Module 2: What to Do Before Administering the CLAS-E Writing

In this module, you will learn about the materials needed to administer the CLAS-E Writing, staffing and scheduling recommendations, and tips for helping test takers approach the assessment in a relaxed and positive way.

Test administrators should be familiar with the "Before Testing" instructions presented in the CLAS-E Test Directions books. There is one Test Directions book for each level and form, but the instructions for what to do before testing are the same.

There are some important ways in which the test publisher's directions and materials have been adapted, with permission, for use in MA (e.g., instructions on timing, adapted answer sheets). The summary below presents key information from the "Before Testing" instructions, noting when alternative procedures and materials should be used.

In any instances where the instructions in the Test Directions differ from instructions provided by ACLS (in this training and the Assessment Policies Manual), the ACLS instructions supersede those provided by the test publisher.

Test Materials

Before administering the CLAS-E Writing, make sure that all test materials are ready and accessible in the room to be used for testing. This includes materials from the test publisher and adapted materials previously developed by SABES/ACLS. The following is a list of required materials.

Note: Materials developed by SABES are marked with an asterisk.

For the Test Administrator
- o Adapted TABE CLAS-E Locator Test Directions
- o Tips for Taking the TABE CLAS-E (test administrator version)*
- o CLAS-E Test Directions for Forms A and B, Levels 1 through 4
- o Adapted TABE CLAS-E Writing Test Directions*
- o CLAS-E Scoring Tables Book, Forms A/B

For Test Takers
- o Tips for Taking the TABE CLAS-E (test taker version)*
- o CLAS-E Locator Test Books
- o Adapted CLAS-E Locator Test Answer Booklet*
- o CLAS-E Test Books, Forms A and B, Levels 1 through 4
- o Adapted Answer Sheet for Levels 1-4 (for multiple-choice portion)*
- o CLAS-E Expository Writing Folios, Forms A and B, Levels 1 through 4

Staff Recommendation

ACLS recommends that programs maintain at least two certified test administrators for each test the program administers. Test administrators, after completing this training, administer and score the Locator Interview, the Locator Test, and the CLAS-E Reading.

Testing Schedule

- Allow sufficient time to go over the directions for each component of the CLAS-E
- Plan test administration for test takers who require accommodations
- Allow time for make-up sessions for test takers who miss the scheduled test session

Students are given 5-10 minutes to complete the Locator Interview (Written Interview - Part B), 15 minutes to take the Locator Test (Part 1), 20 minutes to take the multiple-choice portion of the CLAS-E Writing Test, and 27 minutes to take the exporting writing portion. These timing specifications should be strictly followed, except for students who receive testing accommodations that allow extra time (see information about accommodations below).

Organizing the Testing Area

Key recommendations:
- Plan seating arrangements, allowing enough space between test takers to avoid sharing of answers
- Allow for grouping of test takers based on test level
- Place a Do Not Disturb sign on the door of the testing room
- Write the starting and stopping time of the test session on the board or on a large sheet of paper
- For more than 20 test takers, an additional proctor is required

Preparing Test Takers

Test administrators should help test takers approach the CLAS-E Writing in a relaxed and positive way. To that end, a handout called "Tips for Taking the TABE CLAS-E" has been developed. There are two versions of this handout: an administrator version with directions and a student version. The handout (student version) should be given to each student after administering the Locator Interview (Part B), but before the Locator Test.

Testing Accommodations

As explained in the ACLS Assessment Policies Manual, testing accommodations should be provided to learners with the appropriate disability-related documentation. Guidelines about accommodations for the TABE tests have been prepared by the test publisher and can be accessed here.

The test publisher also provides a framework for categorizing accommodations, which is presented in the document above and on pages 13-14 of the Test Directions books. The categories illustrate how different types of accommodations influence the interpretation of test scores.

Category 1 accommodations:

- Not expected to influence a test taker's performance in a way that alters the interpretation of the test taker's score.
- Examples: take the test alone or in a study carrel; use a Large Print edition of the test; take additional breaks, but the breaks do not result in extra time for testing or opportunity to study information in a test already begun

Category 2 accommodations:

- May have an effect on a test taker's performance that should be considered when interpreting the test taker's score
- Examples: be allowed extra time; use flexible scheduling that may result in extra time; use directions that have been marked with highlighting

Category 3 accommodations

- May change what is being measured and alter the interpretation of the test taker's score because the accommodation is strongly related to the target knowledge and skills
- Examples: have questions, prompts, and/or answer choices presented through sign language; use of a text-to-talk converter; have questions, prompts, and/or answer choices paraphrased

The summary of accommodation categories in this module and the test publisher's guidelines (available here) are provided to assist programs in offering fair testing conditions to all learners. In cases where it is difficult to determine what type of accommodation is most appropriate, practitioners may contact the Center for Educational Assessment at the University of Massachusetts (aclstesthelp@educ.umass.edu) for additional guidance.