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Predictors of Academic Achievement in Multilingual Learners

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Abstract

Predictors of Academic Achievement in Multilingual Learners

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This research examined what factors predicted higher academic achievements in first language (L1) and non-first language (L2) English learners in Grades 8 and 9. The sample was drawn from a single school in which the language of instruction was English, and the mid-year and year-end results were examined and compared for both groups. The Differential Aptitude Test Form S (DAT-S) was used as the predictor of academic achievement, and the aim of the research was to show which aptitudes as predicted by the DAT-S were the best predictors of subsequent academic performance across the two linguistic groups. For both groups, although the trend was more pronounced in the L2 group, it was found that proficiency in the English language was the best predictor of academic performance across most school subjects. This trend proved to be robust in subjects that specifically called for usage of English, as well as subjects where mathematics and calculation was involved. It was concluded that the best predictor of subsequent academic achievement in an English language instructional environment was linguistic proficiency in English.