

## Developing a Test of Early Arabic Literacy Skills to Inform Beginning Reading Instruction

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### Abstract

Arabic is the fourth most common language, spoken by over 400 million native speakers. Results of international assessments indicate that literacy development remains a critical need, with most of the participating Arab countries near the bottom of achievement levels. A necessary first step towards improving literacy achievement is the development of instructional programming and assessments that: 1) are aligned with the construct of reading, 2) can inform instruction, and 3) can identify students at-risk for poor outcomes. To address this need, a multi-national research effort has been launched to develop the Test of Early Arabic Literacy Skills (TEALS), a standardized measure of early literacy skills for students in grades 1 and 2. The TEALS assesses four constructs (phonological awareness, orthographic knowledge, morphological awareness, word reading) across 12 subtests. A total of 188 students completed the TEALS by trained administrators. Rasch analyses were used to analyze the data. Results indicate that the TEALS can provide reliable estimates of students' early literacy skills.

**Keywords:** Arabic, word reading, Rasch, literacy development, standardized assessment