

Massachusetts Department of Education Policies for Using the TABE Test

Overview: The Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) has content areas that measure reading, language, mathematics, and spelling. There are five overlapping levels – L (Literacy), E (Easy), M (Medium), D (Difficult), or A (Advanced) that range from GLE 0 to GLE 14.9. The Locator test is administered to determine the appropriate level of the TABE test to administer to the individual student.

Massachusetts' assessment policy for ABE Reading, ABE Writing, and ABE Math is to use the TABE Test, Forms 7 and 8, Levels E, M, D, A for the next 3-5 years.

Basic Assessment Policies:

1. Programs need to pre- and post-test at least 70% of their enrolled students each Fiscal Year. This policy, revised January 2003, shares more of the decision-making responsibility with programs as to when to test students. It is imperative, however, not to confuse achieving a standard of pre- and post-testing 70% of your students with testing twice a year. Achieving the standard will mean that each program consider its past performance and develop an assessment plan.
2. While the above policy is structured to give programs the flexibility to test students sooner than 4 months or 65 hours of instruction (depending on program intensity and schedule) when necessary, this time frame is still a good rule of thumb. The goal in pre- and post-testing is to capture students' educational progress, and it will be more difficult for students to show gain when less than 4 months has elapsed.
3. A student's primary assessment area **cannot** change during the year. Likewise, the test you administer has to stay the same for the pre- and post-tests—**you cannot switch from what you used for the initial test to another assessment during the course of a Fiscal Year.**
4. All staff who administer the TABE test need to attend a training first and receive a certificate.
5. Effective March 1, 2003, teachers cannot administer or score their own students' tests.

I. Required Test Forms and When to Administer

1. Use only TABE Forms 7 and 8; no other forms of the test may be used.
2. The TABE may be given any time after the day of intake. This should be the 2nd or subsequent point of contact with the students, or any time thereafter up to 3 weeks after enrollment.
3. **TABE L** (Literacy level) won't be used—there is little connection between the test questions and the learning standards of the ELA and Math curriculum frameworks. Instead, programs should use the same instrument used last year for students at the GLE 0 – 1.9 level. (Programs who used TABE Forms 5 and 6 last year should contact their PS or their SABES Regional Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator for alternatives.)

4. **Locator Test:** Use the Locator to determine which level of the test to give to a student— E, M, D, or A. It is important to use the Locator--the results of the tests will not be valid if the proper level of test difficulty is not administered. Using the right level of a test is essential to obtain the most accurate measurement of knowledge. It is an un-timed test.

The Locator has reading, mathematics, and language test items, and gives separate scores for each area. You can also use the Locator for class placement rather than administering multiple tests so close to a student’s intake. To use the Locator, you total the number of correct test items to determine the corresponding level of test to administer.

Locator Test Scores Evaluation Chart			TABE Test Level to Administer
Reading	Mathematics	Language	
6 and below	6 and below	6 and below	E
7 – 10	7 – 11	7 – 9	M
11 – 14	12 – 15	10 – 12	D
15 and above	16 and above	and above	A

5. **Use the Complete Battery, not the Survey:** The Complete Battery is a more reliable measure of student knowledge and skill because it has more test items and more breadth for each test objective, compared to the Survey. Also, the standard error of measurement for the Survey Form is too great to obtain reliable measures of progress for students over a year of instruction. The standard error of measurement for the Survey Form was large enough to inaccurately inflate or deflate the students’ scores up or down one entire GLE level.

6. **Required Sub-Tests:** Depending on the primary area selected by the student, programs are only required to administer one of the sub-tests below. One area must be selected as the primary area to report educational gain every four months. The Mathematics Computation and Spelling sub-tests are not required (or recommended) for use.

Primary Area	Sub-Test Required	# Test Items	Time
ABE Reading	Reading	50	50 minutes
ABE Writing	Language	55	39 minutes
ABE Math	Applied Mathematics	50	50 minutes

7. **When to Use Different Levels and Forms of the TABE:** Different levels of the TABE can be given for initial, mid-year (if administered), and post-test. Since all levels of TABE are calibrated on the same scale, results may be compared across levels. Never give the same Form (either 7 or 8) of the test at the same Level (either E, M, D, or A) sequentially to a student. In other words, if a student is functioning at the same level, switch Forms; if s/he has shown strong progress in class, move to the test at the next level with the same Form.

8. **Required Materials:** Use the order form found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/news.htm>

- TABE 7 Complete Battery (includes Examiner’s Manual) Levels E, M, D, A

- TABE 8 Complete Battery (includes Examiner’s Manual) Levels E, M, D, A
- Practice Exercise and Locator Test
- Answer Sheets: Scoreze for each Form and Level OR CompuScan with Stencils
- Norms Book, Forms 7 and 8

II. Placement Tests

You may use the Locator as a placement tool, but you can’t use TABE Forms 5/6 for placement. Each SABES Regional Center has copies of different assessments that programs may copy and use as placement tools. For ABE, the Cambridge Community Learning Center’s placement tool is recommended.

III. For Reporting, Use Scale Scores, not GLEs

Record scale scores, not GLEs, in SMARTT. The scale score is the basic or “primary” score for the TABE, and is used to compute and derive all other scores. Since GLE scores are derived from scale scores, using scale scores to report educational gain gives more accurate results of student achievement. Use the TABE Norms Book (Forms 7 and 8) to convert the number-correct score (the number of test items a student answers correctly on a test) to scale scores. The Norms Book also gives the GLE level for each scale score. The SMARTT ABE database will translate the scale scores into the levels stipulated by the federal NRS. Programs will be able to generate reports that portray student functioning levels and gains using this framework.

ABE Reading, Writing, and Math Correlations		
Scale Scores	GLE Level	NRS Level
Reading: less than 367	0 – 1.9	Beginning ABE Literacy
Math: less than 313		
Language: less than 391		
Reading: 368 - 460	2 – 3.9	Beginning ABE
Math: 314 - 441		
Language: 392 - 490		
Reading: 461 - 517	4 – 5.9	Low Intermediate ABE
Math: 442 - 505		
Language: 491 - 523		
Reading: 518 - 612	6 – 8.9	High Intermediate ABE
Math: 506 - 565		
Language: 524 - 559		
Reading: 567 - 595	9 – 10.9	Low ASE
Math: 566 - 594		
Language: 560 - 585		
Reading: greater than 595	11 – 12.9	High ASE
Math: greater than 594		
Language: greater than 585		

IV. Accommodations

While the TABE offers some accommodation options, ACLS believes more time is needed to explore what types of accommodations are important to set up for students who need them. This January, PAWG II will look at accommodations that might be provided for students with special needs. For now, any student may be given the large print version of the TABE. Programs may also extend the time limits for administering the TABE to time and a half for any students with a documented formal diagnosis of a learning disability. (“Formal” means the kind of assessments and associated documentation developed through a core evaluation by an appropriately licensed professional.)

V. Areas Still Needing Work

1. For students in Transitions Programs: The TABE is not appropriate for use with students at this level. Programs should continue using the assessments approved via the crosswalk process in FY02.

2. For Students in ADP/EDP Programs: If a student’s preparation for the EDP includes *any* academic instruction, then programs must administer the TABE.

3. For ABE Students in Workplace Education Programs: Programs may use TABE 7/8 or continue to use assessments approved via the crosswalk process in FY02. Notify your Program Specialist.