

College Student Achievement Project



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Contact us:
csap@senecacollege.ca

Website:
[http://
csap.senecacollege.ca](http://csap.senecacollege.ca)

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Language Gap Analysis Report

The Report is divided into three distinct sections. In order to demonstrate how communication skills may be delivered, in both discrete courses and through learning outcomes embedded in other courses (general education and vocational courses), the first section of the Report contains a case study of two different college programs. The curriculum of the Business Administration – Accounting program at three English language colleges and one French language college is examined and examples of both types of course are discussed. This process is repeated for the curriculum of the Police Foundations program offered at four different colleges, again three English language and one French language. A detailed breakdown of the courses including course descriptions and learning outcomes is provided.

The second section analyzes the learning outcomes of the first communication course offered in either Semester One or Two at each college and looks for commonalities among them. Courses may be taught using an expository or vocational writing approach. In addition, both remedial (for first language students) and developmental (for second language students) courses are analysed. Students are placed in these courses based on the results of post-admission language tests.

The final section compares the outcomes summarized in the previous section to the learning expectations of the Grade 8 Language and the Grades 9 – 12 English and French curricula in order to identify potential gaps. When the learning expectations in the Ontario elementary and secondary English and French curriculum documents were compared to the language skills colleges expect students to possess, no gaps were apparent. However, data from the CSAP Final Report 2013 demonstrated that many students, particularly those coming from the Grade 12 college destination courses were unprepared for college language courses. The Report proposes an explanation and one possible solution in order to ensure that students graduating from secondary school with this course will be as well prepared for college language courses as those students who have taken the Grade 12 university destination course.

The report can be downloaded from the CSAP Website at <http://csap.senecacollege.ca> under the publications tab.

Assessment Development Project

The CSAP Assessment Development Project was set up to develop an assessment of basic numeracy for use as a common system-wide assessment for colleges to use for post-admission students. Its scope and potential uses were later broadened to incorporate the principles of “assessment for learning” and also to be useful for students considering applying to college. The project has now been completed with five inter-related products. It has been field tested by over 10,000 students in both colleges and secondary schools.

- *Curriculum framework*, identifying nine mathematics topics and three performance expectations to be assessed;
- *Item bank*, comprising some 400 items (both multiple choice and constructed response) linked to the curriculum framework all pretested and with detailed psychometric data associated with each;
- *Test design and delivery system*, enabling unique tests to be generated for all test takers; characteristics of the tests include:
 - two types (basic numeracy and full diagnostic);
 - equal coverage of the curriculum framework
 - equal difficulty
 - delivered on line to computers or other mobile devices
 - available in English or French;
- *Reporting system*, enabling test takers to receive instant feedback on their achievement and, where appropriate, for colleges, schools, faculty and teachers to receive reports on the achievement of their students;
- *Remedial modules*, also linked to the curriculum framework to enable students to access interactive instructional material for any topic.

Plans for implementation of the assessment are being developed by a group of colleges led by Laurel Schollen and Humber College is beginning the process for selecting a technology partner. It is hoped that the assessment will become generally available to both colleges and schools during 2015. A full report of the development project will be available on the CSAP web site in April 2015.

CSAP Database

The College Student Achievement Project (CSAP) collects data on student achievement in first-year college mathematics and language courses and publishes annual reports containing analyses of this data on a provincial basis. It also provides an interactive online database for colleges and school boards to access information relating to their own institutions.

Members of both college and K-12 communities can use the CSAP database for a variety of research analyses. For example, a college community may wish to compare how their students' achievement compares with the provincial aggregate or conduct a detailed analysis of a particular academic program by 'drilling down' past the broad program cluster to the program code level. Similarly, a school board may wish to compare which mathematics pathway provides their graduates with the most success in college or see how the graduates from each secondary school are distributed across college programs.

Access to this information is provided to users authorized on an annual basis by vice-presidents, academic (for college users) and by superintendents (for school board users). Further information is available on the CSAP web site (<http://csap.senecacollege.ca>, click on the 'Research Database' tab and complete the online form).

To join the CSAP mailing list and receive regular email updates about the project, send us an email at csap@senecacollege.ca.

Seneca

8 The Seneca Way
Markham, Ontario L3R 5Y1

Phone: 416-491-5050 ext. 77848
E-mail: csap@senecacollege.ca
Website: <http://csap.senecacollege.ca>

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