



Educational Testing Service (ETS) K12 EL Identification Assessment

Overview:

The overall goal of the ETS K12 EL Identification Tool (ID Tool) is to assist states, districts, schools and teachers in effectively and adequately screening and placing EL students in appropriate language instruction educational programs. The identification assessment tool is intended to be used for two primary purposes:

- To determine whether a newly enrolled student is an EL (that is, eligible for a language instruction educational program), and
- For those identified as EL students, to assist in determining the student's initial English-language proficiency (ELP) level.

Challenge:

Our greatest challenge has been developing an engaging, technology-enhanced product for students capable of providing timely information for educators on student language proficiency. In addition, the product needed to be administered on PCs as well as tablets. Of utmost importance is that this product be based on a solid foundation of research and follow best practices in educational measurement.

Solutions:

The tool is being designed based on current language-learning theories and research, including proven effective strategies for educating ELs. The technology enables us to develop the tasks incorporating these current theories. The previous traditional paper-based tests had limitations in integrating these theories (e.g., the importance of effective communication, integrating multiple sources including the digital sources in various language activities).

Our task integrates modalities of listening, speaking, reading and writing. These modalities reflect the communicative language that students need to use in the school context rather than the task measuring discreet language skills. A balance of foundational and higher-level language skills allows us to represent the entire range of proficiency levels. The use of technology provides much quicker score reporting and provides teacher feedback more quickly. This allows them to develop and apply learning interventions in a more timely way.

The product is in the development and prototyping phase. The prototyping provides us with research-based information on student performance which in turn informs our design of the assessment.

Learning impact outcomes:

By identifying student language abilities and providing educators with timely information, decisions can be made regarding targets and educational goals. Early interventions can help improve student language abilities at an earlier phase in their educational development which can lead to more engagement in school and build a foundation for lifelong learning.



Return on investment:

ETS is a nonprofit organization. The work on this initial product is part of a much larger national K12 EL mission-driven initiative for ETS. There are five million ELs in our public schools; this number is expected to grow rapidly. Our goal is to provide EL students with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their language abilities while also providing meaningful data, rapidly, to those who serve them. ETS is committed to investing in this population and believes there will be a large social return on our investment.

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