

What are Educational Functioning Levels?

To ensure consistent measurement of educational gain, learners are initially placed in **educational functioning levels (EFLs)** based on their abilities to perform literacy-related tasks in specific content areas as measured by an approved standardized pre-test. After a set number of instructional hours, students are again assessed (post-tested) to determine their skill levels. If their skills have improved sufficiently to be placed one or more EFLs higher, students are reported as having completed a level.

What is meant by 'educational gain'?

Educational gain measures the primary purpose of the AEFLA grant program: to improve the basic literacy skills of participants. **All learners** enrolled in AEFLA-funded programs are members of the cohort whose educational gain will be reported to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) via the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS). For reporting purposes, educational gain is expressed in terms of level completions.

What are the test benchmarks for initially placing students in the ABE and ASE EFLs?

EFL	Grade Level Equivalent	Test Benchmarks	
		Colorado AEFLA Approved Assessments	
		CASAS	TABE 9/10
Beginning ABE Literacy	0-1.9	Reading: 200 and below Math: 200 and below	Reading: 367 and below Total Math: 313 and below Language: 389 and below
Beginning Basic Education	2-3.9	Reading: 201–210 Math: 201–210	Reading: 368–460 Total Math: 314–441 Language: 390–490
Low Intermediate Basic Education	4-5.9	Reading: 211–220 Math: 211–220	Reading: 461–517 Total Math: 442–505 Language: 491–523
High Intermediate Basic Education	6-8.9	Reading: 221–235 Math: 221–235	Reading: 518–566 Total Math: 506–565 Language: 524–559
Low Adult Secondary Education	9-10.9	Reading: 236–245 Math: 236–245	Reading: 567–595 Total Math: 566–594 Language: 560–585
High Adult Secondary Education	11-12.9	Reading: 246 and above Math: 246 and above	Reading: 596 and above Total Math: 595 and above Language: 586 and above

What are the test benchmarks for initially placing students in the ESL EFLs?

EFL	SPL	Test Benchmarks	
		Colorado AEFLA Approved Assessments	
		CASAS	BEST Plus
Beginning ESL Literacy	0-1	Reading: 180 and below Listening: 180 and below	400 and below
Low Beginning ESL	2	Reading: 181–190 Listening: 181–190 Writing: 136–145	401–417

High Beginning ESL	3	Reading:191–200 Listening:191–200 Writing:146–200	418–438
Low Intermediate ESL	4	Reading: 201–210 Listening: 201–210 Writing: 201–225	439–472
High Intermediate ESL	5	Reading: 211–220 Listening: 211–220 Writing: 226–242	473–506
Advanced ESL	6	Reading: 221–235 Listening: 221–235 Writing: 243–260	507–540

How do we know which level of pre-test to administer in order to determine a student’s initial EFL?

Pre-test selection must be based on appropriate administration of **locator or appraisal**. (CASAS provides an appraisal to determine which pre-test to use; TABE provides a locator test to determine which pre-test to use. BEST Plus is computer-aided and adjusts to students’ level during the assessment process.)

When should the pre-test be administered to incoming students?

An approved standardized pre-test must be administered to students **within their first 12 hours** of attendance.

What if the student’s pre-test scores in different subjects are at not within the same EFL?

If the learner is functioning at different EFLs in different skills areas, the **lowest EFL** is generally used as the basis for initial placement into an EFL. Learners may be placed according to their higher EFLs if doing so is in accordance with the skill area in which their instruction will be focused.

What about students who score above the top of the range in the Advanced ESL EFL?

Students who pre-test above the range for Advanced ESL should be re-tested on an ABE assessment and placed in ABE/ASE if appropriate; or they may be beyond the skill range for adult basic skills learners and could be referred to programs or services designed to serve persons at higher levels of proficiency. There is no ESL reporting level for learners at ESL level 7 or higher, and students whose Initial EFL is above SPL 6 are **not countable** for AEFLA reporting purposes.

What is the set number of instructional hours that students must receive before they are post-tested?

Follow test publishers’ recommended time frames for pre- and post-testing. This information is found in the **Assessment Policy for AEFLA Programs**, and is covered in annual **Regional Assessment Training**. Exceptions to test publishers’ recommended time frames must be **limited and rare**.

What are instructional hours?

Instructional hours are the hours of instruction or instructional activity the learner receives from the AEFLA program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote student learning in the program curriculum, such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring, or participation in a learning lab. (Note: Time spent on assessment can be counted only if the assessment is designed to inform placement decisions, assess progress, or inform instruction. Time used to take the GED test, for example, cannot be counted as instructional activity.)