IOWA STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Relationship between ISASP and ELPA21

Iowa Testing Programs

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Relationship between ISASP and ELPA21 Performance

Legislation under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) mandates that states provide annual accountability assessments to validly measure English learners' (EL) language proficiency, as well as their academic achievement on state content standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science. These mandates, along with district and state requirements for testing, are perceived as burdensome and time consuming for educators and students, taking time away from valuable instruction. As states strive to meet these assessment requirements, they face challenges to validate their assessments for the fast-growing and heterogeneous EL group while justifying the need for multiple tests that may be producing similar results (Crane, Barrat, & Huang, 2011; Wolf, Kao, Griffin, Herman, Bachman, Chang, & Farnsworth, 2008). Therefore, research that investigates the relationship between language proficiency assessments and statewide content assessments is needed to explore greater efficiencies in testing for EL students.

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between EL students' performance on the English Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) and their achievement in the English Language Arts domain of the Iowa Statewide Assessment of Student Progress (ISASP ELA). The following questions will be addressed in this study:

- 1. What is the relationship between the ISASP ELA assessment and ELPA21 with respect to the consistency of classification into proficient or not proficient performance?
- 2. What is the relationship between the ISASP ELA assessment and ELPA21 with respect to overall performance?
- 3. What is the factor structure for EL students using the ISASP ELA score? What is the factor structure using ELPA21?

Data

The data used in this study consisted of all EL students in Grades 3-11 who took the ISASP and ELPA21 in the years 2018-2019 and 2020-2021. The total sample sizes were 19,221 in 2018-2019 and

16,035 in 2020-2021. The ISASP is a system of standards-based summative accountability assessments for students in Grades 3-11. The tests are designed and developed to support interpretation and use in terms of the Iowa Core Standards (Iowa Core) adopted by the Iowa State Board of Education. For each subject and grade level, the content standards specify the subject matter students should know and the skills they should be able to perform. The ELPA21 is a testing program designed to measure growth based on the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards for students in kindergarten-Grade 11.

Additional traits of the ISASP and ELPA21, including their respective scale scores, are discussed below. Attributes and primary purposes for these two assessments are summarized in Table 1. Background characteristics of the study participants are summarized in Table 2.

ISASP. The ISASP includes Reading, Language/Writing, Mathematics, and Science assessments. This report will include information from the ISASP ELA assessment, which represents a composite of the Reading and Language/Writing assessments. Scores for Reading, Language/Writing, and ELA are reported using the ISASP scale score (ISS) metric. The ISS metric is a vertical scale that spans the full performance continuum on each subject-area assessment from Grades 3-11. The vertical scale ranges from 345 to 800 with a standard deviation of 50 in Grade 7; the standard deviations range from 28.7 in Grade 3 to 60.5 in Grades 9-11. For the ISASP ELA assessment, students receive a designation of Not Yet Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced.

The ISASP Reading assessments measure how well students can comprehend a variety of written materials. They contain authentic, engaging reading passages of varying length and complexity. Both literary passages (e.g., fiction, folktales) and informational passages (e.g., expository science and social studies materials, procedural texts, and general nonfiction) are included. Items require students to draw inferences or to generalize about what they have read, and the questions reflect a variety of cognitive levels in the comprehension of texts that students read. The test provides users with information about the kinds of comprehension skills students are expected to continue developing—skills they will use in reading texts across the curriculum, in engaging with literature, and in reading and thinking about

materials encountered outside of school. Items associated with each passage require students to demonstrate understanding at a variety of cognitive levels associated with reading comprehension.

The ISASP Language/Writing assessments are divided into two sections. The Language section focuses on students' abilities to understand how language is used to express ideas. Students must choose the best or most appropriate way to express the ideas in a piece of writing. Choices involve organization, sentence structure, usage, clarity, and the most effective or appropriate language for a particular audience. All questions are based on complete texts patterned after student writing in content and style. These texts are drawn from many different types of writing familiar to students, including argument, informative/explanatory, and narrative examples. Each is presented as a draft in which certain portions have been marked to indicate a possible need for revision. The Writing section includes a writing prompt tied to a pair of texts (in addition to standard texts, students may also gather information from graphs, charts, or other formats). In responding to the writing prompt, students must take a position based on what they have read, then cite evidence from the texts to support their claim. Prompts that require different types of writing are developed each year to allow for a comprehensive coverage of the Iowa Core in writing. Proficiency for the ISASP ELA was determined at the total test level resulting from a standard setting study conducted in 2019.

ELPA21. ELPA21 is designed to measure the four language domains of listening, reading, speaking and writing as each is embedded in the academic content areas of English Language Arts, mathematics and science. ELPA21 provides scale scores for each of the domains. The scale scores represent linear transformations of theta, such that $SS = 80*\theta + 550$. Minimum and maximum scale scores have not been defined. Scale scores for each of the four domains are classified into five levels of performance. Overall proficiency levels are determined through the pattern and level of performance across the four domains. A profile of level four and level five performance on the four domains is defined as proficient. A profile that does not meet the requirements of proficiency is defined as progressing or emerging, depending upon the pattern and levels of performance attained.

Results

Question 1. To address the first research question regarding whether there is classification consistency in proficiency status between the ISASP ELA and ELPA21 assessments, a 2x2 contingency table for all grades was presented (Table 3). In general, there seemed to be a strong association between ELPA21 and ISASP ELA proficiency classification. As shown in Table 3, the classification consistency rate was high, ranging from 82-84%. This indicates that both assessments are consistent in their abilities to identify students who need additional supports in English. Approximately 12% of EL students who were proficient on the ELPA21 were classified as not proficient on the ISASP ELA. It is not surprising that a percentage of students who were identified as proficient in the ELP Standards were not classified as proficient on the ISASP ELA, as the ISASP measures additional content standards in ELA beyond ELP. The percentage of EL students who were not proficient on the ELPA21 but were proficient on the ISASP ELA ranged from 4-6%. A similar pattern was observed for each grade and across the years.

Question 2. To address the second research question regarding the relationship between overall performance on the ISASP and ELPA21 assessments, summary statistics on scale scores for each of the ELPA21 domains were computed based on ISASP ELA proficiency classification (Figure 1). Summary statistics for the ISASP assessments were also computed based on ELPA21 proficiency classification (Figure 2). In addition, correlations between the ELPA21 domains and ISASP assessments were examined (Tables 4-12).

Using the proficiency classification of the ISASP ELA, Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between ISASP proficiency classification and ELPA21 performance. Noticeably, the mean of the speaking test was higher than that of the other ELPA21 domains for those who were not proficient on the ISASP ELA. This difference was less pronounced for those who were classified as proficient on the ISASP ELA. In contrast, there was no large difference among the means of ISASP domains for students classified as either proficient or not proficient on the ELPA21 (Figure 2).

Correlations between scale scores for ISASP tests and the ELPA21 domain-level scale scores are presented in Table 4. Within ELPA21, the domain scores of Reading and Writing were highly correlated (r = .94), followed by ELPA21 Listening and Reading (r = .84). The high correlations among the ELPA21 domains are expected given the underlying construct of ELP. In contrast, the ISASP tests were moderately correlated with each other with the strongest between the Reading and Language/Writing sections of the ELA test (r = .57). This is also expected as the ISASP is measuring different constructs in respect to specific content standards. The correlations of similar domains across the two assessments were also moderate, ranging from .52 to .73 for ELPA21 Reading and ISASP Reading, and from .57 to .68 for ELPA21 Writing and ISASP Language/Writing. These moderate correlations between similar domains are indicative of some differences in structure and content between the two assessment systems. For example, the ISASP has a constructed response writing task.

In addition to the domain scale scores, ELPA21 provides an overall score based on students' combined performance in all four domains. ELPA21 indicates that this overall score can be used for program evaluation and state accountability. The relationships between the overall ELPA21 scale score and ISASP ELA scale score by grade are displayed in scatterplots in Appendix A. Thresholds for not proficient/proficient and proficient/advanced on the ISASP ELA scale are represented by vertical hash mark lines. Overall, these scatterplots provide visual representations that show as students' scores increase on ELPA21, they increase on ISASP ELA. Again, as implied by Table 3, there is more variability in student's scores on ISASP ELA for students who achieved higher scores on ELPA21. That is, ELPA21 measures student's English language proficiency and ISASP ELA measures English Language Arts content standards and it is expected that students who achieve English language proficiency will still vary in their performance on ELA content standards.

Question 3. To address the third research question related to the factor structures of ISASP ELA and ELPA21, the extent to which ISASP ELA and ELPA21 converge on the constructs of Reading and Writing was examined. A closer look in Grades 3, 5 and 8 at the underlying constructs accounting for

correlations among the ISASP ELA assessments and ELPA21 for ELs was obtained by fitting a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) model to domain scores from the ISASP Reading and Language/Writing assessments and the four domain scores from ELPA21. Three latent variables or factors in the CFA models fit the observed data extremely well (residuals in the correlation metric of .033, .036 and .028 in grades 3, 5 and 8, respectively). The multiple choice ISASP domain scores loaded on the first latent variable, the constructed response ISASP domain scores on the second, and the ELPA21 language scores on the third. Although correlations among the latent variables in the CFA models were high (.49 to .71 depending on the grade, with highest correlations between the ISASP multiple choice and ELPA21 language scores), they were not so high as to suggest the ISASP and ELPA21 assessments represented the same construct. Rather, the CFA results showed evidence of both convergent and discriminant validity for the Iowa population of English learners.

Significance

This study provides important validity evidence that may help refine and clarify construct theories about language abilities and how they operate in empirical data. Furthermore, although the two assessments differ somewhat in the structure of the content and domains covered, the results suggest similar classifications across the two assessments, suggesting that both assessments are consistent in the ability to identify students that need additional instructional supports in English.

References

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Table 1 Attributes and Primary Purposes for ELPA21 and ISASP

| | ELPA21 | ISASP |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Primary | Measures ELP Standards | Measures student achievement and |
| Purposes | Fulfills accountability requirements for | growth on common core standards |
| | ESSA | Fulfills accountability requirements for |
| | Facilitates English proficiency | ESSA |
| Domains | Reading | Reading |
| Assessed | Writing | Writing |
| | Speaking | Language |
| | Listening | Mathematics |
| | | Science |
| Grades or Grade | Kindergarten, 1, 2-3, 4-5, 6-8, 9-11 | 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 |
| Bands Assessed | | |
| Item types | Multiple Choice | Multiple Choice |
| | Technology Enhanced | Technology Enhanced |
| | Constructed-Response | Constructed-Response |
| Scores Provided | Scale score provided for each domain. | Scale score provided for each domain. |
| | Scale scores divided into five | |
| | performance levels (1 to 5) within each | |
| | domain. | |
| Proficiency | Performance levels of 4s or 5s on each | Proficiency level for English Language |
| Decisions | of the domain indicate overall | Arts is a cutscore on the weighted total of |
| | proficiency. | reading (50%), Writing (25%) and |
| | - | Language (25%). |

Table 2
Background Characteristics of Study Participants in Grades 3-11

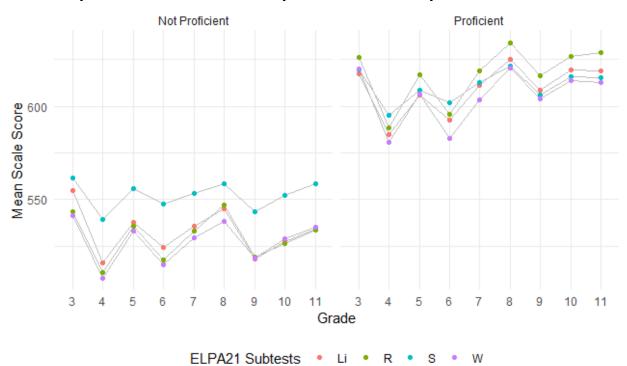
| | | AY 2018-2019 | AY 2020-2021 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------------|--------------|
| | | (N = 19,221) | (N = 16,035) |
| Gender | Female | 44.99% | 43.87% |
| | Male | 55.01% | 56.13% |
| American Indian/Alaskan Native | Yes | 14.75% | 12.94% |
| | No | 85.25% | 87.06% |
| Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander | Yes | 2.91% | 4.78% |
| | No | 97.09% | 95.22% |
| Asian | Yes | 11.71% | 10.91% |
| | No | 88.29% | 89.81% |
| Hispanic/Latino | Yes | 64.10% | 63.95% |
| - | No | 35.90% | 36.05% |
| Black/African American | Yes | 16.83% | 17.77% |
| | No | 83.17% | 82.23% |
| White | Yes | 56.47% | 56.85% |
| | No | 43.53% | 43.15% |
| 504 | Yes | 0.59% | 0.68% |
| | No | 99.41% | 99.32% |
| IEP | Yes | 18.05% | 20.29% |
| | No | 81.95% | 79.71% |
| FRL | Yes | 85.54% | 80.57% |
| | No | 14.46% | 19.43% |

Note. 504 = Indicator of disability status; IEP = Individualized education plan; FRL = Free or reduced price lunch

 $\label{thm:consistency} Table\ 3$ Classification Consistency for ELPA21 and ISASP ELA in Grades 3-11

| 2018-2019 | | ISAS | P |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|------------|
| | | Not Proficient | Proficient |
| ELPA21 | Not Proficient | 71% | 6% |
| | Proficient | 12% | 11% |
| | | | _ |
| 2020-2021 | | ISAS | P |
| | | Not Proficient | Proficient |
| ELPA21 | Not Proficient | 78% | 4% |
| | Proficient | 12% | 6% |

Figure 1 Summary Statistics of ELPA21 Domains by ISASP ELA Proficiency Classification in 2018-2019



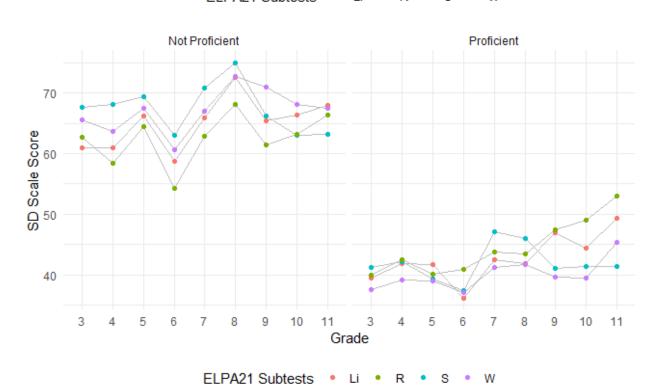
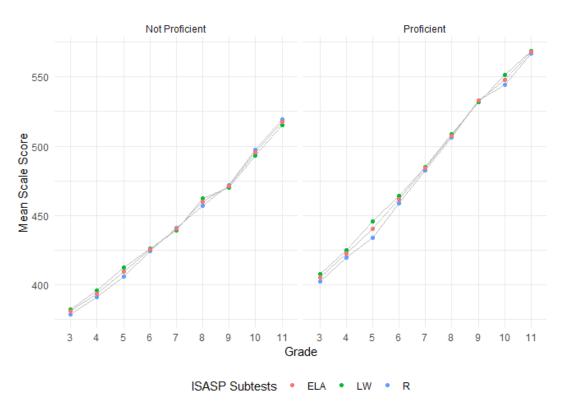


Figure 2
Summary Statistics of ISASP Domains by ELPA21 Proficiency Classification in 2018-2019



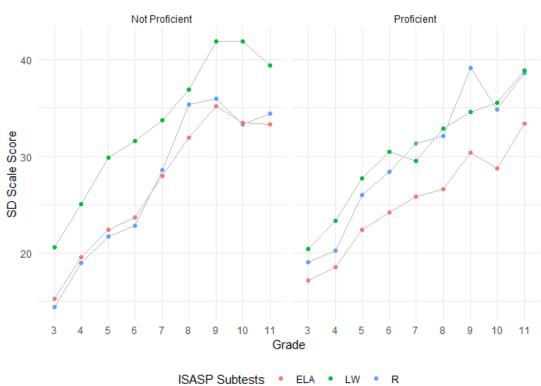


Table 4
Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 3 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.83) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .94 | (.85) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .84 | .81 | (.84) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .74 | .74 | .75 | (.83) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .52 | .48 | .42 | .34 | (.88) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .64 | .62 | .52 | .46 | .57 | (.84) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 5
Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 4 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.83) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .91 | (.86) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .87 | .87 | (.85) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .71 | .78 | .75 | (.86) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .71 | .64 | .61 | .47 | (.86) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .66 | .66 | .59 | .48 | .63 | (.83) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 6
Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 5 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.85) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .92 | (.87) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .88 | .89 | (.86) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .73 | .79 | .77 | (.88) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .66 | .59 | .56 | .40 | (.87) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .59 | .57 | .54 | .46 | .59 | (.83) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 7
Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 6 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.80) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .86 | (.88) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .87 | .87 | (.90) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .69 | .78 | .76 | (.84) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .66 | .58 | .60 | .46 | (.88) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .61 | .61 | .55 | .48 | .58 | (.84) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 8
Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 7 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.82) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .87 | (.90) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .89 | .89 | (.92) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .74 | .81 | .78 | (.86) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .64 | .56 | .58 | .46 | (.88) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .60 | .61 | .56 | .50 | .58 | (.87) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 9
Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 8 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.86) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .89 | (.90) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .91 | .91 | (.83) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .76 | .80 | .81 | (.87) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .62 | .56 | .58 | .46 | (.87) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .64 | .63 | .61 | .53 | .62 | (.87) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 10 Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 9 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.82) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .88 | (.88) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .93 | .92 | (.89) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .75 | .80 | .80 | (.89) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .59 | .49 | .55 | .44 | (.85) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .68 | .63 | .64 | .53 | .56 | (.86) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

Table 11 Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 10 in 2020-2021

| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.84) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .90 | (.86) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .94 | .93 | (.88) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .75 | .78 | .79 | (.87) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .66 | .59 | .62 | .48 | (.85) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .68 | .66 | .66 | .54 | .61 | (.87) |

R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

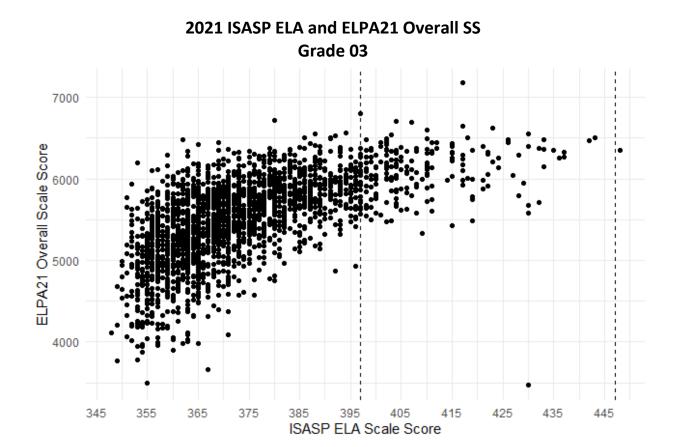
Table 12 Correlation Matrix between ELPA21 and ISASP Grade 11 in 2020-2021

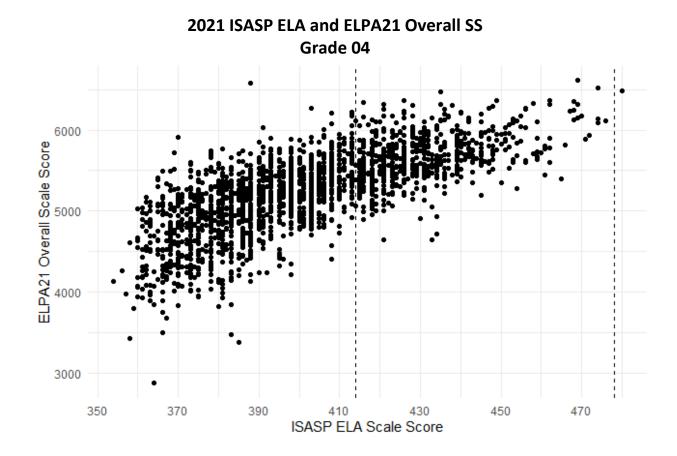
| | R_SS_ELPA21 | W_SS_ELPA21 | Li_SS_ELPA21 | S_SS_ELPA21 | R_SS_ISASP | LW_SS_ISASP |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| R_SS_ELPA21 | (.85) | | | | | |
| W_SS_ELPA21 | .90 | (.83) | | | | |
| Li_SS_ELPA21 | .95 | .93 | (.87) | | | |
| S_SS_ELPA21 | .74 | .76 | .78 | (.86) | | |
| R_SS_ISASP | .67 | .63 | .63 | .46 | (.87) | |
| LW_SS_ISASP | .64 | .62 | .62 | .48 | .65 | (.88) |

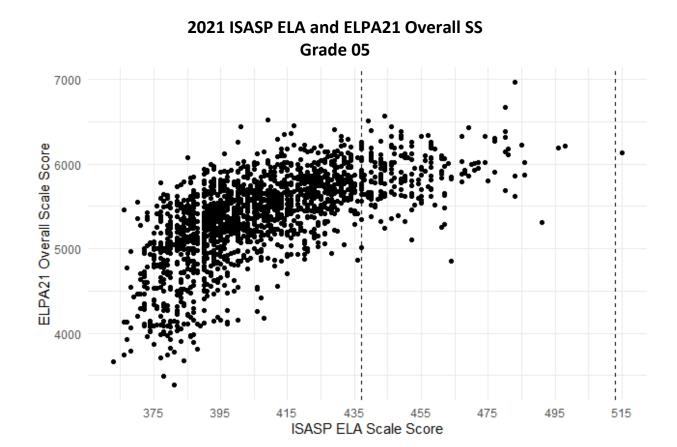
R_SS_ELPA21: Reading Scale score ELPA21 W_SS_ELPA21: Writing Scale score ELPA21 Li_SS_ELPA21: Listening Scale score ELPA21 S_SS_ELPA21: Speaking Scale score ELPA21 R_SS_ISASP: Reading Scale score ISASP

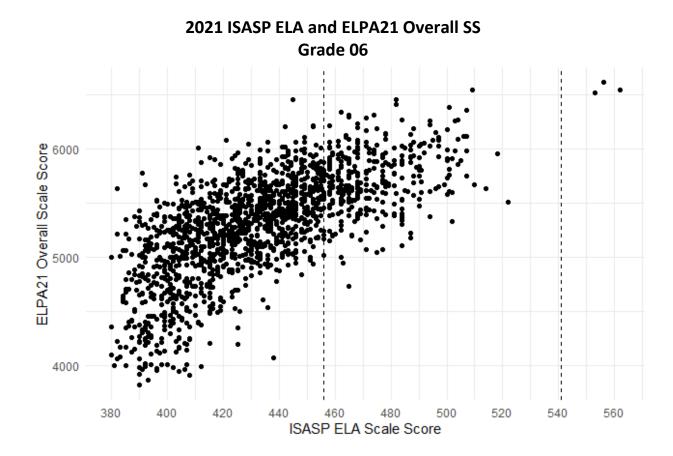
Appendix A

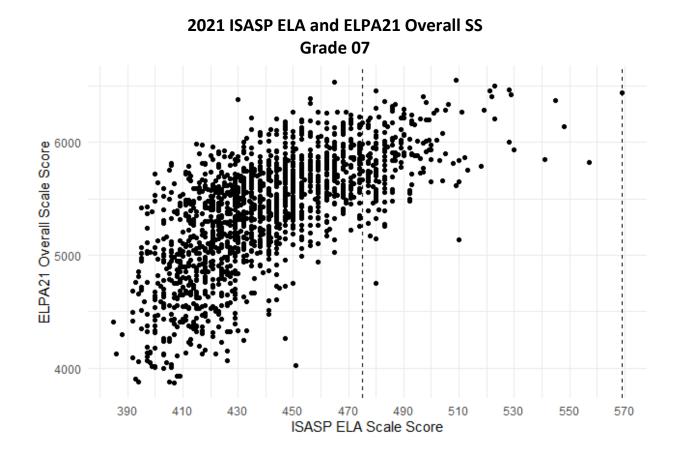
Scatterplots of ELPA21 and ISASP ELA Performance by Grade

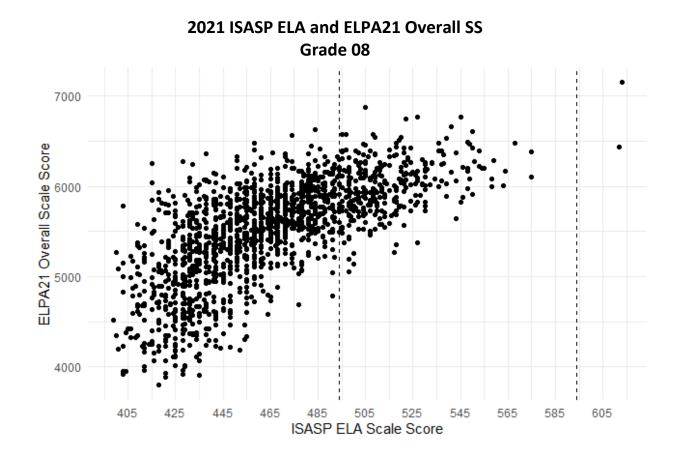


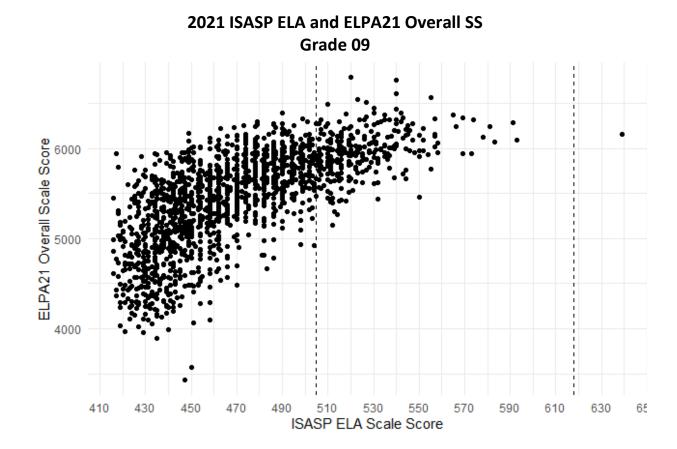


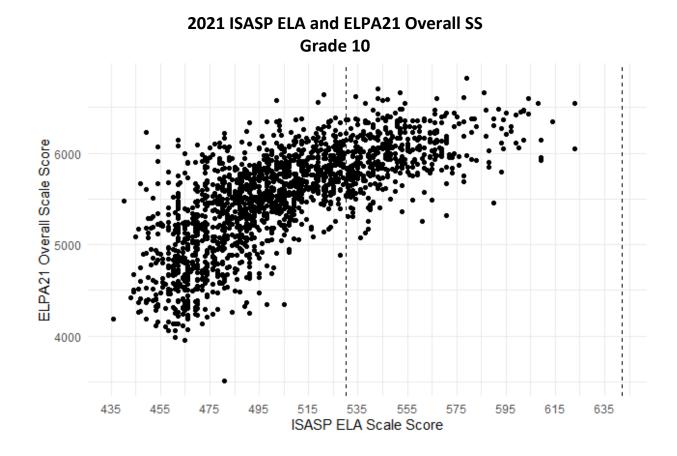












2021 ISASP ELA and ELPA21 Overall SS Grade 11

