

Introduction to the LaRue Reading Skills Assessment for Preliterate Students

The Reading Skills Assessment for Preliterate Students was developed to meet a need for testing students who have very limited English literacy skills, and cannot read and write in their own language. It was created to show which literacy skills and knowledge preliterate ESL students have and don't have. This assessment isn't appropriate for students who have attended school and learned to read and write in any language.

Research on education shows that reading as a skill is transferable from language to language. Educated students, even if they don't know a word of English, already understand the idea of the alphabetical order, they already know that letters can be represented in a variety of fonts, and that there is a correspondence between letters and sounds in determining how to pronounce a word. They also know that languages, however well organized, have exceptions to rules that need to be learned as exceptions.

However, some students have no educational background, and have never learned to write in their native language. They often have great difficulty taking written tests of any kind. This test is designed specifically for these students. It provides the instructor with a starting point for their instruction in learning to read and write English. The skills and knowledge that are needed to begin to learn to read are included in this test.

This test combines an oral interview by the instructor, along with reading and writing by the student. It allows us to test the student's knowledge of sounds and phonics, as well as other literacy skills. It reveals what skills a student does and doesn't have. This can give the instructor information that is not available from the CASAS tests, since it is only a paper and pencil test. The LaRue Reading Skills Assessment for Preliterate Students will help you determine which skills need to be taught next, and whether a pre-literate student has all of the literacy skills needed to join a mainstream ESL class.

If a student can score a total of 90 points or more on The LaRue Reading Skills Assessment for Preliterate Students, that is strong evidence that they have basic literacy skills and will be able to take the CASAS test 11 or 12, and get a meaningful score.