



Assessment of General Education at USFSP
ETS Proficiency Profile
Summary Data

Fall 2008 – Fall 2010
9.8.11

Note: At the time of this report, freshmen and upper-division transfer students have been assessed for fall 2011. The data is being evaluated to determine if the assessment window should be closed. If so, a preliminary report will be forthcoming. The assessment of seniors however is pending through late fall 2011 or early spring 2012. The final report will be issued once the assessment cycle is complete.

Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness
www.usfsp.edu/ir

ETS Proficiency Profile

Fall 2008 – Fall 2010

Background

Assessment of general education at USF St. Petersburg (USFSP) involves two main strategies – direct assessment of student learning in general education courses, and overall assessment of student learning in general education using a norm-referenced tool. This report focuses on the results of the ETS Proficiency Profile which has been in use at USFSP since fall 2008. The Proficiency Profile measures four core skill areas of general education: critical thinking, reading, writing and mathematics; and context-based skills in three areas: humanities, social sciences and natural sciences. As noted, the Proficiency Profile is a norm-referenced assessment which allows group comparisons, and the results can be used to demonstrate program effectiveness. USFSP administers the 40-minute online abbreviated version of the assessment to three student groups: freshmen, upper-division transfers and graduating seniors.

Freshmen and upper-division transfer students that attend any of the summer orientation sessions are invited to participate in the assessment. The first 65 students that volunteer for the assessment (over-sampled to achieve a statistical threshold level of 50 valid assessments) are allowed to register early as part of the orientation process. Sixty-five graduating seniors (over-sampled to achieve a statistical threshold level of 50 valid assessments) are recruited from exit-level general education courses by asking faculty members that teach those courses to release students from one lecture in order to take the assessment or grant them extra credit points for taking the assessment. No additional incentives are given to students for their participation in this assessment of general education.

USF St. Petersburg uses a reasonable approach to understanding student learning in general education by reporting, in general terms, performance differences between USFSP student groups and norm-referenced student groups. It is noted that over the course of the first three years of assessment, upper-division transfer students performed slightly below the level of entering freshmen, and that graduating seniors performed at a slightly higher level than both entering freshmen and upper-division transfer students. These early results suggest successful student learning in general education. Additionally, USFSP students (all groups) have performed at about the level of comparative norm-referenced student groups. This suggests an effective general education program in that student learning in general education at USFSP is on par with national trends.

ETS Proficiency Profile Findings: Fall 2008 – Fall 2010

Student Group Performance

Figure 1 below shows the differences in USFSP student group performance over the three year assessment cycle. For two years of available data, freshmen scored higher than upper-division transfer students; and for three years of available data, seniors scored higher than both freshmen and upper-division transfer students. It is anticipated that seniors will continue to perform at a higher level than freshmen and upper-division transfer students as assessment of general education continues over time. A three-year average for freshmen and graduating seniors, and a two-year average for upper-division transfer students were superimposed onto Figure 1 to provide context. USFSP student group performance relative to multi-year averages shows variability for all student groups. It is assumed that this variability will be reduced over time as more assessment data becomes available.

Figure 1
USFSP Student Group Performance and USFSP Multi-year Averages

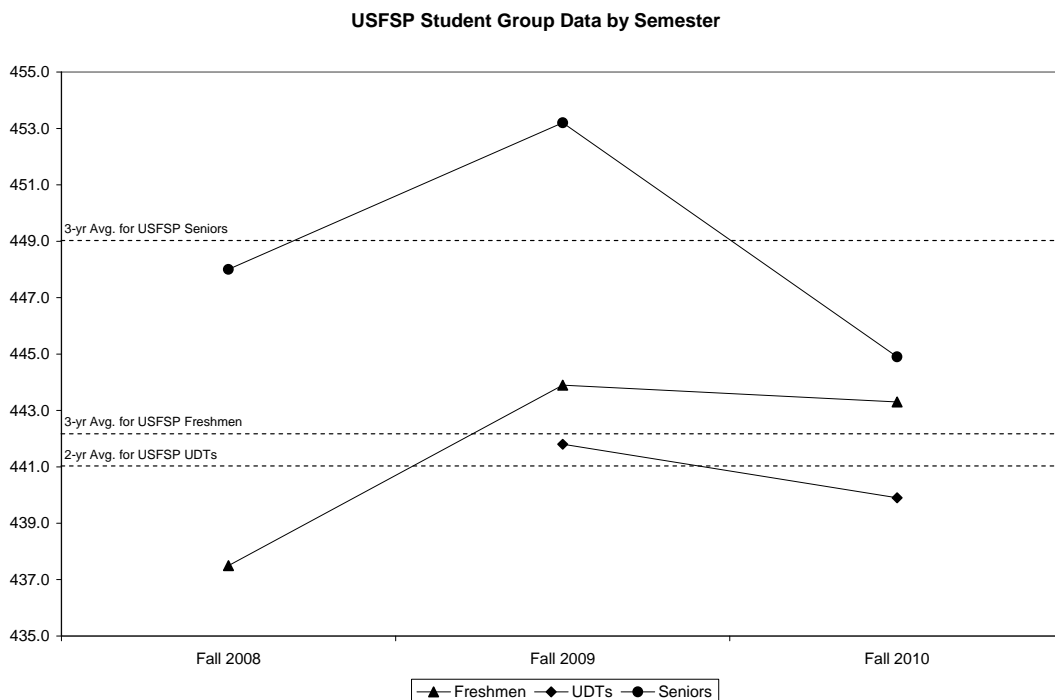


Figure 2 below shows differences between USFSP student group performance and norm-referenced student group performance. In fall 2008, freshmen scored slightly below their comparative group and seniors scored slightly above their comparative group. In fall 2009, freshmen and seniors scored higher than their comparative groups, but upper-division transfers scored below their comparative group. In fall 2010, freshmen again scored higher than comparative group, but upper-division transfers and seniors scored lower than comparative

groups. Although not yet stable these results are suggestive of an effective general education program.

Figure 2
 USFSP Student Group Performance and Norm-referenced Student Group Performance

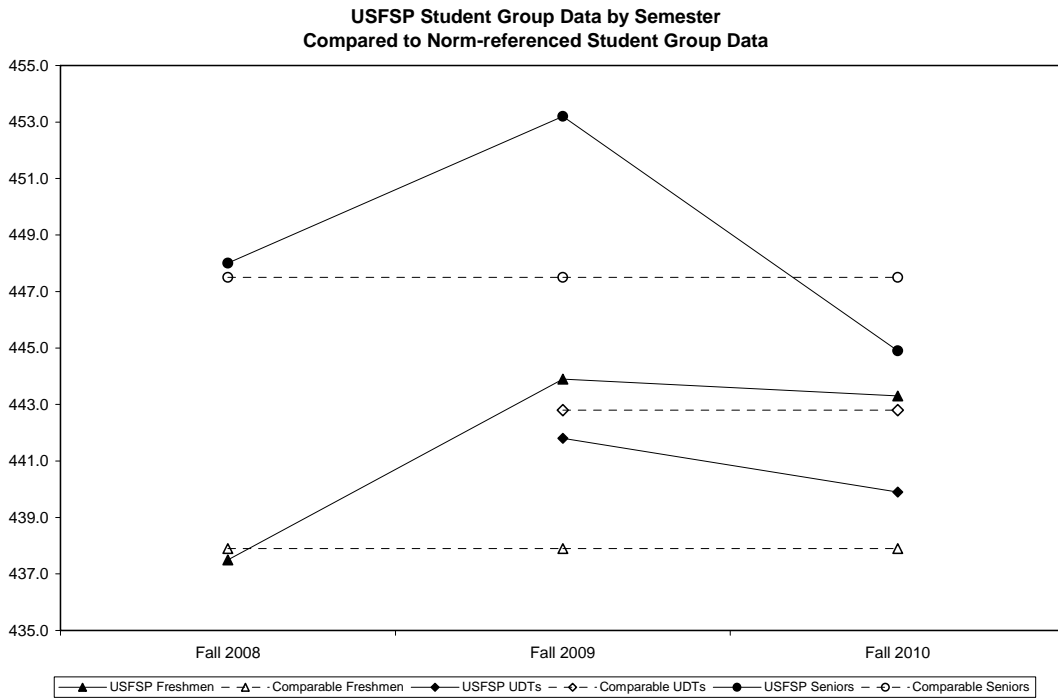


Table 1 – Table 3 that follow below show the disaggregated data that were summarized in order to produce Figure 1 and Figure 2.

In 2010 (see Table 1), USFSP freshmen scored slightly higher than upper-division transfers; and seniors performed slightly higher than freshmen and upper-division transfers. Compared to norm-referenced groups, USFSP freshmen scored slightly higher than comparative freshmen; and USFSP upper-division transfers and seniors scored slightly lower than comparative groups of students.

Table 1
Fall 2010: Scaled Scores for Freshmen, Upper-Division Transfers, Seniors and Students at Comparative Institutions

USFSP Freshmen (N=64)		USFSP UDTs (N=63)		USFSP Seniors (N=58)	
Mean	443.3	Mean	439.9	Mean	444.9
Std. Dev.	16.12	Std. Dev.	14.53	Std. Dev.	15.48
25 th Percentile	433	25 th Percentile	430	25 th Percentile	434
50 th Percentile	441	50 th Percentile	439	50 th Percentile	445
75 th Percentile	451	75 th Percentile	447	75 th Percentile	454
Comparable Freshmen		Comparable UD Students		Comparable Seniors	
Mean	437.9	Mean	442.8	Mean	447.5
Std. Dev.	6.9	Std. Dev.	6.8	Std. Dev.	7.3
25 th Percentile	425	25 th Percentile	430	25 th Percentile	433
50 th Percentile	435	50 th Percentile	441	50 th Percentile	446
75 th Percentile	448	75 th Percentile	456	75 th Percentile	462

In 2009 (see Table 2), upper-division transfer students were assessed for the first time. USFSP freshmen scored slightly higher than upper-division transfers; and seniors performed slightly higher than freshmen and upper-division transfers. Compared to norm-referenced groups, USFSP freshmen and seniors scored slightly higher than comparative groups of students; and upper-division students scored slightly lower than comparative groups of students.

Table 2
Fall 2009: Scaled Scores for Freshmen, Upper-Division Transfers, Seniors and Students at Comparative Institutions

USFSP Freshmen (N=65)		USFSP UDTs (N=61)		USFSP Seniors (N=61)	
Mean	443.9	Mean	441.8	Mean	453.2
Std. Dev.	18.0	Std. Dev.	18.8	Std. Dev.	20.9
25 th Percentile	432	25 th Percentile	428	25 th Percentile	439
50 th Percentile	442	50 th Percentile	442	50 th Percentile	451
75 th Percentile	455	75 th Percentile	455	75 th Percentile	469
Comparable Freshmen		Comparable UD Students		Comparable Seniors	
Mean	437.9	Mean	442.8	Mean	447.5
Std. Dev.	6.9	Std. Dev.	6.8	Std. Dev.	7.3
25 th Percentile	425	25 th Percentile	430	25 th Percentile	433
50 th Percentile	435	50 th Percentile	441	50 th Percentile	446
75 th Percentile	448	75 th Percentile	456	75 th Percentile	462

In 2008 (see Table 3), two groups of seniors were assessed. In the first year of assessment, native and non-native seniors scored slightly higher than freshmen; and when compared to norm-referenced comparative groups both groups of USFSP seniors scored slightly higher than comparative seniors and USFSP freshmen scored at about the same level as comparative freshmen. Note that when native and non-native seniors scores are combined (see bottom of Table 3), the combined scores for seniors is slightly higher than freshmen and is about at the same level when compared to norm-referenced comparative groups of seniors.

Table 3
Fall 2008 Scaled Scores for Freshmen, Native and Transfer Seniors and Comparative Institutions

USFSP Freshmen		Native Seniors		Transfer Seniors	
Mean	437.5	Mean	445.2	Mean	450.2
Std. Dev.	12.9	Std. Dev.	18.6	Std. Dev.	21.9
25 th Percentile	430	25 th Percentile	435	25 th Percentile	436
50 th Percentile	439	50 th Percentile	446	50 th Percentile	447
75 th Percentile	443	75 th Percentile	454	75 th Percentile	462
			Combined Seniors		
			Mean	448.0	
			Std. Dev.	18.6	
			25 th Percentile	439	
			50 th Percentile	447	
			75 th Percentile	459	
			Comparable Seniors		
Comparable Freshmen			Mean	447.9	
Mean	437.9		Std. Dev.	7.3	
Std. Dev.	6.9				
25 th Percentile	425		25 th Percentile	433	
50 th Percentile	435		50 th Percentile	446	
75 th Percentile	448		75 th Percentile	462	

Table 4 – Table 6 that follow below show the subscale scores each year for the three USFSP student groups and their comparative norm-referenced groups. Data at this level of detail are useful for continuous improvement at the general education/academic program-level.

Performance at the Subscale-level

In fall 2010 (see Table 4), freshmen scored slightly higher on all seven subscales than their comparative group; but there was variability on subscale scores for upper-division transfers and seniors when compared to comparative groups. Upper-division transfers scored lower on three subscales: reading, writing and natural sciences; and seniors scores lower on five of the subscales: critical thinking, reading, writing, humanities and natural sciences. However, at the institutional level, seniors performed at the same level or slightly higher level than freshmen and upper-division transfers in all but one of the seven subscales areas – the humanities.

Table 4
Fall 2010: Sub-scale Scores for Freshmen, Upper-Division, Seniors and Students at Comparable Institutions

GE Domain	Critical Thinking	Reading	Writing	Math	Humanities	Social Sciences	Natural Sciences
USFSP Freshmen							
Mean	111.2	118.4	113.8	113.8	115.3	112.9	115.1
Std. Dev.	5.9	5.4	4.7	5.0	5.9	6.4	5.0
50 th Percentile	112.0	119.0	114.0	113.0	113.0	112.0	114.0
Comparable Freshmen							
Mean	109.3	116.0	113.1	112.0	112.8	111.6	113.3
Std. Dev.	5.7	6.9	4.9	5.6	6.0	5.9	5.6
50 th Percentile	108.0	116.0	113.0	111.0	113.0	111.0	113.0
Upper-Division Transfers							
Mean	111.6	117.5	113.4	111.3	114.7	113.3	114.7
Std. Dev.	4.9	5.8	4.3	5.3	5.2	5.5	5.5
50 th Percentile	112.0	117.0	114.0	110.0	113.0	113.0	114.0
Comparable Upper-Division Students							
Mean	111.1	118.2	114.4	113.1	114.7	113.3	115.1
Std. Dev.	6.3	6.9	4.9	6.0	6.4	6.3	5.8
50 th Percentile	110.0	119.0	114.0	113.0	114.0	112.0	115.0
Seniors							
Mean	111.6	118.7	114.1	114.6	114.0	115.1	115.1
Std. Dev.	5.35	5.4	4.2	6.2	5.6	5.5	5.1
50 th Percentile	112.0	121.0	114.0	114.0	113.0	115.0	114.0
Comparable Seniors							
Mean	112.1	119.5	115.1	114.0	115.7	114.4	115.9
Std. Dev.	6.5	6.8	4.8	6.1	6.5	6.4	5.8
50 th Percentile	111.0	120.0	115.0	113.0	115.0	115.0	116.0

In fall 2009 (see Table 5), freshmen scored slightly higher or at the same level on all subscales as their comparative group; but there was variability on subscale scores for upper-division transfers and seniors when compared to comparative groups. Upper-division transfers scored lower than the comparative group on three subscales: reading, writing and natural sciences; and seniors scored lower than the comparative group on one subscale: writing. However, at the institutional level seniors performed at the same level or slightly higher than freshmen and upper-division transfers in all seven subscale areas.

Table 5
 Fall 2009: Sub-scale Scores for Freshmen, Upper-Division, Seniors and Students at Comparable Institutions

GE Domain	Critical Thinking	Reading	Writing	Math	Humanities	Social Sciences	Natural Sciences
USFSP Freshmen							
Mean	111.8	117.4	114.5	113.8	115.0	113.5	114.3
Std. Dev.	6.2	7.1	4.5	5.4	5.8	6.5	5.6
50 th Percentile	112.0	117.0	114.0	114.0	113.0	114.0	113.0
Comparable Freshmen							
Mean	109.3	116.0	113.1	112.0	112.8	111.6	113.3
Std. Dev.	5.7	6.9	4.9	5.6	6.0	5.9	5.6
50 th Percentile	108.0	116.0	113.0	111.0	113.0	111.0	113.0
Upper-Division Transfers							
Mean	111.3	117.7	113.3	112.9	114.8	113.4	114.5
Std. Dev.	6.5	6.6	5.7	5.0	6.5	6.2	6.0
50 th Percentile	110.0	119.0	114.0	112.0	113.0	113.0	114.0
Comparable Upper-Division Students							
Mean	111.1	118.2	114.4	113.1	114.7	113.3	115.1
Std. Dev.	6.3	6.9	4.9	6.0	6.4	6.3	5.8
50 th Percentile	110.0	119.0	114.0	113.0	114.0	112.0	115.0
Seniors							
Mean	114.8	120.9	114.9	114.9	118.2	116.3	116.8
Std. Dev.	7.1	6.8	4.8	6.6	6.7	6.7	5.7
50 th Percentile	113.0	124.0	114.0	114.0	120.0	117.0	117.0
Comparable Seniors							
Mean	112.1	119.5	115.1	114.0	115.7	114.4	115.9
Std. Dev.	6.5	6.8	4.8	6.1	6.5	6.4	5.8
50 th Percentile	111.0	120.0	115.0	113.0	115.0	115.0	116.0

In fall 2008 (see Table 6) data is shown for native and non-native seniors, and the data for the combined group of seniors is used for the discussion that follows. Freshmen scored slightly higher or at the same level as their comparative group on all but one subscale: writing; and seniors scored slightly higher or at the same level as their comparative group on all but two subscales: writing and natural sciences. However, at the institutional level seniors performed at the same level or slightly higher than freshmen in all seven subscale areas.

Table 6
Fall 2008 Sub-scale Scores for USF St. Petersburg Freshmen and Seniors and Comprehensive Institutions

GE Domain	Critical Thinking	Reading	Writing	Math	Humanities	Social Sciences	Natural Sciences
USFSP Freshmen							
Mean	109.4	116.9	112.9	112.2	113.7	111.9	113.9
Std. Dev.	4.4	5.9	4.2	4.9	5.7	6.0	4.7
50 th Percentile	109.0	117.0	112.0	112.0	113.0	112.0	113.0
Comparable Freshmen							
Mean	109.3	116.1	113.2	112.3	113.0	111.7	113.3
Std. Dev.	1.7	2.4	1.6	1.9	1.7	1.8	1.8
50 th Percentile	108.	116.0	113.0	111.0	113.0	111.0	113.0
Native Seniors							
Mean	114.0	119.6	113.2	112.6	116.6	116.1	115.5
Std. Dev.	6.8	6.7	5.0	6.0	6.2	6.7	6.0
50 th Percentile	113.0	121.0	114.0	113.0	118.0	116.0	117.0
Non-native Seniors							
Mean	112.3	119.4	115.8	115.4	116.5	114.8	114.7
Std. Dev.	6.9	6.9	5.1	7.2	5.9	7.1	5.8
50 th Percentile	112.0	119.0	115.0	115.0	118.0	116.0	113.0
Two Senior Groups Combined							
Mean	112.3	119.4	115.8	115.4	116.5	114.8	114.7
Std. Dev.	6.9	6.9	5.1	7.2	5.9	7.1	5.8
50 th Percentile	112.0	119.0	115.0	115.0	118.0	116.0	113.0
Comparable Seniors							
Mean	112.3	119.5	115.1	114.3	115.8	114.5	115.9
Std. Dev.	2.0	2.1	1.4	2.2	1.8	1.8	1.7
50 th Percentile	111.0	120.0	115.0	113.0	115.0	115.0	116.0

The figures that follow below show the subscale score data by student group for the three-year assessment period. In addition to including the norm-referenced subscale scores for comparative student groups, multi-year subscale averages were superimposed onto the graphs in order to provide context. Each figure is then followed by a companion figure that shows the average group subscale score compared to norm-referenced group subscale scores. Figure 3 and Figure 4 show relatively consistent performance by freshmen across all seven subscales both by year and when collapsed across year. Figure 5 and Figure 6 compares the performance of upper-division transfers and shows variability on all subscales when compared by year or combined as a group. Figure 7 and Figure 8 compares the performance of seniors and also variability on all subscales when compared by year or combined as a group.

As noted previously, data at this level of detail are useful for continuous improvement at the general education/academic program-level. Subscale data is very rich, and the figures that follow are intended to help the reader more easily identify areas of strength and weakness in student learning in general education at USFSP.

Figure 3
 USFSP Freshmen, Fall 2008 – Fall 2010

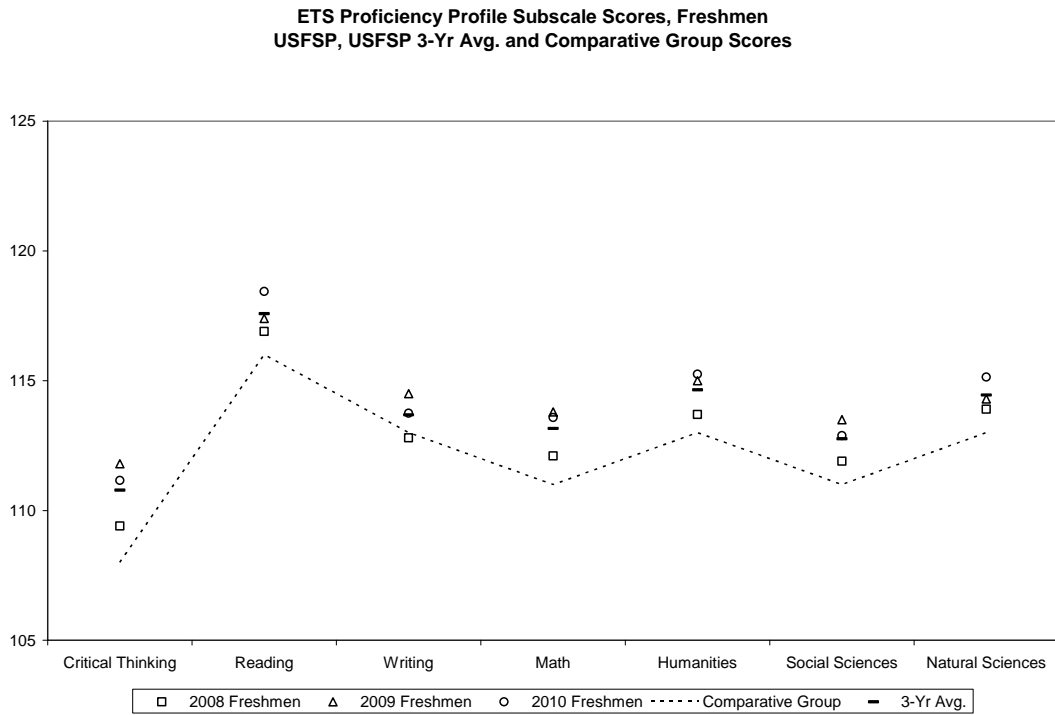


Figure 4
 All USFSP Freshmen Combined

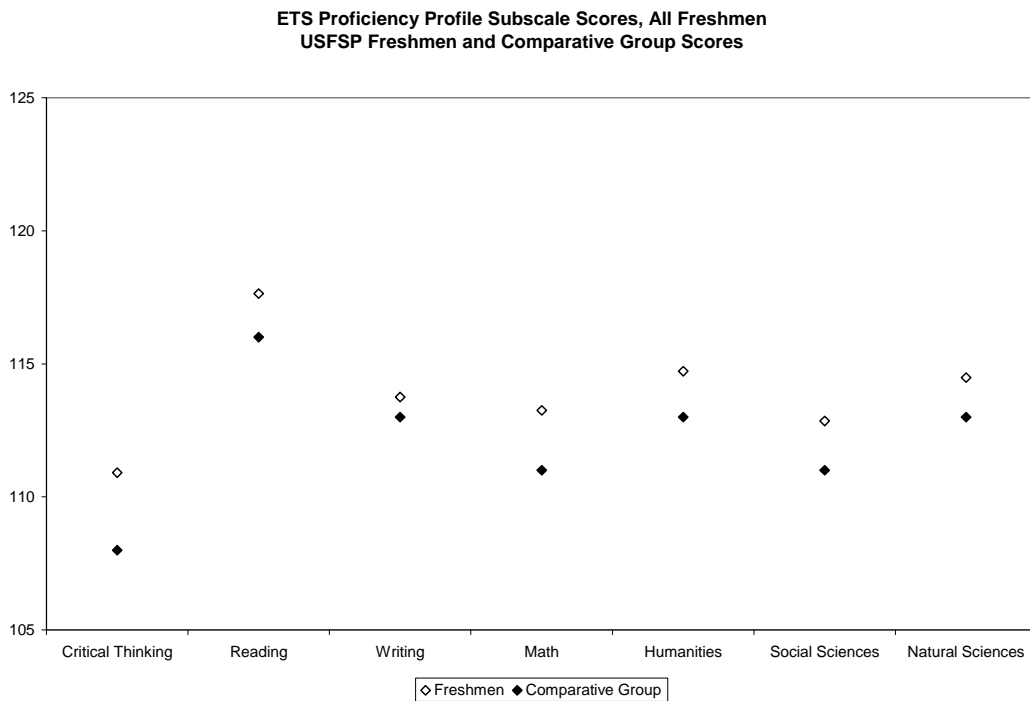


Figure 5
 USFSP Upper-division Transfers (UDTs), Fall 2009 and Fall 2010

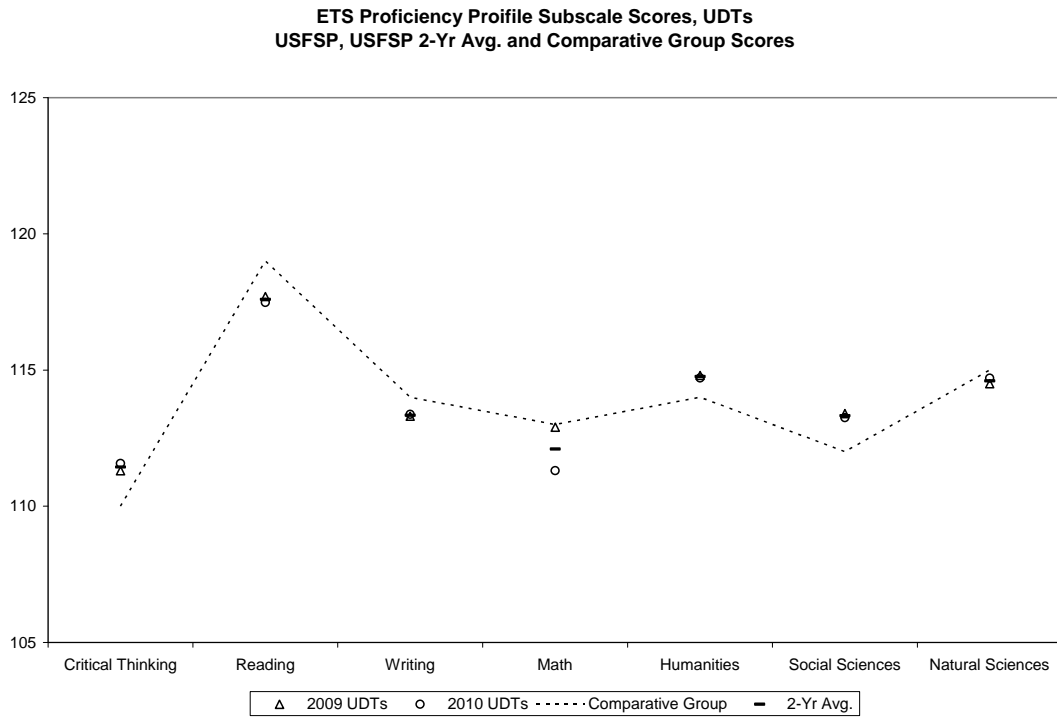


Figure 6
 All USFSP UDTs Combined

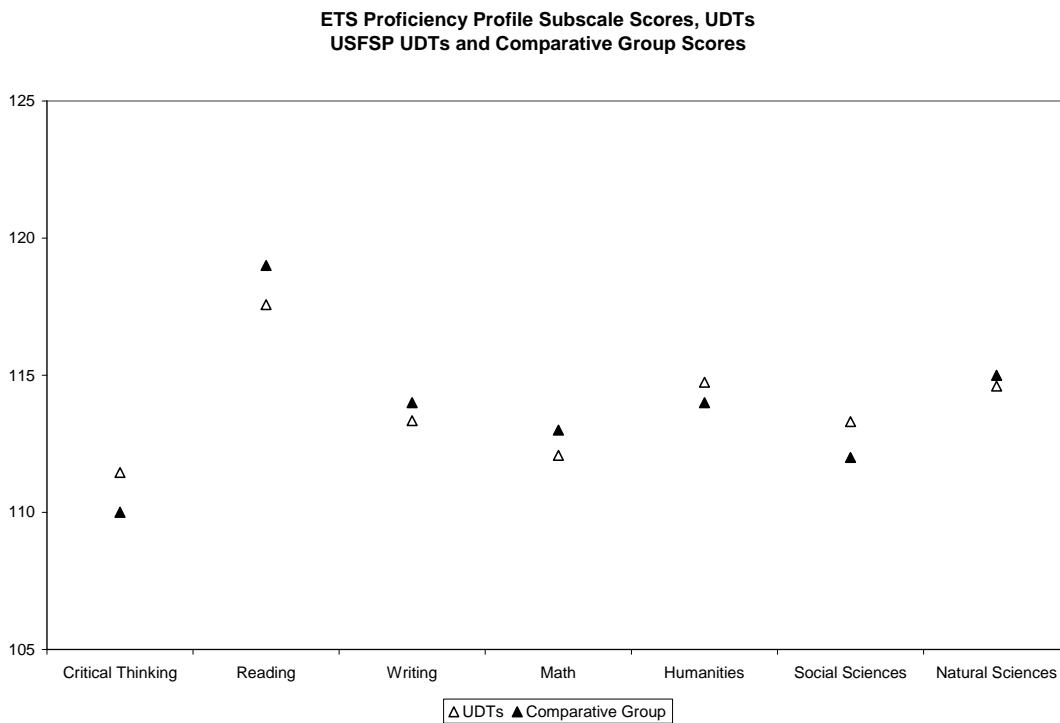


Figure 7
 USFSP Seniors, Fall 2008 – Fall 2010

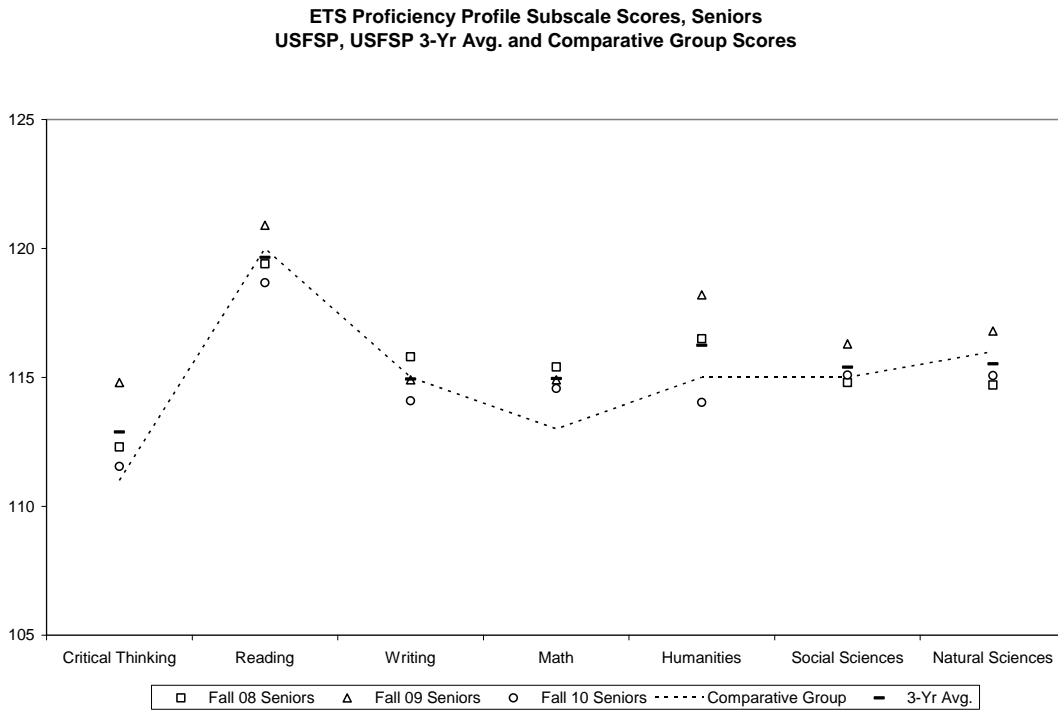


Figure 8
 All USFSP Seniors Combined

