UCSB GRANT REPORT

How Well Does the SAT Predict College Performance for Language Minority Students?
A Study of Two Freshman Cohorts at UC Santa Barbara

The validity of the SAT as a college admissions criterion has recently been the subject of increasing scrutiny in California, particularly for minority students. Little attention, however, has been paid to the degree to which validity is affected by the applicant's primary language. The main goal of this study was to investigate the validity of the SAT for Latino and Asian American students who are not native English speakers.

Study Procedures

Analyses were based on over 6,000 students at the University of California, Santa Barbara who enrolled in 1997 and 1998. The data included SAT math and verbal scores, high school grade-point average (GPA), freshman GPA at UCSB, ethnicity, and responses to a questionnaire item asking applicants to indicate "Language(s) you learned to speak first." The item had three possible responses: "English only," "Another language," or "English and another language." We classified the Latino and Asian American students (the only ethnic groups with a substantial proportion of "Another language" responses) according to their responses to the language question, yielding six groups. For simplicity, we refer to students responding "Another language" as "Other" and "English and another language" as "Bilingual." A seventh group, consisting of White students who said English was their primary language, served as a reference group.

The analysis of predictive validity of an admissions test such as the SAT focuses on whether the test is an effective and accurate predictor of freshman GPA, and whether it produces better predictions than would be attained using high school GPA alone. We evaluated the use of two different types of regression analysis—a standard statistical procedure used in many prediction applications such as stock market forecasting—to predict freshman GPA using high school GPA and SAT scores. Each analysis

yields useful information about the predictive value of test scores.

1. When a single prediction equation is estimated for all language/ethnicity groups combined, do the predicted Freshman GPAs tend to be too high for some groups and too low for others?

2. When separate prediction equations are estimated for each language/ethnicity group, how does the effectiveness of prediction vary among the groups?

Analysis Using a Single Prediction Equation

We first estimated a single prediction equation (per freshman cohort) using high school GPA as the only predictor. For the Other and Bilingual groups, using only high school GPA to predict freshman GPA led to substantial overprediction in which students' predicted freshman GPAs were higher than their actual freshman GPAs. This was particularly true for Latino students, where the overprediction sometimes exceeded a quarter of a grade point.

Including SAT scores in the prediction equation substantially improved prediction accuracy. (An exception is the Asian/Bilingual group, where, for unknown reasons, overprediction of at least .12 of a grade point occurred in all regression models.) **Figure 1** shows, in grade-point units, the average amount of overprediction (above the

Figure 1 - Average Over/Under Prediction of Freshman GPA for 1997 Cohort
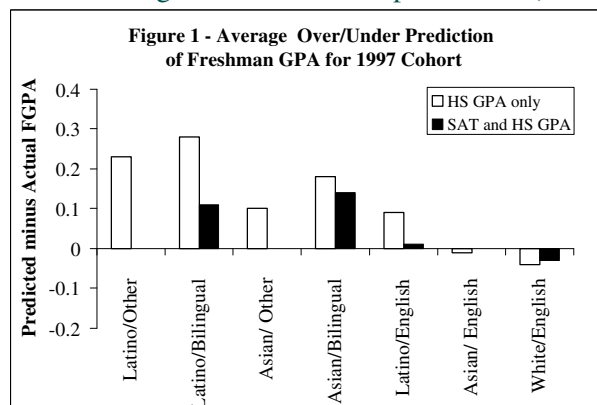
horizontal line) or underprediction (below the line) for each language/ethnicity group in 1997. For example, in the Latino/Other group, the combined-group regression equation produced predicted freshman GPAs that exceeded actual freshman GPAs by an average of nearly a quarter of a grade point when only high school GPA was used as a predictor. When SAT and high school GPA were used, the overprediction was negligible. Results for 1998 were fairly similar, but with a smaller degree of overprediction among the Latino groups and a greater degree of underprediction for the Asian/English group. The model using both SAT scores and high school GPA explained just over 20 percent of the total variation in freshman GPA in both 1997 and 1998.

Analysis Using a Separate Prediction Equation for Each Language/Ethnicity Group

Estimation of separate correlations and prediction equations models for each language/ethnicity group showed that high school GPA was nearly always the best of the three predictors, as is typical. For both Asian and Latino Other groups in 1998, though, SAT verbal score was more highly correlated with freshman GPA than was high school GPA. SAT math score was nearly always the weakest of the three predictors. In fact, high school GPA and SAT verbal score, combined, explained almost as much of the variation in freshman GPA as all three predictors. When all three predictors were included in the model, the models for the language/ethnicity groups explained between 15 and 25 percent of the variation in freshman GPAs. A substantial exception occurred for the Asian/English group, in which SAT scores and high school GPA explained 44 percent of the variation in 1998.

For Asian Americans in both years and Latinos in 1997, prediction of freshman GPA was better for the English groups than for the Other groups, with Bilingual groups falling in between. In 1998, however, prediction was more effective for the Latino/Other and Latino/Bilingual groups than for the Latino/English and White/English groups.

Summary

This study demonstrates that test scores play a substantial role in predicting the freshman grades of language minority students at UC Santa Barbara. Using high school grades alone to predict college grades led to substantial prediction bias for the language minority groups. Also, for the two Other Language groups in 1998, SAT verbal score was more highly correlated with freshman GPA than was high school GPA. When high school grades and test scores were included in the regression equation, prediction was less effective for language minority groups than English groups in 1997, but the reverse pattern held for Latinos in 1998.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that combining native and non-native speakers of English can obscure important information about test validity. For example, in nearly every regression result from 1998, overprediction occurred for the Asian/Other Language and Asian/Bilingual groups, whereas underprediction occurred for the Asian/English group. These distinctions would not have been apparent if these groups had been combined into a single "Asian-American" category.

The current study was hampered by a lack of specific language information and by the large amount of missing language and ethnicity data for the 1998 cohort. To address these problems and to test the generalizability of the findings, similar analyses are being conducted using national data from the High School and Beyond study, which includes specific information about the respondents' primary language.

— Rebecca Zwick and Lizabeth Schlemer
UC Santa Barbara

(The complete Final Grant Report is available at: *http://lmri.ucsb.edu/resact/2/tocgrantreports.htm*)

TECHNICAL REPORT

Academic English: A Conceptual Framework
ROBIN SCARCELLA, *UC IRVINE*

Learning academic English is probably one of the surest, most reliable ways of attaining socio-economic success in the United States today. Learners cannot function in school settings effectively without it. This variety of English entails the multiple, complex features of English required for success in public schooling and career advancement. It involves mastery of a writing system and its particular academic conventions as well as proficiency in reading, speaking, and listening. Unfortunately, academic English has often been ignored or under-emphasized in public school instruction. Many have not understood its importance in helping students function in school settings or have misunderstood its complex nature.

This paper discusses approaches to the study of academic English, presents a multi-dimensional framework for analyzing it, and describes the relationship between the variety of English used in everyday situations and the variety of English used in academic ones. It concludes with a discussion of pedagogical implications pertaining to instruction, assessment, and professional development.

GET ALL THE LATEST RESEARCH, NEWS AND PUBLICATIONS CONCERNING LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS AT:
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UPDATE:

The Feasibility of Developing A California Education Longitudinal Study
PHILLIP KAUFMAN, *MPR ASSOCIATES*

This report, highlighted in our **Fall 2001 issue**, is now available on the UC LMRI website at: *http://lmri.ucsb.edu/resdiss/tocresdiss.htm*

Research Grants Awarded

The UC LMRI Faculty Steering Committee has awarded two more research grants from the February 2002 Call for Proposals, bringing the total grants awarded from that Call to eleven.

Following are the abstracts submitted by the funded grantees (edited for length due to space considerations).

DISSERTATION GRANTS

The Effects of Home, Preschool and Kindergarten Experiences on the Early Scholastic and Self-Regulatory Skills of Economically Disadvantaged Mexican-American Young Children
TED R. POLANCO, *UC SANTA BARBARA*
GRANT #02-02CY-11DG-SB

This study will examine the relationship between children's home communicative practices and problem-solving styles and children's social and academic outcomes at the end of preschool and across the kindergarten year. More specifically, this study attempts to identify what kind of teaching and learning opportunities Mexican-American children experience in mother-child joint problem-solving tasks, and how these teaching and learning practices (verbal and nonverbal) interface with the demands of children's first formal schooling experiences.

This study will use both quantitative and qualitative methodology to examine the following research questions: 1) What are the teaching practices that parents in these families use? 2) Which ones are predictive of successful, independent problem-solving in the children? 3) Which ones are predictive of school success of the children (as measured by researcher assessments obtained through open observations of children's school task performance teacher assessments, and school readiness assessments)? 4) How do social-interactive experiences in preschool between students and teachers and students and other students supplement children's self-regulatory practices to make them more consistent with the ones required of school?

Negotiating Two Languages When Learning to Write: The Literacy Paths of Young Bilinguals
MARCO ANTONIO BRAVO, *UC BERKELEY*
GRANT #02-02CY-03DG-B

The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) to investigate if students who are schooled in two languages develop parallel literacy skills in each respective language and 2) to examine the literacy paths taken by culturally and linguistically diverse students when writing narratives in two languages (Spanish and English). To do so, longitudinal data for two cohorts of elementary school bilingual children (2nd and 5th grades) will be probed using the Authentic Literacy Assessment System (ALAS) to chronicle the literacy trajectories of young bilinguals.

This study will investigate how students negotiate two languages during ALAS and other classroom writing activities that stem from the assessment and will use the ALAS scores to chronicle the students literacy paths. To obtain breadth and depth, a hybrid methodology both frames and informs this study. That is, such qualitative tools as open-ended teacher interviews, participant/observations in classrooms, are complemented by quantitative instruments (writing rubric mean scores in both languages) in order to create a more holistic view of bilingual children's process in acquiring literacy in two languages.

Second Postdoctoral Fellowship Awarded

Jill Leafstedt

UC LMRI is pleased to announce its second postdoctoral fellowship to Dr. Jill Leafstedt for the 2002-03 academic year. Dr. Leafstedt received her Ph.D. from UC Santa Barbara in August 2002 with Professor Michael Gerber serving as her dissertation chair. Her dissertation examined reading development in English-only and bilingual first grade classrooms. Her post-doctoral fellowships will support additional research on the reading development of kindergarten Spanish-speaking students instructed in English under the mentorship of Professor Gerber. Dr. Leafstedt received her BA and teaching credentials from UCSB. She worked for three years as a Special Education teacher in Southern California and one year as a first grade teacher in Guatemala.

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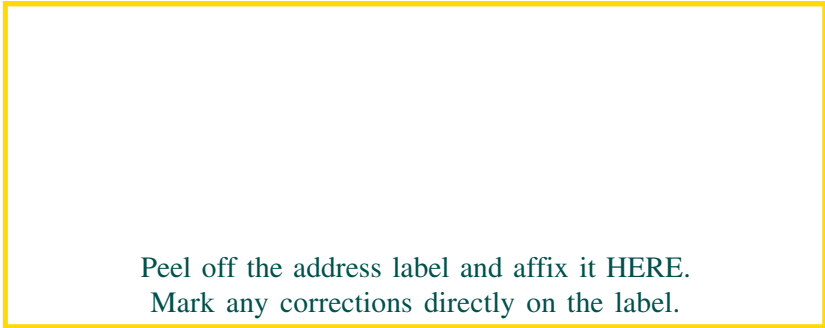
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

What Works for the Children? What We Know and Don't Know About Bilingual Education
The Civil Rights Project
Harvard University
June 2002

Results on the implementation of California's English immersion programs show that these programs are not the success claimed by Unz Initiative proponents, and some research indicates that achievement gaps between native-English speakers and English Language Learners are widening and that teachers, whose professional rights have been radically limited, are seriously demoralized.

In February 2001, The Civil Rights Project at Harvard University convened a roundtable discussion of researchers and civil rights experts to examine language support programs and the validity of arguments about bilingual education that have been advanced in recent policy debates. (Specific policy recommendations are provided at the end of this paper.)

This document is available at: *http:// www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights/publications/ bilingual02/CRPpositionpaperFINAL.pdf*

* * *

Dismantling Bilingual Education Implementing English Immersion: The California Initiative
Christine Rossell, *Boston University*
Revised: July 20, 2002

California has a 26-year history of bilingual education that was supposed to end with the passage of Proposition 227 on June 2, 1998.

Proposition 227 did not completely replace bilingual education, but the number of limited English proficient or English Learner (EL) students enrolled in bilingual education declined.

The future academic success of Proposition 227 is limited by other potential problems as well. To begin with, there is no unequivocal research demonstrating that bilingual education is the educational disaster that some of its critics claim.

The only reform that has occurred since Proposition 227 is that the state has mandated that all school districts use the same flawed test to designate and redesignate ELs.

The complete report can be found at: *http://web.bu.edu/ POLISCI/CROSSELL/CRossell.html*

* * *

Effects of Implementation of Proposition 227 on the Education of English Learners, K-12
American Institutes for Research (AIR) and WestEd
Year Two Report: June 28, 2002

This report summarizes the first two years of the legislatively mandated, five-year evaluation of the effects of Proposition 227 implementation on the education of English learners (ELs) in California K-12 public schools. While the report builds on findings from the first year phone interviews and case study site visits, it focuses primarily on extensive findings derived from second year activities.

The complete report can be found at: *http:// lmri.ucsb.edu/resdiss/2/prop227.htm*

Education Policy Center News
(Continued From Back Page)

function and performance of the CELDT Oral exam at the secondary level. Initial results indicate that the CELDT Oral portion may significantly underestimate the oral language proficiency of high school age ELs.

Legislative Update: The Ed Policy Center has participated in Latino Caucus meetings to help create language for legislative proposals regarding **Senate Bill 1665 (Polanco)**. Key in SB1665, as it currently reads, is the focus on the credentialing of teachers who will work with ELs. The Center continues to monitor legislation and educational policy which pertains to English Learners.

UC LMRI FACULTY STEERING COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Two current members of the UC LMRI faculty steering committee, **Paula Levin**, Lecturer SOE at UC San Diego, and **Giorgio Perissinotto**, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese, at UC Santa Barbara, have been reappointed to new three year terms beginning July 1, 2002.

After having served in the committee since 1997, **Margarita Azmitia**, Professor of Psychology at UC Santa Cruz, has stepped down from the committee. **Margaret Gibson**, (see bio, below), has been appointed to a three-year term on the committee effective July 1, 2002.

BIOGRAPHY

Margaret Gibson

Margaret A. (Greta) Gibson is a Professor of Education and Anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research focuses on the school performance of immigrant and minority youth with particular attention to home-school-community relationships and to how school context and peer relations influence student participation and achievement in high school settings. In addition to her ongoing research in several multiethnic high schools in California, Gibson has conducted field research in the U.S. Virgin Islands, northern India, and Papua New Guinea. Gibson is one of the founding editors of Race Ethnicity and Education; she also serves on the Board of Directors, Council on Anthropology and Education.

Education Policy Center News

Policy Discussion and Dinner: On June 3, **Dr. Jamal Abedi** of UCLA's CRESST center presented a policy discussion entitled *High Stakes Testing and English Language Learners: Psychometric and Linguistic Issues*. Dr. Abedi discussed how language itself becomes a source of error in the assessment and measurement of ELs. He proceeded to review several CRESST studies regarding the assessment and accommodation of EL students, with a focus on the studies that dealt with linguistic modification as a means by which to narrow the achievement gap. Dr. Abedi also shared another study that analyzed the relationship between language proficiency scores and language classification codes.

Conference Presentation: On June 23, with Dr. Abedi at the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) conference in Palm Desert, **Rebecca Callahan** presented the findings from a preliminary study regarding the

University of California

Linguistic Minority Research Institute

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Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3220

In This Issue