

## Can Entrance Tests help to Enhance the First Year Academic Experience?

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## First Year Learners: Academic Experience

- Learner
  - Background
  - Academic Preparedness or lack thereof
- Institution
  - History
  - Commitment to success
  - Resources
  - Profile of Learners
- Program Choice : Department
  - Academic demands of the program
  - Program Design
  - Expectations of respective Industries
- Academic and support Staff
  - Preparedness of staff to "deal with" dynamic student profile, changing education,



## The First Year Cohort

- Primarily ex-school leavers
- Admission based on school leaving exams
- Alignment between higher education and secondary education



## Selection Instrument: Entrance Tests

- Entrance tests vs School leaving
- Complimentary selection instrument
- Assess "academic readiness" for Higher Education
- Focus on competencies required within programs rather than the pre-requisite content



## Selection of Appropriate Entrance Tests


- Identify what is required, establish criterion
- Continued diverse availability of resources – implications
- General student profile of applicants to the program
- Purpose of the test
- Resources required to use a chosen instrument



## The DUT Experience


- Various Entrance Criteria: tests, interviews, matric
- Various Entrance tests
- Centrally SATAP : administered by CHED






## SATAP


- Standardised Assessment Tests for Access and Placement
- Brief History
- Nationally used
- Continually reviewed
- Tests in 4 domains






## Principles and approaches


- Define “literacies” expected of first year learners entering higher education in each domain: viz lang, numeracy, mathematics, Science
- The focus is on cognitive process and skills that underpin tasks more than on discipline content;
- Tests are designed to assess competencies in reading and writing modes only
- Tasks are designed to mirror authentic academic tasks that are typical of higher education contexts
- Primarily MCQs






## Why SATAP at DUT


- Input at the test Development
- Continuation of the old TELP tests that were used by MLS
- Review of other tests : SATAP most appropriate for DUT learners
- Results generated are widely spread
- Cost






## Uses of SATAP at DUT


- Selection
- Placement into ECP
- RPL access
- Diagnostic Information






## DUT process


- Departmental meetings : appropriateness and purpose
- Marks for selection or placement
- Generation of reports
- Discussions with departments
- Data to inform other workshops : principals meeting, junior lecturers workshop, assessor training etc



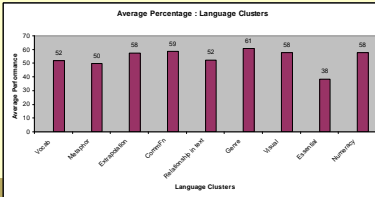
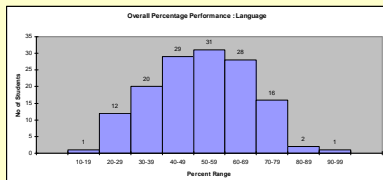
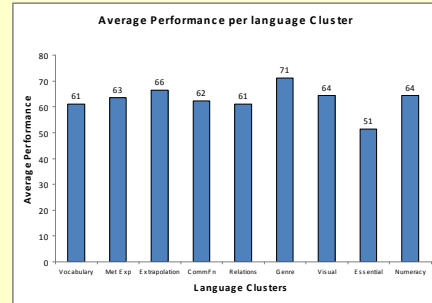
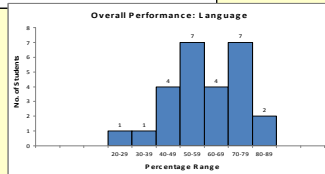
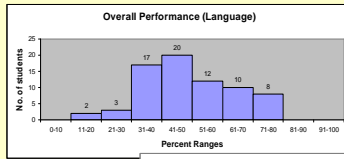


## Uses of Entrance Tests

- Identify any gaps that exist between what is expected of the learners and their actual competencies
- Understand the learners : strengths and weaknesses



## Interpreting data



## Sample Report



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## General Trends Identified



- Discrepancies between matric marks and marks on the test
- Students performed better in procedural categories than higher order thinking categories
- Students remember content, procedures experienced most recently
- Conceptual Gaps (numeracy, maths, and science) identified
- Performance on the numeracy test
- Lack of ability to apply content knowledge to other situations (transferability of knowledge)
- Comparison of departmental reports for the different years
- What does this imply for DUT?????



## Use of the results



- Profile the learners
- Staff development
- Materials design
- Teaching Strategies
- Program Design
- Institution
- Alignment : Secondary and higher education collabortion



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