The Computerized Assessment of Proficiency (CAP) is an online test of proficiency developed by CASLS. In the past, proficiency tests developed at CASLS have been licensed by Avant Assessment through a technology transfer agreement overseen by the University of Oregon Office Of Technology Transfer. These tests are delivered operationally under the name STAMP (STAndards-based Measurement of Proficiency). We refer to tests under development as CAP to differentiate between research done by CASLS and partners during the development phase from any additional work in the future by Avant Assessment or any currently available Avant products.

The Swahili Computerized Assessment of Proficiency (Swahili CAP) was created in partnership with the National African Language Resource Center (NALRC) at the University of Wisconsin. It is designed to provide a general overall estimate of a language learner's proficiency in modern Swahili. Language proficiency is defined as a measure of a person's ability to use a given language to convey and comprehend meaningful content in realistic situations. Three skills are included: reading, writing, and speaking. The computer will automatically score the reading section and provide an estimate of proficiency. The writing and speaking sections are not scored, though teachers have the option of scoring their students if they so desire.

Swahili CAP is a snapshot of language ability based on a relatively small number of tasks. As such, the CAP is not a substitute for the judgment of an experienced classroom teacher, nor is it sensitive enough to make high-stakes claims regarding a test taker's language proficiency. CAP can provide a general indication of proficiency which can, in conjunction with other measures, help to inform placement decisions at the start of a course or provide information for program evaluation and reflective teaching.

This document describes how to view and interpret data from the Swahili CAP.

Considerations for Using CAP Scores

Current best practices in education recognize that educational decisions are best made by using **multiple sources** of information. CAP scores should **never** be used **in isolation** for making decisions that could negatively impact students, teachers, or language programs.

Reflective program evaluation

Because CAP is not based on content from any particular course of study or any specific program goals, CAP is not a direct measure of classroom learning or teacher effectiveness and should not be used punitively to penalize students or teachers. CAP was designed to provide an external estimate of general student proficiency. By looking at aggregate student performance (e.g., averages for particular classes or gains for particular years of study), teachers and administrators can identify those areas in which program goals are being met as well as those in which performance is less than desired. This information can then provide the basis for improvement. The individual teacher can also use information at the classroom level for reflective teaching by observing student performance over time. Other useful information for reflective program evaluation include portfolios of student work, surveys of student satisfaction, classroom observations, teacher review of the connection between program objectives and course syllabi, and the like.

Placement related decisions

Placement decisions involve matching students with available instructional options. The most effective placement practices are those which are directly based on the particular sequence of instruction in a particular program. Tests should not drive placement decisions – program goals, student needs, and available resources should drive placement decisions. Information from tests such as CAP can be used to inform these decisions where appropriate. The moral imperative of placement decisions is that students should benefit from the placement. That is, if a student is placed in Class B rather than Class A or Class C, there must be evidence that such placement benefits the student by providing instruction that is more appropriate than other options. There are no "cut scores" on CAP that correspond to particular levels of instruction. Programs wishing to use CAP for placement decisions should first ensure that the content of CAP is relevant to their program goals and then undertake a systematic investigation of how students in different program levels perform on CAP. If CAP scores correlate acceptably with program levels, they can provide one additional source of information to help direct students to appropriate courses.

End-of-term summative decisions

Because CAP is not based on content from any particular course of study, it is not appropriate to assign end-of-course grades based on CAP scores. CAP scores can help teachers provide feedback to their students at the end of a sequence of instruction about their general level of proficiency. Teachers can also access the writing and speaking samples of the students to give feedback on particular issues in those areas.

Graduation / Credit-granting decisions

CAP is not sensitive enough to make high-stakes decisions about the proficiency level of individual students and should not be used for high-stakes decisions such as denying graduation.

Navigating the system

1. Log in to the system by clicking on the "Teacher Login" button on the main page.

2. Use the Login and Password provided by the test coordinator.

3. Once you have logged in, you will see the Teacher Control Panel. From here, you can grade your students speaking and writing samples and access test results for the test.

Grading Writing and Speaking Samples

1. If there are unscored writing or speaking samples from your class, you can grade them by clicking on the "Click Here to Grade" link in the control panel.

Situation

You have been living in Beijing for a few months and your birthday is coming up. Your friend has offered to throw you a party. Write an email message in Chinese to your friend with at least FOUR details about your preferences.

Please fill in your answer below:

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. In vulputate molestie nulla, vitae varius diam feugiat eget. Aliquam non sapien nisl, sit amet sollicitudin odio. Integer leo velit, ullamcorper nec fringilla a, dictum ac nunc. Curabitur aliquet suscipit lacus eu venenatis.

Common Writing Rubric	
Language	**Control**
(4) – Writes using multiple, connected sentences and clear paragraph structure. Uses a variety of sentence and discourse types.	(4) – Expansive vocabulary. Shows evidence of tailoring language for the task. Though writing may still have errors in more advanced structures, the clarity of ideas rarely suffers.
(3) – Writes in multiple, connected sentences. Uses a variety of sentence types.	(3) – Able to narrate in multiple time frames and express relationships (e.g., sequential, causal, etc.). Writing is generally easy to understand, though may make some errors.
(2) – Writing consists primarily of phrases and loosely connected sentences.	(2) – Writing shows evidence of original production, but may still have errors in basic structures.
(1) – Writing consists mostly of lists of words or learned phrases.	(1) – Writing consists primarily of learned phrases. Writing may be unclear or appear strange to those not familiar with emerging writing.

2. You will be presented with anonymous samples from your class. The item and student's response can be seen at the top of the screen, and the grading rubric appears at the bottom. A detailed explanation of the rating scale is at the end of this document.

Play ▶

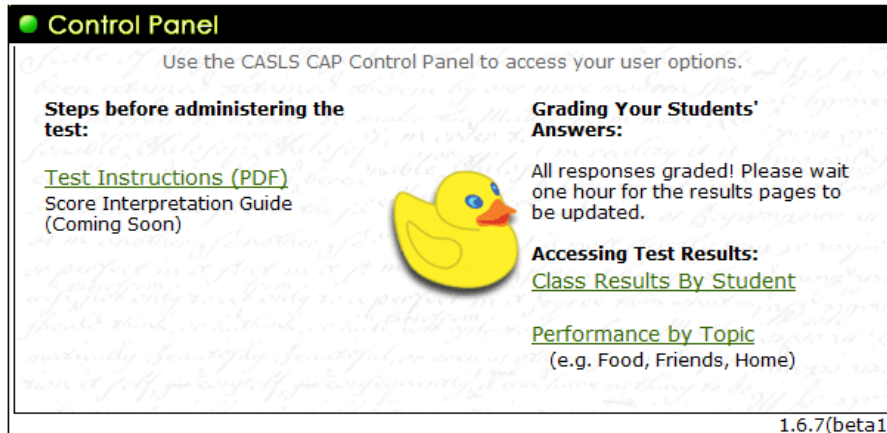For speaking items, click on the "Play" button to hear the sample.

Common Writing Rubric	
Language	**Control**
(4) – Writes using multiple, connected sentences and clear paragraph structure. Uses a variety of sentence and discourse types.	(4) – Expansive vocabulary. Shows evidence of tailoring language for the task. Though writing may still have errors in more advanced structures, the clarity of ideas rarely suffers.
(3) – Writes in multiple, connected sentences. Uses a variety of sentence types.	(3) – Able to narrate in multiple time frames and express relationships (e.g., sequential, causal, etc.). Writing is generally easy to understand, though may make some errors.
⦿ (2) – Writing consists primarily of phrases and loosely connected sentences.	⦿ (2) – Writing shows evidence of original production, but may still have errors in basic structures.
(1) – Writing consists mostly of lists of words or learned phrases.	(1) – Writing consists primarily of learned phrases. Writing may be unclear or appear strange to those not familiar with emerging writing.
(0) – Little or no language.	(0) – Little or no language.

Submit

3. To score a sample, click on the appropriate radio button next to the description that best matches the sample for each of the two categories. Once you are satisfied with your rating, click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the scoring rubric to save your rating. Note that once you have clicked submit, you CANNOT go back and change your rating. Continue this process until all ratings are complete.

All items graded!

4. When there are no more items to grade, you will be returned to the Control Panel.

Viewing Test Results
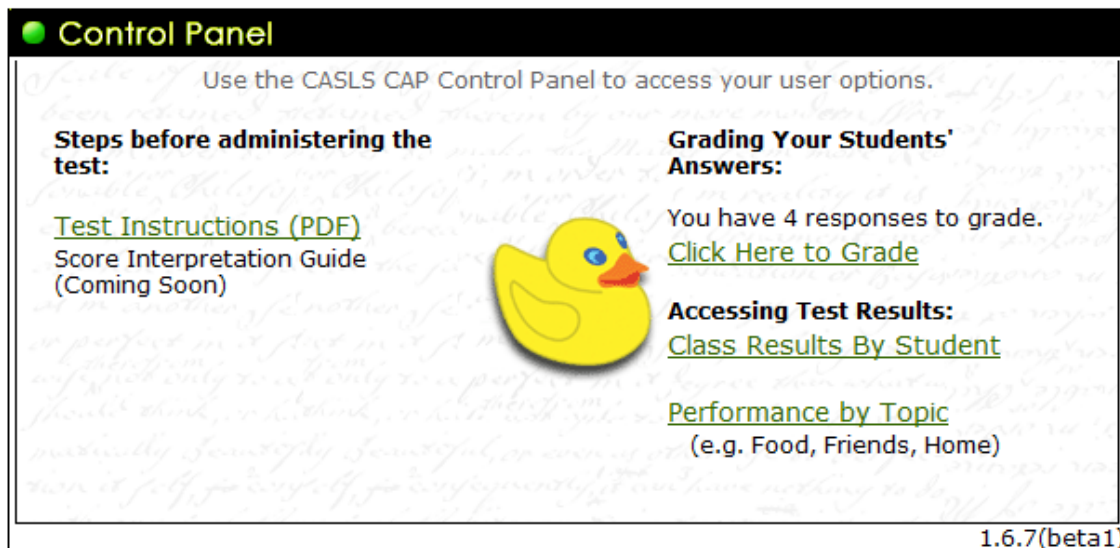
1. To view student results (with or without grading speaking and writing), click on the "Class Results By Student" link.

Swahili CAP Score Interpretation Guide

Report for CASLS, class CASLS-B							
Name/ID	Panel Name	Benchmark	Level	Writing Score	Speaking Score	Test Time	Writing/Speaking Detail
John Smith	Reading (Simplified Characters)	Beginning	515	-	-	4 min.	Detailed View
John Smith	Chinese Listening	Beginning	487	-	-	3 min.	Detailed View
John Smith	WR-ChineseSimplified	-	-	2.00	-	1 min.	Detailed View

2. Score results are presented in rows, with each line representing one student and one skill.

Column Name	Explanation
Name/ID	This column will display whatever the student typed as their "Full Name" when they logged in. It is sorted alphabetically.
Panel Name	The skill area of the test (RD = Reading, WR=Writing, SP=Speaking)
Benchmark	The CASLS Benchmark level associated with the student's performance. This is only displayed for students who have completed the test.
Level	The scale score for the student. This is only displayed for students who have completed the test.
Writing Score	The average score across all four writing prompts. This will only display if the teacher has graded the writing samples.
Speaking Score	The average score across all four speaking prompts. This will only display if the teacher has graded the speaking samples.
Test Time	The elapsed time that the student spent taking the test.
Writing/Speaking Detail	For speaking and writing tests, clicking this link will allow you to see/hear the students spoken and written responses.

Interpreting the Reading Scores

The reading test is scored automatically by the computer. This test produces two scores: a Benchmark Level score (Benchmark) and a numerical score (Level). The Benchmark levels are intended to be comparable to major levels of other well-known proficiency scales (ILR, ACTFL). Note that the highest benchmark possible on the test is Transitioning (ILR 1 / ACTFL Intermediate). Benchmark scores are provided with the cut scores shown below. These categories are based on percentage correct for various levels, as described in the next section. Note that because the test is adaptive, students who get 'harder' items will score higher than students who get 'easy' items, even if the overall percent correct is the same.

Benchmark	Score (Level)	Description
	Reading	
Transitioning	4 - 6	Transitioning proficiency is characterized by the ability to use language knowledge to understand information in everyday materials. In reading, students at this level should be able to understand the main ideas and explicit details in everyday materials such as short letters, menus, and advertisements. In listening, students at this level can follow short conversations and announcements on common topics and answer questions about the main idea and explicitly stated details. In speaking and writing, students are not limited to formulaic utterances, but can express factual information through the manipulation of grammatical structures.
Beginning	1 - 3	Beginning proficiency is characterized by a reliance on a limited repertoire of learned phrases and basic vocabulary. A student at this level is able recognize the purpose of basic reading texts by understanding common words and expressions. The student is able to understand a core of simple, formulaic sentences in both reading and listening. In writing and speaking, the student is able to communicate basic information through lists of words and some memorized patterns.
Undetermined	0	A score of "Undetermined" indicates that the test taker did not do better than chance.

Interpreting the Reading Score Ranges

Within each Benchmark level, there are designations for A, B, and C. These designations are merely identify students in the top third, middle third, or bottom third of the score range for that particular level and are provided as a convenience. These designations should not be interpreted as being exactly equivalent to ACTFL sublevels. Scores are calculated as shown in the second table, and should be considered estimates of performance.

Benchmark	Group	Reading
Transitioning	A	6
	B	5
	C	4
Beginning	A	3
	B	2
	C	1
Undetermined	UD	0

	C	B	A
Level -1, -2	0.9	0.9	0.9
Level	0.3	0.3	0.8
Level +1			0.3

Interpreting the Speaking and Writing Scores

CASLS does not provide rating for the speaking and writing sections. However, teachers are able to login and rate their student samples. The CASLS common rubric describes a range of proficiency comparable to other well-known proficiency scales (ACTFL Novice – Superior / ILR 0+ - 3). The **Language** rating describes the **type** of language being produced (words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs). The **Control** rating describes the **quality** of language being produced. In most cases the rating for these categories should be the same or, at most, adjacent.

Score	Language	Score	Control
4	Speaks/writes in multiple, clearly connected sentences. Uses a variety of sentence types and discourse organizers.	4	Expansive vocabulary. Easy to understand. Tailors speech/writing to audience. Shows awareness, though not perfect control, of discourse conventions.
3	Speaks/writes mostly in connected sentences. Uses a variety of sentence types.	3	Able to narrate in multiple time frames and express relationships (e.g., sequential, causal, etc.). Easy to understand, though may make some errors.
2	Speaks/writes in a combination of memorized phrases and sentence-length utterances. Can occasionally string sentences together.	2	Shows evidence of original production, but may still have errors in basic structures. Generally understandable.
1	Speaks mostly in single words or memorized phrases.	1	Relies on memorized elements. May be difficult to understand.
0	Little or no target language.	0	Little or no target language.

The score for each prompt is the average of the scores for the two categories. The final score for the speaking/writing section is the average of scores for each prompt. Based on the rubric, the general relationship between the speaking/writing scores and proficiency levels is shown below. Note that this proficiency range is greater than that possible on the reading test.

Score	Level
4.0	Refining
3.5	
3.0	Expanding
2.5	
2.0	Transitioning
1.5	
1.0	Beginning
0.0	

Swahili CAP Score Interpretation Guide

Examples of language production at various levels:

Prompt: "You are getting ready for school and need some supplies. Your host offers to go to the store for you. Tell her what you need for school."

Zero Level Response
Notes
Zero level responses are those that are indecipherable, profane, or not in the target language. If the response has occasional non-target language words, those words should be ignored and the remainder of the response scored accordingly.

Beginning Level Response
Example: "I need pencil...book...pen...desk"
Notes
This is mostly a list of words. The student seems to have memorized "I need" as a chunk, so its use here is not evidence of original production. Note that even if the student has said "I need pencil, I need book, I need pen, I need desk", this is still not evidence of anything more than knowledge of a single chunk. The fact that the student included "desk" in a list of things to buy for school is probably an indication of a rather limited vocabulary.

Transitioning Level Response
Example: "Excuse me. I need for school is pencil and book and scissors and notebook. I am excited for school. It will start 9:00. Thank you."
Notes
Here, there is evidence that the student can use the language to perform a simple task. Although there is not a lot of original production here, there is evidence that the student can link elements together. There are multiple sentences with varied grammar, but they are not connected into paragraph level discourse. At the upper end of this level, the speaker may be quite talkative and have a fairly broad command of a range of structures, but will fail to produce speech in paragraphs.

Swahili CAP Score Interpretation Guide

Expanding Level Response
Example: "My school starts tomorrow. I need some things for school and I heard that you are planning to go to the store. If you could get some pencils and pens, notebook, and some book covers while there, I really appreciate you. I can pay you when you get back. Thank you."

Notes
This task should not be a challenge for a student at this level. Here the student has no difficulty with the basic task and is able to make an easily interpretable request. There is evidence of language beyond a mere repetition of learned elements. Although fairly short, the response hangs together as a paragraph. Note that there are still some errors, but they do not interfere.

Refining Level Response
Example: "I really appreciate you doing this for me. If it's no trouble, there are a few things that I need for school tomorrow. First, I need a notebook. If they have single subject notebooks, that would be my preference. I'll also need some mechanical pencils, size .5 if they have them, but .7 is fine as well. Since I'm taking chemistry, I'll also need a graphing calculator. As long as it says "graphing" on the package, you probably don't have to pay too much attention to the individual features. Finally, I'll also need some book covers, nothing too colorful or weird. About five should do it. I'd be happy to come along if you need a hand."

Notes
This task is actually not appropriate to elicit a sample of language at this level. However, it is clear from what is produced that the speaker has no problems with the task and is able to clearly articulate his or her needs. Vocabulary is precise and the discourse is clearly structured. Students at this level can still make mistakes, but would probably not do so in a simple task such as this.