

AEBG ESL Crosswalk Meeting Notes

Tuesday, December 4, 2017

The purpose of this meeting was to develop a draft crosswalk between the English as a Second Language (ESL) English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards that have been proposed for the National Reporting System (NRS) and the descriptors for CB21 levels, which are associated with California community college levels below a transfer-level course (note: shortly after this meeting, the draft descriptors were adopted by the federal government).

Once the new ELP standards are incorporated into a revised CASAS test, this crosswalk will help to establish equivalencies between measurable skills gains associated with assessment test scores and the gains associated with moving from one level of the college ESL sequence to the next, for the purpose of legislative reporting for the Adult Education Block Grant (AEBG). In addition, adult education consortia can leverage this crosswalk to support regional efforts to align adult schools' evolving curricula and determine placement methodologies. Finally, the findings of the group will be shared with the Chancellor's Office to support efforts to develop ESL multiple measures for AB705.

The meeting was attended by ESL faculty from K-12 adult education providers, community college noncredit programs, and community college credit programs. The group spent the meeting reviewing and editing a crosswalk of ELP descriptors to the CB21 competencies associated with the community college Common Assessment Initiative (CAI).

The group established the following pre-requisite framework, which showed nearly the same results as the crosswalk developed for the current EFLs:

A Student Who Completed the Proposed ELP Level	A Student Who Completed the Current EFL Level	Is Ready for the CB21 Level Course
Level 5		Integrated ESL Advanced One level prior to transfer level English (A)
	Advanced ESL	Integrated ESL Low Advanced Two levels prior to transfer level English (B)
Level 4	High Intermediate ESL	Integrated ESL High Intermediate Three levels prior to transfer level English (C)
Level 3	Low Intermediate ESL	Integrated ESL Low Intermediate Four levels prior to transfer level English (D)
Level 2	High Beginning ESL	Integrated ESL Beginning High Five levels prior to transfer level English (E)
Level 1	Low Beginning ESL	Integrated ESL Low Beginning

		Six levels prior to transfer level English (F)
--	--	--

Key factors in the alignment included:

- the frequent reference in ELP Levels 1-3 to concepts being mastered “with support”
- the nature of the reading assignments outlined in the CAI descriptors
- the emphasis on academic language that appears in college Low Beginning classes (six levels below transfer) and expository writing that appears in college High Intermediate classes (three levels below transfer)

However, there were several important caveats to this crosswalk:

- 1) In the CAI descriptors, between five and one levels below transfer, students progress from writing short notes to letters to informal texts to formal texts to multi-paragraph essays. However, some ESL program representatives reported move students from short notes to essays in a single level. Consortia should closely examine pedagogy, support structures, and the prior education of its English language learners to ensure that students can progress through the sequence in the most expedient manner, while taking into account the types of reading and writing tasks expected in a community college environment.
- 2) There was significant disagreement regarding ELP Level 3, with some faculty feeling that students should be eligible for High Intermediate ESL (3 levels below transfer) and others feeling that they should go into Low Intermediate ESL (4 levels below transfer).
- 3) There is greater specificity for the CAI descriptors than the ELP descriptors, particularly regarding the nature of the reading material that students are engaging. Paired with the fact that the descriptors for ELP Levels 4 and 5 were very similar to each other, and the issue that competencies outlined in ELP Level 5 are aspirational and not often taught in adult schools, the group found it difficult to determine whether ELP Level 5 aligns with one or two levels below transfer.
- 4) There was a strong sense that there is a significant gap between ELP Level 5 and transfer-level English courses. The lack of specificity in the reading materials and the writing outcomes of the ELPs seem to place adult education students at one or two levels below transfer English at the community college. Consortia should examine local curricula to determine what types of supports could enable students to successfully transition to college-level course work, whether through a bridge program that focuses on expository writing or co-requisites that support English language skills such as academic vocabulary and language forms and functions.