

THE USE OF PLACEMENT TESTS IN MODERN
LANGUAGES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN*

WHAT are placement tests in modern languages? They are really achievement tests, the best known of which are the Iowa Placement Examinations, the Columbia Research Bureau Tests, and the American Council Tests, and may be characterized as follows

1) They are quite objective in contrast with the ordinary essay examination which is subjective in nature. All the responses, with few exceptions, may be checked by a clerk with a key, the technique such as the true-false, multiple-choice or selection, and completion type enabling this to be done

2) They are far more comprehensive than the old-type examination, the aim being to sample the course of study as extensively as possible within certain time limits

3) They are a sort of yard-stick made to measure not merely a semester's work but several semesters' or even years' achievement in comparable terms

4) They may be corrected far more quickly and economically than can be the old-type examination, the cost being estimated at about one-tenth that of correcting the typical old-type test such as the College Entrance Examinations and the Regents Papers of New York¹

5) They are far more reliable and valid than the old-type test, being from one and a quarter to nearly three times as dependable as the essay type as has been demonstrated by educationalists and language men through special investigations²

* A preliminary report made to the Wisconsin Presidents, Deans, and Registrars at their annual meeting Oct 23, 1930, to the Board of Examiners of the University of Wisconsin, Nov 14, 1930, and to the teaching staffs of the various foreign language departments at the University of Wisconsin Dec 17, 1930

¹ Ben Wood, *New York Experiments with New-type Modern Language Tests* The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927, p 312

² Ben Wood, *op cit* p 118

Henmon, *Achievement Tests in Modern Languages*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1929, p 90 fig

Cheydleur, "The Relative Reliability of the Old and New Type Modern Language Examinations," *The French Review*, May, 1929.

6) They have been standardized so that results may be evaluated in these terms.

7) They are available in equivalent or duplicate forms

For what purposes may these placement or achievement tests be employed?

1) They may be used to compare the achievement of students in different countries such as Canada, England, and the United States. Likewise they may serve to compare the standards of different sections of the same country, or those of different cities, or those of different schools private or public

2) They may be utilized as a basis for more scientific classification of students than now obtained by the unit or credit system alone, assuring more homogeneous groups

3) They may serve for diagnostic purposes to determine where stress of study or teaching should be laid, i e , on vocabulary, grammar, reading, or composition

4. They may be employed for determining not merely effective studying but also effective teaching

5) They may be helpful in establishing the value of various methods such as the direct, the grammar-translation, or the eclectic

6) They may aid to show progress from semester to semester, or from year to year

7) They may replace or supplement the old-type tests in determining final term or semester grades

8). In short they may serve for educational guidance in evaluating the effectiveness of study, of teaching, and of curricula.

What were the specific tests used in modern languages at Wisconsin in 1928 and 1929 for placement purposes? They were the American Council Alpha Tests in French, Spanish, and German. As time and space preclude the lengthy consideration of more than one of these, we shall describe briefly the French form alone which resembles the other two. It consists of four parts: a vocabulary section of 75 items of the multiple choice type and based upon Henmon's 400,000 word count, a grammar section of 50 items of several techniques combined such as the completion and the selection type or multiple choice and based on the fundamentals common to many text books, a silent reading section consisting of 7 carefully graded selections with 28 questions on the same to be answered in English to test comprehension, and a free

composition part, based on a picture, to be corrected or scored by means of a composition scale. All of these tests were the work of specialists in languages and education and perfected through several years of experimentation and constructive criticism. Their questions comprise only such items as are common to widely used courses of study and designed to be valid for measuring achievement in all types of schools and colleges.

What do the results of the placement tests in Sept. 1928 disclose in regard to the average attainment of the modern language entrants?

Table 1 shows that the students who entered the French classes at Wisconsin in Sept. 1928 with 2 semesters, 4 semesters, 6 semes-

TABLE 1

A Comparison of the Norms of the Composite Percentile Rank on A-C Alpha French Test—Form A—High School Basis Administered at the University of Wisconsin September 1928 to Beginning 1b, 10a, 10b, 20, and 21 With the Standard Norms for This Same Test

	Form	Sem	Norms	N
Comp P.R. of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	2	40-87	34
	A	2	58-00	352-744
Comp P.R. of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	4	46-25	195
	A	4	53-00	475-739
Comp P.R. of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	6	40-00	62
	A	6	54-00	402-565
Comp P.R. of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	8	46-25	49
	A	8	49-00	85-131

ters, and 8 semesters of high school preparation were 17, 7, 14, and 3 points respectively below the national norms in percentile rank. We shall not comment upon the causes of this low level of our entrants beyond pointing out that it is probably due to evident lack of serious study, language inaptitude, poor teaching, improper classification, or the university requirements. Later it will be demonstrated that the same disparity appeared in the Spanish and German entrants in Sept. 1928 and in Sept. 1930.

What do the results of the placement tests in Jan. 1929 disclose in regard to the average attainment of the modern language entrants after one semester's study?

Table 2 sets forth the records of the above French students after one additional semester's work at the University Inspection of

TABLE 2

A Comparison of the Norms of the Composite Percentile Rank on A C Alpha French Test—Form B—College Basis Administered at the University of Wisconsin January 1929 to the Above Students (those in Table 1) After One Semester in 1b, 10a, 10b, 20, and 21 With the Standard Norms for This Same Test

	Form	Sem	Norms	N
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	B	2	61 66	34
	B	2	53 00	297-452
Comp P.R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	B	3	62 81	195
	B	3	53 00	394-509
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	B	4	65 87	62
	B	4	50 00	179-243
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	B	5	66 66	49
	B	5	52 00	60-171

the same reveals the fact that in spite of the handicap with which both students and instructors had to contend the entrants with 2 semesters, 3 semesters, 4 semesters, and 5 semesters of high school raised their average percentile rank 9, 10, 16, and 15 points respectively above the national norms

The significance of this improvement from a teaching point of view stands out more clearly by observing that there is approximately a 21, 17, 26, and 20 percentile gain in the 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th semester college entrants at the end of a half year under our system. As neither the students nor the instructors knew that they were to be submitted to the second test (Form B of the A C. Alpha Test, which is the equivalent of Form A), it cannot be claimed that they consciously aimed to meet the requirements of such a test. It would be valuable to know from a pedagogical and administrative point of view what the Spanish and German entrants in 1928 did after a half year's experience with their languages but time, strength, and money have been lacking to ascertain whether the same gratifying progress was made by them and their instructors.

An examination of Table 3 enables us to compare the norms of the entrants in French, Spanish, and German at Wisconsin in Sept 1930 at the 2d, 4th, 6th, and 8th semester levels with the national norms at these same levels. For the French group of 389 students we learn that the average percentile rank below norm is 11.48 points, for the Spanish group of 89 it is 10.6 points, and for the German group it is 10.5. In 1928 for 340 cases of French it was 12 below, for 89 cases of Spanish it was 7 below, and for 72

TABLE 3

A Comparison of the Norms of the Composite Percentile Rank on A C Alpha French, Spanish, and German Tests—Form A, H S Basis, Administered at the University of Wisconsin, Sept 1930, to Freshmen and Transfers—With the Standard Norms for These Same Tests

French	Form	Sem	Norm	N T
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	2	50.6	45
	A	2	58.0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	4	40.5	186
	A	4	53.0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	6	41.7	72
	A	6	54.0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	8	34.0	86
	A	8	49.0	
Wt Average below norm			12.4	389
Spanish				
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	2	50.0	22
	A	2	57.0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	4	38.3	54
	A	4	53.0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	6	62.5	7
	A	6	63.0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	8	40.0	6
	A	8	53.0	
Wt Average below norm			10.6	89

German

Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	2	55 0	30
	A	2	57 0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	4	55 6	94
	A	4	56 0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	6	28 3	20
	A	6	54 0	
Comp P R of Wis Entrants Standard Norms	A	8	52 0	15
	A	8	56 0	
Wt Average below norm			10 0	159

cases of German it was 7 5 below. To sum up the situation, the weighted average percentile norms for 1138 French, Spanish, and German Entrants in 1928 and 1930 at Wisconsin was 11 points below the standard norms. Unless it can be demonstrated that the national norms of the three tests were established on a highly selective principle, and we do not believe that it can be, these figures are not over flattering in regard to the average students who come to us with their modern foreign language preparation done elsewhere. They plainly indicate that remedial measures should be taken to improve such conditions.

What confirmation of this state of affairs do the results of the component parts of the American Council Alpha French Test give? A comparison of the two curves of achievement (see Figures 1, 2, 3, 4), namely that of the national norm and that of the Wisconsin entrants reveals in a more graphic way what we have laid bare in a statistical manner. Whether we examine achievement in vocabulary, grammar, silent reading, or composition, the inferiority of the Wisconsin entrants, judged from their median scores, with the exception of a few bright spots like fourth and sixth semester silent reading and eighth semester composition, is very clearly indicated. As we said before, it is not our aim at present to discuss the reasons for this downward tendency, which is characteristic of the Spanish and German entrants also. We call attention to it because other state colleges and universities as well as private institutions must be facing somewhat similar problems which

should be met bravely and intelligently. We hope to be able to point out a way for solving some of these problems

What does the distribution of scores on these respective parts of the A C Test reveal in regard to the classification of students? If we take the silent reading or comprehension part for our purpose, and this seems to be most reasonable and fair to do as reading attainment

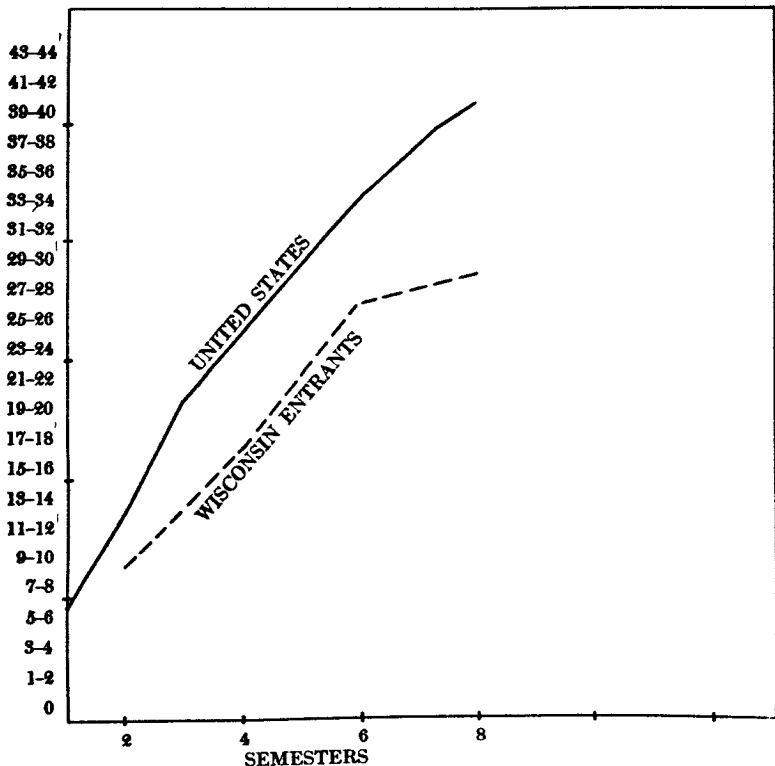


FIGURE 1. Comparison of norms in French grammar for the high schools of the country and Wisconsin entrants in Sept 1928 and Sept. 1930

appears to be the one goal on which practically all language teachers agree as the central objective of their instruction, we find the following facts about overlapping of attainment in the 2d, 4th, 6th, and 8th semesters of study.

The significance of Table 4 lies in the fact that it furnishes reliable evidence to prove that a considerable percentage of students

TABLE 4

Overlapping of Silent Reading in the A C Alpha French Test—Form A, Showing the Percent of Each Semester That Exceeds the Next Higher Semester Median and the Percent That Falls Short of the Next Lower Semester Median All Students in Column (1) Under the Regular Unit or Credit Scheme Receive Entrance Credit if Freshmen, and Advance Credit if Transfers

Percents of Students in Semester Indicated in Column (1) who are							
Above	4 sem M	6 sem M	8 sem M	Below	2 sem M	4 sem M	6 sem M
1	2	3	4		5	6	7
2 sem. S R	8%	4%					
4 sem S R		21%	16%		9%		
6 sem S R			43%		5%	23%	
8 sem. S R						13%	29%

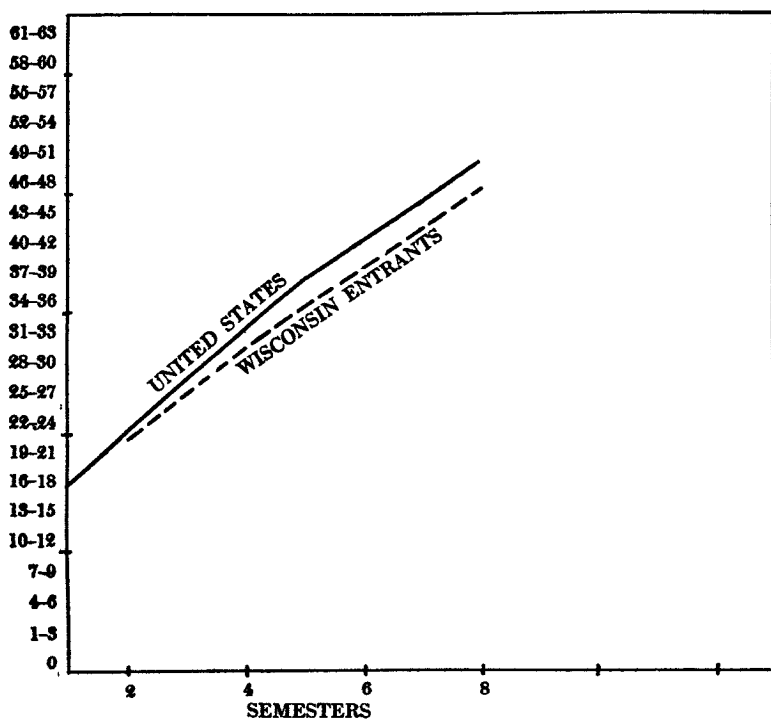


FIGURE 2. Comparison of norms in French vocabulary for the high schools of the country and Wisconsin entrants in Sept 1928 and Sept. 1930.

under the old accrediting system receives credit for which credit is not due and vice versa, many students do not receive credit for which credit is due. For example, 21% of the 4th semester students in Sept 1928 and Sept 1930 are above the medians of the sixth semester students and conversely 23% of the sixth semester students are below the medians of the fourth semester students.

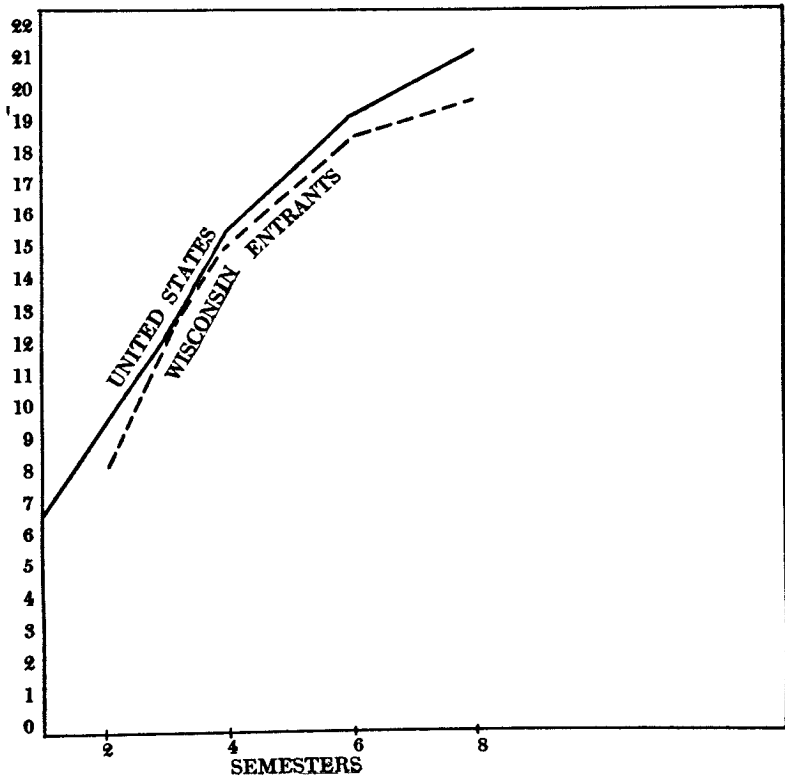


FIGURE 3 Comparison of norms in French silent reading for the high schools of the country and of Wisconsin entrants in Sept 1928 and Sept 1930

If any one should object to this conclusion on the ground that the silent reading part of the test is not the whole test, we refer to Ben D Wood's "New York Experiments with New-Type Modern Language Tests," where he demonstrates by means of the whole C. R. Bureau Test the same overlapping or misclassification of high school students under the regents system, and we have

established elsewhere by means of the whole C R Bureau Test and the whole A C Test, administered to about 2200 Wisconsin students of French, Spanish, and German, the same overlapping or misclassification of students at different semester levels in college Chart I, showing the means and sigma ranges of scores on the C R Bureau French Test given to 1160 students, illustrates in a graphic and realistic manner the overlapping of classification

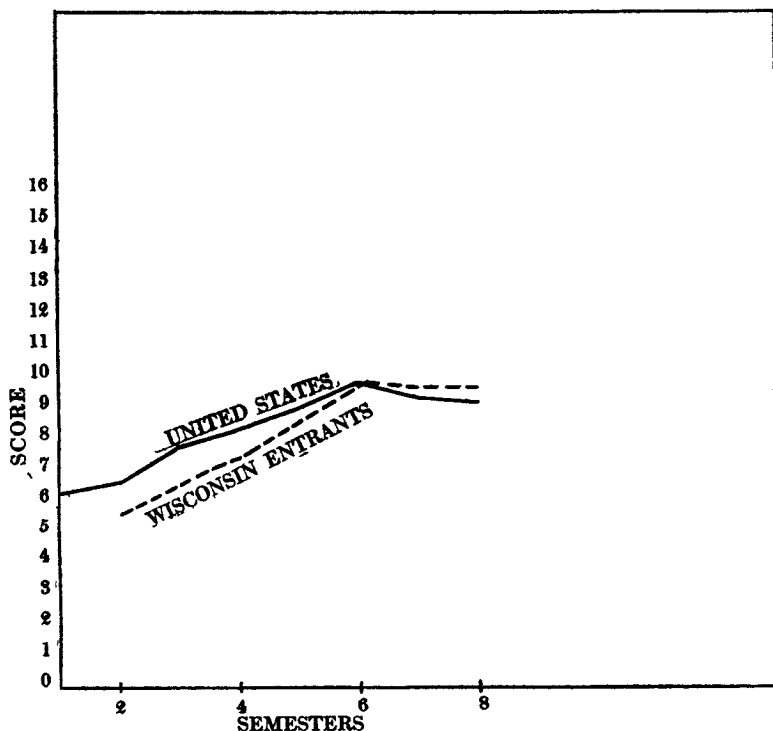


FIGURE 4 Comparison of norms in French composition for the high schools of the country and Wisconsin entrants in Sept 1928 and Sept 1930

among our own 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 7th semester students at mid-year's 1927. Likewise Chart II, setting forth the means and sigma ranges of scores on the A C French Test—Form B given to 341 of our 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th semester students at mid-year's, 1929, confirms the misclassification of our students under the present system

What practical use can be made of the placement tests and the information that they put at our disposal? Thus far the picture of the modern language entrants at Wisconsin is not a bright one

Semes- ters																N							
1	110																					375	
2				142																		97	
3					170																	344	
4						179																62	
5							195																242
7								210															40
Scores on C.R.B. Tests	100	110	120	130	140	150	160	170	180	190	200	210	220	230	240	250						1160	

CHART I Means and Sigma Ranges of Scores on C R B French Test administered at the University of Wisconsin, Feb 6-7, 1927

Semes- ters	Means and Sigma Ranges															N								
2	80																						85	
3	101																							200
4	109																							49
5	121																							57
	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120	130	140	150										341		

CHART II Means and Sigma Ranges on American Council Alpha French Test—Form B—administered at the University of Wisconsin, Jan 26, 1929 to Freshmen and Transfers, which show overlapping of classification.

However, we must not overlook the fact that we have been examining chiefly the average students and not the upper group. Had

we taken action on the Freshmen and Transfers presenting French in Sept 1928, 144 or 32% would have gained 352 semesters of work in college and 185 or 41% would have lost 251 semesters of work, a net gain of 101 semesters. We shall omit the Spanish and German figures here because the French Group illustrates the principle employed for the proposed placement, namely, to advance a student, for example a 4 sem H S French student, one or more semesters whenever his composite percentile rank was nearer to the fifth or sixth semester norm than it was to his own, or contrariwise to demote him a semester or more whenever his composite percentile rank was nearer to the next lower semester norm than his own. The departments concerned and the administration, or more properly speaking, the ultra conservative elements thereof, took no action on the proposed placement, although the total number of students concerned would have been less than 11% of the total enrollment of the modern languages.

For the benefit of those unacquainted with educational terms we might explain that *mean* signifies the arithmetical average and that *sigma range*, which is the best index of the spread of talent and which comprises about two-thirds of each group compared, indicates the deviations from the mean. Chart I shows, for example, that 43% of our fourth semester French students in Feb 1927 were nearer to the third semester mean than to their own and that 34% of the same group were nearer to the fifth semester mean than to their own. Chart II likewise illustrates a somewhat similar displacement or misclassification of our students, for instance, 20% of our third semester French people in Jan 1929 were nearer to the mean of the fifth semester students than to their own, whereas 31% of the fifth semester were nearer to the mean of the third than to their own.

In order to ascertain whether any reliance could be placed on the predictive value of the achievement tests, the history of 395 entrants in French, 65 in Spanish, and 71 in German, all of Sept 1928, were followed through for one semester to learn what would happen to them in the natural course of events. Again we shall use the French group as typical. In Table 5 we have arranged the proper placement of Freshmen and Transfers in accordance with the principle explained above in normal, high, and low groups as determined not by their school and college credits but by their actual

achievement as shown by their composite percentile rank on the A C Alpha French Test Form A administered at the University of Wisconsin, Sept 1928 It will be noted that 119 were placed as

TABLE 5

The Proper Placement of Freshmen and Transfers in Normal, High and Low Groups as Determined not by Their School and College Credits but by Their Actual Achievement as Shown by Their Composite Percentile Rank on the American Council Alpha French Test Form A—Administered at the University of Wisconsin, Sept 1928

	Totals of all Cases	Placement by A C Alpha Test		
		Normal	High	Low
Freshmen	277	90	80	107
Transfers	119	29	48	42
Both Groups	396	119	128	149

normal, i e as agreeing with their school units or college credits in the registrar's office, 128 as high, i e as having too much school or college credit, and 149 as low, i e as having too little school or college credit

Let us now glance at Table 6 which shows the distribution of the semester grades of these same entrants at the end of their first semester with us Teachers gave them these marks independent of their placement by the A C Alpha Test as the results of the latter were not generally known. The predictive value of the tests is established in a striking way, if we accept the instructor's marks as the criteria An examination of the figures for both groups reveals that those estimated as normally placed received 2 A's, 28 B's, 55 C's, 26 D's, 6 E's, and 2 F's As might be expected among those placed too high by their school or college credits, it will be seen that of the 128, there were 1 A, 9 B's, 36 C's, 43 D's, 20 E's, and 19 F's Of these placed too low by their school or college credits, 38 won A's, 59 B's, 42 C's, 8 D's, 1 E, and 1 F Such results ought to be a reasonable vindication of the use and reliability of the best type of achievement test even to the most meticulous of its critics.

What is the present status of the experiment in modern language placement at Wisconsin? In conformity with the new curriculum committee's recommendations of last June, subsequently passed

TABLE 6

The Final Grades of 394 Freshmen and Transfers at Mid-Year's, 1929, Placed in Their Various Courses in Accordance With Their School and College Credits It is Clear That the Immediate Classification of the Students by the Results of the American Council Alpha French Test Administered in Sept 1928 Would Have Been Justified by the Actual Results as Shown by the Term Marks

	Placement on Alpha Test	Totals	Final Grades					
			A	B	C	D	E	F
Freshmen	Normal	90	1	23	40	18	6	2
	High	80	1	4	18	30	13	14
	Low	107	31	43	26	5	1	1
Transfers	Normal	29	1	5	15	8	0	0
	High	48	0	5	18	13	7	5
	Low	42	7	16	16	3	0	0
Both Groups	Normal	119	2	28	55	26	6	2
	High	128	1	9	36	43	20	19
	Low	149	38	59	42	8	1	1

by the faculty and the board of regents, the representatives of the three departments concerned agreed on the following plan To administer to all Freshman entrants as well as to Transfers from other colleges the A C Alpha Tests—Form A in the different languages, and to place the students in accordance with the following principle the composite percentile ranks obtained from the four parts of the above tests would be the working basis, all students on each semester level should be graded on a five-point working scale—A, B, C, D, E This scale follows the one recommended by the makers of the Alpha Tests because it assumes a normal distribution of cases and because it is more conservative than the proposed scheme of 1928 and less drastic than that which our own student mortality tables show In pursuance of this policy the above tests were administered this last September to 388 new students offering French, 89 offering Spanish, and to 160

offering German either from high school or college, which represent 16%, 7%, and 11% respectively of the total enrollment of the several departments involved. On the results obtained from this testing, in general A and B students were advanced one or more semesters according to our classification tables, C and D students were left unchanged, and E students, those with a composite percentile rank of 7 or less were failed for their respective level and demoted one or more semesters. In Table 7 we have presented in summary form the data for French as typical of the whole lan-

TABLE 7

Summaries of the Placement of Freshmen and Transfer Students by the A. C. Alpha French Tests—Form A, at the University of Wisconsin, September 1928 and September 1930

<i>A1</i>	
Summary of Freshmen Group in French, September 1928 Proposed Placement (No action taken on the same)	
113 or 35%	gain 292 semesters of work in college
116 or 36%	lose 139 semesters of work in college
96 or 29%	remain unchanged
<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 325	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 100%
<i>A2</i>	
Summary of Transfer Group in French, September 1928 Proposed Placement (No action taken on the same)	
31 or 24%	gain 60 semesters of work in college
69 or 54%	lose 112 semesters of work in college
29 or 22%	remain unchanged
<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 129	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 100%
<i>A3</i>	
Summary of Freshmen and Transfer Groups in French, September 1928—Proposed Placement (No action taken on the same)	
144 or 32%	gain 352 semesters of work in college
185 or 41%	lose 251 semesters of work in college
125 or 27%	remain unchanged
<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 454	<hr style="width: 50px; margin: 0 auto;"/> 100%

TABLE 7—*Continued*

<i>A4</i>	
Summary of Freshmen Group in French, September 1930 Proposed Placement (Action taken on the same with reservations)	
69 or 24%	gain 185 semesters of work in college
10 or 3%	lose 16 semesters of work in college
213 or 73%	remain unchanged
<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 292	<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 100%
<i>A5</i>	
Summary of Transfer Group in French, September 1930 Proposed Placement. (Action taken on same with reser- vations)	
14 or 15%	gain 34 semesters of work in college
8 or 8%	lose 12 semesters of work in college
74 or 77%	remain unchanged
<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 96	<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 100%
<i>A6</i>	
Summary of Freshmen and Transfer Groups in French, September 1930—Proposed Placement (Action taken on same with reservations)	
83 or 21%	gain 219 semesters of work in college
18 or 5%	lose 28 semesters of work in college
287 or 74%	remain unchanged
<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 388	<hr style="width: 50px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 100%

guage group Immediately after the placement tests were given, they were scored and the changes to be made sent to the students, instructors, and advisors As the tests do not establish achievement in oral or aural work, nor in literature, certain reservations were made in regard to what advanced courses the students would be permitted to take For instance, no students with only four semesters of high school preparation, no matter how high the result of their achievement test, were allowed to take courses above third year college work. Those making a poor showing on the test had

to repeat the work without credit or else take up a new language if they preferred

An examination of Table 7A6 reveals that 83 or 21% of the entrants in French, if they make good, will gain approximately 219 semesters of work in college toward the fulfillment of the language requirement for graduation (not toward the required number of credits for graduation), also that 18 or 5% lose 28 semesters of work in college, and that 287 or 74% remain unchanged. The total number of changes involved at the beginning is only 4% of the total enrollment of the French department, about the same proportion obtains for the Spanish and the German departments.

In Table 8, Parts I and II, we have presented summaries giving the grades of students promoted and demoted as the result of the placement tests in September. As the data are for November 7th and December 1st for the present academic year they bring the experiment practically up to date.

TABLE 8

PART I

Grades of Students Advanced in French, Spanish, and German as the Result of the Placement in September 1930 (Grades as for Nov 7)

A's	B's	C's	D's	E's	F's	Total
9	52	31	7	3	2	104
	7	2	1			10
9	59	33	8	3	2	114
Grades of Students Demoted in French and Spanish						
1		2			1	5
					1 left	U

10 Demoted German Students not Reported

PART II

Grades of students advanced in French, Spanish, and German as the Result of the Placement Tests in September 1930 (grades as for mid-semester Dec 1, 1930)

A's	B's	C's	D's	E's	F's	Total
15	60	29	8	1	2	115

An inspection of the grades for mid-semester shows 97% passing, 90% C or better, 65% B or better, 13% A

TABLE 8—Continued

Grades of Students demoted in French, Spanish, and German as the result of the Placement Tests in September 1930 (grades as for mid-semester Dec 1, 1930)

A's	B's	C's	D's	E's	F's	Total
1	2	6	2	1	1	13

In regard to maladjustments, two students promoted to Span 10a (third semester) were failing, hence they were put back to Sp 1b (second semester) on Nov 10, another student advanced to a 10b (fourth semester) class, which was disbanded, was placed in Sp 10a and is still one semester ahead. Three students in French who had been advanced were also put back one semester to see if they could not carry on the work more satisfactorily.

The above results are far superior to placement under the former credit system alone as can be seen from our own practice and that which obtains in other large state or private institutions. Our own average number of conditions and fails in French at Wisconsin for ten years is 17%, 11%, 9%, and 5% for first, second, third, and fourth college semesters respectively. In Spanish the average for the same semesters runs 20%, 12%, 6%, and 5%.

From B. P. Steeves' "Status of Modern Foreign Languages in the American High School and College"³ we find the following statement in regard to the percent of students making low and failing grades in first and second year modern foreign languages courses in the University of Texas, the University of Minnesota, the University of Wisconsin, and Harvard University:

"1 In the first year of language study the failures in all three languages combined is 9.5 per cent of the number enrolled in these classes, while the failing and low grades combined give 45.2 per cent.

2 In the second year, however, these two items are reduced to 3.3 per cent and 31.5 per cent respectively.

3 In both years of language work the lowest percentage of mortality is found in the German and the highest in the Spanish, though this difference is notable only in the first year courses. In this year it varies from 7.6 per cent to 12 per cent for failures, and from 37.5 per cent to 50.6 per cent for all low grades combined."

³ An unpublished thesis submitted for the degree of doctor of philosophy at the University of Washington, 1927.

And, finally will the placement in modern languages work? In the foregoing exposition we have propounded eight or nine leading questions about the nature and use of placement or achievement tests in general and about the A C Alpha Tests in particular and we have endeavored to answer these questions in the light of experimental data. We do not presume to have answered our own questions to the satisfaction of all. The first milestone will be passed at the end of the first semester when it will be possible to study each case and the soundness of the plan as a whole. No doubt adjustments will have to be made in the tentative scheme in the light of experience. The principle of placement may be extended as soon as better tests can be constructed and as soon as we discover the range within which we can safely predict the promotion or demotion of students. We believe that the plan will be a stimulation to both teachers and students in high schools and colleges as it will eventually make for a more homogeneous and scientific classification of students and establish a fairer basis for evaluating effective instruction, studying, and curricula. The worthwhileness of the plan will depend on the future spirit of co-operation between school and college heads, between administrative officers and instructors, and between instructors and students. If our plight be that of Plato's prisoner who, when forced to face the bright light, was unable to see the real objects whose phantoms his eyes had formerly beheld in the dimmed cavern, we shall fail. If, on the other hand, our spirit be that of Tennyson's Ulysses, drawing near the end of his days, "to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield," we shall win.

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