



AEBG English Crosswalk Meeting Notes

Tuesday, October 3, 2017

The purpose of this meeting was to develop a draft crosswalk between English Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) associated with the National Reporting System (NRS) and the descriptors for CB21 English and Reading levels, which are associated with California community college levels below a transfer-level course. This crosswalk will help to establish equivalencies between measurable skills gains associated with scores on a federally-approved assessment test and the gains associated with moving from one level of the college basic skills 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 curricula and determine placement methodologies.

The meeting was attended by English faculty from K-12 adult education providers and community colleges. In advance of the meeting, the group was given a draft crosswalk that had been prepared by a subject matter expert, as well as access to all source documents. The meeting was then spent discussing whether the draft alignment was accurate.

***Important note: for the first meeting, the descriptors being compared were for current EFLs, as assessed in the existing CASAS test. However, revised EFLs associated with the College and Career Readiness Standards have been published, which make significant alterations to the content taught at each level. CASAS has developed a revised test, but it has not yet been approved by the federal government. Many adult schools have already aligned their curriculum to these new standards, so the content of courses may not align with the current EFL descriptors or be reflected in CASAS test scores.*

Several important issues were surfaced in discussion.

- 1) An additional meeting should be held where faculty examine crosswalks that compare the revised EFL descriptors and California community college CB21 framework. Given that the revised EFL descriptors are more detailed, it may be possible to compare them to the assessment competencies created for the community college Common Assessment Initiative.
- 2) The current EFLs describe the skills that students should have when they *enter* a course, whereas the CB21 levels identify the skills students have when they *complete* a course. When the EFLs were shifted down one level to reflect this difference, it revealed larger gaps between adult ed and community college standards that had been documented in prior crosswalks. (CB21 descriptors will be easier to align with the revised EFLs, as they both focus on exit, rather than entrance, competencies.)
- 3) There is greater specificity for the CB21 descriptors than for the current EFL descriptors, making it difficult to tell the nature of potential gaps in expected skills, as well as the intent of specific federal items. The group recommended that the discussion focus on high-level skills as a first step, with an emphasis on flagging places where alignment was not strong. Furthermore, additional information is needed to fully evaluate the High Adult Secondary Education descriptor. Due to an apparent typo in the federal descriptor (“literacy works”), clarification is required on whether the focus is on academic literature.

- 4) The current EFL descriptors and the college framework are fairly closely aligned at the lowest levels, but diverge as students progress up the sequence, with college pathways putting a stronger emphasis on skills such as reading academic texts, writing persuasive essays, and citing multiple sources. Some examples of gaps between the current EFL descriptors and the college framework include:
- CB21 Level E in English has students writing three-to-five paragraph compositions, which is more complex than the simple paragraphs described in Low Intermediate Basic Education.
 - CB21 Level D in English includes writing expository essays and incorporating resources, which are higher-level skills than those described for High Intermediate Basic Education.
 - CB21 Level C in Reading focuses more on comprehending inferences than Low Adult Secondary Education.
 - CB21 Level C in English and Level B in Reading put a greater emphasis on analyzing literature and acquiring academic vocabulary, as opposed to a focus on nonfiction and technical texts in High Adult Secondary Education.
 - CB21 Level A in English addresses skills such as synthesizing multiple works of literature and writing persuasive essays, whereas High Adult Secondary Education describes analyzing information from multiple sources and does not specify genres of writing or mention persuasion.

However, as noted above, many adult schools are aligning to the new federal College & Career Readiness Standards that seek to prepare students for college-level coursework, which means they are integrating more academic English concepts into their curriculum.

Once the crosswalk can be updated to include the revised EFLs, some members of the group felt that it would be important to examine whether there is a significant difference between expected skills for successful completion of adult school and entry into college-level coursework. College-ready expectations should be closely examined to determine how to bridge gaps in state requirements for a high school equivalency and entry into credit-bearing coursework in an open-access postsecondary institution. This analysis should ensure that adult education students are not being held to a higher standard than other students.