

**SETTING MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR SBVC PLACEMENT TEST VALIDITY  
COURSES  
MATH 952,090,095,102  
ENGLISH 914, 015,102**

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San Bernardino Valley College (SBVC) maintains an assessment and placement procedure designed to place every student in courses that best match his or her skill level. The current procedure consists of multiple measures that include a survey, a performance exam, and counseling. In general, multiple measures assessment techniques are employed in order to adequately account for three factors: (1) the student's background and experiences, (2) the student's skill level, (3) factors that come through when the student meets with a counselor for academic advising, and information on issues about personal background such as motivation, maturity, self-direction, and personal preference.

The first stage of the placement process at Valley College requires each student to complete a course-history survey to assess the basic skills courses in their backgrounds (the content of the survey is discussed in detail in the content validity section below). The responses to this survey determine which placement test the student will take. The

student's responses to the survey also contribute to the overall point total used for course placement

The second stage of the process is referred to as the skills assessment portion of the placement process. This stage employs a performance based assessment exercise as the primary placement tool. As stated above, the appropriate exam is determined by the student's responses to the course-history survey. Several exams are available: arithmetic, pre algebra, elementary algebra, intermediate algebra, and college algebra. (see Appendix B for examples). Again, the initial test a student takes is determined by his/her self reported readiness as indicated on the course-history survey. If the student does poorly, he/she is encouraged to step down at least one level until he/she encounters problems with which he/she feels comfortable.

The SBVC faculty believes that performance-based assessment of math, reading, and writing ability, where students are required to work through problems, is superior to indirect methods of testing with multiple choice and/or fill-in questions. The direct method is believed to have the greatest ability to place students in courses that will sufficiently challenge them, but not overwhelm them with material they cannot handle. Also, the faculty believe that tests and testing procedure they have developed is better matched to the population of students we serve, than primary assessments used at the state level. The unique demographic characteristics of our student population calls for an assessment procedure tailored to their special needs<sup>1</sup>. Again, the objective is to identify the learning needs of SBVC students and place them in courses that maximize their opportunity for growth and minimize the chances of frustration, boredom, and failure.

The success measures established in previous studies of locally developed math and English assessment tests will constitute the minimum acceptable results of any new test (see 2005, 2006, 2008 test reliability and validity studies submitted to the California State Chancellor's Office for Math, English, and Reading) . The minimum standards have been set using two measures: 1) Success rates as measured by grades and retention, and

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Introduction to College Algebra (Math 102)  
Validity and Reliability Study

2) students and faculty satisfaction with the placement as measured by the placement and prerequisite surveys. The matriculation committee is awaiting the results of a comparison study. It will have concerns and reservations with recommending the adoption of any placement tests that do not meet the current standards.