A META-ANALYSIS ON THE PREDICTIVE VALIDITY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENTS FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS SECONDARY RESEARCH?

How are SELPs used in admissions?

WHAT DOES IT FIND?

- Correlation has previously been found between SELP scores and admissions prediction of academic success (eg. Students being admitted with slightly lower than required academic grades but a strong SELP score).
- SELP scores were found to positively correlate with academic success (p=.001).
- No significant differences were found between the IELTS and TOEFL tests in terms of their correlation to academic success.
- The correlation of SELPs to academic success was lower than the correlation between more general admissions assessments, not focused on English language proficiency, and academic success.
- While a positive correlation between SELP scores and academic success exists, it is relatively small, thus suggesting SELP scores should continue to primarily be used to measure English proficiency only.

KEY TERMS

Standardised English language proficiency assessments (SELP)

High-stake tests aiming to measure learners' English proficiency for university admissions.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS SUMMARISED?

32 studies

HOW CAN I USE THE FINDINGS IN MY TEACHING?

- For those involved in admissions to university, care should be taken when considering SELP scores in isolation. A more holistic view should be taken to consider the application as a whole.
- Teachers shouldn't use SELP scores as a primary indicator of academic success. The correlation was shown to be small.
- Teachers should keep in mind the difference between English language proficiency and academic success and perhaps take this into account when marking assessments where English proficiency is perhaps lower, but academic understanding seems at a high level.
- Teachers could consider designing their curriculums around the average SELP scores in their cohort to embed some EAP tuition into their curriculums. This would enable students English proficiency to more closely reflect their academic abilities.

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