



TECHNOLOGY

High Level Language Aptitude Battery and Profile System (Hi-LAB)

OVERVIEW

Background

Prior research has shown that certain adults have a higher capacity for learning foreign languages than others. However, it has been difficult to predict which individuals will have the greatest potential to learn (i.e. speak at a near-native level of proficiency) before teaching it to a large cohort and seeing which students progress faster. If students could be assessed for learning potential prior to language training, employers and educators could assess which students are most likely to benefit from language education.

Innovative Technology

Researchers at the University of Maryland have developed an aptitude battery of the potential to reach very advanced levels in a foreign language despite beginning to learn at an age past the critical period (after teenage years). By using a series of tests indicating working memory, associative memory, phonemic categorization, and other variables, it can be determined what level of proficiency a particular learner can achieve, and what learning style is best for them to achieve the highest results. Indicators showing a high level of learning potential can be easily shown and interpreted by a profiling score card system. For companies looking to deploy employees overseas or work with speakers of foreign languages, this test will help identify the candidates best suited to work in those capacities before incurring the cost of training an employee in a foreign language. This method has been used successfully by the U.S. Government in the selection of employees for foreign service and language learning. In addition, a learners language aptitude profile can be used to inform language pedagogy and create customized curriculum based on his/her specific cognitive strengths.

CONTACT INFO

UM Ventures
0134 Lee Building
7809 Regents Drive
College Park, MD 20742
Email: umdtechtransfer@umd.edu
Phone: (301) 405-3947 | Fax: (301) 314-9502

Additional Information

INSTITUTION

University of Maryland, College Park

CATEGORIES

- Education/Training/Multimedia
- Information Technology

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

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