

*News on Research, Products and Solutions for Learning and Education*

# innovations



inside:  
**Keeping Learning  
on Track**

Internet-Based  
Testing Goes Global

**TOEFL<sup>®</sup>**  
Launches Anew With a  
Groundbreaking Assessment

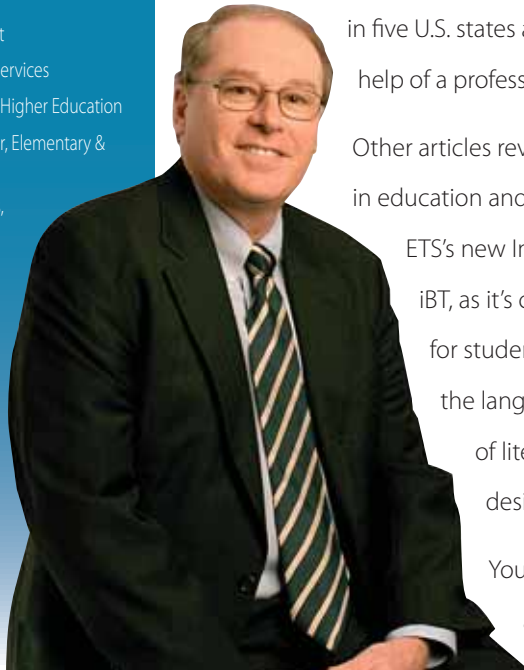
*Listening.  
Learning.  
Leading.*

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### Welcome to *ETS Innovations*.

*Innovations* is a new resource for people throughout the world who share our commitment to advancing learning and education.

We named this magazine “Innovations” because it will feature what’s new, forward-looking and fresh in educational assessment. The name also expresses an important attribute of ETS itself: innovation is at the core of everything we do.

Each issue of *Innovations* will focus on a particular theme in assessment. Our inaugural issue covers the fundamentals — how assessments can support teaching and learning.

Our main story, “Keeping Learning on Track,” examines how teachers from schools in five U.S. states are putting assessments to work in the classroom with the help of a professional development program designed by ETS.

Other articles review what’s being done to narrow the achievement gap in education and to expand educational opportunity worldwide through ETS’s new Internet-based *Test of English as a Foreign Language™*. TOEFL iBT, as it’s called, puts innovative research and technology to work for students who wish to study in any country in which English is the language of instruction. Finally, an article on the importance of literacy skills features two new online literacy assessments designed by ETS.

You’ll notice the word “Innovations” in different languages across the bottom of each page of the magazine. It’s a symbol of ETS’s commitment to bring assessments in the service of learning to educators and learners around the world.

That’s what *ETS Innovations* is all about. And that’s what ETS is all about.

Regards,

Kurt M. Landgraf  
CEO and President, ETS

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# KEEPING LEARNING *on track*

**A** new teacher professional development program puts ETS's core capability — assessment — in the service of classroom learning.

It's a familiar classroom scenario: The teacher presents a lesson, then asks if anyone has any questions. If there are none, the teacher moves on to the next lesson, often not really knowing if all students have grasped the material until they're tested at the end of the chapter or unit.

A different scenario is playing out in classrooms that stress "assessment for learning." There, it would not be unusual to see every student in the class holding up a card marked with an A, B, C or D in response to a teacher's multiple-choice question. "The teacher can see every student's answer and so will know immediately if they understand," says Marnie Thompson, Director of Teacher Professional Development Research in the Learning & Teaching Research Group at ETS. "The teacher uses this evidence of learning to instantly modify what's happening in the classroom. She

may decide to reteach the concept if most students didn't understand it, or to hold a whole-class discussion based on the misconceptions revealed in students' answer choices, or to have those who understand teach a peer who needs help."

"The 'big idea' in assessment for learning classrooms is using evidence of learning to adapt real-time instruction to meet students' immediate learning needs," Thompson explains. "It's the basis for the sustained, interactive teacher professional development program that ETS has been developing with teachers and school leaders across the United States for the past three years."

Called *Keeping Learning on Track: Integrating Assessment with Instruction through Teacher Learning Communities*, the new program will be introduced in a limited number of school districts in California, Ohio, Texas and

Vermont during the 2006-07 school year. It's designed, Thompson says, to have a significant effect on student achievement at a cost that school districts will find affordable.

"There is today a bewildering range of coherent approaches to school improvement, almost all of which can be shown to have a positive effect on student achievement," says Dylan Wiliam, a Senior Research Director in the [ETS Research & Development Division](#). "Analysis of the costs and effects of various solutions suggests that improving teacher quality is the most promising route to improved student achievement, and that it is most likely to be achieved by improving teachers' classroom assessment practices."

Wiliam's research with Paul Black, a professor emeritus at King's College, University of London, found that focusing on the use of assessment, minute by minute and day by

day, appears to be the most powerful way to help teachers "keep learning on track." Their study showed that students whose teachers used assessment to support learning achieved in six or seven months what would normally have taken a year. "The effects were consistent across countries — Canada, England, Israel, Portugal and the United States — as well as across grades and content areas," Wiliam says. "Our work with teachers in England showed that the gains could be sustained over time, even when measured using externally mandated standardized tests."

### Using assessment to adapt real-time instruction

In 2004, Wiliam, Thompson and other researchers from the ETS Research & Development Division began working with teachers to find effective ways to fuse assessment and instruction. The project began with

school districts in New Jersey, where ETS is based, and focused on assessment for learning.

Developing teacher learning communities in each participating school, teachers and ETS researchers refined and created new assessment for learning strategies and techniques. ETS gradually increased the size, diversity and number of initiatives. By the 2005-06 school year, there were 28 participating districts, including 10 of the lowest-performing schools in Cleveland (*see story below*), as well as schools and districts in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Based on what they learned, ETS staff developed *Keeping Learning on Track: Integrating Assessment with Instruction through Teacher Learning Communities*. Currently, the program includes:

## Keeping Learning on Track in Cleveland

Ten low-performing schools in the Cleveland, Ohio, Municipal School District (CMSD) are participating in *Keeping Learning on Track: Integrating Assessment with Instruction through Teacher Learning Communities*, and the district's executive director for Standards, Curriculum, and Classroom Assessment says she finds a level of hopefulness in ETS's new teacher professional development program.

"*Keeping Learning on Track* ties assessment to daily instruction so closely that the teachers using the program in their classrooms can clearly see that it will move children's learning forward," says District Executive Director Donna Snodgrass. "A lot of the teachers find this is a positive way of getting kids engaged, and they want to spread the word."

Staff from the ETS Learning & Teaching Research Group began working with the 10 Cleveland schools — none of which had made adequate yearly progress on statewide assessments as mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act — in fall 2005. They conducted a series of *Keeping Learning on Track* workshops for some 200 CMSD staff members, and trained school leaders to lead school-based teacher learning communities. The ETS researchers have been providing consultation to participants on a sustained basis.

Reaction has been so positive that Learning & Teaching Research staff were asked to present a one-day seminar to the principals and Cleveland Teachers Union building representatives for all CMSD schools last December. Snodgrass says there is strong interest in continuing the program and expanding it next year. "The school district plans to sustain the teacher learning communities in the 10 original schools and to create even more of them in those buildings," she says. "In addition, the district wants to bring in five new buildings next year, and we are working with ETS to accomplish that." ✨



Martha Figueroa and other elementary school teachers in Cleveland, Ohio, are participating in an innovative professional development program.





- A two-day introductory workshop for teachers and school leaders that provides an overview of *Keeping Learning on Track* strategies and techniques; and a two-day workshop for teachers who will lead school-based teacher learning communities focused on assessment for learning. Both workshops are led by ETS trainers.
- *Keeping Learning on Track* modules to guide monthly teacher learning community meetings.
- Ongoing consultative help from ETS trainers to ensure the effort is effective at changing teacher practice in ways that improve student learning.

*Keeping Learning on Track* features five key strategies:

- Engineering effective class discussions, questions and learning tasks that elicit evidence of student learning.
- Clarifying and sharing learning intentions and criteria for success.
- Providing feedback that moves learners forward.
- Encouraging and facilitating students to be the owners of their own learning.
- Encouraging and facilitating students as instructional resources for one another.

“These strategies define the territory of assessment for learning,” Thompson says. “But it is entirely up to the teacher to select, adapt or invent the specific teaching techniques that will make these strategies come alive in the classroom. At this point, we have almost 100 techniques for teachers to choose from.”

One technique teachers can use to check student understanding is to ask a multiple-choice “hinge question.” The lesson can continue in different directions depending on what answer the student provides. “By planning their hinge questions in advance, teachers can be more responsive to their students’ immediate learning needs,” Thompson says.

Another technique that provides visual evidence of learning is Stop/Slow Signals. “Students assess — and become owners of — their own learning as they hold up yellow or red cards or cups that tell the teacher to slow down or even stop teaching when they don’t understand what’s being presented,” she says.

“The monthly teacher learning communities are so helpful,” Thompson notes, “because they create a supportive network of teachers who are trying out assessment for learning techniques in their classrooms and sharing them with their colleagues.”

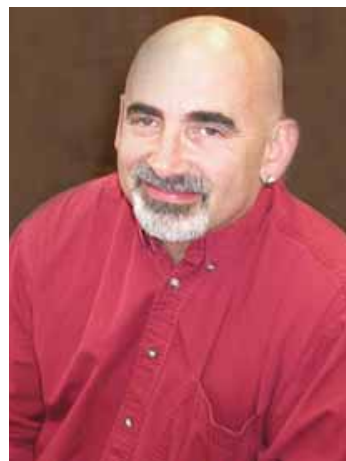
### Ongoing research

Research on *Keeping Learning on Track* is ongoing. “For example, we have a research team in Cleveland, Ohio, observing teacher learning community meetings and conducting classroom observations,”

Thompson explains. “The researchers are collecting both qualitative and quantitative data, including district test scores, to determine how teachers are participating in the teacher learning communities, how they’re using the *Keeping Learning on Track* strategies and techniques in their classrooms to adapt instruction, and whether student achievement is being raised because of these improvements in teaching.”

Because the issue of institutionalization is so critical to the program’s success, researchers will also investigate these other key questions:

- As student learning improves, is the value of *Keeping Learning on Track* recognized throughout the school?
- Are more teachers adopting *Keeping Learning on Track*, with support from teachers in teacher learning communities and the broader school culture?
- Is this leading to continued improvements in teaching, improvements in student achievement, and reductions in achievement gaps?



*Research shows the effectiveness of assessment for learning across grades, content areas and countries, says Senior ETS Research Director Dylan Wiliam.*

### Reaching worldwide goals

“Improving student achievement and reducing the achievement gap are worldwide goals,” Wiliam says. “Prior research shows that teacher learning communities can provide a most effective process for teacher change, and that a focus on assessment for learning is the most powerful, and yet most neglected, aspect of teacher practice. By fusing these, educators have the real possibility of reaching those goals and giving students power over their own lives.”

For more information, visit [www.ets.org/klf](http://www.ets.org/klf). 

# Closing the Achievement Gap:

## Delivering on the Promise of Opportunity



Public education has been at the core of American society from the nation's earliest days — ever since Congress, in the Land Ordinance of 1785, ordered that one lot in each new township in the Western Territory be set aside for public schooling.

The law reflected a belief, current at the time, that democracy depended on an educated citizenry.

That belief has held firm through the generations, embodying America's faith in learning and its promise of equal opportunity.

As the United States Supreme Court wrote in *Brown v. Board of Education*, the landmark 1954 decision overturning racial segregation in the public schools, education "is the very foundation of good citizenship."

And it's a belief that holds true today, evidenced by the federal [No Child Left Behind](#)

[Act](#), which aims to close the academic achievement gap among students of different racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds.

"The history of public education in the United States shows this constant struggle to make good on the promise of equal opportunity, to make the belief a reality," says ETS President and CEO Kurt Landgraf, one of the nation's most energetic advocates of education reform and of closing the achievement gap.

"It's a struggle that produces generational watersheds and calls to action," Landgraf says. "The land grants of the 18th and 19th centuries, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *No Child Left Behind* — these are expressions of the belief that education and democracy sustain each other.

"For ETS, whose mission is to advance quality and equity in education for all people, this is our struggle, too. It's part of who we are as an organization, and it's why so much of our effort is devoted to closing the achievement gap."

### Race, ethnicity and money matter

The first step in that effort involves mapping the gap's dimensions through research.

"Before we can develop assessment-based strategies and approaches to help nar-

row and close the achievement gap, we need to identify and understand it," says Ida Lawrence, ETS's Senior Vice President for Research & Development. "Unfortunately, an inescapable conclusion of our research is that when it comes to the quality of education, race, ethnicity and money matter."

Lawrence points to ETS's groundbreaking study *Parsing the Achievement Gap: Baselines for Tracking Progress*, which identified the core factors that create and sustain gaps in achievement among different groups of students. Those factors range from birth weight, nutrition and parental involvement in a child's education, to curriculum rigor, class size, and teacher quality.

"In every instance, we found that minority students are disadvantaged relative to their White counterparts in the conditions and experiences conducive to academic achievement," says Michael Nettles, Senior Vice President of ETS's Policy Evaluation & Research Center.

The report found, for example, that minority and poor students move from one residence to another more often than more-affluent White students: 27 percent of African American third-graders changed schools three or more times since first grade, compared with 25 percent of Hispanic students, and just 13 percent of White students.

The history of public education in the United States shows a constant struggle to make good on the promise of equal opportunity.

“Can you imagine being seven years old and already having moved three, four or five times?” Nettles asks. “How at ease and ready to learn will that youngster be in a new school every year? How well will her teachers know her?”

Disparities in school resources show up early, especially in teacher quality. Nettles notes that research at ETS and elsewhere shows that teachers in high-poverty schools are less experienced and less qualified than those in low-poverty schools. They are also less likely to hold an academic degree in the subjects they’re teaching, he says.

### Early experiences, later echoes

Such early setbacks compound over the course of a student’s academic career. An ETS report on high school completion, *One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities*, noted a link between students’ racial and ethnic backgrounds and high school dropout rates. According to the report, 72 percent of White students finish high school vs. 54 percent of Native American students, 52 percent of Hispanic students, and 51 percent of African American students.

For those students who work hard and make it through high school, the postsecondary world offers its own challenges, ranging from the high cost of higher education to a lack of the support and mentoring that are so important for postsecondary success.

“There is a particular poignancy to successful, high-achieving students beating the odds and making it to college, only to stumble as they try to navigate the maze of financial aid on their own, or because they feel adrift in the unfamiliar culture of a university campus,” says Nettles.

To examine the issue, ETS teamed with The Goldman Sachs Foundation last fall for a symposium titled “Developing High-Poten-

tial Youth.” It was one of a series of achievement-gap symposia ETS has organized.

“What we learned at the symposium was that young people from underrepresented backgrounds have a tendency to ‘leak’ out of the educational pipeline that for other students leads to high-level careers,” ETS President Landgraf says.

“But we also learned that plugging the leak is often merely a matter of providing timely, accurate, meaningful information and support to these high-potential students and their families about the world of higher education,” Landgraf says. “That requires resources and commitment, but it’s something that can be fixed.”

And in fact, Landgraf notes, many colleges and universities, including some of the most selective institutions in the nation, are collaborating with nonprofit organizations, foundations and corporations to broaden the demographics of their student bodies.

Other recent ETS achievement-gap symposia include 2005’s “Latino Achievement in the Sciences, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics,” at which ETS, the College Board® and

the Hispanic Research Center at Arizona State University launched a nationwide initiative to attract Hispanic students into the STEM fields.

Also last year, an ETS report titled *Fragile Futures: Risk and Vulnerability Among Latino High-Achievers* noted that many high-achieving Latino students miss the opportunity to succeed academically because their needs are poorly understood. As a result, these students’ academic futures

are left “hanging by a thin thread of hope,” according to the report, written by Patricia Gándara, a professor of education at the University of California, Davis.

### Improving teacher quality

Teacher quality has been a consistent focus of ETS’s work on the achievement gap.

“Research, experience and common sense tell us that a good teacher — someone who knows the subject well and has the pedagogical skills to teach the material in an engaging way — can make all the difference,” Landgraf says. “Teacher quality is the most important factor in a child’s learning experience.”

Given the importance of teacher quality, ETS works hard to develop products and services that support teachers’ professional development, such as the *Pathwise®* Series of teacher and school-leader programs.

Classroom assessments, too, are proving to be valuable tools in helping to close the achievement gap. These “formative” assessments measure what students are learning

during the course of the school year and show teachers who’s learning, who’s not, and how they can adjust their practice and lessons accordingly. (See “Keeping Learning on Track,” page 3.)

Understanding the causes of the achievement gap through research, developing the tools to help educators narrow and ultimately close the gap, supporting teachers, students and families in their pursuit of educational opportunity — these are the goals that animate ETS’s mission to advance quality and equity in education for all people worldwide.

“There’s so much at stake in this cause,” says Landgraf. “The work we do as a society to address inequities in our public schools will echo in the lives of individual students and in history.”



*Teachers in high-poverty schools are less experienced than those in low-poverty schools, says Michael Nettles, Senior VP of ETS’s Policy Evaluation & Research Center.*



*We need to understand the achievement gap before we can close it, says Ida Lawrence, ETS’s Senior VP for Research & Development.*



# TOEFL® Test Launches Anew With a Groundbreaking Assessment

*The new Internet-based version allows for  
greater access across the globe*



When research showed that ETS's widely used *Test of English as a Foreign Language*™ (TOEFL®) could be structured more effectively, ETS took action. The resulting test, called TOEFL iBT, incorporates the latest knowledge about English-language learning with an Internet-based delivery mechanism — making it the world's first integrated-skills English-proficiency test to be delivered online.

The original TOEFL test was based on language-instruction norms of the time. These focused on learning about a language and on isolating and analyzing the elements of that language. Today's research, in contrast, shows that a communicative approach, in which people interact with others and communicate in real-life situations, produces better results.

"The trend in language teaching is to integrate skills, rather than to teach them in isolation, and focus on skill knowledge rather than language use," says Mari Pearlman, Senior Vice President of the [Higher Education Division](#) at ETS. "University admissions officers and educators asked to see this same integration incorporated into the TOEFL test. With their help, ETS's research and development experts worked together to deliver a test that is even stronger and that can be accessed by a larger group of English-language learners worldwide."

## Strengthening English-language learning

The *Test of English as a Foreign Language* measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to use and understand English as it is spoken, written and heard in college and university settings. More than 6,000 colleges and universities in 110 countries accept results from the test, and more than 18 million people have taken it to date. In 2005, 825,000 non-native English speakers in 180 countries took the exam to establish their proficiency in English.

"When ETS decided to rework the TOEFL test, it was already widely known as the leading assessment of academic English," says ETS Senior Assessment Director Tina Wright. "But in keeping with our commitment to promote learning to communicate — and at the request of the education community — we decided to take a fresh look at it. Ultimately, we sought to create a test that would carry even more weight in the education community because it better supported learners and learning around the world."

How to gain that additional strength became the question for ETS. The answer emerged from the company's extensive research.

"When we started exploring how to improve the TOEFL test, we found that we could use more communicative tasks while maintaining high standards of measurement quality," says Research Group Leader Mary Enright. ETS, she says, took this information and created a new TOEFL test product that bolsters English-language learning overall.

ETS introduced TOEFL iBT across the United States on Sept. 24, 2005, and in Canada, France, Germany and Italy the following month. The company will introduce the new test throughout the rest of the world in 2006.

The exam tests the ability to read, listen and then speak in response to a question; to listen and then speak in response to a question; and to read, listen and then write in response to a question.

"After a decade of research in university settings, we have a test that measures all four communication skills and uses an integrated skills approach that simulates university-level language demands," Pearlman says. "TOEFL iBT provides educators with better information about students' proficiencies and will result in better-prepared students."

Other improvements include performance feedback on score reports to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, an expanded writing section, and a new speaking section.

## TOEFL iBT Assessment





"Unlike other English-language tests, we do not use face-to-face interviews for the speaking section of the test," Pearlman says. "The interview method may add bias to a test depending on the rapport between the test taker and interviewer. TOEFL test takers record their spoken English. And instead of relying on one person's impression, ETS has between three and six highly trained raters review test-taker responses. It's fairer for students and more accurate for universities."

### Innovation in test delivery

Also promoting fairness is the test's groundbreaking delivery method: TOEFL iBT is the first large-scale English-proficiency assessment to be delivered over the Internet, allowing increased access for test takers. Score reports, too, are delivered online, allowing test takers to view their scores 15 business days after taking the test. Institutions and test takers receive hard copies of these reports as well.

Students can take the TOEFL iBT exam at Thomson Prometric test centers and at other Internet-based university and education locations. ETS aims to have between 2,000 and 3,000 test centers in more than 130 countries by the end of 2007, with each test center offering 30 to 40 administrations a year.

"We are very proud of the new test. Rolling out an entirely new Internet-based delivery system has been challenging, but by the end of 2006, we are certain that we will have Internet testing capabilities in virtually every location around the world in which Internet connectivity is reliably available," Pearlman says. "The test's integrated tasks support the education community's effort to link teaching and learning with testing, and its Internet-based delivery opens the door for a far greater contingent of students. We are pleased to have delivered this product and look forward to seeing it flourish further."

For the latest information about TOEFL iBT or to access a free practice test, go to [www.ets.org/toefl](http://www.ets.org/toefl). ✨



To prepare for the TOEFL® Internet-based test (iBT), students and teachers in the United States and abroad alike need access to a new set of learning tools, ones that help them focus on building communicative English skills.

The new *Test of English as a Foreign Language™* assesses the listening, reading, writing and speaking skills of students for whom English is a second language. What makes TOEFL iBT a landmark exam is that it tests these skills in an integrated manner — and over the Internet.

To help students succeed on the test, ETS has created the following:

- **TOEFL Practice Online**

This free service provides targeted practice as well as instant scores and feedback.

- **The Official Guide to the New TOEFL iBT**

Published by McGraw-Hill, this guide helps students learn about and best prepare for the new test.

In addition to encouraging students to study differently, ETS expects the test to promote changes in teaching practices — especially outside the United States, where the integrated approach to teaching is not necessarily the norm.

"Huge infrastructures and cultures are still based around rote memorization," says Paul A. Ramsey, Senior Vice

President of ETS's Global Division. "The new test will have a positive effect on these classrooms because people will be motivated to teach communicatively. In the United States, where communicative teaching has been the trend, there will no longer be a dichotomy between teaching and testing."

ETS also offers the following learning tools:

- **NorthStar: Building Skills for the TOEFL iBT**

Co-created by ETS and Pearson Longman, the NorthStar program for TOEFL iBT targets 10 skills for mastering the new test. It is part of a learning series with accompanying study guides for students.

- **Professional Development Workshops**

Helping teachers understand TOEFL iBT from the inside out, these workshops turn

test specifications into learning objectives around which teachers can create lessons and activities.

"TOEFL iBT helps underscore the fact that teaching and testing are really two sides of the same coin," says Mari Pearlman, Senior Vice President of ETS's Higher Education Division. "It's a clear example of how teaching to the test can be a good thing."

For more information on TOEFL iBT learning tools, go to [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org). ✨

With TOEFL iBT, teaching to the test can be a good thing.

# Global Skill Needs Measured Through Online Literacy Tests

The Education Minister of the Cayman Islands recently sounded an alarm about Caymanians graduating from high school with a lack of basic language skills, making it difficult for them to compete for jobs. In San Antonio, Texas, city and business leaders are working to raise the city's literacy rate by promoting programs that advance basic skills in reading, writing and math so local residents can earn better-paying jobs. In Nigeria, the federal government is establishing a radio station to improve literacy at the grassroots level and encourage human development in the country.

As these and thousands of similar initiatives show, literacy skills have become a currency in America and around the world. "People with below-average skills cannot expect to get good jobs and earn above average wages in an increasingly global economy," says Irwin Kirsch, Senior Research Director at ETS's Center for Global Assessment. "Studies show that literacy skills are essential to developing the human capital that influences the social and economic outcomes of individuals and nations. People need these skills to process printed, written and now digital information to function in society, to achieve their goals, and to develop their knowledge and potential."

## Two new tests

To provide information that individuals, institutions and policymakers can use to determine if there is a need to improve literacy skills and to better focus teaching and learning activities, last fall ETS began offering two online computerized literacy tests, the **PDQ Profile™ Series** and the **Health Activities Literacy Test**. Based on the legacy and the extensive research base of the

large-scale National Adult Literacy Survey and International Adult Literacy Survey, the ETS tests measure essential skills for lifelong learning and health-related activities. They are available in American English and will be offered in Canadian English, Canadian French, and Spanish in the near future.

Julie Eastland, Program Administrator in the Center for Global Assessment, says that governments to date have purchased more than 80,000 ETS literacy tests. "The Canadian government is going to use the PDQ Profile Series in its nationwide adult literacy program," Eastland says. "Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, which works to improve the standard of living of Canadians by promoting a highly skilled and mobile workforce, will be using it in various settings, including college and workplace locations. New Zealand and Belgium are using the PDQ Profile Series, as well."

## Low overhead

According to Eastland, institutions like the fact that, unlike most other literacy tests that are paper-and-pencil based, the ETS tests don't require staff to administer and hand-score the open-ended tasks. Also, the data are downloadable using any spreadsheet software. "Researchers tend to be the biggest individual users," she notes.

The PDQ Profile Series consists of tests that provide accurate information about an individual's skill at using written and printed information associated with adult roles and contexts. PDQ refers to the Prose, Document and Quantitative literacy proficiency scales used in the large-scale surveys and in these new computerized tests.



- Prose literacy measures how well individuals understand and use information found in newspapers, magazines, novels, brochures, manuals and fliers.
- Document literacy assesses how well a person understands information in forms, schedules, charts and graphs, and tables.
- Quantitative literacy involves reading the same type of materials associated with Prose and Document literacy, but differs in that the individual needs to identify the appropriate information and perform one or more arithmetic operations using these materials.

## Health literacy

The Health Activities Literacy Test also provides accurate information about an individual's skill at using written and printed information, but focuses on health-related activities that are defined in terms of health promotion, health protection, disease prevention, health care and maintenance, and systems navigation. These activities are associated with literacy behaviors such as reading information about how to stay healthy and knowing what to do if you become ill.

"The tests capitalize on and extend new computer technologies that allow for real-time scoring and reporting of the everyday open-ended literacy tasks," Kirsch says. "They are adaptive in that they select sets of questions based on an individual's level of skill, making the test shorter and more precise. And they automatically produce individual score reports that emphasize the test taker's strengths and weaknesses with particular types of literacy tasks."

Most important, Kirsch adds, the information that comes from these tests can be used by individuals, institutions, researchers and policymakers to target critical resources and educational interventions to improve adult literacy.

More information is available online at [www.ets.org/etsliteracy](http://www.ets.org/etsliteracy). 🌟





**ETS Policy Notes**—  
**“Addressing Achievement Gaps: Leading the Challenge of Developing High-Potential Youth”** —  
 The Spring 2006 issue of

*ETS Policy Notes* presents highlights of a symposium on developing high-potential youth, co-sponsored by The Goldman Sachs Foundation and ETS. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/highpotentialyouth.html](http://www.ets.org/highpotentialyouth.html).



**“Locked Up and Locked Out: An Educational Perspective on the U.S. Prison Population”**  
 (Richard J. Coley and Paul E. Barton, February 2006)

— This ETS Policy Information Report describes the rising prison population and its characteristics, examines the status of prison education programs and their impact, and reviews programs that try to help ex-prisoners re-enter society. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/lockeduplockedout.html](http://www.ets.org/lockeduplockedout.html).



**“Fragile Futures: Risk and Vulnerability Among Latino High Achievers”**  
 (Patricia Gándara, December 2005) — This

ETS Policy Information Report focuses on the unique needs of high-achieving Latino students, a group frequently overlooked in discussions about the achievement gap. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/fragilefutures.html](http://www.ets.org/fragilefutures.html).



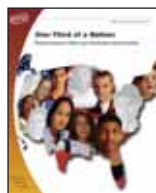
**ETS Policy Notes** —  
**“Addressing Achievement Gaps: The Progress and Challenges of Women and Girls in Education and Work”** — The Fall 2005

issue of *ETS Policy Notes* provides an overview of the presentations made at an ETS symposium on the progress women and girls have made in education and work, and the challenges they still face. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/womenandgirlsgap.html](http://www.ets.org/womenandgirlsgap.html).



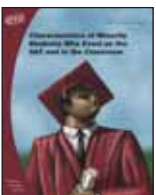
**“Using Student Progress to Evaluate Teachers: A Primer on Value-Added Models”** (Henry I. Braun, September 2005) — This

ETS Policy Information Perspective is intended to help educators and policymakers better understand the benefits and limitations of using value-added models to evaluate teachers. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/valueadded-models.html](http://www.ets.org/valueadded-models.html).



**“One-Third of a Nation: Rising Dropout Rates and Declining Opportunities”**  
 (Paul E. Barton, February 2005) — This ETS Policy

Information Report documents rising high school dropout rates, declining public investments in second-chance programs, and deteriorating opportunities for dropouts in the job market. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/onethirdofanation.html](http://www.ets.org/onethirdofanation.html).



**“Characteristics of Minority Students Who Excel on the SAT and in the Classroom”** (Brent Bridgeman and Cathy Wendler, January 2005) — This ETS Policy

Information Report finds that all students who take rigorous courses and actively participate in high school activities can achieve high scores on the SAT. For a free copy, go to [www.ets.org/minoritystudentsat.html](http://www.ets.org/minoritystudentsat.html).



**“A Primer on Setting Cut Scores on Tests of Educational Measurement”**  
 (Michael Zieky and Marianne Perie) — This 24-

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