

# ELPA Validity Evaluation Instrument:

Protocol for Analysis of Language Content in ELPA  
(Reading Passages and Items)

The logo for 'evea' features the letters 'e', 'v', 'e', and 'a' in a blue, sans-serif font. The letter 'v' is a solid magenta color and is significantly larger than the other letters, positioned between the two 'e's.

Washington  
Idaho  
Indiana  
Montana  
Oregon



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## **About EVEA**

The U.S. Department of Education funded Enhanced Assessment Grant *Evaluating the Validity of English Language Proficiency Assessments* (EVEA; CFDA 84.368) was awarded to the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction of the State of Washington in fall 2009. The project brought together five states – Idaho, Indiana, Montana, Oregon, and Washington – to work on collaborative and independent validity plans for English language proficiency assessments (ELPAs) over an 18-month period. During the EVEA funding period, none of the partner states belonged to an existing ELPA consortium; rather each had worked with commercial test developers to create state-wide ELPAs that are aligned with their state English language development (ELD) standards. The main project goal was for each state to create a validity argument for its ELPA system. Additional project outcomes included:

- Building individual State Interpretive Arguments for the validity of each state’s ELPA,
- Building a Common Interpretive Argument for any ELPA;
- Designing a set of studies and instruments to support and pilot test these arguments; and
- Making instruments publically available at the close of the project for the wider education community to access.

This research instrument is one product of these efforts.

## **Collaborating institutions**

edCount, LLC

The National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA, the Center for Assessment)

The Graduate School of Education and Information Studies (GSE&IS) at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

Synergy Enterprises, Inc. (SEI)

The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE)

## **Authors**

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## **Research Objective**

The protocol was developed to characterize the language features of items on an English language proficiency assessment (ELPA), particularly the language of reading passages and related items. Such analyses can reveal the degree of language complexity in the different forms of an ELPA used across years or across grade spans, and even across different ELPAs.

## **Claim**

The ELPA has been designed to yield scores that reflect students' knowledge and skills in relation to academic English language expectations defined in the ELD/P standards.

## *Underlying Assumptions*

Multiple forms of an ELPA that may be rotated year-to-year are equivalent in terms of the degree of complexity of the language they measure.

The different forms of an ELPA that are used across grade-spans will show a progression from the lowest complexity in language features at the earliest grade spans to the greatest complexity in language features in the highest grade spans.

Within any grade span of an ELPA that a range of items will show a progression from low-levels of complexity to high-levels of complexity in language to reflect the ELP levels found in state ELP standards.

## **Research Questions**

Research Question 1: Are multiple forms of an ELPA equivalent in terms of the language complexity of reading passages and related items?

Research Question 2: Do grade spans within an ELPA demonstrate a progression in language complexity of reading passages and related items?

Research Question 3: Is a progression from low to high levels of language complexity across reading passages and related items reflected within a grade span?

## **Method**

Each reading passage and related items can be subjected to the protocol that examines language features at the word, sentence and discourse levels. While all ELPA items can be subjected to language analyses, reading passages and related items in particular offer extensive text that also allows for the characterization of the complexity of discourse level features such as clause connectors and cohesive ties.

## **Analysis**

Once the language features of passages and items have been identified, the equivalence (or progression) in language complexity can be ascertained. For example, the basic statistics of the passages such as number of words, number of sentences, etc., in a passage can give an indication of the "stamina" needed by the reader. Differences in basic statistics of reading passages and items can be compared within and/or across ELPA forms. Comparison of the number and types of word level

features of passages within and/or across ELPA forms can provide information about equivalence (or progression) in lexical demands placed on the reader. Comparison of the number and types of sentence level features can provide information about equivalence (or progression) in grammatical demands on the reader. Comparison of the number and types of discourse level features can provide information about equivalence (or progression) in discourse demands on the reader.

<b>Protocol for Analyses of Language Content of ELPA EVEA PROJECT M. Heritage &amp; A. Bailey (2010; Revised 2011)</b>	
TEST: _____ TEST YEAR: _____ GRADE/SPAN: _____ FORM: _____ PASSAGE TITLE: _____ PAGE NO. _____	
<b>Text Layout &amp; Purpose:</b>     Total words: _____ Total sentences: _____ Mean length of sentence: _____ Lengths of 3 longest sentences: _____ Lengths of 3 shortest sentences: _____	
WORDS	
<b>Cross disciplinary (General utility words)</b>	
<b>Topic-related (vivid words)</b>	
<b>Superordinate</b>	
<b>Subordinate</b>	
<b>Conceptual</b>	
<b>Background/topic knowledge/culturally specific knowledge</b>	
<b>Syllabic structure (3 and above)</b>	
<b>Derived forms</b>	

<b>Compound words</b>	
<b>Adverbs</b>	
<b>Comparative</b> Ex: ran <b>faster</b>	
<b>Superlative</b> Ex: ran <b>fastest</b>	
<b>Adverbial phrase</b> Ex: as often as possible	
<b>Nouns</b>	
<b>Proper nouns</b>	
<b>Collective nouns</b>	
<b>Noun case – subject/object/possessive</b>	
<b>Adjectives</b>	
<b>Adjective</b> Ex: rich	
<b>Comparatives</b> Ex: richer	
<b>Superlatives</b> Ex: richest	
<b>Verbs</b>	
<b>Concrete</b>	
<b>Abstract</b>	
<b>SENTENCES</b>	
<b>Sentence Structures</b>	
<b>1. Simple Declarative</b> Ex: The boy read the book	
<b>2. Simple Negative</b> Ex: The girl did not walk to school.	
<b>3. Yes/No – Interrogative</b> Ex: Is that your new teacher?	
<b>4. Wh-interrogative</b> Ex: What did the teacher talk about today?	
<b>5. A)Coordinating Conjunction</b> Ex: The boy and the girl went to the playground.	

<p><b>5. B) Coordinating Conjunction</b> Ex: The teacher wrote a sentence and the students copied it.</p>	
<p><b>6. Infinitive Phrase</b> Ex: The students wanted to finish their homework.</p>	
<p><b>7. Prepositional Phrase</b> Ex: We read the books in school during quiet time.</p>	
<p><b>8. Sentential Coordination</b> Ex: The children traced and colored the pictures.</p>	
<p><b>9. Object noun-phrase Complement</b> Ex: I think that the teacher's gone</p>	
<p><b>10. Subordinating Conjunction</b> Ex: If it is cold, I will bring a sweater to school.</p>	
<p><b>11. Sentential Coordination</b> Ex: The teacher corrected, scored, and returned the homework assignment</p>	
<p><b>12. Subordinating Conjunction</b> Ex: The girl did not go to school today because she is sick.</p>	
<p><b>13. Embedded Wh-Question</b> Ex: Chantelle saw where the student went.</p>	
<p><b>14. Complex Wh-Interrogative</b> Ex: What does he think is for lunch today?</p>	
<p><b>15. Complex infinitive phrase</b> Ex: I know how to do my homework.</p>	
<p><b>16. Relative clause</b> Ex: The people who work at school are nice.</p>	
<p><b>17. Relative clause</b> Ex: I see the boy who rides his bike to school every day.</p>	
<p><b>18. Relative clause</b> Ex: The girl who lived next door decided to go to school with them.</p>	
<p><b>19. Passive</b> Ex: The book was read by the girl.</p>	
<p><b>20. Passive negative</b> Ex: The book was not brought by the girl.</p>	
<p><b>21. Passive interrogative</b> Ex: Was the book borrowed from the library?</p>	
<p><b>22. Negative/passive interrogative</b> Ex: Wasn't the story written by the teacher?</p>	
<p><b>23. Non-intuitive passive construction</b> Ex: The teachers were dismissed to recess by the students.</p>	

<b>24. Multiple embedded clauses</b> Ex: Electricity travels from the power source, such as a battery, around a series of conductors, back to the power source	
<b>25. Nominalization</b> Ex: Discovery could result in adverse consequences.	
<b>MARKING WITH MODAL VERBS</b> <b>*can *could *may *might *must *shall *should *will *would</b>	
<b>26. modal verb + base form</b> = will eat	
<b>27. modal verb + be + present participle</b> = will be eating	
<b>28. modal verb + have + past participle</b> = will have eaten	
<b>29. modal verb + be + past participle</b> = will be eaten	
<b>30. modal verb + have + been + present participle</b> = will have been eating	
<b>31. modal verb + have + been + past participle</b> = will have been eaten	
<b>32. modal + be + being + past participle</b> = will be being eaten	
<b>33. modal verb + have + been + being + past participle</b> = will have been being eaten	
<b>TENSES</b>	
<b>Present Tense</b>	
<b>Past Tense</b>	
<b>Future Tense</b>	
<b>Present Progressive Tense</b>	
<b>Past Progressive Tense</b>	
<b>Future Progressive Tense</b>	
<b>Present Perfect Tense</b>	
<b>Past Perfect Tense</b>	

<b>Future Perfect Tense</b>	
<b>Present Perfect Progressive</b>	
<b>Past Perfect Progressive</b>	
<b>Future Perfect Progressive</b>	
<b>DISCOURSE FEATURES</b>	
<b>Discourse Markers</b>	
<b>Time/sequence</b>	
<b>Cohesive tie: Anaphoric references</b>	
<b>Cohesive tie: Cataphoric references</b>	
<b>Disjunctive</b>	
<b>Causal</b>	
<b>Others</b>	
<b>Genre</b>	
<b>Narrative (fact)</b>	
<b>Narrative (fiction)</b>	
<b>Persuasive argument/opinion</b>	
<b>Expository (informational)</b>	
<b>Poetry</b>	
<b>Humor</b>	
<b>Other</b>	
<b>Language Functions</b>	
<b>Define vocabulary and phrases</b>	
<b>Describe processes or phenomena</b>	
<b>Explain processes or phenomena</b>	
<b>Compare and classify information and phenomena</b>	



<b>Reason with phenomena (cause and effect)</b>	
<b>Label processes or objects</b>	
<b>Enumerate (list) facts and processes</b>	
<b>Predict outcomes</b>	
<b>Generalize processes or facts to other phenomena</b>	
<b>Other</b>	