A Study of Placement Testing
at Gateway Technical College, Kenosha, WI, Fall 2012

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Overview

As part of the special assignment, the Student and Instructor Placement Surveys were rewritten. This was done for the following reasons [see Appendix A for a direct comparison]

- align the rating system for student self-assessment and instructor assessment of placement in order to allow for a more direct comparison to be made between the two data points.
- Reduce the number of options for a student to provide the reason for being enrolled in the course, which would ideally lead to more accurate reporting.
- Provide a standard definition of placement evaluation for instructors to limit instructor interpretation.
- Reword directions to more directly convince students to supply accurate previous testing scores.

Administration of Surveys

Surveys were distributed to all Communications faculty, full time and adjunct. Five instructors participated in the survey, though one used the previous version of the survey. This provided a total of 129 data points, with the following course distribution:

	Eng Comp 1	Intro to Coll Writing	Pre-College Writing
Data Points	69	43	17
Tested into (%)	45 (65.2 %)	31 (72.1 %)	15 (88.2 %)
Passed into (%)	15 (21.7 %)	9 (20.9 %)	2 (11.8 %)
Mis/Unreported (%)	9 (13.0 %)	3 (7.0 %)	0

Results

Inter-rater reliability
The following represents the difference between the instructor's assessment of an individual student's placement and the individual student's self-assessment of her/his placement.

	(-2)	(-1)	agreement	(+1)
TOTAL	2 (1.6 %)	27 (20.1 %)	74 (57.4 %)	16 (12.4 %)
EC1	1	10	39	13
- tested	0	7	25	11
- passed	1	3	7	2
ICW	1	11	25	3
- tested	?	8	18	3
- passed	?	3	6	0
PCW	0	6	10	0
- tested	-	5	9	-
- passed	-	1	1	-

Summary
- 57.4 % of the time inter-rater reliability was in agreement
- 98.3 % of the time inter-rater reliability was within +/- 1 category

2 students (1.6 %) were (-2) in placement [the instructor assessed the student two category ratings below where the student placed her/himself].

- one student did not report data
- one student scored COMPe/r 17/73 and passed into the course

27 students (20.1 %) were (-1) in placement [the instructor assessed the student one category rating below where the student placed her/himself].

- 7 (25.9 % of the 27) students passed into the course from the previous course
- 20 (74.1 %) tested into the course

- 25 students were within a "proper" placement range [ratings 2 or 3]
- 2 students were assessed as not prepared for the course (1 test and 1 sequence)

- For English Composition 1, there were 10 students with (-1) in placement
  - 8 reported COMPASS English scores (Distribution of 4 within 5 points of the cut, 2 more than 16 over the cut)
  - 2 reported ACT English scores (scores of 19 and 20, with 19 being our cut score)
- For Intro to College Writing, there were 11 students with (-1) in placement

- ○ all reported COMPASS English scores (3 within 6 points of the cut score for EC1)
- ○ 3 also reported ACT English scores (15, 16, and 18)
- For Pre-College Writing, there were 6 students with (-1) in placement
  - ○ 2 reported COMPASS English scores (6 and 6)
  - ○ 4 reported ACT English scores (9, 13, 14, and 17)
  - ○ 1 reported no scores; 1 reported both ACT and COMPASS English

74 students (57.4 %) were in neutral in placement [the instructor assessed the student in agreement with where the student placed her/himself].

- 14 (18.9 %) passed into the course
- 52 (70.3 %) tested into the respective course
- 8 (10.8 %) did not report or misreported

16 students (12.4 %) were (+1) in placement [the instructor assessed the student one category above where the student placed her/himself].

- 2 (12.5 %) passed into the course
- 14 (87.5 %) tested into the course

1. How effective is COMPASS English for testing into a course?

Scores of those rated as 1 by instructor

Course	# of students rated	Cut score	Student scores
ICW	1 (2.3 %)	51	30 (likely misreported)
EC1	1 (1.4 %)	73	76

Scored of those rated as 4 by instructor

Course	# of students rated	Cut score	Student scores
ICW	0	51	-
EC1	2 (2.9 %)	73	91, 99

2. How effective is COMPASS e-Write for testing into EC1?

Scores of those rated as 1 by instructor

# of students	e-Write holistic (sub scores)
1	5 (2, 2, 2, 2, 2)

Scores of those rated as 2 or 3 by instructor

[See Figure 1 for students rated as 2 or 3]
[See Figure 2 for students rated as 2]
[See Figure 3 for students rated as 3]

Scored of those rated as 4 by instructor

# of students	e-Write holistic (sub scores)
2	7 (3, -, 3, -, 3); 6 (3, 3, 3, 3, 3)

Conclusion from data

1. Based on instructor placement assessment, e-Write could help determine placement. However, due to the small range of scores given by the e-Write exam, there is considerable overlap in students who are appropriately placed and those who might be placed too low in English Composition 1. Therefore, it is best used as a complementary placement assessment tool.

2. From the data analysis, e-Write's assessment parallel with the instructor's assessment of student skills. Inter-rater reliability also indicates that it is in-line with students' assessment of their own placement based on writing skills.

3. A specific use of the e-Write could be for an Advanced Standing tool.

Figure 1
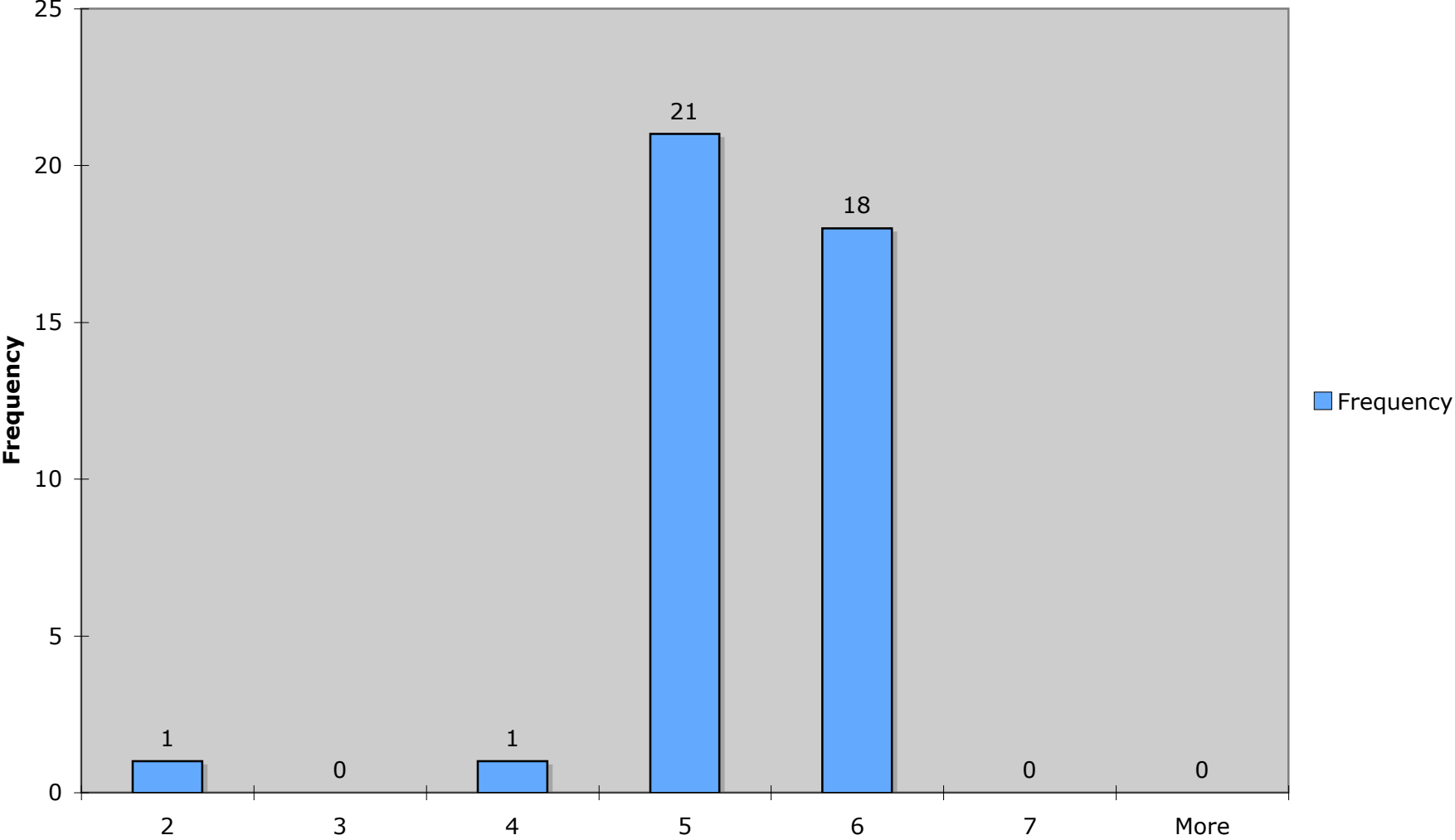**Histogram of Students Assessed as "2" or "3" by Instructor**

Figure 2
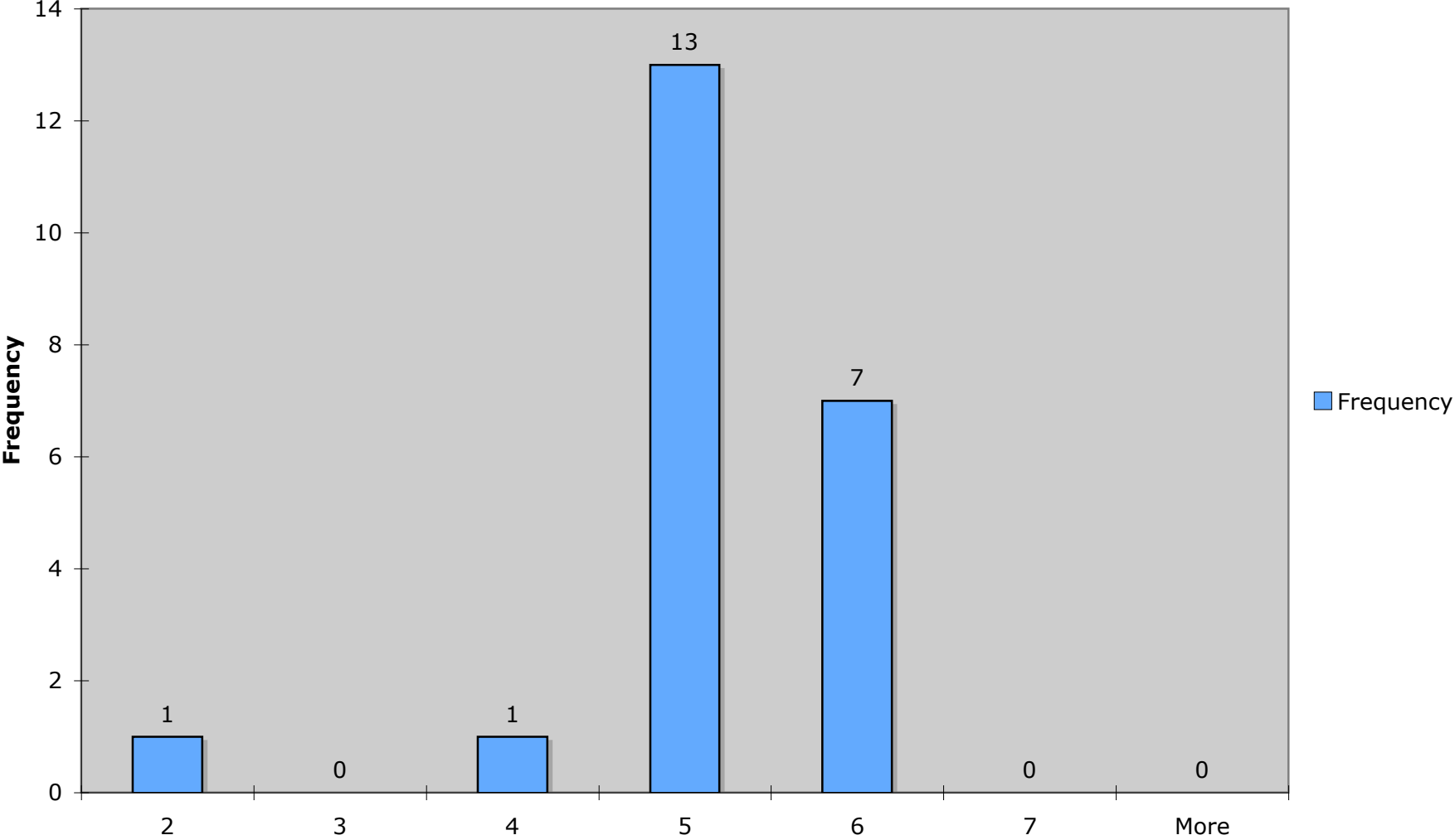**Histogram of Students Assessed as "2" by Instructor**

Figure 3
Histogram of Students Assessed as "3" by Instructor