

TOEFL® Primary™ Research

Baron, P. A., & Papageorgiou, S. (2014). *Mapping the TOEFL® Primary™ Test onto the Common European Framework of Reference* (ETS Research Memorandum ETS RM-14-05). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

This standard-setting study linked scores on the *TOEFL Primary* test to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Eighteen educators from 15 countries served on the standard-setting panel and recommended cut scores for three CEFR levels on the Reading and Listening tests and four CEFR levels on the *TOEFL Primary* Speaking test.

Cho, Y., & So, Y. (2014). *Construct-Irrelevant Factors Influencing Young English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learners' Perceptions of Test Task Difficulty* (ETS Research Memorandum ETS RM 14-04). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

The objective of the study was to understand the factors that may unduly influence students' performance on an English test. Twelve Korean elementary school children (ages 9–11) who were learning English as a foreign language (EFL) interacted with test materials and responded to English language test questions. Participants were also interviewed to elicit their perception of the difficulty of test questions and to gain insight into their thought processes while they were answering listening and reading test questions. Verbal reports indicated that the complexity of language used in test questions may interfere with students' demonstration of their abilities on the constructs targeted in the test questions. Memory load and ambiguity in task descriptions were also observed to influence young test takers' perception of test difficulty.

Cho, Y., Ginsburgh, M., Morgan, R., Moulder, B., Xi, X., & Hauck, M. C. (in press). *Designing the TOEFL Primary Tests*. (ETS Research Memorandum). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

The purpose of this report is to describe the process of developing the *TOEFL Primary* tests from conceptualization to test design. We devote the first part of the report to a discussion of the tests' purposes and intended uses, and, based on a synthesis of research, key aspects of language learning in children, all of which served as a conceptual guide in the test design. In the second part of the report, we describe how the final design of the *TOEFL Primary* tests was shaped throughout the test development process. We conclude the report with a discussion of the research that is needed to evaluate claims about the tests and improve their quality.

Hsieh, C. (2016). *Examining Content Representativeness of a Young Learner Language Assessment: EFL Teachers' Perspectives*. In M. Nikolov (Ed.), *Assessing Young Learners of English: Global and Local Perspectives*. (93–108). Switzerland: Springer.

This study examines the content validity of the *TOEFL Primary* test by employing expert judgments. Seventeen experienced EFL teachers from 15 countries participated in the study. The teachers evaluated the relevance and importance of the language knowledge and skills the *TOEFL Primary* test is intended to measure. The expert teachers' judgments were used as the criterion on which the content-related evidence of validity was based. Results of the study indicated that the *TOEFL Primary* test content measures what it is intended to measure and covers the important domains of language knowledge and skills young language learners are required to possess in order to perform effectively in EFL classrooms.

Timpe-Laughlin, V. (2015). *Evaluating a Learning Tool for Young English Learners: The Case of the TOEFL® Primary™ English Learning Center* (Research Report No. RR-15-04). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service.

This report describes a study that explores the use of the English Learning Center (ELC), an online learning platform that provides young English language learners with activities that are intended to help them develop communication skills in English. To explore its implementation, as well as how the ELC is used and perceived by instructors and students, data were collected via web-based surveys and on-site interviews with both teachers and elementary-level students. The largely qualitative analyses provided two key findings. First, the ELC was used predominantly as a supplementary, self-access learning material outside EFL classrooms. As such, it was perceived as a valuable learning tool for language practice, which additionally prepared students for the *TOEFL Primary* test. Second, responses provided preliminary evidence to support a number of claims ETS and Edusoft have made about the ELC. This report concludes with suggestions to enhance the ELC program, along with factors that should be considered in future materials evaluation research, particularly in research with young language learners.