

The University of California, Irvine

The Department of Education

presents

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12:00PM – 1:30PM

Room – 2024 Education

**Unhinging the Instructional Potential of a Language Test:
Examining the Validity of a Large-scale Test for Diagnostic Purposes**

Classroom teachers are continually faced with the challenge of providing feedback to an increasingly diverse population of English Language Learners (ELL), whether new immigrants or American-born students. At this critical juncture of teaching and learning, diagnostic assessment is a useful tool for facilitating targeted instruction. In response to this demand for diagnostic tools, existing large-scale tests are retrofitted to serve this diagnostic purpose. Despite this multiplicity of such test use, few studies have examined the validity of these tests for the new purpose. In my presentation, I will describe the results of my dissertation research that examines the validity of the Canadian Academic English Language (CAEL) Assessment for the diagnostic purposes from the perspective of raters, teachers, and students. More specifically, I will focus on the raters' perspective by highlighting the connection between the CAEL diagnostic qualities observed in ELL academic writing and the advice offered by the raters. The raters selected in this study are experienced teachers and markers of CAEL, and therefore, are in a unique position to suggest feedback to ELLs on how to improve their skills in writing an academic essay.