

# Establishing AP Spanish Language Exam Validity Using College Professors' Grading Standards

David Baum  
Educational Testing Service

# Introduction

- This presentation focuses on a college comparability study conducted in 2007.
- During a college comparability study, a portion of an AP Exam is administered to college students and the free-response portion is scored during the AP Reading.
- The results of a college comparability study are considered when setting AP grades in order to ensure that the AP standards are comparable to or higher than the grading standards that are applied by college professors when evaluating the performance of their own students in corresponding college courses.

# How AP Exam Standards are Established (2004-2007)

- College curriculum survey
- “Evidence Centered Design”
- Task Force
  - College professors/AP teachers
- Development Committee
  - 3-4 College professors, 3-4 AP teachers
  - Chief Reader(s): 1-2 College professors
- Question tryout
- College comparability study

# AP Spanish Language Course and Exam

- Designed to be equivalent to 5th- and 6th-semester college and university courses that focus on speaking and writing in the target language at an advanced level
- 4 modalities: Listening, Reading, Writing, Speaking
- 3 communicative modes: Interpretive, Interpersonal, Presentational
- Linguistic skills (e.g., fluency, accuracy) that support communicative ability
- Language intended for native speakers
- Variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, styles, registers, broad regional variations
- Authentic sources
- Cultural perspectives

# AP Spanish Language Exam Format

Language Modality & Communicative Mode		Tasks	# of Questions & % of Final Score	
Listening	Interpretive	6	30-35	20%
Reading	Interpretive	5	35-40	30%
Writing	Grammar/Usage	3	20	5%
	Interpersonal	1	1	5%
	Presentational	1	1	20%
Speaking	Interpersonal	1	1	10%
	Presentational	1	1	10%

# AP Spanish Language College Comparability Study Exam Format

- Subset of exam administered to AP students
- All communicative modes and language modalities
- Included:
  - 13 Listening questions
  - 19 Reading questions
  - Either:
    - 2 Writing tasks (2 questions)
    - 2 Speaking tasks (2 questions)

# AP Spanish Language College Comparability Study Size

- 19 colleges/universities
- 405 students

# AP Spanish Language College Comparability Study Participating Institutions

- Binghamton University
- Brigham Young University
- Drew University
- Drexel University
- Florida Atlantic University
- Lawrence University
- Northern Arizona University
- Penn State Altoona
- San Jose State
- Sonoma State University
- Temple University
- University of California, Davis
- University of Houston
- University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- University of Miami
- University of North Carolina, Charlotte
- University of Texas, Austin
- University of Texas, Pan American
- University of Wisconsin, Madison

# College Comparability Study Administration Procedures

- College professor at each participating institution performs the following tasks:
  - Administer exam
  - Assign exam grade
  - Report course and exam grades
  - Complete instructor's questionnaire
    - Describe administration environment (course title, student background, weight given to exam, etc.)
    - Evaluate appropriateness of exam content

# College Comparability Study Scoring Procedures

- College student exams scored along with AP student exams
- Same scoring session
- Same scorers (mixture of college professors and AP teachers)
- Same scoring guidelines (rubrics)

# Creation of Scoring Guidelines

- Free-response question tryout
- Sample selection

# Scoring Overview

- Each response assigned a single holistic score
- Various dimensions evaluated simultaneously
- For example:
  - Task Completion
  - Delivery
  - Language Use

# College Comparability Study Grade Setting Process

- Equate college scores to same scale as full AP exam
- Average college scores by exam grade by college (ignore all F's)
- Consider variations in courses and administrations
- Set cut score for each AP grade using average exam score obtained by college students earning corresponding letter grade

College Grade	AP Grade
A	5
B	4
C	3
D	2

# Analysis Groups

1. Have you lived or studied for one month or more in a country where the language of the exam you are now taking is spoken?
2. Do you regularly speak or hear the language at home?

Group	Q1	Q2
STD	N	N
SPEC1	Y	N
SPEC2	Y/N	Y

# AP Spanish Language College Comparability Study Results (150-point scale)

Colleges		AP Students (Standard Group)		
Exam grade	Average score	AP grade	Minimum composite score	Average Score
A	109	5	112	122
B	87	4	92	101
C	72	3	77	84
D	55	2	60	68
F	N/A	1	N/A	42

# AP Spanish Language Percentage of Students Earning Each AP Grade (Standard Group)

AP Grade	2006	2007
5	8.5%	10.4%
4	16.2%	20.1%
3	31.1%	19.7%
2	26.2%	22.5%
1	17.9%	27.4%

# More Information

- AP Central (<http://apcentral.collegeboard.com>)
  - Exam questions
  - Scoring guidelines
  - Sample student responses with commentary on performance
  - Scoring statistics
  - “How AP College Comparability Studies Affect AP Grades for Foreign Language Exams”
- Foreign Language Annals
  - Bischof, et al (2004). “Validating AP Modern Foreign Language Examinations Through College Comparability Studies“, Foreign Language Annals, 37, 4, 616-622.