Objective
To develop an aptitude battery that predicts which adults may successfully learn a foreign language to very advanced levels of proficiency.

Definitions
Language aptitude is a special, inherent talent that not all individuals possess. Language aptitude is not learned, although it may be trained within limits.

Constructs are theoretical concepts. Constructs that may influence language aptitude include working memory and processing speed.

Hi-LAB is the abbreviation for High-Level Language Aptitude Battery. It is a composite test battery, developed by CASL researchers, that measures constructs to predict adults’ foreign language aptitude.

Results of the second reliability study indicate that the Hi-LAB tests meet or exceed reliability standards for test development, their composite score meets the strictest standards for high-stakes personnel selection tests, and they measure a set of separable constructs hypothesized to be relevant to the prediction of near-native foreign language learning.

Relevance
Hi-LAB identifies high-level language learners using innovative measures . . .

Unlike currently used language aptitude tests, which predict success in the early stages of language learning, Hi-LAB uses innovative, computer-delivered cognitive behavioral tasks to predict success at very advanced levels. Examples of these cognitive tasks are working memory tasks, priming tasks, and task-switching.

. . . to assist with the selection, hiring, and training of top language professionals.

Identifying individuals with language aptitude helps focus language hiring and training resources on those who are most likely to succeed at language learning. Analysts with a known higher language aptitude can be selected to work with more difficult, critical languages, such as Chinese and Arabic.

Reports
- Predicting high-level foreign language learning: A new aptitude battery meets reliability standards for personnel selection (June 2010)
- Assessment use argument (March 2009)
- Predicting near-native ability: The factor structure and reliability of Hi-LAB (February 2009)

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