



LOS ANGELES HARBOR COLLEGE

Matriculation Research Report

Disproportionate Impact Study
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Assessment Instrument

Fall 2008

Prepared by:
Office of Research and Planning

INTRODUCTION

The English as a Second Language (ESL) assessment test is based upon writing and reading scores that are combined with high school GPA as a multiple measure.

The placement sequence of these ESL courses is shown below with 4 being the lowest and 1 as the highest level of placement.

Table 1. English as a Second Language Course Sequence

Sequence	Course and Description
4	<i>English 84</i> College English as a Second Language I, Non-Degree Applicable
3	<i>English 85</i> College English as a Second Language II, Degree Applicable
2	<i>English 86</i> College English as a Second Language III, Degree Applicable
1	<i>ENL Referral</i> Referral to take English as a Native Language Assessment Test

Source: Los Angeles Harbor College Summer and Fall 2008 Schedule of Classes

Between spring 2005 and fall 2008 semesters, the test was administered to 538 students. However, since only 9 were referred to take the ENL test, this group was excluded from the total.

This study will determine if there is a test bias based on age, gender, and ethnicity and recommend possible solutions if a disproportionate impact is found.

AGE

Table 2. English Placement by Age (Percent)
n=529

Sequence	Placement	Age Percent					Row Avg
		<20 (n=53)	20-24 (n=86)	25-34 (n=156)	35-44 (n=128)	> 45 (n=106)	
3	English 84	15.1%	22.1%	23.1%	31.3%	34.9%	26.5%
2	English 85	54.7%	59.3%	58.3%	46.1%	48.1%	53.1%
1	English 86	30.2%	18.6%	18.6%	22.7%	17.0%	20.4%
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: SIS Stud_APMS and Student tables, 9/15/08.

English 85 Level of Placement:

- Using the 80% guideline, the row average placement for all groups in English 85 42.5% (53.1% X 80%). This is the standard for comparison.
- Any group in that level that averages below 42.5% could be considered an indication of disproportional impact.
- Table 2 shows no disproportional impact for any age group at the English 85 level.

English 86 Level of English Placement:

- Using the 80% guideline, the row average placement for all groups in English 86 is 16.3% (20.4% X 80%). This is the standard for comparison.
- Any group in that level that averages below 16.3% could be considered an indication of disproportional impact.
- There is no indication of disproportionate impact for any age group in the English 86 level of placement based on Table 2.

GENDER

Table 3. English Placement by Gender (Percent)
n=529

Sequence	Placement	Gender Percent		Row Avg
		Male (n=143)	Female (n=386)	
3	English 84	23.8%	27.5%	26.5%
2	English 85	51.0%	53.9%	53.1%
1	English 86	25.2%	18.7%	20.4%
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: SIS Stud_APMS and Student tables, 9/15/08.

English 85 Level of Placement:

- Using the 80% guideline, the average for the Male group in English 85 is 40.8% (51.0% X 80%). This is the standard for comparison.
- Table 3 shows no disproportional impact for the Female group (53.9%) at this level of placement.

English 86 Level of English Placement:

- Using the 80% guideline, the average for the Male group in English 86 is 20.7% (25.2% X 80%). This is the standard for comparison.
- There is indication of gender disproportionate impact in the English 86 level of placement.

ETHNICITY

Unknown and Decline to State categories were excluded from the ethnicity group. That leaves 510 assessed students in the set. In addition, the n's for African American and White students are too small to allow any but the most tentative analysis.

Table 4. English Placement by Ethnicity (Percent)
n=510

Sequence	Placement	Ethnicity Percent				Row Avg
		Afr Amer (n=7)	Asian (n=230)	Hispanic (n=238)	White (n=26)	
4	English 84	28.6%	17.4%	36.6%	11.5%	26.3%
3	English 85	57.1%	54.8%	51.3%	50.0%	52.9%
2	English 86	14.3%	27.8%	12.2%	38.5%	20.8%
		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: SIS Stud_APMS and Student tables, 9/15/08.

English 85 Level of Placement:

- Using the 80% guideline, the row average placement for all groups in the English 85 level is 42.3% (52.9% X 80%). This is the standard for comparison.
- Any group having a placement percentage below 42.3% could be considered an indication of disproportionate impact.
- There is no indication of disproportionate impact in this level of placement based on the figures on Table 4.

English 86 Level of English Placement:

- Using the 80% guideline, the row average placement for all groups in the English 86 level is 16.6% (20.8% X 80%). This is the standard for comparison.
- There is indication of disproportionate impact in the Hispanic (12.2%) and African American (14.3%) groups. However, these results may be the

result of the relatively small number of African-American and White students, rather than disproportionate impact.

RECOMMENDATIONS

English 85

Overall results for English 85 show no disproportionate impact in age, gender, and ethnicity.

English 86

There is no indication of disproportionate impact in age for English 86. However, the concern is in gender where women (18.7%) fall below the 80% standard for comparison.

The following are a few recommendations in order to address the issue of gender:

- Review the publisher's information regarding cultural and gender bias.
- Repeat this study when adequate data can be gathered.
- English as a second language faculty must make a policy statement regarding this impact and consider ways to decrease the disparity.
- In reviewing and modifying the cut scores, both the faculty and the assessment office need address the issue with a plan.

In terms of ethnicity, data collection will continue until there is a sufficient number of students to conduct a valid and reliable study.