

Intake

Students set goals and take the CASAS.

1. If students score 230 on the CASAS Appraisal and have “good” listening and speaking skills as determined through a discussion of their needs and goals, they are scheduled for TABE testing. ELLs must score a minimum Reading score of 420 on TABE 11/12 Level E before bridging into GED®.
2. If students score into Level 5, they are placed in our ESL Advanced class so that they can be provided with instruction that begins the “transition” process to prepare them for the Bridge class. Depending on individual goals, ELLs may also begin working with our Intervention Specialist.
3. Students test out of ESL at 236. Then they are scheduled to take the TABE. After testing, depending on goals and needs, they will meet with our Career Navigator or our ESL College Transition Coach (provided by the college) or our Intervention Specialist. They may meet with all three to determine the best path forward.

Instruction

Structure of Classes:

- GED® Bridge is composed of a wide variety of ELLs who have different needs and goals. No level 5 learner is placed in our Bridge class without a posttest of 236 or better.
- GED® Bridge is a language-supported GED® class
- Students meet Monday-Friday
- Bridge is taught by a former ESL instructor

IET collaboration:

- A College and Career Navigator works with BCTC to place eligible and interested learners into training opportunities
- CCR class is taught by a Bridge instructor to provide necessary language support

Partners:

- An Intervention Specialist meets with students one-on-one depending on their goals
- Hispanic churches
- Public library branches provide Spanish tutors outside center hours

GED® Ready and GED® Test

Students from levels 5 and higher are eligible after consultation with their instructors and the Intervention Specialist

Procedures for taking the GED® are the same as those for native speakers.

Students are asked if they want to test in Spanish. Most do not take the test in Spanish.

Intake

Instruction

GED® Ready and
GED® Test

“Traditional” intake

1. New students are individually interviewed during registration.
2. An informal assessment determines whether the student should take the CASAS placement test or the 27R/28R.
3. CASAS is administered completely online. Students participate in a short computer orientation to understand fundamental computer skills necessary to complete the test.

Structure of Classes:

- Full-semester sessions composed of consecutive 8-week cycles (students think of them as one long/one-semester class)
- Students are in multilevel classes (beg./int. grouped together; advanced in other classes)
- Social studies and science texts are used to teach reading, vocabulary, and content; one day a week students receive math instruction (in English) using that content to introduce vocabulary, etc.
- Twice a year, students receive 2 weeks of math-only instruction in English

IET collaboration:

- BurlingtonEnglish is used for “time off” and helps contextualize career vocabulary, etc.

Partners:

- Local businesses and churches help distribute books for studying (supplements are in ESP and ENG)

- Individualized determination on readiness of students to take the OPT
 - Uses the Ready Test in both ENG and ESP
 - Now uses an “assessment test” to determine which testing language
 - That test uses practice questions from a practice GED® test and Scoreboost
- There is no minimum CASAS level for students to take the OPT

Frequently Asked Questions for Kentucky ESL to GED® Transition Programs

In an effort to maximize our enrollments to meet the GED® goals for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, KY Skills U has curated some best practices for transitioning our ELL population to GED® seekers. The highlighted models are not meant to be a rulebook to follow; rather, they should be guiding considerations to tailor to local needs and resources.

Two providers featured in our best practices represent two different models for transitioning to GED® seekers. Our first model, from Bluegrass Community and Technical College (BCTC), features a Bridge course transitioning ELLs into GED® by keeping students in an ELL setting as former ESL instructors teach them GED® content. BCTC's model also prominently incorporates Integrated Education and Training (IET) in order to fulfill Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) requirements under section 243 of WIOA. Our second model, from West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKYCTC), features contextualized GED® content instruction as foundations for ESL classes. Readiness for the GED® and the GED® Ready Test is determined by a variety of factors, not just CASAS.

To jump to the Contextualized GED® Instruction model of WKYCTC, [click here](#).

IELCE Bridge to GED® Model

Bluegrass Community and Technical College

INTAKE QUESTIONS

Which CASAS appraisal do you use at intake to arrive at the 230 score?

- A. CASAS Appraisal 80 and Life and Work Reading Series.

Do CASAS scores alone determine consideration for transitioning to GED®?

- A. The CASAS Appraisal is given in conjunction with a local listening and speaking test. If students score 230 or higher on that appraisal, they are immediately set up with a TABE 11/12 test and placed in the Bridge course. If they score lower than 230, then we administer the CASAS; scores between 221 and 236 are placed into the level 5 classes.

How do you gauge “good” listening and speaking skills?

- A. During the intake process, a listening and speaking assessment is done. CASAS provides its own rubrics for those domains, as does TABE CLAS-E. Other programs in the state have also created informal assessments (not tied to level gains) as a means of assessing speaking and listening.

What is the minimum TABE Reading score ELLs must achieve before placement in the Bridge course?

- A. ELLs must take the TABE before they enter the Bridge course. A reading score of 420 or better on the TABE 11/12 Level E is required.

Does “Level 5” refer to NRS level 11? A CASAS score of 236 places a student beyond NRS level 12.

- A. Level 5 a BCTC internal designation for low-advanced students.

In level 5 classes, how is the content different in order to begin the transition? Any specific examples?

- A. The core curriculum for level 5 is *Ventures Transitions*, which introduces academic language and is focused on developing necessary reading and writing skills for the transition to work and/or postsecondary.

Most of our students who enter our programs generally test at NRS levels 7-9, so transitioning them to GED® would take a long time. Are all ELLs transitioned to GED® seekers?

- A. No, only those who express an interest in the GED® during intake. If they do express interest, they begin work with an intervention specialist so that work can begin concurrently in level 5 classes.

What is an “Intervention Specialist”?

- A. An Intervention Specialist works with instructors and intake staff to find the best transition pathway for our ELLs.

Can brand new ELL students start the GED® Bridge class without taking CASAS?

- A. Yes, new students can be referred for TABE 11/12 assessments to evaluate their readiness for the Bridge class without either of those CASAS tests. During the intake interview, a determination may be made based on the strength of the ELL’s listening and speaking skills. If there is any uncertainty, the CASAS Appraisal is given, and our process picks up there.

Why do continuing ESL students need to achieve 236 in order to test into the Bridge course?

- A. If the student is placed in ESL, the 236 score is necessary for a level gain. We have yet to have someone pass the GED before making a level gain.

INSTRUCTION

Structure of Classes

Do students have to attend class every day?

- A. No. The Bridge class meets two days a week so that there are opportunities to work with the math specialist. If ELLs are in Level 5, our intervention specialist works out a schedule so that they continue to receive language support while they also work on math.

Is content taught on certain days of the week?

- A. No. The Bridge class provides language support while ELLs work on reading and writing. Science and social studies materials are used in the Bridge class so that students can learn the content and practice the language skills.

What about GED® math?

- A. ELLs in the Bridge class work with a math specialist on days that they do not have reading and writing. While math instruction is GED® specific, it is still taught by a former ESL instructor familiar with techniques and strategies for ELL learners.

Do you teach GED® content in Spanish?

- A. No. KY Skills U guidelines prohibit teaching GED® content in Spanish or any language other than English. Students may, however, attend tutoring sessions with some of our partners who may choose to reinforce the content/concepts in a language other than English.

IET Collaboration

How do you integrate career education with your Bridge and ESL program in order to meet the IELCE requirements?

- A. We have a lead College and Career Navigator (CCN) who works with the Bluegrass and Community Technical College (BCTC) to place ELLs in training programs while they receive language support in the classroom.

For more information regarding the IELCE Bridge to GED® Transition Model from BCTC, please contact

Adrienne Todd, ESL Coordinator, Bluegrass Community and Technical College, adrienne.todd@kctcs.edu.

Contextualized GED® Content Model

West Kentucky Community and Technical College

INTAKE QUESTIONS

What kind of informal assessment do you use?

- A. The informal assessment is simple. As we work through the student's registration folder, I give the student basic instructions (both verbal and written). Some are related to the registration forms while others are random. If I notice that the student can follow basic instructions in English with little or no guidance, I feel comfortable using the placement test.

What if the student cannot follow the questions or the instructions?

- A. I move to a five-minute informal interview. This will give me an idea whether the problem is listening, reading, or just fear.

How can you use the CASAS online assessment? Don't students have trouble with understanding the technology?

- A. Before the student takes the test, I explain how to use the technology with a PowerPoint that shows how to use the mouse and other dynamics of the test. BurlingtonEnglish also has video-only computer tutorials on the student and teacher dashboards.

How often do students enroll?

- A. We keep open enrollment during the first semester and the first part of the second semester. After a certain point, students may not meet MSGs and posttest requirements, so we tell them to come back during the next orientation.

INSTRUCTION

Structure of Classes

How many hours per week do your classes meet?

- A. Each of the four (4) ESL/GED® classes meets around five (5) hours per week. Advanced students can come to all four classes if they like, increasing their classroom contact hours five (5) to ten (10) hours a week. This comes in handy when we work on grammar.

How many instructors are committed to this initiative?

- A. Currently, only one instructor uses GED® contextualized instruction in our three counties. Two other instructors only teach ESL. Modified texts, however, around GED® and/or civics content can be used for ESL lessons.

You said that social studies and science content are used to teach ESL and RLA skills. Are these texts specifically designed for ESL students, or are they the same as those in the GED® courses?

- A. All texts are designed for GED® courses. Therefore, low-level students would do companion work with a program like IXL while using any GED® book, like Scoreboost. GED Ready® gives us enough information to assign the student the best tool. Texts can also be modified to accommodate emerging readers' vocabulary without sacrificing content or content-specific vocabulary.

Do you use a set syllabus?

- A. My classes move at the speed of the students, so following a set syllabus is difficult. I incorporate project-based learning to differentiate instruction and to teach beginning research, but participation is voluntary. Students choose from topics pertaining to American history and civics; lately, they have also been researching the Coronavirus. Students have access to several computer labs on our campus, but accommodations are made for those with little to no computer or internet access. The process results in an essay that they can present to their classmates if they so choose.

IET Collaboration

Would GED+Plus fit into IET collaboration?

- A. Absolutely, if a student is interested. For an ESL student, however, the process may take a little longer. Click the link for more information on [GED+Plus](#).

How does Burlington English help with IET?

- A. ESL students seeking a GED® in our program want certificates to get better jobs or to attend college. BE has Career Readiness content that reinforces their English while improving their English.

GED Ready® and GED®

What is your “assessment test,” and what language is it in?

- A. The “assessment test” is an instructor-created test using questions from Scoreboost and past GED® questions. The tests are available in both languages, but we use Spanish as a last resort because we instruct in English.

Do you allow students to take the Ready Test in both English and Spanish?

- A. Most of the time it is easy to recognize the strongest language, so you know the right test. Sometimes, you will come across a student with similar skills in both English and Spanish. In those random cases, you must test in both languages. Make sure your director is on board because he/she will have to justify why students are testing in multiple languages. That is why a proper assessment prior to giving the GED Ready® is so important.

Do your students take TABE 11/12 to transition to GED® seeker?

- A. We do NOT. We used to use TABE 9/10, but our ESL students have reported feeling like they “do not know anything” after using TABE 11/12. The GED Ready®, CASAS, and informal assessments give us enough information to work with them toward GED® goals while maintaining their morale and self-esteem.

For more information about the Contextualized GED® Content Model from WKYCTC, please contact

Tammy Maines, KY Skills U Program Director, West Kentucky Community and Technical College, tammy.maines@kctcs.edu or

Gus Amaya, KY Skills U ESL Instructor, West Kentucky Community and Technical College, gustavo.amaya@kctcs.edu