CCC Assess
Centralized Assessment Delivery Project
San Joaquin Delta College
5-8-2010

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ASSESSMENT STATISTICS:

In 2007 a survey of all 109 community colleges was done to determine what methods were being used to place students. Accuplacer and MDTP were the most popular, at 41 and 42 colleges, respectively. One college had no method of assessment for mathematics. It was speculated that students placed themselves at this college.

Another study found that when students were given a thorough explanation of the expectations for various courses, they largely placed themselves the same way as they assessed.

MOTIVATIONS FOR CREATING A CENTRALIZED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM:

BUSINESS PROBLEM:

1. Testing costs are borne locally (Matriculation funds)
2. Number of students who can be tested is limited
3. Matriculation funds have recently been cut, thus further reducing purchasing potential and the number of students who can be tested.
4. Little purchasing economy of scale
5. Scores are non-transferable, which requires re-testing
6. No central score repository (or any store of cut-offs for different schools)
7. Right now roughly $10,000,000 spent on testing per year. This amounts to $1.50 or more per student. If purchased in bulk, the ballpark figure from testing companies is less than $1.00 per student.

PERCEPTION PROBLEM:

1. Myth: California Community Colleges use 300+ placement tests;
   Fact: there are 3-5 main testing methods per curricular area.
2. Students face different cut scores, thus allowing them to "shop around"
3. Students are not required to test.

GOALS:

1. More effective way to assess preparedness and ensure appropriate placement.
2. Develop a centralized data base for storing placement scores.

3. Single instrument for math, English (reading and writing), and ESL assessment.
4. No need for all tests to be provided by one company
5. Unlimited user license (No need to estimate approximate usage)
6. Online pretest (For students to get familiar with test format).
7. Customizable for community colleges (wide variety of students; UC-bound vs. remedial)
8. Individual college branding (colleges can include their own logo, add own supplemental questions)
9. The data warehouse will provide all available K12 scores (STAR, CAHSEE, EAP)
   (CSU interested in seat at advisory committee… Possibly CSU will also use the same test????)
10. Electronic Transcript info.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

Develop a centralized method of assessment; the testing instruments (like technical utilities) will be delivered centrally. The testing instruments themselves will be picked by faculty. Scores will be collected and stored centrally with web portal access. While the central assessment method would not be mandated, it would be economically incentivized, centrally funded.

Questions:

- Would multiple-measures that affect the cut-off scores be made public? Would colleges have access to each others' multiple measures?
- How would prerequisites be validated?
- Would there be communication between central and local databases? (Two-way data flow)
- How would students who require pencil/paper test be accommodated? Would this be cost-effective?

BENEFITS

- Save money by buying in bulk
- free up local money
- expose students to test before they take it
- test and re-test (if unlimited license)
- No re-testing necessary if students move around
- placement algorithm
- By doing this the California Community Colleges "FIX SOMETHING" themselves, and thus gain trust from the state.

THE GRANT

HP and the Gates foundation have each put forth $250,000 to fund the project. This money is to pay for meetings, background work, feasibility analysis, and limited piloting. Ongoing costs must be borne by the state.

ROLE OF FACULTY

1. Create criteria for instrument selection
2. Evaluate potential vendor products
3. Produce a list of potential vendors. Evaluate products/costs, select testing instrument for each curricular area.

TIMELINE

- **Now:** Faculty begin developing criteria/cubrics for RFI (request for information)
- **Fall 2010:** evaluate RFI respondents
- **Spring 2011:** Negotiate ongoing funding sources; seek budget line item. The number in question is 7 digits. (Not that big a deal…?)
- **Summer/Fall 2011:** Analyze product quality vs. cost; award final selection, contract.

MATH Break-Out Session

Part I

Likes/Wants for math Assessment Test:

- arithmetic skills (whole number vs. integer)
- more discriminating on all levels
    - do we stop it at placement into Calculus I (End at precalc/trig?)
    - many students take the AP test as placement into Calculus II; those who do not, how are they to be placed? (they have to pay for the AP test).
- structure of tests determines the KIND of test based on the students' answers to mathematical history
- should all tests start at the same place?
- Being able to see students' ability in a wide spectrum of subjects;
    - Do not assume that just because there's no arithmetic skill there are no other skills
    - A test that breaks up the skills
    - Diagnostic (Skill/Area deficiency)
    - Assessment gives a single number, placement decides what to do with that number
    - provide an opportunity for students to catch up on weaknesses
- Adaptive tests: allow retakes, possibly at an expense to the student?
    - student selects starting point
    - careful not to lose entire areas
    - several branches at the beginning to assure broad coverage
    - "INITIAL SKILL SNAPSHOT"
- At the "South" meeting (which took place the day before) a desire for a single linear test with enough questions for arithmetic to calculus was voiced.
- Multiple choice vs. short answer. (Cost)
- First section creates snap-shot of multiple skill-levels, before more in-depth adaptive.
- Students often get trapped in low-levels, and can't get out
- Information given to instructors to help with scheduling
- What do "we" (instructors) value?
    - data/tables
    - multiple step questions
    - heavily symbolically oriented/procedural questions (less of this?)
    - Shouldn't neglect open-ended questions ($$$)
    - Do multiple measures work?
    - We want to only keep out those who "don't have a chance"
    - "college" competence.
- Counselors are likely to say "yes" without really knowing.

MATH Break-Out Session

Part II

Result of Rio-Hondo Break-out (from previous day)

1. Single test-taking experience for students (don't want students to feel like they're being subjected to multiple tests)
2. Readiness for Pre-Algebra through Calc I (through precalc including trig)
3. Instant diagnostic indentifying areas of weakness.
4. Sample test available to indicate format and range of questions with instant feedback.
5. Real test available in both online and pencil/paper format
6. Assessment test provides instant score but NOT instant placement. Placement to be determined on a college by college basis.
7. Two-way data transfer between campus and state data
8. Track dates, scores, and number of attempts per student
9. Statewide faculty has opportunity to review and provide input on questions before statewide implementation.
10. Clear and transparent scoring criteria
11. Calculators not necessary and not available
    a. "We" (North) thought that calculators should pop-up on some questions… They should be a local option, because "not necessary" is ambiguous.
    b. Allowing calculators on some questions could diagnose more accurately.
12. Avoid questions testing multiple level concepts in the same question
13. Ability to accept free range responses
14. Correctly interpret input with symbols, spaces, etc.
15. Culturally sensitive/appropriate reading levels
16. No reverse engineering multiple choice questions.

What "WE" (North) thought was important that did not show up in the "South" list:

1. Modular remediation (flexibility for departments to design courses/programs to address specific points of weakness)
2. Arithmetic THROUGH calculus diagnostic
3. Ability to get precise information about students' ability in a wide range of topics.
4. Problems with single score: A lot of time/energy/money but not a lot of information.
5. We don't want a single assessment score; Instead, we want pathways with individual score on each.
6. Placement vs. knowledge. Different campuses have different course structures.

7. This should not be thought of as a placement test. Every campus has a different placement process and this diagnostic should be a piece of that placement process.
8. This test should assess skill, not readiness or placement. Colleges can decide on placement based on their own approach, etc.
9. It's naïve to think that it's possible to create a test with a single score where colleges decide placement according to some scale. This test should be about getting information about what a student knows.
10. We want adaptive Rio Hondo was opposed to adaptive. Why?
11. Knowing precise areas of deficiency can be empowering to students.
12. "Blocks" of mathematics allows students to show off their skills in higher levels of mathematics even if their skills in lower levels are weak.

Commentary:

A meeting will be held to merge the ideas developed at the north and south meetings. This will more clearly identify what is needed of this test, then the test design companies can work on a product that will meet those needs.

At Los Medanos students using Accuplacer often start with "wrong" test and then students with very similar skill-sets get placed in very different courses (this should be avoided).

An assessment test should be separate from remediation. The results of an assessment/diagnostic test should enable remediation.