



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE

National Reporting System



Let's get to work.

OACES

Office of Adult & Career Education Services
Rochester City School District

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE

The Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES), a department of the Rochester City School District, and the Catholic Family Center (CFC) have collaborated to support various community agencies in their efforts to provide services to new Americans.

This guide was partially funded by the New York State Office of New Americans (ONA). ONA supports programs that encourage new Americans to fully participate in New York State civic and economic life by providing training for English Language Learners, helping legal permanent residents navigate the path to citizenship, and encouraging entrepreneurship. ONA is taking steps to protect new Americans as they transition to full participation in New York's communities.



CONTENTS

What Is Adult Education?	1
History of the National Reporting System (NRS).....	4
The Importance of the NRS	4
NRS Goals and Outcomes.....	5
Components of the National Reporting System (NRS).....	5
Educational Gain	6
Educational Functioning Levels.....	7
Functioning Level Table (ABE/ASE & ESL).....	8
Assessing and Measuring Educational Gain	14
Additional Information & Sources.....	15
Notes.....	16

WHAT IS ADULT EDUCATION?

Adult Education is instruction, often at no cost, for adult learners who want to improve their employability, education, or English language skills. Adult Education programs offer basic reading, writing, math, and problem-solving classes, English language lessons, employment preparation and training, Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) preparation, and other basic educational services for adult learners. Adult Education includes Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE) as well as English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL / ESL).

Adult Education programs are for adults 16 years of age and older who are not in school, who have academic skills below the 12th grade level, and/or who need help learning English. The goal of Adult Education is to help adults reach their full potential as workers, family members, and citizens.

Adult Education is funded in part by the federal and state governments, with local and community support. Many programs receive grant funding from private and corporate sources. The New York State Education Department's (NYSED) Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) unit oversees Adult Education programs in New York. ACCES works with public schools, community-based organizations, colleges, correctional facilities, and other agencies to provide Adult Education services.

In Rochester, the Office of Adult and Career Education Services (OACES) is a workforce preparation organization that helps adult students learn the skills they need for success in the workplace and outside the classroom.

With unique focus on the education and employment needs of New York State's adult citizens, several vital interests and goals can be best served through:

- Ensuring that the needs of adults and out-of-school youth are met through efficient and effective access to relevant services, programs, and opportunities offered by the NYSED.
- Encouraging full participation of adults with disabilities.

- Enhancing post-secondary transitions by developing the capacity of individuals to engage in post-secondary education leading to high-quality employment opportunities.
- Promoting workforce investment through unified collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor and State and local Workforce Investment Boards to assure that individuals have access to a “one-stop” source for a full range of services leading to high-quality employment opportunities.
- Supporting individuals experiencing poverty and relying on public services to develop their capacity to earn income and develop assets toward greater economic independence.
- Utilizing a more comprehensive and effective representation for adults in coordinating services and program initiatives with New York State agencies such as the Departments of Labor and Health, the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), the Office of Children and Family Services, and the State University of New York (SUNY).

There are multiple literacies addressed by Adult Education.

- Survival Literacy
- Oral/Speaking and Written Literacy
- Cultural/Social and Civic Literacy
- Workplace and Employment Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Financial Literacy
- Technological and Digital/Electronic Literacy
- Geographic Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Scientific Literacy



The importance of each of these literacies in an individual’s life varies based on specific circumstances. They all, however, have the

potential to greatly affect the life of every adult and his/her family. Literacy begins within the family and is reinforced, whether positively or negatively, in subsequent generations. Adult Education seeks to reinforce, promote, and support literacy to help adults reach their full potential as workers, family members, and citizens and in turn continue the cycle of literacy into the future.

Adult Education provides for the Community in numerous ways:

- Adult Education programs benefit businesses, workers, and job seekers. Businesses encourage Adult Education in order to provide and sustain a highly skilled and specialized workforce a workforce with the skills to perform a variety of tasks or workers with “cross-functional” skills. Workers may receive promotions, gain more power in the job market, or become more valuable employees by enrolling in Adult Education programs.
- Adult Education training facilities often house state-of-the-art equipment such as computers and computer-based training equipment.
- Adult Education programs benefit families. Increased literacy and skills translate to a higher earnings potential for the household. Parents’ literacy levels directly correlate to their children’s educational success (according to the National Center for Families Learning).

NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM

History of the National Reporting System (NRS)

The National Reporting System (NRS) for Adult Education is a performance and outcome-based reporting system for many state-administered, federally funded adult education programs. The NRS began in the late 1990s, in response to the trend towards greater accountability for both adult education and workforce development programs. The system is designed to demonstrate program effectiveness and improve student outcomes by providing for regular evaluation of workforce development and adult education nationwide—for states, programs, teachers, and students.

When the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act within the Workforce Investment Act (WIA – P.L. 105-220) became law, mandatory statewide implementation of NRS began. In 2000, states began submitting their student and program outcomes to the NRS.

The Importance of the NRS

The NRS ensures accountability for all federally funded workforce development and adult education programs. Developed with the help of workforce development professionals and adult educators, the NRS specifies the reporting requirements for adult education programs. The information collected through the NRS assists in assessing program effectiveness and improving the program's delivery system. At the same time, it enables federally funded programs to meet the accountability requirements as defined by Title II of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The U.S. Department of Education uses information from the NRS to meet accountability requirements and to justify federal investment in adult education programs. NRS performance is closely tied to New York State funding.

The NRS is a valuable tool for states, programs, teachers, and students. Administrators and teachers can track changes or trends in program performance and make adjustments as needed, thus enabling educational systems to produce better-educated adult students.

NRS Goals and Outcomes

The goals of the NRS have established a national accountability system for workforce development and adult education programs by identifying common measures for national reporting and their definitions, establishing methods for data collection, developing software standards for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education, and the New York State Education Department (NYSED). The NRS data assists states in developing training materials and activities based on NRS outcomes. It establishes the standards by which Workforce Preparation and Adult Education Programs show gains and reach outcome targets.

The NRS improves the public accountability of programs by documenting their ability to meet federal policy and programmatic goals. The collection of state outcome data enables states to correlate effective practices and programs with successful outcomes and also assists states in assessing progress in meeting their adult education goals. For local providers, the NRS helps instructors and administrators plan instructional activities and services to enhance student outcomes and to correlate effective practices and programs with successful outcomes.

The data also can tell the areas where programs are doing well, which students succeed in a program, and what types of classes, trainings, and instructional arrangements are most effective.

Components of the National Reporting System (NRS)

These measures are the central measures of the NRS. All NRS measures are required performance standards of the WIA of 1998 which are directly tied to incentive grants. States must report the required measures on all students who receive 12 hours or more of service. The U.S. Department of Education (ED) will only use the core measures for educational gain to judge state performance, including eligibility for incentive grants.

There are three types of measurement

- **Outcome measures** - Provide the overall representation of national performance. The NRS outcome measures are: educational gain, entered employment, retained employment, receipt of secondary school diploma or Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC)

diploma, placement in post-secondary education or training, reduction in public assistance, achieved citizenship skills, vote or register to vote, increase involvement in community activities, children's education and/or literacy-related activities.

- **Descriptive measures** - The NRS descriptive measures are student demographics, status in several areas, and goals for attending. These measures allow for a description and understanding of who attends adult education programs and for what reasons. The measures also allow for analyses of the performance of specific groups of students attending adult education programs, such as unemployed students or students receiving public assistance. The demographic measures include ethnicity, age, and gender; status measures also include employment status and whether the student has a disability or is on public assistance.

- **Participation measures** - The NRS requires collection of student goals for attending the program. The goals designated are used to compute the proportion of students achieving the follow-up measures. Note that goal attainment itself is not an outcome measure in the NRS, although it could be computed from information in the NRS and used as an outcome.

Two participation measures—contact hours and program enrollment type—are collected for both descriptive and analytic purposes. These measures record the amount of instruction students receive and the number of students attending in areas such as family literacy and workplace literacy.

Educational Gain

Educational gain measures the primary purpose of the adult basic education program: to improve the basic literacy skills of participants. This goal is the reason that all students are counted in the educational gain measure. The NRS approach to measuring educational gain is to use the NRS functioning levels at which students are initially placed based on their abilities to perform literacy-related tasks in specific content areas. After administration of a pre-test, students are again assessed to determine their skill levels with a post-test. If their skills have improved sufficiently to be placed one or more levels higher, an "advance" is recorded for that student. For students who entered with a goal of obtaining a secondary school diploma or TASC diploma, there is a measure of whether the student obtains the credential.

Educational Functioning Levels

The NRS divides educational functioning into six levels for both Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL).

The six levels for ABE are beginning literacy, beginning basic education, low and high intermediate basic education, and low and high adult secondary education.

The six ESL levels are beginning literacy, low beginning ESL, high beginning ESL, low and high intermediate ESL, and advanced ESL.

At the low and intermediate levels, the basic reading and writing skills are identical for both ABE and ESL. At the higher levels (secondary level for ABE, advanced level for ESL), the reading and writing skills are designed to be slightly higher for ABE than for ESL because the adult secondary level is designed to be the highest level.

The functional and workplace skills for ABE and ESL also differ somewhat by having a stronger second language focus for ESL. Speaking and listening skills are only described for ESL and numeracy is only described for ABE to reflect common instructional practice.

- The descriptors are entry-level descriptors and are illustrative of what a typical student functioning at that level should be able to do. They are not a full description of skills for a particular level. When a student has skills at one or more levels above the placement level, he or she has completed that level and can advance to the next level.

- Students do not need to be assessed in all of the areas described in the level descriptors. The local program must decide, in accordance with State guidelines, the skill areas most relevant to each student's needs or the program's curriculum, and assess students in these areas. At a minimum, students must be assessed in basic reading, writing, or math.

For more in-depth information about adult ESL resources, see the websites for the Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA) at www.cal.org/caela and the CAELA Network at www.cal.org/caelanetwork.

Outcome Measures Definitions

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>NRS LEVEL 1</p> <p>Beginning ABE Literacy</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores (grade level 0–1.9): Reading: 367 and below Total Math: 313 and below Language: 389 and below</p> <p>CASAS scale scores: Reading: 200 and below Math: 200 and below Writing: 200 and below</p> <p>ABLE scale scores (grade level 0–1.9): Reading: 523 and below Math: 521 and below</p>	<p>Individual has no or minimal reading and writing skills. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument. At the upper range of this level, individual can recognize, read, and write letters and numbers but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading. Can write a limited number of basic sight words and familiar words and phrases; may also be able to write simple sentences or phrases, including very simple messages. Can write basic personal information. Narrative writing is disorganized and unclear, inconsistently uses simple punctuation (e.g., periods, commas, question marks), and contains frequent errors in spelling.</p>	<p>Individual has little or no recognition of numbers or simple counting skills or may have only minimal skills, such as the ability to add or subtract single digit numbers.</p>	<p>Individual has little or no ability to read basic signs or maps and can provide limited personal information on simple forms. The individual can handle routine entry level jobs that require little or no basic written communication or computational skills and no knowledge of computers or other technology.</p>
<hr/> <p>NRS LEVEL 2</p> <p>Beginning Basic Education</p> <p>Test Benchmark: TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores (grade level 2–3.9): Reading: 368–460 Total Math: 314–441 Language: 390–490 CASAS scale scores: Reading: 201–210 Math: 201–210 Writing: 201–225 ABLE scale scores (grade level 2–3.9): Reading: 525–612 Math: 530–591</p>	<p>Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety, but individual shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p>	<p>Individual can count, add, and subtract three digit numbers, can perform multiplication through 12, can identify simple fractions, and perform other simple arithmetic operations.</p>	<p>Individual is able to read simple directions, signs, and maps, fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write phone messages, and make simple changes. There is minimal knowledge of and experience with using computers and related technology. The individual can handle basic entry level jobs that require minimal literacy skills; can recognize very short, explicit, pictorial texts (e.g., understands logos related to worker safety before using a piece of machinery); and can read want ads and complete simple job applications.</p>

Notes: The descriptors are entry-level descriptors and are illustrative of what a typical student functioning at that level should be able to do. They are not a full description of skills for the level. ABE = Adult Basic Learning Examination; CASAS = Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System; SPL = student performance levels; and TABE = Test of Adult Basic Education.

Outcome Measures Definitions

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LEVELS

Literacy Level

NRS LEVEL 3

Low Intermediate Basic Education

Test Benchmark:

TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores

(grade level 4–5.9):

Reading: 461–517

Total Math: 442–505

Language: 491–523

CASAS scale scores:

Reading: 211–220

Math: 211–220

Writing: 226–242

ABLE scale scores (grade level 4–5.9):

Reading: 613–644

Math: 593–641

Basic Reading and Writing

Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with a main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.

Numeracy Skills

Individual can perform with high accuracy all four basic math operations using whole numbers up to three digits and can identify and use all basic mathematical symbols.

Functional and Workplace Skills

Individual is able to handle basic reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles, such as completing medical forms, order forms, or job applications; and can read simple charts, graphs, labels, and payroll stubs and simple authentic material if familiar with the topic. The individual can use simple computer programs and perform a sequence of routine tasks given direction using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer operation). The individual can qualify for entry level jobs that require following basic written instructions and diagrams with assistance, such as oral clarification; can write a short report or message to fellow workers; and can read simple dials and scales and take routine measurements.

NRS LEVEL 4

High Intermediate Basic Education

Test Benchmark:

TABE (7–8 and 9–10) scale scores

(grade level 6–8.9):

Reading: 518–566

Total Math: 506–565

Language: 524–559

CASAS scale scores:

Reading: 221–235

Math: 221–235

Writing: 243–260

ABLE scale score (grade level 6–8.9):

Reading: 646–680

Math: 643–693

WorkKeys scale scores:

Reading for Information:

75–78

Writing: 75–77

Applied Mathematics:

75–77

Individual is able to read simple descriptions and narratives on familiar subjects or from which new vocabulary can be determined by context and can make some minimal inferences about familiar texts and compare and contrast information from such texts but not consistently. The individual can write simple narrative descriptions and short essays on familiar topics and has consistent use of basic punctuation but makes grammatical errors with complex structures.

Individual can perform all four basic math operations with whole numbers and fractions; can determine correct math operations for solving narrative math problems and can convert fractions to decimals and decimals to fractions; and can perform basic operations on fractions.

Individual is able to handle basic life skills tasks such as graphs, charts, and labels and can follow multistep diagrams; can read authentic materials on familiar topics, such as simple employee handbooks and payroll stubs; can complete forms such as a job application and reconcile a bank statement. Can handle jobs that involve following simple written instructions and diagrams; can read procedural texts, where the information is supported by diagrams, to remedy a problem, such as locating a problem with a machine or carrying out repairs using a repair manual. The individual can learn or work with most basic computer software, such as using a word processor to produce own texts, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.

Outcome Measures Definitions

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION LEVELS

Literacy Level

NRS LEVEL 5

Low Adult Secondary Education

Test Benchmark:

TABE (7–8 and 9–10): scale scores

(grade level 9–10.9):

Reading: 567–595

Total Math: 566–594

Language: 560–585

CASAS scale scores:

Reading: 236–245

Math: 236–245

Writing: 261–270

ABLE scale scores (grade level 9–10.9):

Reading: 682–697

Math: 694–716

WorkKeys scale scores:

Reading for Information:
79–81

Writing: 78–85

Applied Mathematics:
78–81

Basic Reading and Writing

Individual can comprehend expository writing and identify spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors; can comprehend a variety of materials such as periodicals and nontechnical journals on common topics; can comprehend library reference materials and compose multi-paragraph essays; can listen to oral instructions and write an accurate synthesis of them; and can identify the main idea in reading selections and use a variety of context issues to determine meaning. Writing is organized and cohesive with few mechanical errors; can write using a complex sentence structure; and can write personal notes and letters that accurately reflect thoughts.

Numeracy Skills

Individual can perform all basic math functions with whole numbers, decimals, and fractions; can interpret and solve simple algebraic equations, tables, and graphs and can develop own tables and graphs; and can use math in business transactions.

Functional and Workplace Skills

Individual is able or can learn to follow simple multistep directions and read common legal forms and manuals; can integrate information from texts, charts, and graphs; can create and use tables and graphs; can complete forms and applications and complete resumes; can perform jobs that require interpreting information from various sources and writing or explaining tasks to other workers; is proficient using computers and can use most common computer applications; can understand the impact of using different technologies; and can interpret the appropriate use of new software and technology.

NRS LEVEL 6

High Adult Secondary Education

Test Benchmark:

TABE (7–8 and 9–10): scale scores

(grade level 11–12):

Reading: 596 and above

Total Math: 595 and above

Language: 586 and above

CASAS scale scores:

Reading: 246 and above

Math: 246 and above

Writing: 271 and above

ABLE scale scores (grade level 11–12):

Reading: 699 and above

Math: 717 and above

WorkKeys scale scores:

Reading for Information:
82–90

Writing: 86–90

Applied Mathematics: 82–90

Individual can comprehend, explain, and analyze information from a variety of literacy works, including primary source materials and professional journals, and can use context cues and higher order processes to interpret meaning of written material. Writing is cohesive with clearly expressed ideas supported by relevant detail, and individual can use varied and complex sentence structures with few mechanical errors.

Individual can make mathematical estimates of time and space and can apply principles of geometry to measure angles, lines, and surfaces and can also apply trigonometric functions.

Individual is able to read technical information and complex manuals; can comprehend some college level books and apprenticeship manuals; can function in most job situations involving higher order thinking; can read text and explain a procedure about a complex and unfamiliar work procedure, such as operating a complex piece of machinery; can evaluate new work situations and processes; and can work productively and collaboratively in groups and serve as facilitator and reporter of group work. The individual is able to use common software and learn new software applications; can define the purpose of new technology and software and select appropriate technology; can adapt use of software or technology to new situations; and can instruct others, in written or oral form, on software and technology use.

Outcome Measures Definitions

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>NRS LEVEL 1</p> <p>Beginning ESL Literacy</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 180 and below Listening: 180 and below Oral BEST: 0–15 (SPL 0–1) BEST Plus: 400 and below (SPL 0–1) BEST Literacy: 0–7 (SPL 0–1)</p>	<p>Individual cannot speak or understand English, or understands only isolated words or phrases.</p>	<p>Individual has no or minimal reading or writing skills in any language. May have little or no comprehension of how print corresponds to spoken language and may have difficulty using a writing instrument.</p>	<p>Individual functions minimally or not at all in English and can communicate only through gestures or a few isolated words, such as name and other personal information; may recognize only common signs or symbols (e.g., stop sign, product logos); can handle only very routine entry-level jobs that do not require oral or written communication in English. There is no knowledge or use of computers or technology.</p>
<hr/> <p>NRS LEVEL 2</p> <p>Low Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 181–190 Listening: 181–190 Writing: 136–145 Oral BEST 16–28 (SPL 2) BEST Plus: 401–417 (SPL 2) BEST Literacy: 8–35 (SPL 2)</p>	<p>Individual can understand basic greetings, simple phrases and commands. Can understand simple questions related to personal information, spoken slowly and with repetition. Understands a limited number of words related to immediate needs and can respond with simple learned phrases to some common questions related to routine survival situations. Speaks slowly and with difficulty. Demonstrates little or no control over grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read numbers and letters and some common sight words. May be able to sound out simple words. Can read and write some familiar words and phrases, but has a limited understanding of connected prose in English. Can write basic personal information (e.g., name, address, telephone number) and can complete simple forms that elicit this information.</p>	<p>Individual functions with difficulty in social situations and in situations related to immediate needs. Can provide limited personal information on simple forms, and can read very simple common forms of print found in the home and environment, such as product names. Can handle routine entry level jobs that require very simple written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge and experience with computers.</p>
<hr/> <p>NRS LEVEL 3</p> <p>High Beginning ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores Reading: 191–200 Listening: 191–200 Writing: 146–200 Oral BEST 29–41 (SPL 3) BEST Plus: 418–438 (SPL 3) BEST Literacy: 36–46 (SPL 3)</p>	<p>Individual can understand common words, simple phrases, and sentences containing familiar vocabulary, spoken slowly with some repetition. Individual can respond to simple questions about personal everyday activities, and can express immediate needs, using simple learned phrases or short sentences. Shows limited control of grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read most sight words, and many other common words. Can read familiar phrases and simple sentences but has a limited understanding of connected prose and may need frequent re-reading.</p> <p>Individual can write some simple sentences with limited vocabulary. Meaning may be unclear. Writing shows very little control of basic grammar, capitalization and punctuation and has many spelling errors.</p>	<p>Individual can function in some situations related to immediate needs and in familiar social situations. Can provide basic personal information on simple forms and recognizes simple common forms of print found in the home, workplace and community. Can handle routine entry level jobs requiring basic written or oral English communication and in which job tasks can be demonstrated. May have limited knowledge or experience using computers.</p>

Outcome Measures Definitions

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>NRS LEVEL 4</p> <p>Low Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 201–210 Listening: 201–210 Writing: 201–225 Oral BEST: 42–50 (SPL 4) BEST Plus: 439–472 (SPL 4) BEST Literacy: 47–53 (SPL 4)</p>	<p>Individual can understand simple learned phrases and limited new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly with frequent repetition; can ask and respond to questions using such phrases; can express basic survival needs and participate in some routine social conversations, although with some difficulty; and has some control of basic grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read simple material on familiar subjects and comprehend simple and compound sentences in single or linked paragraphs containing a familiar vocabulary; can write simple notes and messages on familiar situations but lacks clarity and focus. Sentence structure lacks variety but shows some control of basic grammar (e.g., present and past tense) and consistent use of punctuation (e.g., periods, capitalization).</p>	<p>Individual can interpret simple directions and schedules, signs, and maps; can fill out simple forms but needs support on some documents that are not simplified; and can handle routine entry level jobs that involve some written or oral English communication but in which job tasks can be demonstrated. Individual can use simple computer programs and can perform a sequence of routine tasks given directions using technology (e.g., fax machine, computer).</p>
<hr/> <p>NRS LEVEL 5</p> <p>High Intermediate ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 211–220 Listening: 211–220 Writing: 226–242 Oral BEST: 51–57 (SPL 5) BEST Plus: 473–506 (SPL 5) BEST Literacy: 54–65 (SPL 5-6)</p>	<p>Individual can understand learned phrases and short new phrases containing familiar vocabulary spoken slowly and with some repetition; can communicate basic survival needs with some help; can participate in conversation in limited social situations and use new phrases with hesitation; and relies on description and concrete terms. There is inconsistent control of more complex grammar.</p>	<p>Individual can read text on familiar subjects that have a simple and clear underlying structure (e.g., clear main idea, chronological order); can use context to determine meaning; can interpret actions required in specific written directions; can write simple paragraphs with main idea and supporting details on familiar topics (e.g., daily activities, personal issues) by recombining learned vocabulary and structures; and can self and peer edit for spelling and punctuation errors.</p>	<p>Individual can meet basic survival and social needs, can follow some simple oral and written instruction, and has some ability to communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects; can write messages and notes related to basic needs; can complete basic medical forms and job applications; and can handle jobs that involve basic oral instructions and written communication in tasks that can be clarified orally. Individual can work with or learn basic computer software, such as word processing, and can follow simple instructions for using technology.</p>

Outcome Measures Definitions

EDUCATIONAL FUNCTIONING LEVEL DESCRIPTORS—ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEVELS

Literacy Level	Basic Reading and Writing	Numeracy Skills	Functional and Workplace Skills
<p>NRS LEVEL 6</p> <p>Advanced ESL</p> <p>Test Benchmark: CASAS scale scores: Reading: 221–235 Listening: 221–235 Writing: 243–260 Oral BEST 58–64 (SPL 6) BEST Plus: 507–540 (SPL 6) BEST Literacy: 66 and above (SPL 7)</p> <p>Exit Criteria: CASAS Reading and Listening: 236 and above CASAS Writing: 261 and above Oral BEST 65 and above (SPL 7) BEST Plus: 541 and above (SPL 7)</p>	<p>Individual can understand and communicate in a variety of contexts related to daily life and work. Can understand and participate in conversation on a variety of everyday subjects, including some unfamiliar vocabulary, but may need repetition or rewording. Can clarify own or others' meaning by rewording. Can understand the main points of simple discussions and informational communication in familiar contexts. Shows some ability to go beyond learned patterns and construct new sentences. Shows control of basic grammar but has difficulty using more complex structures. Has some basic fluency of speech.</p>	<p>Individual can read moderately complex text related to life roles and descriptions and narratives from authentic materials on familiar subjects. Uses context and word analysis skills to understand vocabulary, and uses multiple strategies to understand unfamiliar texts. Can make inferences, predictions, and compare and contrast information in familiar texts. Individual can write multi-paragraph text (e.g., organizes and develops ideas with clear introduction, body, and conclusion), using some complex grammar and a variety of sentence structures. Makes some grammar and spelling errors. Uses a range of vocabulary.</p>	<p>Individual can function independently to meet most survival needs and to use English in routine social and work situations. Can communicate on the telephone on familiar subjects. Understands radio and television on familiar topics. Can interpret routine charts, tables and graphs and can complete forms and handle work demands that require non-technical oral and written instructions and routine interaction with the public. Individual can use common software, learn new basic applications, and select the correct basic technology in familiar situations.</p>

Assessing and Measuring Educational Gain

To determine placement decisions in New York State, Adult Basic Education (ABE)/Adult Secondary Education (ASE) scores and levels are based on the TABE Test (Testing of Adult Basic Education).

ESL scores are based on the BEST Plus (Basic English Skills Test) Oral English Proficiency Test for Adults.

The NRS requires that local programs assess and place all students into an educational functioning level at intake.

The program places the student according to the lowest functioning level. For example, if a student is at the beginning level in reading and the low intermediate level in numeracy, then the student would be placed in the beginning level. The lowest functioning level also should be used to determine educational gain in subsequent assessments.

To measure educational gain within the NRS, states are required to have a written assessment policy for its local programs. The assessment policy must identify: (1) the tests to be used to measure educational gain for both ABE/ASE and ESL students; (2) when pre- and post-tests are to be administered; and (3) how tests scores are to be tied to the NRS educational functioning levels for initial placement and for reporting student advancement across levels. The assessments used by New York State conform to standard psychometric criteria for validity and reliability and meet the standards provided by the Division of Adult Education and Literacy (DAEL).

For the educational functioning levels to be meaningful, assessments need to be administered in a standardized and consistent way by all programs in each state. When these procedures are not followed correctly or consistently, the determination of educational functioning level is invalid and not comparable across programs or possibly even within programs, making the data validity questionable. Program staff must be trained in test administration and scoring to ensure that the measures are valid and reliable across programs and students.

Additional Information

NYS Education Department
www.acces.nysed.gov

National Reporting System
www.nrsweb.org

Center for Applied Linguistics
www.cal.org

Sources

www.casas.org
www.nrsweb.org



Let's get to work.

OACES

Office of Adult & Career Education Services
Rochester City School District

oaces.net