

Abstract

The GED® English as a Second Language (GED ESL) Test was designed to serve as an adjunct to the GED test battery when an examinee takes either the Spanish- or French-language version of the tests. The GED ESL Test is a criterion-referenced, multiple-choice instrument that assesses the functional, English reading skills of adults whose first language is not English. The purpose of this report is to provide some background and psychometric information regarding the ESL Test. Sections of the report provide an overview of the test specifications, estimates of reliability (including internal consistency and classification accuracy), and evidence supporting the validity of test score interpretations.

Executive Summary

The GED Tests provide an opportunity for adults who have not completed a formal high school program to certify their attainment of high school–level academic knowledge and skills, and earn their jurisdictions’ high school–level equivalency credential, diploma, or certificate. Each year thousands of GED candidates test using either a Spanish- or French-language version of the GED Tests. The ESL Test is available to those jurisdictions that require candidates to prove they have the requisite English reading ability necessary to be awarded a GED credential. GED Testing Service® (GEDTS) produced the current report in order to provide some brief background, test specifications, reliability estimates, and some validity evidence regarding the 2002 Series GED ESL Test.

The data used in the current report were collected during an equating study and operationally between 2002 and 2008. Four different test forms (IA-ID) are available for the 2002 series.

This report includes an evaluation of the reliability of the GED ESL Test using calculated estimates of the internal consistency reliability, the standard error of measurement (SEM), the conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM), and classification accuracy. GEDTS estimated the internal consistency reliability of the GED ESL Test using the Kuder-Richardson 20 (KR_{20}) reliability coefficient.

GEDTS uses a required minimum standard score for the GED ESL Test. CSEM were estimated for standard scores in the vicinity of the minimum standard score using the Feldt-Qualls approximation procedures. Classification accuracy (and false positive and false negative rates) was evaluated for each test form using the Livingston and Lewis procedure.

Finally, the relationship between ESL standard scores and background information was examined. Several questions from a demographic survey asked candidates about their experience studying English as well as their self-reported reading ability. It was expected that candidates with greater amounts of English-reading training and those candidates who lived in the United States for a greater number of years would score higher on the ESL Test. Additionally, we expected that higher self-reported reading levels would be positively related to ESL standard scores. Results of this validity analysis were mixed.

Some of the results include:

- All test forms had KR_{20} reliabilities of at least 0.93.
- Standard score SEMs ranged from 2.8 to 3.5 (on a standard scale of 20 to 80) across all four operational forms.
- The classification accuracy rates were above 0.93 for all forms of the ESL Test.
- All test forms had false positive rates and false negative rates less than or equal to .04.
- The number of years living in the United States was not necessarily related to ESL standard scores.
- The number of years studying English before arriving in the United States was related to ESL standard scores.
- The number of years studying English after arriving in the United States was not necessarily related to ESL standard scores.
- Self-reported reading ability was related to ESL standard scores.

Brief explanations for some of the findings are also provided in the report.