Hogeschool van Amsterdam

Less is more

Effects of student selection on study success in initial teacher preparation programs

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Introduction
In 2014, selection tests based on academic skills (language proficiency and language teaching methodology) were introduced in the English teacher training program at AUAS. The main reason was the need to limit the amount of students, because of teacher training placement shortage. This also created the opportunity to study the effects of student selection on study success.

This poster presents preliminary findings on the question whether selection leads to more study success.

Population (N=188) consists of students in the academic years:
2014-2015 (C14; 91)
2015-2016 (C15; 97)

Study success is defined as:
- number of credits acquired
- dropout rates

Method
Three student groups were identified:
1) students who passed the selection tests (5,5 or higher on a 1-10 scale)
2) students who did not pass the tests
3) students who did not participate in the selection

The number of credits (after semester 1 and after year 1), average high school grades and individual scores on the tests were used for the analyses. ANOVAs were used to determine the differences in credits obtained between the three groups and bivariate correlations (Pearson's r) were applied between the individual scores on the tests, average high school grades and number of credits. Data were collected about other background variables (prior education). Dropout rates were reported without further analysis.

Results
Table 1: Average number of credits after semester 1 based on selection tests results (C14 & C15).

Selection Tests	N	Average # credits	Standard deviation
Not taken	69	14,61	9,00
Fail <5,5	49	16,90	8,70
Pass >=5,5*	70	21,17	6,93

*significant difference between the pass group and both the not taken (p<.05) and fail (p<.01) groups.

After semester 1 the average number of credits of the group that passed the selection tests was significantly higher that the number of credits in both the group that did not pass the tests and the group that did not take the tests.

Table 2: Preliminary findings: average number of credits after year 1 based on selection tests results (C14 & C15).

Selection Tests	N	Average # credits	Standard deviation
Not taken*	69	34,20	21,37
Fail <5,5	49	35,88	20,84
Pass >=5,5*	70	43,34	18,40

*significant difference between the pass group and the not taken group (p<.05).

After year 1 the students in the pass group had a significantly higher average number of credits than the group that had not participated in the selection tests. These findings are based on the number of credits until July 1st 2016 for C15.

Table 3: Number of students, number of credits and dropout rates in the past 5 years. Selection tests were introduced in 14-15.

Study year	N	Average # credits*		dropout rate <60 credits
		end year 1	start year 2	
11-12	151	33,73	51,64	71,5%
12-13	155	36,4	52,3	64,5%
13-14	232	41,7	53,9	52,6%
14-15	91	45,3	54,7	50%
15-16	97	38,4	54,2**	30,9%

* the maximum number of credits that can be obtained in year 1 is 60. The minimum number of credits needed to start year 2 is 50.

** C15 is based on a preliminary average number of credits.

Over the past five years, the average number of credits has been increasing and the dropout rate has been decreasing.

Other findings
We did not find a strong correlation between the individual scores on the selection tests and the number of credits after year 1 (r=.20, p<.01).

We did not find any correlation between average high school grade and the number of credits after year 1 (r=.07, p=.43). The type of prior education has no significant effect on the number of credits after year 1.

Conclusion
Students that passed the selection tests obtained a higher average number of credits, both after semester 1 and after year 1, than students who did not pass or did not participate in the selection tests.

As shown in Table 3, since the introduction of selection tests the average number of credits and the dropout rate did not change dramatically. This is not surprising, since only 37,2% of the students enrolled in the programme passed the selection tests. If only this group was enrolled, then we would have expected a higher average number of credits and a lower dropout rate.

There is no strong correlation between the selection test scores and the average number of credits after year 1. This indicates that there is no direct relationship between a higher score on the selection tests and the amount of credits obtained after year 1. Also students with a low score on the selection tests may obtain a substantial amount of credits and vice versa. Other factors must therefore influence the amount of credits obtained. Our working hypothesis at the moment is that students that decide to take the selection tests are more motivated or more engaged. Motivation and engagement could lead to more study success.

The lack of correlation between average high school grade and study success is not consistent with other research findings. But research in this field has almost exclusively been conducted among students at Dutch academic universities and not at Dutch universities of applied sciences. This is a different population: students at academic universities followed a more academic oriented curriculum at secondary school level. Students at universities of applied sciences followed a general curriculum. A higher correlation between secondary school results and academic results after year 1 is therefore likely to occur in the academic students group.

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