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ABSTRACT
              In the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District
(California), course and basic skills prerequisites have been
established for all courses. Students with no record of completing
these prerequisites cannot enroll unless they have been assessed by a
counselor, have had their prerequisites verified in alternate ways,
and have been granted override status for enrollment. In fall 1988,
9,952 overrides were granted based on the completion of equivalent
coursework, instructor evaluations, life experience, previous
degrees, and other reasons. A study was conducted to compare the
academic success of students who had completed all course and basic
skills prerequisites with that of students who had enrolled on
override status. Study findings included the following: (1) 65% of
the students who had completed both course and basic skills
requirements (N=34,831) received a grade of A, B, C, or Credit,
compared to 59% of those who enrolled on override status; (2) 46% of
the counselors successfully placed more than 60% of their students,
compared with 32% of the counselors in spring 1988; (3) 69% of the
students who were granted overrides on the basis of life experience
or previous degrees received a C or higher in their coursework, as
did 63% of those who documented completion of previous coursework;
and (4) the greatest proportion of A and B grades were achieved by
students with an override based on life experience and students with
previous degrees. Study findings supported the conclusion that
counselors who strictly enforce prerequisites, use a careful
evaluation of relevant life experience, and rely on documented
evidence of previous coursework can place students effectively.
(ALB)

COUNSELOR ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT SUCCESS
FOR FALL 1988

by

Jon Alan Kangas, Ph.D.
District Dean of Academic Standards
San Jose/Evergreen Community College District

Institutional Research Report #75

April 28, 1989

ABSTRACT

Counselor Assessment and Student Success for Fall 1988

by Jon Alan Kangas, Ph.D.
San Jose/Evergreen Community College District (SJ/ECCD)
April 28, 1989

In 1985, all courses in the SJ/ECCD had course and basic skills prerequisites as appropriate. A computerized prerequisite checking system kept track of all students who met prerequisites and all override codes given by counselors.

The California Community College Matriculation Plan and Title 5 regulations state that multiple assessment measures are needed in the placement of students. Counselor assessment is considered an important part of this process. This research examines the questions. (1) Does counselor assessment relate to student success? and (2) Can feedback and experience increase counselor success rates?

The success rate of 65% for all students meeting both course and basic skills prerequisites (N = 34,831) for Fall 1988 was tabulated, as was the success rate of 59% for students assessed by counselors (N = 9952). Success was defined as receiving a grade of A, B, C, or CR.

Codes used included: PD = Previous degree; LX = Life experience; ET = Existing transcript; EC = Existing coursework; ES = Existing test score; IE = Instructor evaluation; OT = Old test score; SE = System error; SI = Student insistence; SO = Some other reason; and SW = Student word.

The results were as follows:

1. The most consistent predictor of course success over large numbers of students at 65% (N=34,831) was completion of course and basic skills prerequisites.

2. The two most significant findings were that counselor judgment, at its best, can relate to high success and that with feedback and experience, counselors can improve their success rates. Seven (7) of 39 counselors (18%) achieved success higher than the computer. This was up from 9% in Spring 1988.

    Eighteen (18) counselors out of 39 (46%) who gave override codes to a broad range of new and continuing students achieved success rates at or above 60%, up from 32% from Spring 1988. Two (2) of 39 (5%) were below 50%, down from 15% in Spring 1988.

3. Life Experience (LX) (N = 213) in related work areas at 69%, possession of previous degrees (PD) at 69%, taking courses in proper sequence (SQ) at 68%, and documented completion of previous coursework (EC) at 63% were the next best predictors of success.

4. A significant improvement in the student word (SW) override code resulted in a 60% success rate, up from 51% in Spring 1988.

5. When an SO (some other reason) code was used to substitute for a prerequisite, a 55% success rate resulted.

6. For students who insisted on taking a course (SI) above their assessment/prerequisite level, less than a 50% success rate (48%) resulted. Only 20% received an A or B grade.

7. The greatest proportion of A and B grades were achieved by students with Life Experience (LX) override codes and students with Previous Degree (PD) override codes (both at 48%). Students meeting all prerequisites achieved 31% A's and B's.

Counselors who carefully follow prerequisites, use a careful evaluation of relevant life experience, and rely on documented evidence of previous coursework can achieve levels of success as high or higher than that of students who meet all prerequisites within the district.

Inservice training by counselors who have high success rates for particular override codes will be used to help train other counselors. The hope is that focused feedback on counselor success by code will continue to result in improved student success. Further research will evaluate the results.

COUNSELOR ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT SUCCESS FOR FALL 1988
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I.   Background

A.   In 1985, the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District began its
     Computerized Prerequisite Checking System. All courses in the
     district were given course and basic skills prerequisites appropriate
     to the course. Students who did not have a record of those
     prerequisites in the district's computer could see a counselor and
     have their prerequisites verified or established in alternative ways.
     Counselors would give override codes for a particular course to
     explain the way in which the prerequisite had been met.

B.   All California Community Colleges have begun a mandated matriculation
     process which includes assessment, orientations, counseling, and
     follow-up of students. We have been advised to use multiple means of
     assessment in making placement decisions rather than relying on a
     single test score. Counselor evaluation and judgment have been
     suggested as important additions to the process of assessing and
     placing students.

C.   The current research has looked at the 9,952 override codes given at
     San Jose City College and Evergreen Valley College during Fall 1988,
     the code used, the counselor who used the code, and the success of the
     student in the course for which he/she was given the override code.

     These success rates for counselors were compared to the success rates
     of all students district-wide who met prerequisites ($\underline{N}$ = 34,831),
     excluding students who received codes.

D.   The goal of the project was to discern which override codes were
     associated with the highest and lowest success rates and to discover
     which counselors had strategies for the use of codes leading to the
     highest levels of student success. The counselors with high success
     rates will be asked to share their strategies during inservice
     training sessions with other counselors.

E.   The definition of the override codes used was as follows:

     EC   Equivalent coursework completed within the District
     EP   Experimental purposes (research, etc.)
     ER   Discrepancy between computer/student (Error)
     ES   Existing test score, not in system
     ET   Equivalent work seen on transcript
     IE   Instructor evaluated student as eligible
     LX   Life experience meets prerequisites, typically judged by faculty
     OT   Other test, e.g., old Davis score or other test score
          that relates to our curriculum
     PD   Previous degree
     SE   System error. Student is OK/DP not OK
     SI   Student insisted on taking a course above his/her
          assessment/prerequisite level
     SM   Student OK. Course name was changed.
     SO   Some other reason. Reason noted on Program Planning form
     SW   Student's word he/she meets prerequisite

II. Success by Override Code

A. Success for the purposes of this study was defined as a student's
    receiving a grade of A, B, C, or CR.

    The success rate for all students in the district who met all their
    prerequisites (excluding those who were given override codes) was
    65%.

    The success rate associated with the various override codes ($N > 10$)
    averaged 59% and ranged from 48% for student insistence to 69% for
    previous degree.

    The following table and graph indicate the number and percentage of
    students who succeeded for each kind of override code given. The flat
    line across the graph indicates the success rate of 65% for students
    who met all prerequisites district-wide (excluding counselor
    overrides).

TABLE 1

SUCCESS RATE BY CODE

	A'S		B'S		C'S		D'S		CR'S		F'S		W'S		I'S		NC'S		TOTAL**		SUCC*	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
EC	149	15%	139	14%	203	20%	69	7%	136	14%	52	5%	198	20%	14	1%	36	4%	996	100%	627	63%
EP	11	22%	8	16%	1	2%	2	4%	8	16%	3	6%	9	18%	3	6%	4	8%	49	100%	28	57%
ER	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
ES	28	10%	42	15%	30	11%	9	3%	55	20%	17	6%	74	27%	4	1%	12	4%	271	100%	155	57%
ET	340	15%	412	19%	360	16%	112	5%	232	10%	109	5%	562	25%	35	2%	63	3%	2225	100%	1344	60%
IE	140	9%	198	13%	158	11%	56	4%	414	28%	41	3%	353	24%	14	1%	125	8%	1499	100%	910	61%
LX	62	29%	41	19%	29	14%	7	3%	16	8%	15	7%	36	17%	3	1%	?	2%	213	100%	148	69%
OT	3	16%	4	21%	1	5%	1	5%	0	0%	2	11%	7	37%	0	0%	1	5%	19	100%	8	42%
PD	31	29%	20	19%	7	6%	1	1%	17	16%	1	1%	27	25%	3	3%	1	1%	108	100%	75	69%
SE	3	8%	8	20%	4	10%	0	0%	4	10%	3	8%	15	38%	2	5%	1	3%	40	100%	19	48%
SI	32	8%	45	12%	72	19%	22	6%	36	9%	32	8%	122	31%	5	1%	23	6%	389	100%	185	48%
SM	2	40%	2	40%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	20%	0	0%	0	0%	5	100%	4	80%
SO	406	12%	520	16%	477	15%	159	5%	384	12%	194	5%	917	28%	46	1%	150	5%	3255	100%	1787	55%
SQ	9	11%	19	23%	11	13%	3	4%	17	21%	3	4%	14	17%	1	1%	5	6%	82	100%	56	68%
SW	138	17%	143	18%	117	15%	37	5%	79	10%	42	5%	204	25%	14	2%	27	3%	801	100%	477	60%
TOTAL	1354	14%	1601	16%	1470	15%	478	5%	1398	14%	514	5%	2539	26%	146	1%	452	5%	9952	100%	5823	59%
DIST PRQ MT+	7332	16%	6789	15%	5390	12%	1532	3%	8841	20%	1705	4%	10559	24%	534	1%	2101	5%	44783	100%	28352	63%
DIST PRQ MT-	5978	17%	5188	15%	3920	11%	1054	3%	7443	21%	1191	3%	8020	23%	388	1%	1649	5%	34831	100%	22529	65%

*Succ = A + B + C + CR grades; the category of "no grades" was not included in the calculations
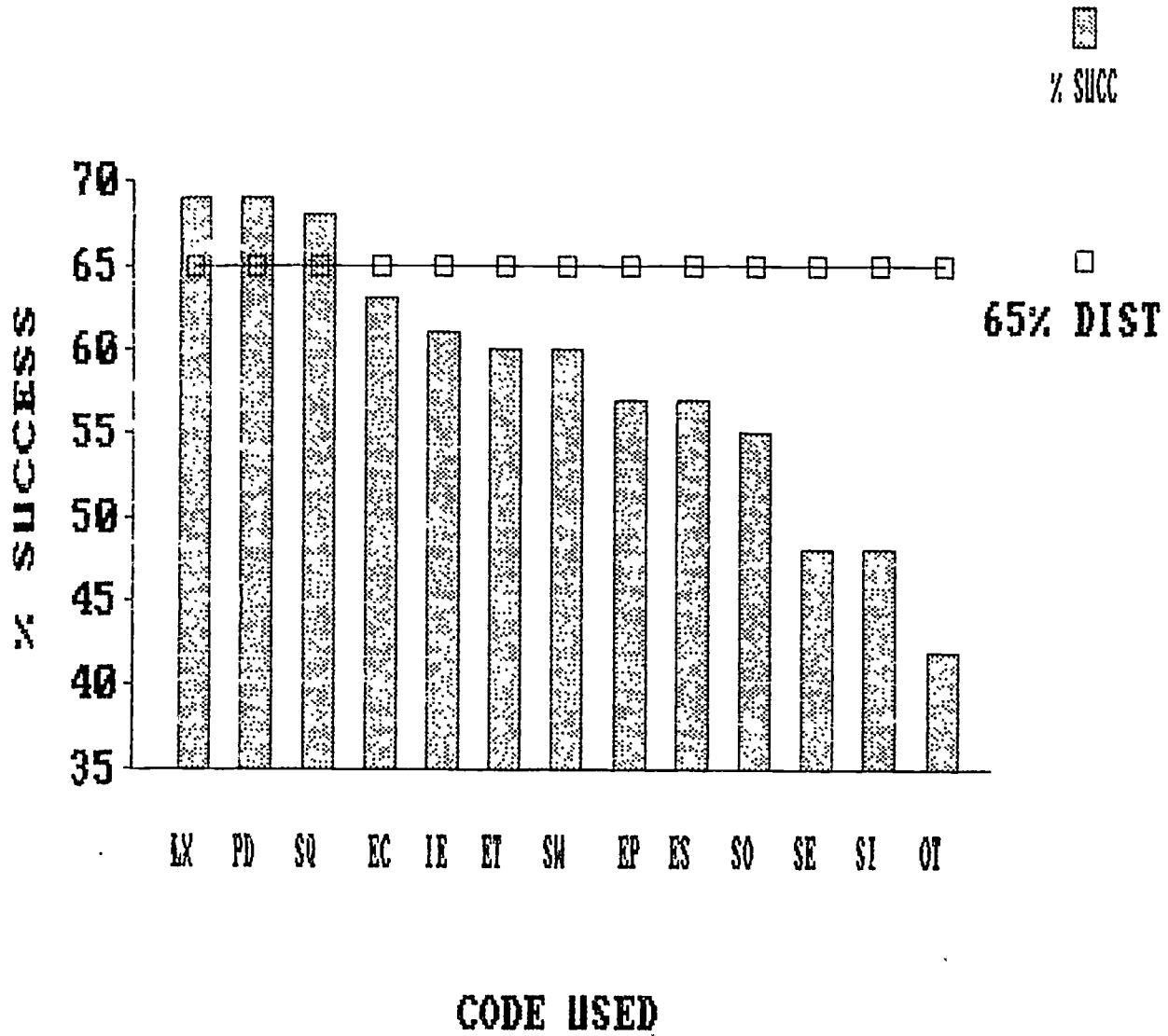
**Totals in previous reports included overrides given for Reading, Writing, and Math levels and for students who received no grades

+Total of all students who met prerequisites district-wide. Includes all students who were given override codes by counselors.

-Total of all students who met prerequisites district-wide minus (-) those who had override codes.

GRAPH 1

% SUCCESS BY CODE

B. Comments

3 CODES BEAT THE COMPUTER

Success
Rate   Code   Comment

69%   LX   The overall success rate of 69% for the Life Experience
               code continued to be a delightful surprise, up from 57%
               for Spring of 1988. This assessment was often done by
               faculty in areas such as electronics, laser, computer
               technology, and math, as well as by faculty and
               counselors in other areas. Previous work experience
               related to a given course seems to be a good predictor
               of success, even exceeding the computer success rate of
               65%.

69%   PD   69% (up from 59%) of students with previous degrees
               succeeded at their coursework.

68%   SQ   This code was used, with a 68% success rate, to allow a
               student to take two courses in sequence when the first
               is a prerequisite for the second, e.g., English one
               level below 1A in Summer and English 1A in the Fall.
               One would expect the success rate to approximate the
               computer's 65% success rate, which it did.

4 CODES WERE AT 60% OR HIGHER

Success
Rate   Code   Comment

63%   EC   63% (up from 60%) of students succeeded who had
               equivalent coursework to a prerequisite in the
               district. Used properly, this means the student met
               the prerequisite by coursework within the District.
               Sometimes the computer may not recognize that an old
               course is equivalent to a new one.

61%   IE   61% (up from 59%) of students who met their
               prerequisite by way of an instructor evaluation were
               successful.

60%   ET   For Spring 1988, 60% of students succeeded who had
               prerequisites met by way of a transcript from another
               school indicating that a course equivalent to the
               prerequisite had been passed. It remained at 60% for
               Fall 1988.

60%   SW   Taking the "student's word" about whether they met
               prerequisites resulted in a 60% (up from 51% in Spring
               1988) success rate, indicating good judgment on the
               part of counselors.

3 CODES WERE BETWEEN 50% AND 60%

Success Rate	Code	Comment
57%	EP	This code was used in error 28 times, since there were no experimental groups used during this semester. It is not possible to interpret the <u>57% success rate</u>.
57%	ES	This code is supposed to be used when an existing test score that qualifies a student for a course is seen by a counselor. In the past, it has often been used for other reasons and also has experienced the highest error rate in its use. The <u>57% success rate</u> of students (up from 50%) is a reflection of a great improvement in this situation. When this code is used strictly and accurately to reflect existing test scores, it should give a good general picture of successfulness related to test scores and should be close to the computer's 65% success rate.
55%	SO	Nearing the chance range, <u>55%</u> (same as Spring 1988) of students <u>were successful</u> who met their prerequisite for "some other" reason.

3 CODES WERE BELOW 50%

Success Rate	Code	Comment
48%	SE	This code indicates that the counselor believes that the student has a record of meeting prerequisites, but that the computer does not seem to recognize it. The system error usage matched the district success rate at 65% for students meeting all prerequisites in Spring 1988, but <u>dropped to 48%</u> in Fall 1988. Errors in interpreting prerequisites were quite often associated with this code.
48%	SI	Students insisting on taking courses above their prerequisite level had <u>less than a 50% chance of succeeding.</u>

3 CODES WITH A SMALL N

Success
Rate   Code   Comment

  42%   OT   Old test scores are typically Davis Reading Test Speed
                       scores and were related to the higher levels of
                       success, at 67% for Spring 1988. For Fall 1988, the
                       success rate dropped to 42%. The small N = 19 makes
                       interpretation difficult.

  --   SM   This code, indicating a problem with the system master
                       file, was used only four times.

  --   ER   This code was not used.

C.   Summary

LX, PD, EC, ET, SQ related to high success

In general, the codes related to past performance, such as job duties (LX) and previous or expected documented coursework and degrees (ET, EC, PD and SQ), were consistently associated with high success.

SW a surprise

SW codes were often given to San Jose State students taking specific courses at the community college. A more judicious use of these codes is reflected in the 60% success rate of these students, up from 51% for Spring 1983.

SO less successful

When students were less well organized with documentation or had more "borderline or unusual" ways of demonstrating their having met a prerequisite, they received an SO code and were less likely to succeed, with a 55% success rate.

SI has low success

Students who insisted on taking a course above their assessment/ prerequisite level had one of the lowest success rates, at 48%.

Students who insisted on taking algebra above prerequisite levels had only a 33% success rate.

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III. A and B Grades by Override Code

A. Students who enter a course with an override code often want to be
    able to achieve top grades. The following graphs, using data from
    Table 1, indicate the percentage of A and B grades received for each
    override code, excluding EP. The flat line indicates that the
    students who met all course and basic skills prerequisites had 31% A
    or B grades.

GRAPH 2

% A + B GRADES BY CODE
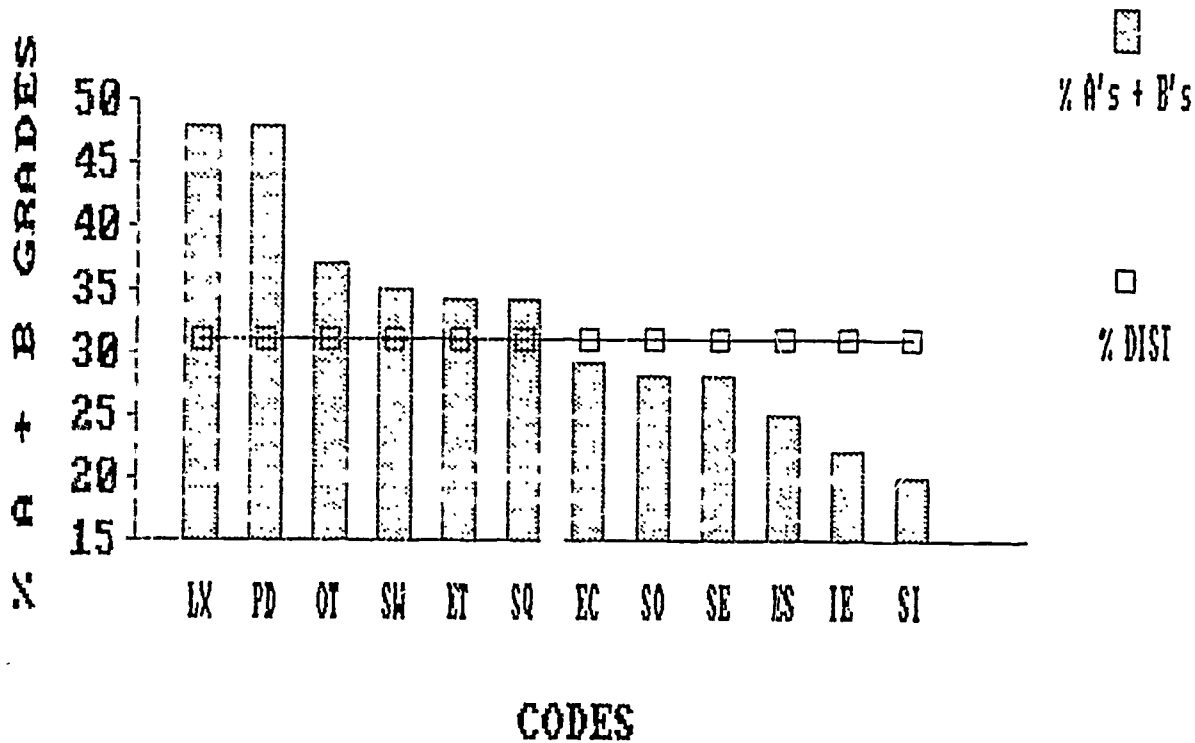
B.   Comments

LX, PD relate to highest grades

Forty-eight (48%) of students with life experience and previous
degrees received A's and B's, compared to the District a ·rage of
38%.   One might infer that high motivation and previous uccessful
experience relate to high grades.

OT, SW, ET, and SQ are above the average

These students have previous college experience and/or appear to have
had a clear sense of purpose or direction resulting in above average
numbers of A's and B's.

The District Student Word (SW) students (35% A's and B's) were often
students from San Jose State making up units.

Existing Transcript (ET) students (34% A's and B's) have previous
coursework elsewhere.

Sequence (SQ) students (33% A's and B's) plan ahead to take courses in
a sequence and appeared to be goal-directed.

SO, SE, ES have below average numbers of high grades

These codes were the most often associated with confusion in
interpreting prerequisites or borderline of unusual situations on the
part of students and were associated with a below average number of
A's and B's.

IE and SI are associated with low numbers of A's and B's

Many Instructor Evaluation (IE) codes were given to ESL students who
received CR grades.   IE had a 61% overall success rate.

Only one in five Student Insistence (SI) students (20%) received an A
or B grade.

IV. Withdrawal Rate by Code

A. Some codes result in a much greater withdrawal rate than others.

GRAPH 3

WITHDRAWAL RATE BY CODE

% WITHDRAWAL

% DISTRICT

X WITHDRAWAL

CODES

SE SI SO ES ET SW PD IE EC LX SQ
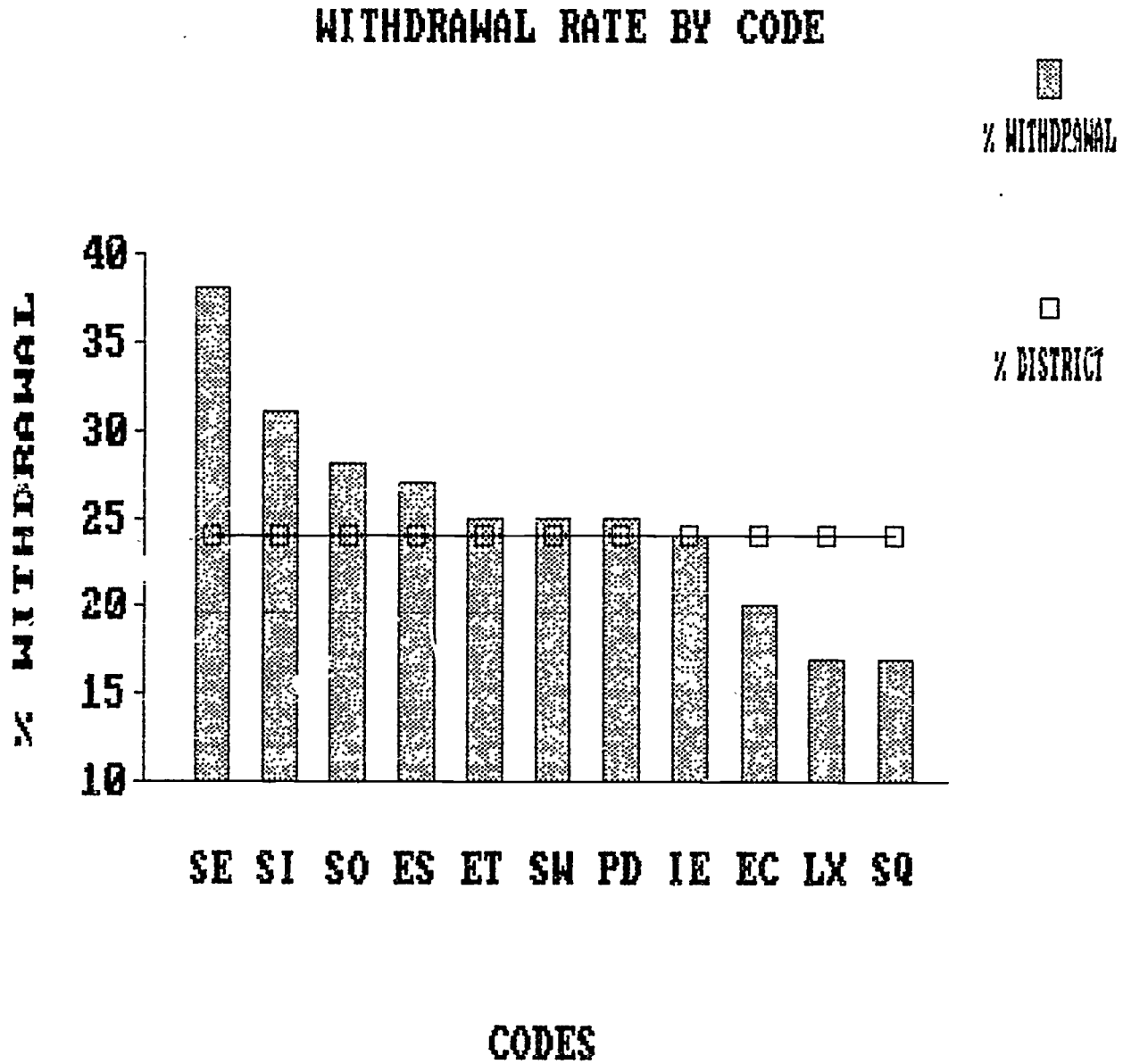
B. Comments

Student Insistence (SI) was associated with a high withdrawal rate, at 31%, compared to 24% withdrawal rate for students who met all prerequisites.

Life Experience (LX) and Sequence (SQ) students both had low withdrawal rates, at 17%

System Error (SE), Some Other Reason (SO) and Existing Test Score (ES) were associated with confusion and with borderline cases and had high withdrawal rates, at 38%, 28% and 27%, respectively.

V. Success Rates by Override Code and by Counselor

A. Table 2 indicates the percentage of students succeeding for each override code and for each counselor (C1 = counselor #1 through C44 = counselor #44).
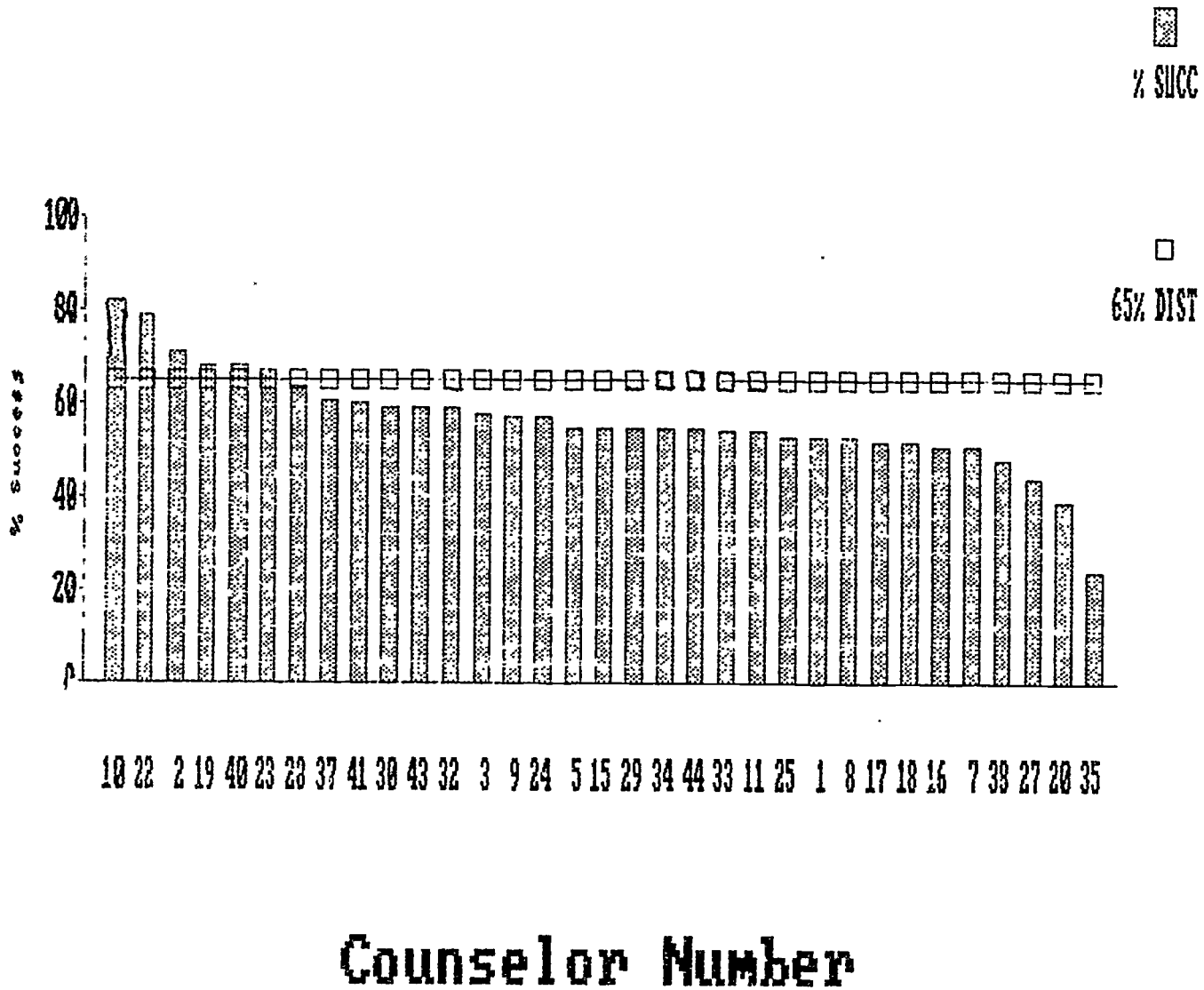
TABLE 2

SUCCESS RATE BY COUNSELOR AND CODE

Counselor

Code	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	C14	C15	C16	C17	C18	C19	C20	C21	C22
EC :	100%	0%	63%	100%	83%	0%	42%	50%	62%	67%	60%	0%	0%	0%	68%	75%	67%	77%	0%	0%	0%	68%
EP :	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	57%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ER :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ES :	100%	0%	57%	50%	73%	0%	45%	0%	100%	0%	58%	0%	0%	0%	68%	33%	100%	0%	0%	0%	58%	78%
ET :	83%	0%	73%	50%	53%	0%	57%	53%	60%	75%	63%	56%	100%	100%	56%	65%	48%	65%	0%	45%	0%	50%
IE :	52%	70%	52%	77%	63%	0%	56%	44%	67%	50%	69%	0%	100%	100%	54%	53%	61%	52%	67%	46%	67%	58%
LX :	100%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	68%	63%	50%	0%	63%	0%	100%	0%	69%	0%	86%	100%	0%	0%	0%	100%
OT :	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	83%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
PD :	100%	0%	43%	0%	75%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	33%	0%	0%	0%	80%	60%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%
SE :	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	50%	0%	0%	56%	0%	0%	0%	43%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SI :	0%	0%	64%	0%	33%	0%	55%	54%	57%	0%	55%	0%	0%	0%	46%	17%	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	20%
SH :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%
SG :	53%	71%	58%	50%	55%	0%	51%	53%	57%	82%	54%	100%	40%	100%	55%	51%	52%	52%	68%	39%	0%	79%
SQ :	0%	0%	71%	0%	0%	0%	64%	0%	67%	0%	33%	0%	0%	0%	63%	90%	100%	0%	0%	50%	0%	100%
SW :	100%	0%	55%	75%	63%	0%	77%	92%	82%	86%	58%	100%	0%	0%	55%	47%	100%	0%	0%	70%	0%	50%
T	57%	70%	63%	59%	60%	0%	55%	57%	61%	72%	61%	75%	77%	100%	59%	58%	57%	56%	71%	46%	50%	62%

Counselor

Code	C23	C24	C25	C26	C27	C28	C29	C30	C31	C32	C33	C34	C35	C36	C37	C38	C39	C40	C41	C42	C43	C44
EC :	20%	60%	59%	0%	53%	0%	0%	83%	0%	50%	66%	0%	0%	0%	68%	44%	0%	67%	100%	0%	50%	0%
EP :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ER :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ES :	54%	0%	50%	0%	0%	33%	0%	36%	0%	53%	60%	0%	100%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
ET :	71%	57%	33%	100%	77%	50%	55%	69%	100%	74%	66%	58%	67%	100%	48%	53%	0%	67%	50%	0%	64%	58%
IE :	53%	63%	75%	0%	64%	50%	59%	55%	67%	50%	43%	0%	80%	67%	45%	58%	0%	57%	57%	100%	17%	0%
LX :	75%	67%	100%	0%	100%	100%	60%	79%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	57%	80%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
OT :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
PD :	0%	67%	0%	100%	0%	67%	50%	33%	100%	80%	100%	0%	0%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SE :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	41%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SI :	0%	75%	100%	0%	100%	100%	64%	33%	0%	0%	0%	48%	0%	0%	0%	51%	0%	31%	75%	0%	0%	0%
SH :	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SO :	67%	57%	53%	50%	44%	64%	55%	59%	33%	59%	54%	55%	24%	7%	61%	48%	50%	68%	60%	0%	59%	55%
SQ :	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	100%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%	0%
SW :	100%	69%	70%	33%	55%	50%	65%	71%	0%	50%	73%	0%	50%	0%	55%	0%	0%	67%	100%	0%	100%	0%
T	66%	61%	61%	56%	53%	57%	56%	61%	62%	53%	62%	56%	46%	67%	59%	53%	50%	59%	63%	100%	59%	51%

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B. Graph 4 plots the success rates for students receiving 'SO' codes,
    broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use the code more
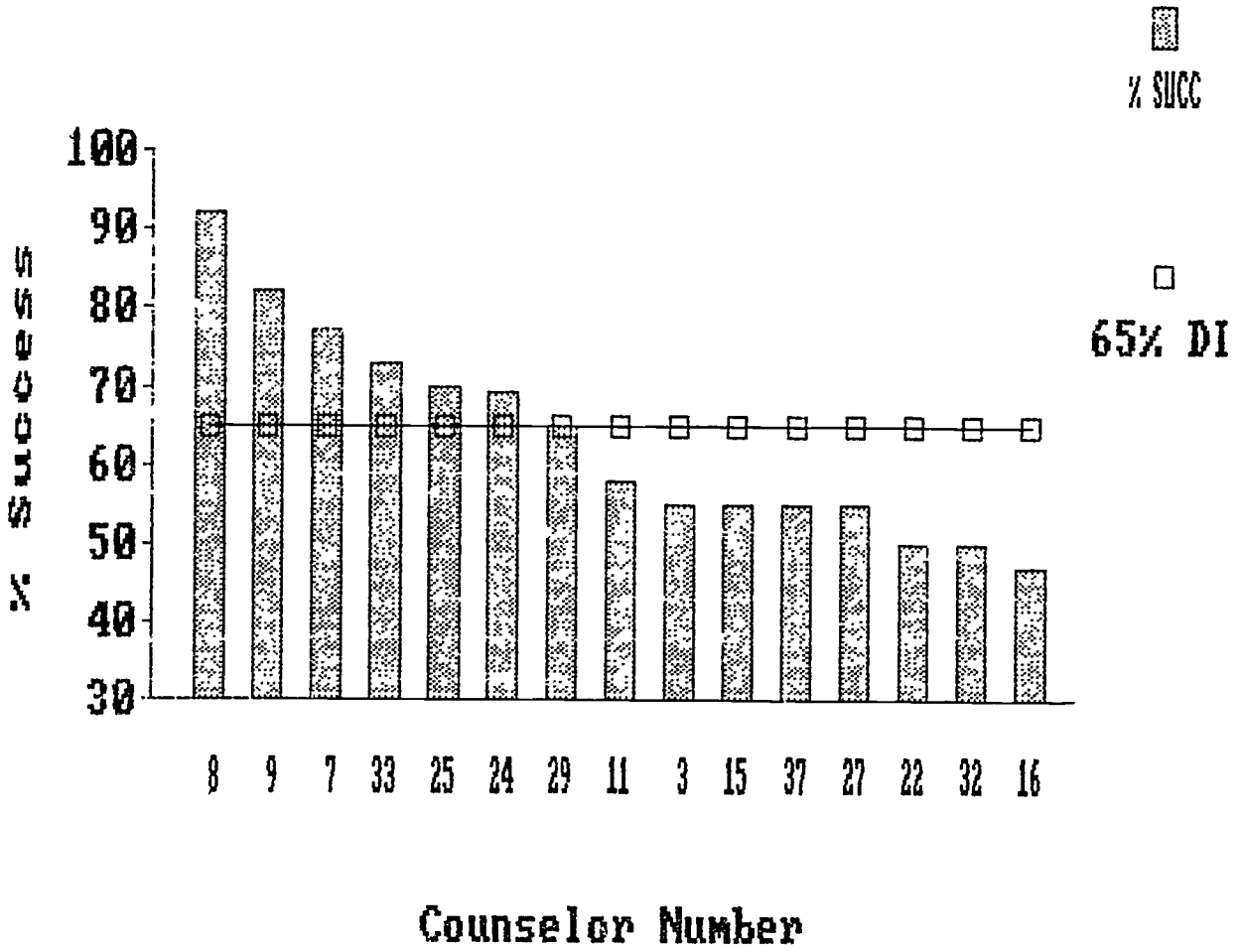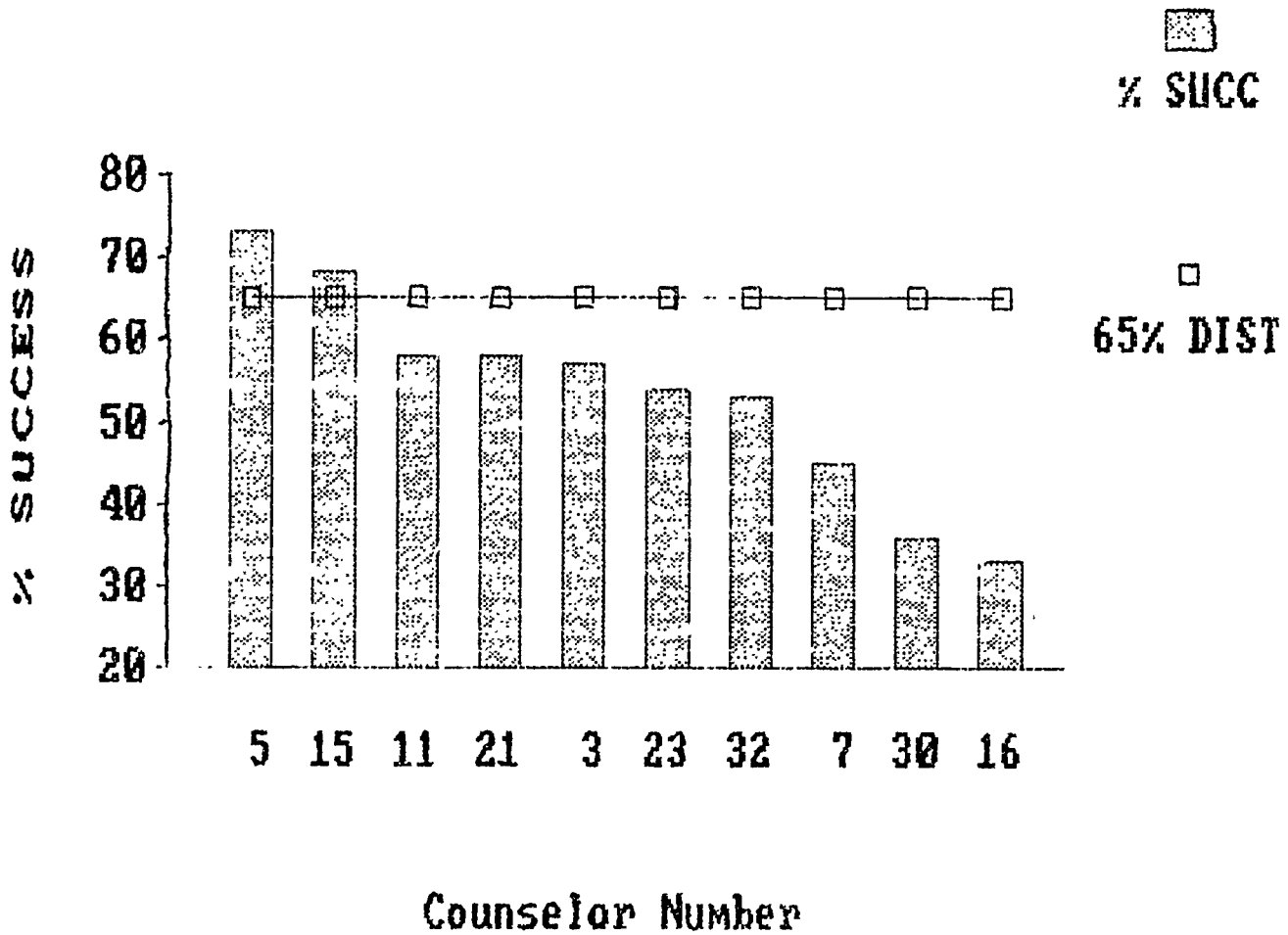   than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 4

'SO' SUCC. X COUNS.

% SUCC

65% DIST

Counselor Number: 10 22 2 19 40 23 28 37 41 30 43 32 3 9 24 5 15 29 34 44 33 11 25 1 8 17 18 16 7 38 27 20 35

Counselor Number

C. Graph 5 plots the success rates for students receiving 'SW' codes, broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use the code more than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 5

'SW' SUCC. X COUNS.

□ % SUCC

□ 65% DI

Counselor Number

D.   Graph 6 plots the success rates for students receiving 'ES' codes,
     broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use the code more
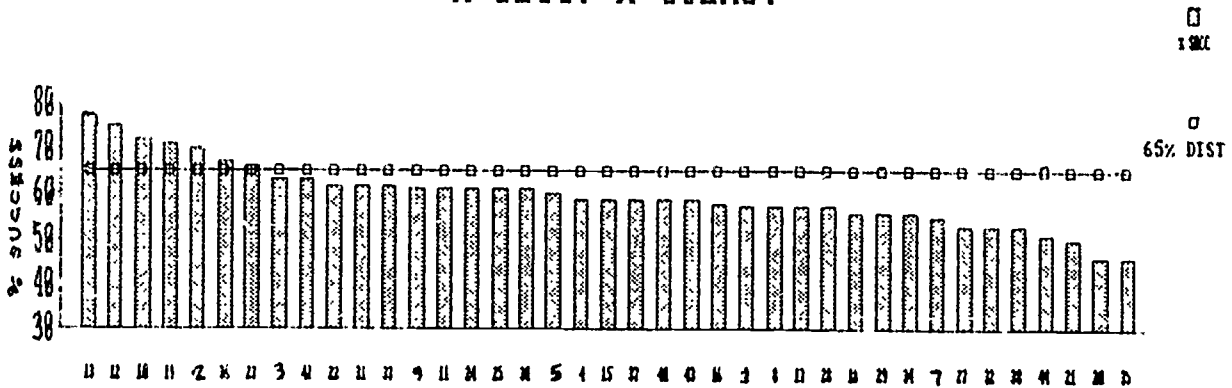   than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 6

'ES' SUCC. X COUNS.

% SUCC

65% DIST

Counselor Number

E. Graph 7 plots the overall success rates for students receiving
    override codes, broken down by counselor. Counselors who did not use
    codes more than 10 times were not included.

GRAPH 7

% SUCC. X COUNS.

Counselor Number

F. Comments

ES Code: The range of success for counselors using ES (an existing
test score was seen that should allow the student to qualify for
the course) was from 53% to 73%, up from 0% and 71% for Spring
1988.

 ---Two of 10 counselors (20%) achieved a higher success rate than
the 65% rate for students meeting all prerequisites, slightly
lower than the 21% for Spring 1988.

 ---Two of 10 counselors (20%) achieved a rate at or above 60%,
lower than the 36% for Spring 1988.

 ---Three of 10 counselors (33%) achieved a rate below 50%, down
from 43% for Spring 1988.

The use of this code relies on a solid knowledge of prerequisites
and a solid interpretation of test scores. It has historically
had the greatest confusion of any code used and continues to be a
problem for counselors.

SO code: The success for counselors using the SO code (the student
meets a prerequisite for some other reason) ranged from 24% to
82%, down from 29% and 90% for Spring 1988.

 ---Six of 33 counselors (18%) had higher success rates than the
students who met all prerequisites. This was about the same
as the 17% for Spring 1988.

 ---Nine of 33 counselors (27%) were at or above 60%, down from
37% for Spring 1988.

 ---Four of 33 counselors (12%) achieved a rate below 50%,
significantly better than the 33% for Spring 1988.

It is clear that a careful examination of the reasons why a
student may meet a prerequisite not included in the computer's
information files or program can result in success rates higher
than for students who meet all prerequisites for their courses.
It also appears that a more careful use of this code can result
in higher success rates.

SW code: The range of success for counselors using the SW code
(student word that they had the equivalent of a prerequisite
course elsewhere) was from 47% to 92%, up from 18% and 67% for
Spring 1988.

 ---Six counselors of 15 (40%) had success rates higher than the
65% rate of students who met prerequisites, up remarkably from
10% for Spring 1988.

 ---Seven of 15 counselors (47%) were at or above 60%, up from 25%
for Spring 1988

 ---Only one of 15 counselors (7%) using more than ten SW codes
had a success rate below 50%, down from 50% for Spring 1988.

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A student's word was not particularly a good predictor of success in Spring 1988. For Fall 1988, however, there was a much more thoughtful application of this code by counselors, increasing this success rate to an exceptional 60% overall. A survey of the 15 counselors is needed to determine what they did differently.

Overall Counselor Success Rates: The overall success rate of counselors who used more than 10 codes ranged from 46% to 77% compared to 41% and 81% in Spring 1988. The collective success rate increased slightly, from 57% to 59%.

For seven of 39 counselors (18%), their overall success rate exceeded the 65% success rate of students who had met all prerequisites, up significantly from 9% for Spring 1988.

Eighteen of 39 (46%) with more than ten codes were at or above 60% overall. Again, this was a significant improvement from 32% for Spring 1988.

Only two of 39 (5%) had an overall success rate below 50%; one was at 50%. This was significantly better than the 15% who were below 50% a year previously.

SI code (a new code for Fall 1988): The range of success for counselors using the SI code was from 31% to 64%.

No counselor using SI exceeded the 65% rate of students who met prerequisites.

Two of 11 counselors (20%) had success rates at or above 60%.

Four of 11 counselors, or 36%, had success rates lower than 50%.

General Comments: Several codes and the overall success rates were singled out for review for Fall 1988 because of their success rates for Spring 1988. It was gratifying and encouraging to note that the percentage of counselors with a success rat above 60% increased for two codes as summarized below:

| | % of Counselors Above a 60% Success Rate | |
	SP 88	F88
Overall	32%	46%
SW	25%	47%

There was an encouraging drop in the percentage of counselors with success rates below 50% as summarized below:

| | % of Counselors Below a 50% Success Rate | |
	SP 88	F88
Overall	15%	5%
ES	43%	33%
SO	33%	12%
SW	50%	7%

The percentage of students below a 50% success rate as a result
of counselor judgment dropped off encouragingly in all areas.

It would appear that counselors can improve their student success
rates with feedback and experience in making judgments about
evaluating a student's preparedness for college coursework.

VI. Summary

How does counselor judgment as a means of assessment relate to student success? Counselors work with an infinite variety of information combinations, including test scores, previous college coursework in and outside of the district, previous degree status, high school grades, work experience, appearance, ability to articulate, vocabulary level, student's word about educational accomplishments, survey information, college grades, home situation, number of hours of work, personal support systems, apparent motivation, clarity of student goal, and so on. Every student brings a different configuration and combination of the above kinds of information. Counselors are faced with the extraordinary task of taking each new combination of information, weighting the information, and making a unique judgment about the chances of success for each student. This judgment must then be combined with a discussion with the student to arrive at a decision about what, in fact, to do. Student variables then get mixed with counselor judgment. This study looked at the success rate of this process in comparison to the success rate of all students in the district who met all course and basic skills prerequisites. Counselor judgment resulting in the use of override codes is often exercised in adverse circumstances, including off-campus sites, short appointment times, long lines, and inadequate information from the student.

Since this first report was done for Spring of 1988, counselors have had feedback on their performance on the use of codes. It was important to know whether or not feedback and experience could influence counselor success rates.

Life experience, in related work areas and documented completion of previous coursework or degrees, continued to be the best way of predicting success. When these variables were analyzed by counselors and faculty, their success rates were:

	SP 88	F88
Life Experience	67%	69%
Previous Degree	59%	69%
Sequence	N/A	68%
Existing Coursework	60%	63%
Instructor Evaluation	59%	61%
Existing Transcript	60%	60%

The most consistent overall predictor of success in courses, at 65%, was completion of course and basic skills prerequisites within the District. Basic skills prerequisites in this study were met either by completion of basic skills courses or by an appropriate test score. Sixty-five percent (65%) of these students were successful.

When unique combinations of information had to be combined to establish some other reason that a student met a prerequisite (and, therefore, should be allowed in a class), the success rate for all counselors was the same as Spring 1988:

    Some Other Reason   55%

When a _student's undocumented word_ about previous coursework was taken, the success rate increased remarkably from 51% for Spring 1988 to:

Student's Word   60%

An Existing Test score code that will potentially provide useful information about test scores in relationship to success was previously an area of confusion that had resulted in a 50% success rate for Spring 1988 and was not in Fall 1988, at:

Existing Score   57%

A student insistence (SI) code was used for the first time this semester for students who insisted on taking a course above their prerequisite level (see Appendix A for a more complete analysis). This group had one of the lowest success rates:

Student Insistence   48%

SI students had one of the highest withdrawal rates of any group, at 31%.

Just as significant was the finding that with experience and feedback many counselors can improve their success rates. For Spring 1988, only 9% of the counselors had a success rate above 65%. This increased to 18% for Fall 1988.

For Spring 1988, 15% of counselors had success rates below 50%. This was reduced to 5% for Fall 1988.

The overall success of all counselors for all codes increased from 57% to 59% from Spring to Fall 1988.

A most significant finding of this report is that _counselor judgment, at its best, can relate to success at higher rates than the rate of success (65%) for those who meet all the prerequisites for a course_. Seven counselors of 39 (18%) were above 65%.

Again, counselor judgment is exercised along with student judgment and it is the result of this interchange that results in the override code given. It is evident that one cannot generalize about the effectiveness of counselor assessment. The judgment and counseling skills in relationship to students are exercised more effectively by some than others.

The complexity of the decision making dealing with an incredible range of variables in differing combinations for each student can never be encompassed effectively by a test or tests.

However, counselors who carefully follow prerequisites, use a careful evaluation of relevant life experience, and rely on documented evidence of previous coursework can achieve levels of success as high or higher than that of students who meet all prerequisites within the district.

It should be kept in mind that a success rate of 59% achieved by counselors is as good or better than most success rates typically reported by placement tests in relationship to course success. This is especially noteworthy when one realizes that counselor assessment is often done in uncontrolled and adverse circumstances, with very short amounts of time

(often 5-10 minutes) to make the assessment. On the other hand, students who receive overrides often have previous degrees, other college coursework, and are probably a much different group of students than those who enter college and take placement tests.

All in all, there is great potential for the role of counselors in the assessment process and for feedback, coupled with practice, to increase success rates. There also appears to be the real possibility that with direct feedback to a counselor about his or her success rates, the counselor success rate can be increased. It is hoped that continual monitoring will see this trend continue.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT ACCESS VS. STUDENT SUCCESS

STUDENT ACCESS VS. STUDENT SUCCESS
(Success of Students Meeting Prerequisites, Assessed by Alternative Means, and Insisting on Courses Above Prerequisite Levels)

by Jon Alan Kangas, Ph.D.
District Dean of Academic Standards
San Jose/Evergreen Community College District
March 13, 1989

In 1985, all courses in the San ᴊse/Evergreen Community College District were assigned course and basic skills prerequisites, as appropriate. A computerized prerequisite checking system kept track of all students who met prerequisites and all override codes given by counselors. Students who insisted on taking courses above their test and/or prerequisite level were given Student Insistence ("SI") override codes.

A statewide debate is taking place. Simply stated:

> One position emphasizes the "right" of individual students to access college level courses above their placement level. This position typically advocates advisory placement into courses.

> Another position typically stresses the need to insure the largest percent of students succeeding as possible in order to increase the educational and employment levels of citizens in the community, and to enhance the self-esteem of students. This position, when coupled with sound assessment and basic skills programs, tends to advocate highly-structured and/or mandatory placement.

The current research indicates the different success rates for all students that the computer determined met prerequisites in the SJ/ECCD (seatcount = 34,831), the success rates of students assessed by alternative means by counselors (N = 9952), and the group of students who insisted on taking courses above their assessment/prerequisite level (N = 389, less than 1% of the district total seatcount). A student was counted for each course he/she took. Success was defined as receiving a grade of A, B, C, and CR; nonsuccess as receiving a grade of D, F, NC, W, and I.

Success Based On
Computer Decision, Counselor Decision, and
Student Insisting on Taking Courses Above Prerequisite/Placement Level

	N	Success Rate
Computer Decision (Cmpt)	34,831	65%
Counselor Decision (Cnsl)	9,563	59%
Student Insistence (S I)	389	48%

Succ. x Cmpt x Cnsl x S I

% Succ.

How Decision Made
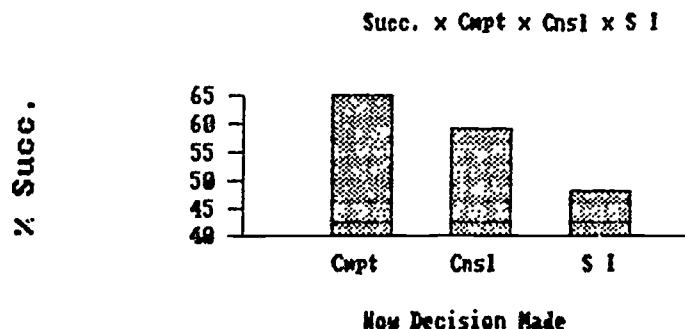
APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF AN INDIVIDUAL COUNSELOR

CONFIDENTIAL FEEDBACK SHEET

GRADES X CODE - FALL 1988

	A'S #	A'S %	B'S #	B'S %	C'S #	C'S %	D'S #	D'S %	CR'S #	CR'S %	F'S #	F'S %	W'S #	W'S %	I'S #	I'S %	NC'S #	NC'S %	TOTAL #	TOTAL %	F88 SUCC# #	F88 SUCC# %	SP88 SUCC# #	SP88 SUCC# %
EC:	3	19%	3	19%	3	19%	1	6%	1	6%	1	6%	2	13%	0	0%	2	13%	16	100%	10	63%	7	58%
EP:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
ER:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
ES:	5	14%	9	26%	4	11%	1	3%	2	6%	2	6%	11	31%	0	0%	1	3%	35	100%	20	57%	23	64%
ET:	36	21%	45	26%	26	15%	5	3%	19	11%	6	3%	32	19%	1	1%	2	1%	172	100%	126	73%	16	73%
IE:	6	14%	3	7%	6	14%	0	0%	8	18%	2	5%	16	36%	0	0%	3	7%	44	100%	23	32%	15	68%
LX:	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	1	50%	2	67%
OT:	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	100%	2	100%	0	0%
PD:	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	29%	0	0%	3	43%	1	14%	0	0%	7	100%	3	43%	0	0%
SE:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	55%
SI:	2	14%	5	36%	0	0%	1	7%	2	14%	1	7%	3	21%	0	0%	0	0%	14	100%	9	64%	0	0%
SH:	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
SO:	25	13%	32	17%	32	17%	14	7%	21	11%	18	9%	41	21%	1	1%	7	4%	191	100%	110	58%	38	49%
SQ:	0	0%	1	14%	1	14%	0	0%	3	43%	1	14%	1	14%	0	0%	0	0%	7	100%	5	71%	0	0%
SW:	3	15%	5	25%	3	15%	1	5%	0	0%	2	10%	5	25%	0	0%	1	5%	20	100%	11	55%	13	48%
TOTALS WITH SI CODE:	81	16%	104	20%	77	15%	23	5%	58	11%	34	7%	114	22%	3	1%	16	3%	510	100%	320	63%	120	57%
TOTALS WITHOUT SI CODE:	79	16%	99	20%	77	16%	22	4%	56	11%	33	7%	111	22%	3	1%	16	3%	496	100%	306	62%	120	57%

#Succ = A + B + C + CR grades

Comments: Nice increase in success rate from 48% to 55%. The good use of ET at 73%, EC at 63% and SI at 64% were helpful in this increase. An improvement in the use of SW at 55% and IE at 52% would be helpful.

Succ. Rate x Semester

% Succ.

Indiv. Couns.

Computer

All Couns.

Semester