De Anza College Office of Institutional Research and Planning

To: International Student Program (ISP) Office
From: Mallory Newell, De Anza Researcher and Loris Fagioli, Consultant
Date: 9/4/2018
**Subject:** TOEFL Scores Correlated with Course Placement

With the passage of AB 705, colleges are required to use U.S. high school transcript data as the primary assessment tool for placement into English and ESL. If such data are not available, colleges may use self-reported high school information or self-guided placement. Further, the Accuplacer Classic test is scheduled to end January 2019, so there will no longer be an English assessment test, but there will remain an essay component for students without high school transcripts. The ESL test is the CELSA test, which will remain in use, however, AB 705 also requires the Board of Governors to approve all assessment tests, and it is not clear if the CELSA or the TOEFL exam will be approved as an assessment test in the future.

This analysis explores whether TOEFL scores for international students within the International Students Program (ISP) is a viable measure for assessment, paired with an additional measure such as an essay or self-guided placement. This analysis includes students who took a placement test between winter 2015 and winter 2018 and submitted a TOEFL score to the ISP office. The analysis includes the first course a student enrolled in at De Anza during the time period. This resulted in 719 students included in the analysis, of these students, 300 (42%) took an ESL course while 419 (58%) took an EWRT course as the first course at De Anza. TOEFL scores ranged from 61 – 116, a minimum score of 61 is required for admission to De Anza College.

Findings:

- There is a clear distinction between higher course placements and higher TOEFL scores with the highest average score resulting in students' first course of enrollment as EWRT1A followed by ESL273.
- Overall, the TOEFL score reliably places a student into a particular ESL or EWRT course level, but it does not predict their success in the course placed.
    - A recent [analysis](#) determined that the Language Arts survey was a valid questionnaire to direct students to either the ESL or EWRT test.
    - The Language Arts survey coupled with a TOEFL score and an essay (self-guided placement) could be a viable assessment for international students.

Graph 1. Range of TOEFL Scores
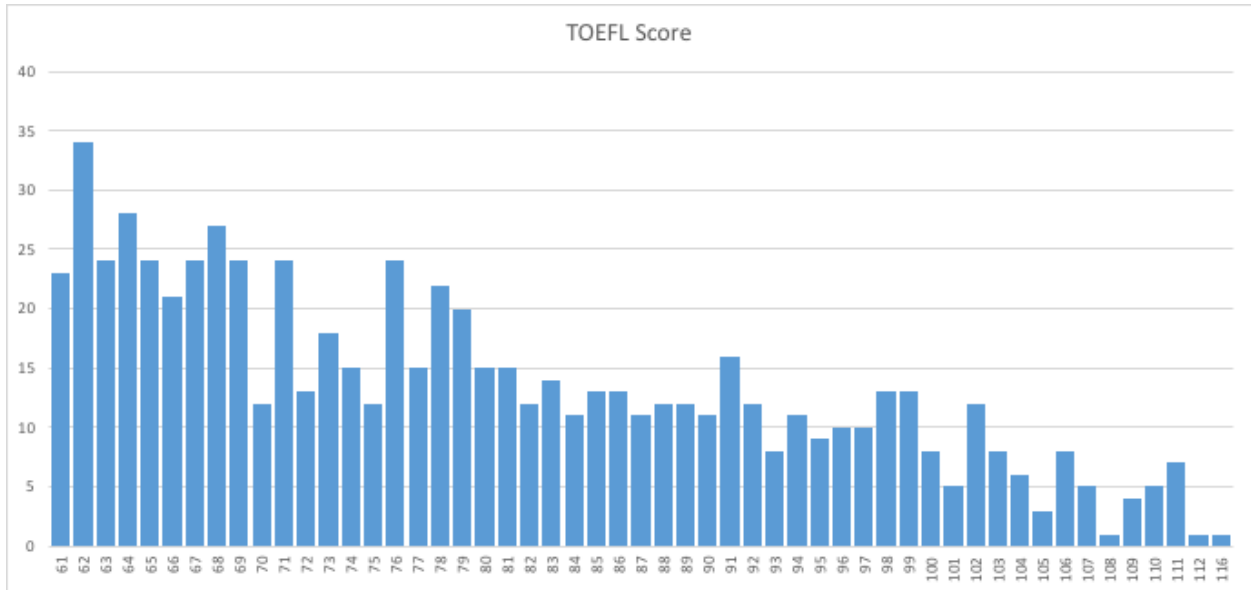
- Graph 1 displays the distribution of TOEFL scores by student. There is a wide range of TOEFL scores for De Anza students but scores with over 20 students with that score range from 62 to 69 including 71, 76 and 78.
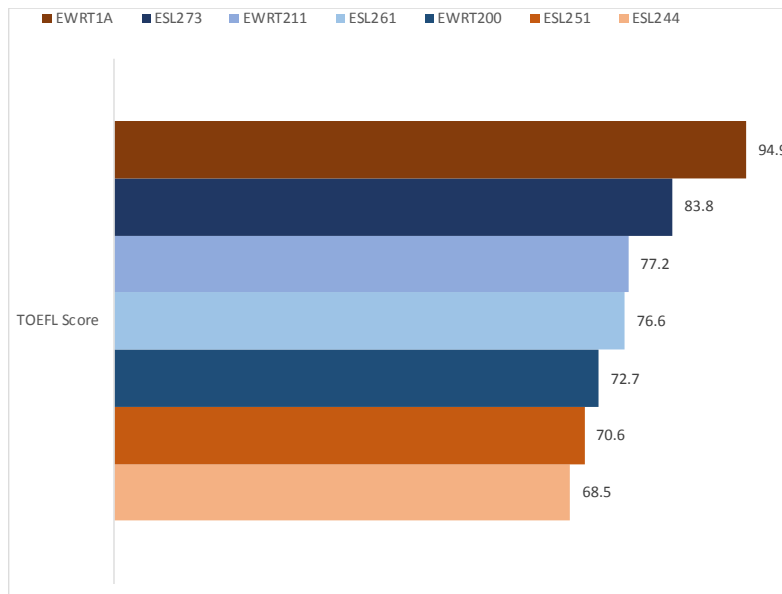
Graph 2. TOEFL Scores by Course

Table 1. TOEFL Scores by Course

	EWRT1A	ESL273	EWRT211	ESL261	EWRT200	ESL251	ESL244
Avg. TOEFL	94.9	83.8	77.2	76.6	72.7	70.6	68.5
Students	163	22	229	102	27	83	74

Table 1 presents the average TOEFL score and the first course a student took at De Anza.

- There is a clear distinction between higher course placements and higher TOEFL scores.
- The highest TOEFL score resulted in students enrolling directly into EWRT1A (transfer-level English), with an average TOEFL score of 94.9 (N = 163).
- The second highest TOEFL score was ESL273 (one-level below transfer ESL) with an average TOEFL score of 83.8 (N = 22).
- Students with an average TOEFL score of 77.2 enrolled in EWRT211 (one-level below transfer English) this was the XX largest population of students (N =229).
- Students with an average TOEFL score of 76.6 enrolled in ESL261 (two-levels below transfer ESL) followed by EWRT200 (two-levels below transfer English) with a score of 72.7 then 70.6 for students in ESL251 (three-levels below transfer ESL). The lowest TOEFL score correlated with ESL244 (four-levels below transfer ESL).

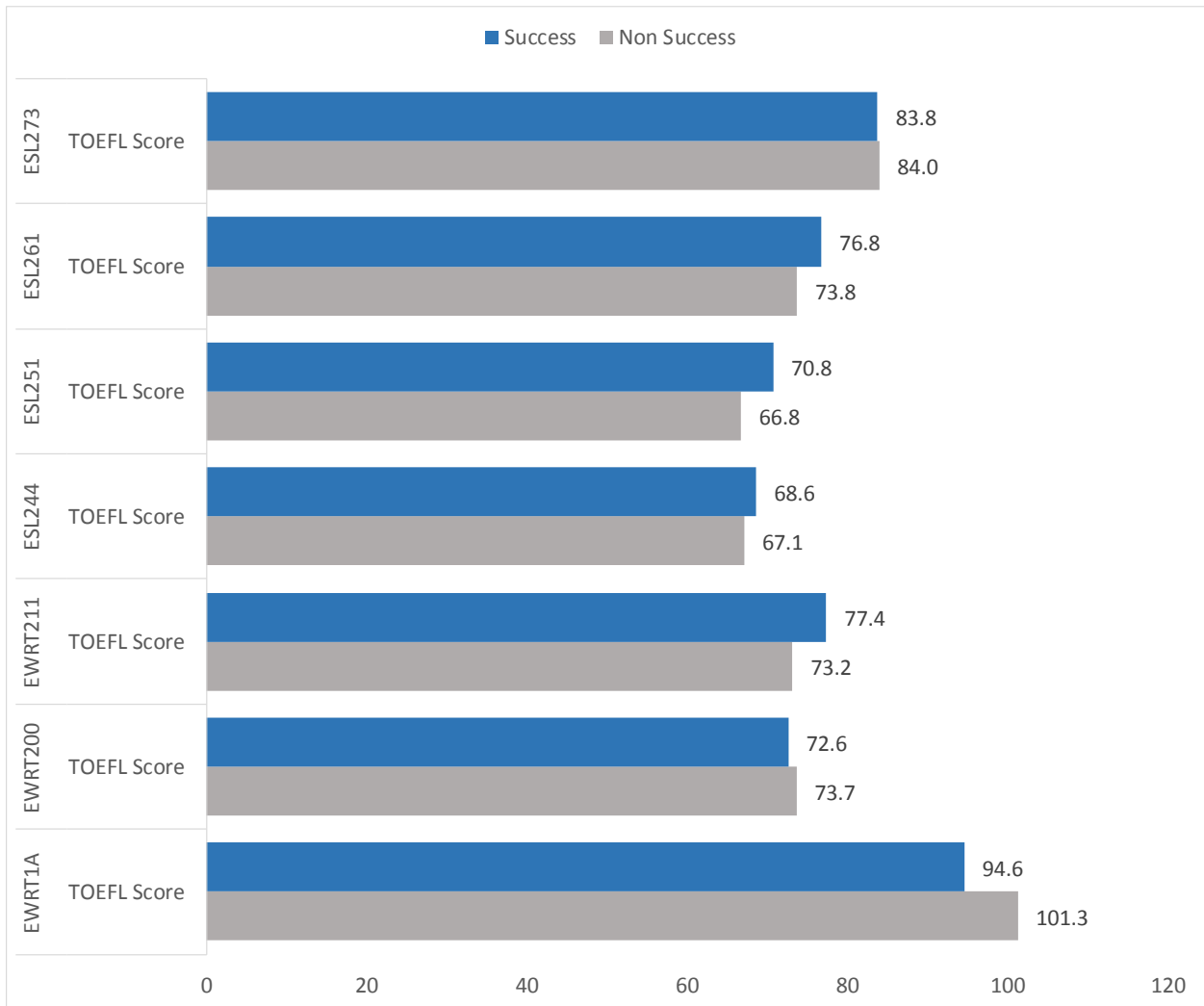## Graph 3. Success and Non Success Rates by TOEFL Score and Course

■ Success ■ Non Success

Course		Success	Non Success
ESL273	TOEFL Score	83.8	84.0
ESL261	TOEFL Score	76.8	73.8
ESL251	TOEFL Score	70.8	66.8
ESL244	TOEFL Score	68.6	67.1
EWRT211	TOEFL Score	77.4	73.2
EWRT200	TOEFL Score	72.6	73.7
EWRT1A	TOEFL Score	94.6	101.3

Table 2. Success and Non Success Rates by TOEFL Score and Course

	EWRT1A Score	ESL273 Score	EWRT211 Score	ESL261 Score	EWRT200 Score	ESL251 Score	ESL244 Score
Success	94.6	83.8	77.4	76.8	72.6	70.8	68.6
Non Success	101.3	84.0	73.2	73.8	73.7	66.8	67.1

Table 2 displays the relationship between TOEFL scores and if students successfully completed the course. Success are A, B, C, and P grades, non success are D, F, I and W grades. In this case, we are looking at average TOEFL scores for students who passed and students who did not pass a course.

- Overall, the TOEFL score places students into a level, but it does not necessarily predict their success in the course which first enrolled.

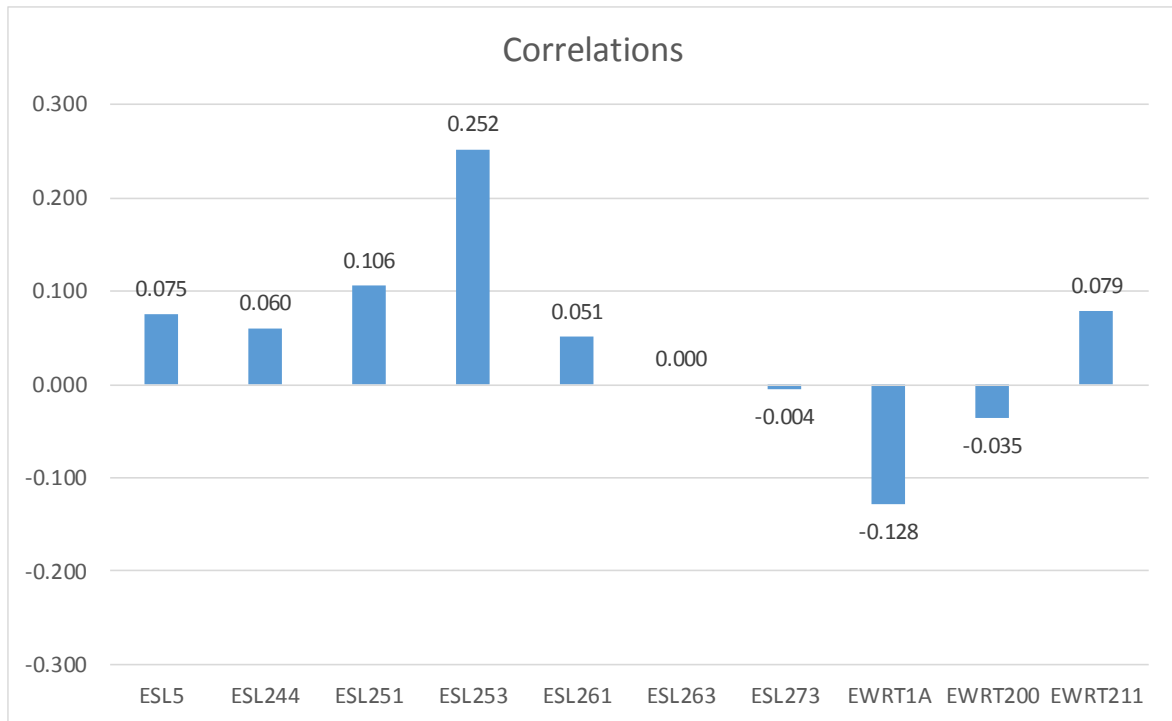## Graph 4. Correlations with Success in Course by Course Level

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Table 3. Correlations with Success in Course by Course Level

	ESL5	ESL244	ESL251	ESL253	ESL261	ESL263	ESL273	EWRT1A	EWRT200	EWRT211
Correlations	0.075	0.06	0.106	0.252	0.051	0	-0.004	-0.128	-0.035	0.079

The correlations above look at the same information as Table 4 above, but in terms of correlations and not average scores. A positive correlation of 1.0 would show that there is a positive relationship between the survey question and success in the course at the course level.

- There is not a correlation between TOEFL and course success rates for any course.