

Title: Results from an Arithmetic Test for Preservice Elementary Teachers

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Abstract:

Students at Mississippi University for Women whose declared major is elementary education are required to take two semesters of mathematics content. A 30-minute timed arithmetic test is given to these students the first day of the course sequence. The test includes addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division with whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and mixed numbers. Students must earn at least 70% on this test to remain in the course. Those who do not pass the first attempt are given two more chances. I supply tutoring for the students who need to retake the test. After discussing the problems missed, I assign similar problems, which they must work correctly before I let them take the second or third try. I have been administering this test over 4 years now, seeing the same type of problems missed from year to year. Although the number of students who need additional help has declined, the type of mistakes made is fairly constant. Implications for teaching towards fixing the common misconceptions will be addressed.