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California English Language Development Test (CELDT)

CELDT is a designed test required by California state law to assess English language proficiency of students in kindergarten through grade twelve whose primary language is other than English. After students are enrolled to California public school for the first time, all students must take the CELDT within 30 days if their home language is not English. The purpose of the test is to identify students' skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English when making placement decisions for new students. Approximately eight weeks after the test, students and each student's teacher would receive a result reporting overall performance and score in each domain with five levels of proficiency: advanced, early advanced, intermediate, early intermediate, and beginning.

-Content validity: In a particular aspect, CELDT shows high content validity based on the fact that it is testing exactly what has been claimed. With the purpose of identifying students' level of English language proficiency, the CELDT web page claims that the test is developed to assess students' progress of acquiring listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Test components are divided into four different domains – listing, speaking, reading, and writing – and also aligned to English Language Development (ELD) standards, which describes expected English language skills in each level. Students are also directly tested of their performance in the target task involving four domains of skills. However, the test components do not include certain areas in ELD standards, mostly involving interactive and cooperative language skills. While the ESL standards expect students to collaboratively interact with texts and interact in a meaningful way with language, the sample test items on CELDT web page do not reveal these standards. In this perspective, students are not being tested in a way to assess their performance of acquiring expected skills in each grade level.

-Face validity: The face validity of CELDT is difficult to be justified when testing a massive number of students in one particular period of time, and then providing an overall scoring report after taking the test. Based on the structure and the content of the test, CELDT seems to have a certain level of face validity. The test is designed in an expected format and construction with contents related to certain parts of students' coursework. Also the allotted time differ in each grade level considering their maturity and intellectual development, which illustrates high face validity. However, the tasks are not involving those skills students have learned or rehearsed previously and cannot assess whether students have the level of language proficiency in order to adopt all courses they are taking in school. In this perspective the test does not have high face validity.

-Authenticity: The test items include certain authentic components such as the speaking domain itself and the inclusion of visual components. Test components such as "4-picture narrative" and "Choose and give reasons" in the speaking domain are examples of test items replicating real-world tasks. Certain components, however, are not highly contextualized – especially those testing students' vocabulary or word analysis skills. Moreover, the test components are generally lacking of interactive tasks, which means that students are not getting a lot of opportunities to interact with peers, teacher(s), or with the text in order to complete each task. This is not well aligned to the ELD standards as well as not reflecting how students might use language in real life for academic purpose.