

Research Brief (Draft)

May, 2014

Student and Faculty Perceptions Regarding the Appropriateness of Student Placement in English, Math, Reading, and ESL Courses

Periodically Cañada College is required by state regulations to validate cut-scores and multiple measures for our assessment tests. Cañada College is undertaking a placement validation process which includes both quantitative and qualitative components. The following brief describes the results of the qualitative portion of this analysis in which faculty and students were surveyed in order to determine their perceptions of the appropriateness of the student's placement.

Research question 1:

What were the student and faculty perceptions regarding the appropriateness of student placement in English?

Methodology

Students who completed the English Placement test between April 2013 and August 2013, and subsequently enrolled in an English course in the Fall of 2013, were surveyed in order to determine their perception of the appropriateness of their placement. Additionally, the instructors for these courses were also surveyed in order to determine their perceptions of the appropriateness of the student placement.

Table 1: Fall 2013, Student Perceptions of Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College English Courses (Were you appropriately placed in this course?)

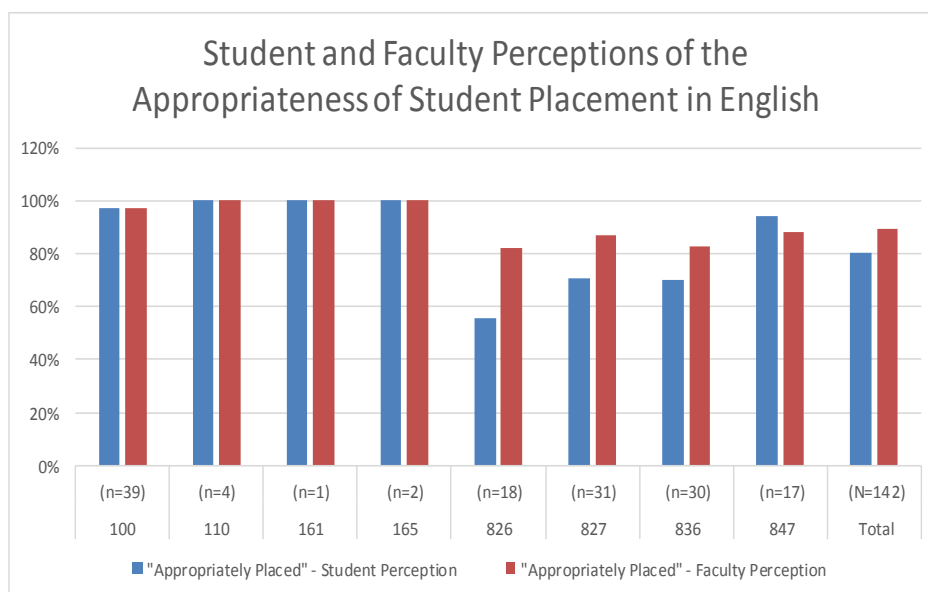
Course number	<i>n</i>	No	Undecided	Yes	"Appropriately Placed"
100	39	1		38	97%
110	4			4	100%
161	1			1	100%
165	2			2	100%
826	18	8		10	56%
827	31	8	1	22	71%
836	30	9		21	70%
847	17	1		16	94%
Grand Total	142	27	1	114	80%

Table 2: Fall 2013, Faculty Perceptions of Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College English Courses

Course number	n*	No	Undecided	Yes	"Appropriately Placed"
100	39	1		38	97%
110	4			4	100%
161	1			1	100%
165	2			2	100%
826	17	3		14	82%
827	31	3	1	27	87%
836	29	5		24	83%
847	17	1	1	15	88%
Grand Total	140	13	2	125	89%

* n= number of responses from faculty (number of students which the faculty member responded on the appropriateness of their placement)

Chart 1: Comparison of Faculty and Student Perceptions of the Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College English Courses



Discussion

In English 100 faculty and students generally agreed that students had been appropriately placed in the courses. In English 110, 161, and 165 all of the students and faculty surveyed indicated the students (n=7) were appropriately placed (however the size of the sample in these courses makes drawing any conclusions about the appropriateness of student placement at these levels based on this data difficult). In English 826, 827, and 836 faculty respondents were more likely than student respondents to indicate students were appropriately placed.

Comments from faculty and student respondents suggested that in the majority of instances in which the students or faculty indicated that students were not appropriately placed, the students and faculty believed the student should have been placed in a higher level course.

Research question 2:

What were the student and faculty perceptions regarding the appropriateness of student placement in Math?

Methodology

Students who completed the Math Placement test between April 2013 and August 2013, and subsequently enrolled in a Math course in the Fall of 2013, were surveyed in order to determine their perception of the appropriateness of their placement. Additionally, the instructors for these courses were also surveyed in order to determine their perceptions of the appropriateness of the student placement.

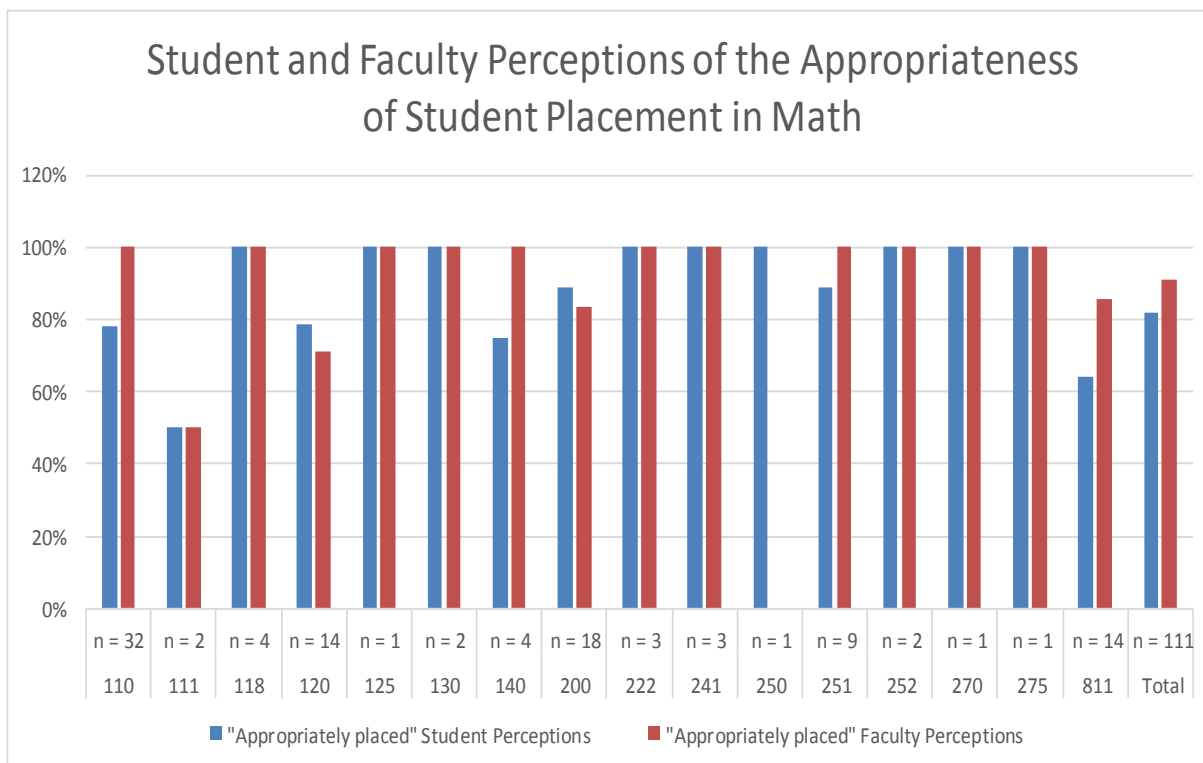
Table 3: Fall 2013, Student Perceptions of the Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College Math Courses

Course number	<i>n</i>	No	Yes	"Appropriately Placed"
110	32	7	25	78%
111	2	1	1	50%
118	4		4	100%
120	14	3	11	79%
125	1		1	100%
130	2		2	100%
140	4	1	3	75%
200	18	2	16	89%
222	3		3	100%
241	3		3	100%
250	1		1	100%
251	9	1	8	89%
252	2		2	100%
270	1		1	100%
275	1		1	100%
811	14	5	9	64%
Grand Total	111	20	91	82%

Table 4: Fall 2013, Faculty Perceptions of the Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College Math Courses

Course	n*	No	Yes	"Appropriately Placed"
110	32		32	100%
111	2	1	1	50%
118	4		4	100%
120	14	4	10	71%
125	1		1	100%
130	2		2	100%
140	4		4	100%
200	18	3	15	83%
222	3		3	100%
241	3		3	100%
250	0		0	
251	9		9	100%
252	2		2	100%
270	1		1	100%
275	1		1	100%
811	14	2	12	86%
Grand Total	110	10	100	91%

*n= number of responses from faculty (number of students which the faculty member responded on the appropriateness of their placement)



(Discussion and recommendations on page 6)

Research question 3:

What were the student and faculty perceptions regarding the appropriateness of student placement in Reading courses?

Methodology

Students who completed the Reading placement test between April 2013 and August 2013, and subsequently enrolled in a reading course in the Fall of 2013, were surveyed in order to determine their perception of the appropriateness of their placement. Additionally, the instructors for these courses were also surveyed in order to determine their perceptions of the appropriateness of the student placement.

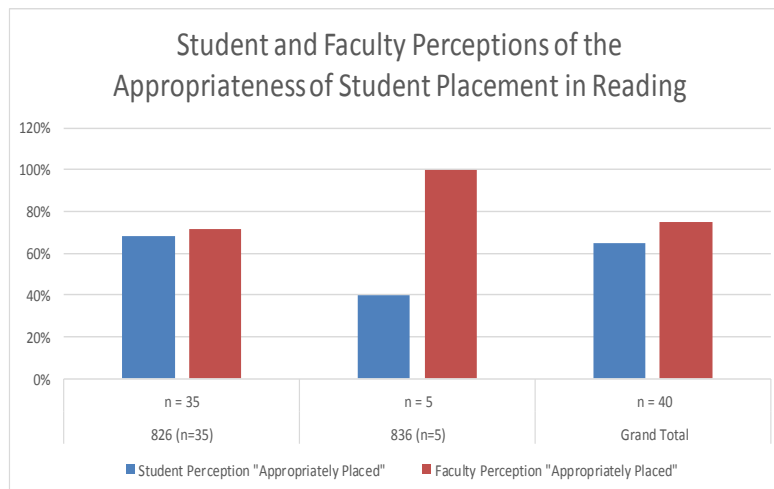
Table 5: Fall 2013, Student Perceptions of Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College Reading Courses

Course	<i>n</i>	No	Yes	"Appropriately Placed"
826	35	11	24	69%
836	5	3	2	40%
Grand Total	40	14	26	65%

Table 6: Fall 2013, Faculty Perceptions of Appropriateness of Placement in Cañada College Reading Courses

Course	<i>n</i>	No	Yes	"Appropriately Placed"
826	35	10	25	71%
836	5		5	100%
Grand Total	40	10	30	75%

**n*= number of responses from faculty (number of students which the faculty member responded on the appropriateness of their placement)



Discussion

Regarding student and faculty perceptions of the appropriateness of student placements in Math, the majority of the student (82%) and faculty (91%) responses indicated students were appropriately placed in Math courses. However, only 64% (9/14) of the students placed in Math 811 indicated they were appropriately placed.

Regarding student and faculty perceptions of reading placements, the majority of the student (65%) and faculty (75%) responses indicated students were appropriately placed in reading courses. However, the proportion of student and faculty responses indicating students were appropriately placed in Reading was lower than the proportions in English and Math.

Regarding the combined results from the math, English and reading placement surveys, faculty were less likely than students to indicate students placement was inappropriate. Faculty responses indicated 33 students were not appropriately placed, while student responses indicated 61 students were not appropriately placed. The courses in which the students indicated the lowest levels of agreement with their placement were English 826 (56%, n = 18), English 827 (71%, n = 31), English 836 (70%, n = 30), Math 811 (64%, n = 14), Reading 826 (69%, n = 40), and Reading 836 (40%, n = 5).

Recommendations

Overall the majority of students and faculty believed the placements were appropriate. However in order to provide more information regarding the appropriateness of student placement it is recommended that additional quantitative research be conducted. Specifically, it is recommended that correlations between placement test scores and success in courses be examined to determine the degree to which placement scores are correlated with student success in courses. This research would also support the examination of the appropriateness of the placement cutoff points.

Additionally, it is recommended that this analysis include comparisons of course outcomes between students who were “placed” in courses with students who advanced into the same courses as a result of completing a lower level course.