



LAS Links Family of Assessments, Benefits of a Common Scale

The LAS Links Second Edition (forms C and D and Español B) was designed to meet two goals:

- 1) To serve as an augmentation of the first edition (Forms A/B), but to increase rigor for better correspondence to the academic language demands of the Common Core State Standards. The new forms provide a more systematic approach for assessing the target language use situated in key content areas such as Mathematics/Science/Technical Subjects and Language Arts/Social Studies/History as well as the critical Social/Instructional/Intercultural language.
- 2) To ensure that all English forms could use the existing LAS Links common scale to support continuity in transitioning to the new forms. Being able to demonstrate growth is an essential component of a Title III assessment.

Title III of ESEA requires that schools annually measure the English language proficiency of English language learners. A common scale allows states, districts and schools to demonstrate the growth their students have achieved. This approach to test development is important because it allows a school to track the progress in language proficiency over time. It also permits educators to interpret the improvement in student scores from one test administration to the next as evidence of student growth across years. Forms must be linked in order to track progress of individual students as they move from one grade level to the next, using test forms that are grade appropriate.

Common scaling provides a technology for linking test forms built for students for different abilities to a single underlying scale score metric. A concurrent calibration method used to create the LAS Links common scale allows estimation of item parameters with higher precision for items taken by common examinees.

The design for placing the forms C and D on the same scale as A and B required some students to take both Form A/B and the C/D field test forms within a short period. To achieve optimal form linking results between Forms A/B and C/D in operations, operational test data from equivalent samples of students taking Form B in Year 1 and then taking Form C in Year 2 were also used to examine and augment the form linking performance, and the same adjustment to operational Form C was applied to operational Form D through concurrent calibrations. Additionally, a cut score review was conducted to evaluate the reasonableness of continuing use of the same LAS Links cut scores in light of the changes to the test content after Forms C and D are placed on the LAS Links common scale. Participants reviewed every C/D item in each grade span against the LAS Links proficiency level definitions in order to determine whether the cut scores could be used with the new forms. To facilitate user interpretations of student performance that is more pertinent to Form C/D, adjustments were also made to the detailed performance descriptors of each LAS Links proficiency level for better correspondence to the test content in the new forms.

We remind our customers that accurate interpretation of students' scores requires careful analysis of all key performance elements. Examples of such elements may include:

- 1) The extent of student readiness for a broader range of academic language skills.
- 2) The degree that the test administration protocol is guided by careful review of materials prior to testing. Adequate review and understanding of the new test content will help test examiner's to ensure standardized test administration that elicits optimal student test performance.
- 3) Student familiarity with new task types. Without disclosing actual test content or teaching to the test, educators should appropriately inform students of new item types and task format to reduce any negative influence on test performance due to lack of familiarity with specific tasks.

When test administration protocols and rating of students' responses to Speaking items are followed by solid training and when students understand tasks being used in the new assessment, students would have greater chance of being able to demonstrate their abilities in understanding and using academic language in English on the test.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about LAS Links call 800.538.9547 or visit www.laslinks.com.

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