Title of Project:
A Students' Perspective on a High-stakes Test and its Effects on Test Performance

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Project Summary:
Since the 1980s, validity theory in educational measurement and language testing has witnessed a shift from a focus on validity investigation of the test itself to score interpretation for a particular test use. When the social dimensions and consequences of assessment are included in discussions of validity, the test stakeholders' position has to be re-evaluated. An increasing number of scholars recognise the process of exploring students' perspectives on a test as a key part of test validation, in order to re-evaluate the promoted standards and intended results, and to discover any unintended and unpredicted occurrences in practice (Bachman and Palmer, 2010; Davies, 2008; Hawkey, 2006; Saville, 2012). However, the issue is still under investigation: on what aspects of language assessment and at what stage of testing are students capable of providing meaningful information valuable for test development, validation and test revision. Until now, no research has attempted to take the dynamic social context and individual characteristics into consideration and question whether and how students' perspectives on a test affect their test performance. This project intends to explore from students' perspectives whether a high-stakes test (the College English Test) in China has achieved its intended purposes, and to reveal the potential interactions between students' perspectives on a test and their test performance, thus providing empirical evidence for researchers and test developer to reconsider the significance of students' perspectives in the process of testing and that of the integration of value implications in test construct and test use with validity discussion.