**Student Surveys from the SE Course of the**

**General Education English Program at Shizuoka University**

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The General Education English Program at Shizuoka University is to undergo change, and in the very near future, a general framework for a new curriculum will emerge. While much discussion has already occurred, it is hope that this report on data from student surveys can contribute in some degree to a better understanding of student perspectives. Such understanding is a valuable resource to be applied to curriculum evaluation and development (Brown, 1995, p. 236; McDonough & McDonough, 1997, p.181; Richards, 2001, p. 301). In order to collect data from students, two surveys were implemented in the 2010-2011 academic year. The results from a survey for students who had completed the Power English (PE) Course were discussed in Urick, Suto & Komachi (2011). This article reports on a survey that was filled out by students who were in the final semester of the Standard English (SE) Course. The purpose of the survey was to better understand how students felt about the program, and what changes would, from the students’ perspective, be desirable...

**METHOD**

The students who participated were in their second year at the university and filled out the surveys during classes in January 2011. The students were about a month from completing the required courses for the SE course, and thus in a good position to give feedback on the program as a whole. Of the 1,689 students who were enrolled in second-year SE classes in January 2011, 1,341 completed surveys. The large percentage of students from which data was obtained (79.4%) suggests that the results should be considered as representative of the group as a whole.

Many of the items for the SE survey were identical to questions on the PE survey, from which data was collected earlier in the same academic year. Some questions from the PE survey did not apply to SE students and were changed or not used. Other items were added to help provide information directly relevant to ongoing discussion about curriculum development at the university. Also included were questions about students' basic information (gender and university faculty), test scores, and attitudes toward English. The three final questions of the survey ask for students' opinions about the difficulty level and amount of assignments as well as the amount of time they spent outside of class on assignments. The survey also provided space for written comments on its reverse side. This article does not contain any analysis of the written comments.

**RESULTS**

Results from the survey, translated into English, are shown in Table 1. The same data with the original items in Japanese are attached as the Appendix. This section details the results from each item.

**Q0-1**

Well over half of the students in each faculty responded to the survey. The Faculty of Engineering is the largest at the university, and 439 of this faculty’s 538 students who were enrolled at the time of the survey filled out surveys. For the Faculty of Education, the number was 268 of 332, and for the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, 255 of the 304 students in the target group provided data. 94 of 141 second-year Agriculture students filled out surveys, as did 105 of the 169 second-year students in the Faculty of Informatics. In addition to these numbers, 31 respondents did not answer this question. It is likely that the placement of this item in an isolated box at the top of the survey sheet led to the comparatively high number of participants who did not respond.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Q0-1 | Faculty | Humanities\* | Science | Education | Informatics | Agriculture | Engineering |
| 255/304 | 149/195 | 268/332 | 105/169 | 94/141 | 439/538 |

\*The full name of the faculty is the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

**Q1-1**

There were more male students than female students among the respondents. 928 male students and 404 female students filled out surveys. This is a reflection of the general student population; as of May 1, 2011 there were 6,170 males and 2,725 females enrolled as undergraduate students at the university (National University Corporation Shizuoka University, 2011, p.16). Nine respondents did not answer this question.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Q1-1 | Gender | Male | Female |
| 928 | 404 |

**Q1-2**

More than half...

**DISCUSSION**

In many areas a majority of students did not express dissatisfaction with elements of the current SE program. Generally speaking, students appear to be satisfied with the amount of homework (Q2-14) and the difficulty level of coursework (Q2-13). Not many students desired more challenging courses (Q2-11). Only 8.4% reported that the class sizes were too large (Q2-9). Yet only 40.4% reported that the four to six courses they had taken had helped them improve their English (Q2-1). If class size, the amount of homework, and the level of coursework are not problems for most students, what can be done to ensure that more students can leave the General Education English Program having made recognizable gains in ability?

Students in the more advanced PE Course...

**References**

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