

New Insights about Oakton Students – from the Fall 2007 Current Student Survey

Each fall the Office of Research surveys currently enrolled students. We randomly select class sections, ask faculty to administer the survey during class time (we mail instruments to students in online courses), and weight responses so that answers from full-time students, who have more chances to be included in the survey, don't dominate our results. A total of 1,283 students completed the survey. This *In the Abstract* features responses to two Current Study Survey questions. The complete report will be available in January.

Expected skills and the Goldilocks effect

As an approach to determining how students evaluate what is expected of them in Oakton's courses with respect to basic academic skills, we posed this question: "Please consider the courses that you are currently enrolled in, and any that you have taken in previous terms at Oakton. Think about all of your courses, not just the ones in math, composition or speech. Please indicate whether the overall level of skill expected of you in each of the following areas was too easy, just right, or too hard for these courses." Table 1 shows results.

Table 1 – Level of Basic Skills Expected of Students (based on weighted results)

Skill	Percents based on those who rated the skill level expected in Oakton courses			Of respondents, percent who said the skill was not applicable in their Oakton courses
	Too Easy	Just Right	Too Hard	Not Applicable
Math skill expected of me was	16%	71%	13%	20%
Writing skill expected of me was	9%	81%	10%	10%
Reading skill expected of me was	14%	79%	7%	10%
Speech/Presentation skill expected of me was ..	11%	80%	10%	24%

What do data tell us?

- Most students find the level of skill expected of them in their Oakton courses to be about right.
- For three of the four skills, about the same percentage of students find expectations to be too easy as find them to be too hard.
- Twice the percentage of students find reading skill expectations to be too easy (14%) as compared to too hard (7%).
- Nearly one quarter of students were not required to demonstrate speech or presentation skills, and one-fifth were not required to demonstrate math skills.

Languages spoken

We learned that only 53 percent of our students (based on weighted results) say that English is both their native language and the language mainly spoken at home. The 1,283 respondents identified 61 different languages; in cases where students reported multiple languages, each language is counted in the table below. The total number of different languages spoken by Oakton students is actually higher because additional languages are spoken by students not included in the survey.

Table 2: Languages Spoken by Survey Respondents

Language	N.	Language	N.	Language	N.	Language	N.
Spanish	76	Chinese	9	Bisaya	2	Cantonese	1
Polish	68	Serbian	7	Croatian	2	Gijocinuti **	1
Assyrian	37	French	6	Indian *	2	Hungarian	1
Urdu	36	Hindi	6	Japanese	2	Ilokano	1
Russian	33	Vietnamese	6	Laotian	2	Macedonian	1
Korean	29	Farsi	5	Nepali	2	Mandarin	1
Tagalog	27	Italian	5	Portuguese	2	Montenegrian	1
Romanian	22	Mongolian	5	Swedish	2	Moore	1
Gujarati	18	Albanian	4	Aramaic	1	Persian	1
Bulgarian	14	Cambodian	4	Armenian	1	Punjabi	1
Arabic	13	Hebrew	4	Asian *	1	Shanghainese	1
Bosnian	11	Thai	4	Barjali **	1	Slovak	1
Malayalam	11	Creole	3	Belorussian	1	Swahili	1
Filipino	10	German	3	Bemba	1	Taiwanese	1
Greek	10	Lithuanian	3	Bengali	1	Tamil	1
Ukrainian	10						

* Language not specified

** We don't recognize these languages but have presented them with students' spellings.