	%	85.7	3.8	10.5	100.0

As can be seen in Table 6, instructors were mostly favorable in the placement of the students. Only ESL 223A course (66.7%) had a rate lower than 75% agreement that the students were appropriately placed. The other 3 level courses were higher than the 75% standard, ranged from 75.0% to 78.9%. Overall, 22.2% of the students were thought to be under-prepared by the instructors and only 1.6% of the students were considered over-prepared. Given the small sample size of the students rated, especially in the higher level courses, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 6: Instructor Rating of Placement Adequacy at Alameda

ESL		Prepared	Under Prepared	Over Prepared	Total
285A	n	56	15	0	71
	%	78.9	21.1	0.0	100.0
222A	n	21	5	2	28
	%	75.0	17.9	7.1	100.0
223A	n	10	5	0	15
	%	66.7	33.3	0.0	100.0
52A	n	9	3	0	12
	%	75.0	25.0	0.0	100.0
Total	n	96	28	2	126
	%	76.2	22.2	1.6	100.0

Berkeley City College

Berkeley offers only the 2 highest levels of ESL reading and writing courses. Eleven classes participated in the survey (100% participation rate, see Table 7). Of the 154 first-time students, a total of 123 students completed the survey and 9 instructors rated 129 first-time students in their classes (2 instructors did not rate their students in Fall 2015).

Table 7: Description of Participating Reading and Writing ESL Courses at Berkeley

Courses	# of Sections Surveyed	Total Enrolled	# of Student Ratings	# of Instructor Ratings
ESL 223A (High Intermediate)	5	81	64	72

ESL 52A (Advanced)	6	73	59	57
Total	11	154	123	129

Students were satisfied with their placement (See Table 8). Both levels of ESL courses had a higher than 75% agreement rate that the course was the right level, 84.4% for 223A and 91.5% for 52A. Overall, only 5.7% of the students reported that they were underqualified for the course (too difficult); while 6.5% believed they were overqualified (too easy). Given the small sample size of the students, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 8: Student Rating of Placement Accuracy at Berkeley

ESL		Qualified	Under Qualified	Over Qualified	Total
223A	n	54	4	6	64
	%	84.4	6.3	9.4	100.0
52A	n	54	3	2	59
	%	91.5	5.1	3.4	100.0
Total	n	108	7	8	123
	%	87.8	5.7	6.5	100.0

As can be seen in Table 9, instructors were favorable in the placement of the students. Both level courses were above the 75%, 80.6% for 223a and 94.7% for 52A. Overall, 11.6% of the students were thought to be under-prepared by the instructors and only 1.6% of the students were considered over-prepared. Given the small sample size of the students rated, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 9: Instructor Rating of Placement Adequacy at Berkeley

ESL		Prepared	Under Prepared	Over Prepared	Total
223A	n	58	12	2	72
	%	80.6	16.7	2.8	100.0
52A	n	54	3	0	57
	%	94.7	5.3	0.0	100.0
Total	n	112	15	2	129

%	86.8	11.6	1.6	100.0
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Laney College

Thirty-one out of 35 classes from all four levels of ESL reading and writing courses participated in the survey at Laney (89% participation rate, see Table 10). Of the 327 first-time students, a total of 264 students completed the survey and 30 instructors rated 272 first-time students in their classes (One instructor did not rate his/her students).

Table 10: Description of Participating Reading and Writing ESL Courses at Laney

Courses	# of Sections Surveyed	Total Enrolled	# of Student Ratings	# of Instructor Ratings
ESL 285A (High Beginning)	11	156	136	142
ESL 222A (Intermediate)	8	90	68	66
ESL 223A (High Intermediate)	6	54	39	37
ESL 52A (Advanced)	6	27	21	27
Total	31	327	264	272

Students were generally satisfied with their placement (See Table 11). All 4 levels of ESL courses had a higher than 75% agreement rate, ranging from 78.7% to 95.2%. Overall, 8.3% of the students reported that they were underqualified for the course (too difficult), with the highest percentage of students in 285A (13.2%). Only 6.8% of the students believed they were overqualified (too easy). These results should be interpreted with caution given the small sample size of students, particularly in the higher level courses.

Table 11: Student Rating of Placement Accuracy at Laney

ESL		Qualified	Under Qualified	Over Qualified	Total
285A	n	107	18	11	136
	%	78.7	13.2	8.1	100.0
222A	n	62	3	3	68
	%	91.2	4.4	4.4	100.0

223A	n	35	1	3	39
	%	89.7	2.6	7.7	100.0
52A	n	20	0	1	21
	%	95.2	0.0	4.8	100.0
Total	n	224	22	18	264
	%	84.8	8.3	6.8	100.0

As can be seen in Table 12, instructors were generally favorable in the placement of the students. All 4 levels of ESL courses had rates higher than 75% agreement that the students were appropriately placed, ranged from 75.7% to 81.7%. Overall, 14.7% of the students were thought to be under-prepared, especially in the highest level course (22.2%); and only 4.8% of the students were considered over-prepared. Given the small sample size of the students rated, particularly in the higher level courses, these results should be interpreted with caution.

Table 12: Instructor Rating of Placement Adequacy at Laney

ESL		Prepared	Under Prepared	Over Prepared	Total
285A	n	116	21	5	142
	%	81.7	14.8	3.5	100.0
222A	n	54	7	5	66
	%	81.8	10.6	7.6	100.0
223A	n	28	6	3	37
	%	75.7	16.2	8.1	100.0
52A	n	21	6	0	27
	%	77.8	22.2	0.0	100.0
Total	n	216	40	13	272
	%	80.5	14.7	4.8	100.0

Conclusion

Both students and instructors reported acceptable levels of satisfaction with the ESL reading and writing course placement process. When the 3 colleges were examined individually, only 1 course level at Alameda exhibited lower than the standard 75% satisfaction level. Specifically, 4

instructors in ESL 223A classes reported that 66.7% of the students were qualified for the course, whereas 33.3% were under-prepared. However, caution is warranted because only 15 first-time students were evaluated in the 4 classes.

Overall, the small number of students and instructors we were able to survey limits what conclusions we draw, especially with the two higher level courses at Alameda and Laney. Additional data need to be collected in the future to determine the generality of the findings for each college. Moreover, approximately 17% of the students did not complete the survey and we need to elucidate the factors that contribute to nonparticipation.

Appendix A: Consequential Validity Survey – Student Survey**PCCD ESL Placement Validation Student Survey - Fall 2015**

To be completed by the student

Please take a few minutes to provide feedback on this course. Your judgment will help Peralta CCD to improve course placement processes.

Date _____ Birthdate _____

Name _____

Course Section (circle one): 285A 222A 223A 52A

1. Which **ONE** of the following statements is most true about your placement in this course?
 This course is the right level for me.
 This course is too difficult for me.
 This course is too easy for me.

2. How did you get placed into this course?
 Placement test at one of the Peralta colleges (Alameda, Berkeley, Laney, Merritt)
 Placement test outside Peralta colleges
 Completed prerequisite course
 Successfully challenged the prerequisite
 Other _____

3. If you took the placement test at one of the Peralta colleges, did you prepare for the test by studying?
 Yes No

4. To what extent are personal reasons (illness, job/family responsibilities, personal problems, etc.) interfering with your performance in this course?
 Not at all
 Somewhat
 Very much

5. Do you have enough time to meet the studying/homework demands of this course?
 Yes No

Appendix B: Consequential Validity Survey – Instructor Survey

PCCD Placement Validation Survey - Fall 2015

To be completed by the instructor

As part of the revalidation process for Peralta Community Colleges' assessment placement tool, we need data from you about the students in your class.

Please indicate the appropriateness of each student's placement by completing the following statement. This student is:

1 = Appropriately placed in this class.

2 = Inappropriately placed – should have enrolled in a lower level class.

3 = Inappropriately placed – should have enrolled in a higher level class..

Student Name	Student ID	Rating