



CASAS 2009-10 WIA Title II Promising Practices Awards

The Promising Practices Awards recognize California ABE, ASE or ESL adult education providers that have implemented strategies and practices to help students attain their goals. These practices must improve program accountability, develop skills that students need in the workplace, promote collaboration and cooperation with other programs or agencies, promote the effective use of technology, promote effective student transitions, or have potential application in other adult programs. CASAS manages the Promising Practice Awards for the California Department of Education.

Promising Practice nominations are identified through the WIA Title II program evaluation process, which includes feedback from WIA II Program Evaluation Survey responses, site visits, student learning outcome data, and reports from other adult educators. In order to be eligible for a Promising Practices award, agencies must meet specific data collection criteria and document the effectiveness of the practice through an evaluation process based on data findings. CASAS evaluation program specialists review nominations, conduct interviews to validate the information received, closely examine the impact of the practice and make recommendations to the California Department of Education. The following programs have been recognized as 2009-10 Promising Practices:

Coast Community College District Le-Jao Center Bridges to Success Cohort Program

Category: Transitions

The Bridges to Success Cohort Program provides support and mentoring to 15 ESL students, and helps them to transition to credit community college courses or vocational certificate programs. Students from the ESL program apply, and selected students then enroll in a minimum of 12 units at Coastline Community College. Each student is given a Bridge Program mentor who assists with enrollment and provides support as they take courses at Coastline CCD, and works with the ESL Bridge program counselor. This program was started after the agency found that most ESL students did not continue to college credit programs at Coastline Community College. The program realized that students would be more successful if they progressed with a cohort of their peers, and were able to receive counseling, support services and mentoring as they transitioned to college or vocational education courses. Since this program started, there has been a waiting list of at least 10 students who would like to participate, and those who participated indicated that they benefit greatly from the support of their Bridge Program mentors and peers.

Of the 15 students who participated in the Bridges to Success program in 2008, 11 (70%) enrolled in at least one credit course in the summer, and 12 (80%) enrolled in at least one credit course in the Fall of 2008. Coast CCD was above the state performance average in almost all of the ESL levels in 2008-09, and their persistence level in was 97.5%.

Contra Costa County Office of Education: Santa Fe Springs Parole Site Pathways to Employment through the Parolee Education Program

Category: Transitions

Contra Costa County Office of Education's (CCCOE) Santa Fe Springs Parole Site has created an innovative workforce transition program that effectively prepares parolees for employment. CCCOE is participating in the Workforce Skills Certification System (WSCS) Pilot, one of CDE's Adult Basic Education Initiatives. The Pathways to Employment Program was designed for students to receive focused workplace-related instruction and assessment, and to translate their new skills directly into job placement. Students assessed with both a standardized basic and soft skills assessment and receive a detailed skills profile. This profile documents soft skills such as customer care and responsibility, as assessed by Learning Resources, Inc (LRI). The profile also documents CASAS assessment results together with descriptors of the skills demonstrated, in language that employers understand.

Implementing this WSCS project has changed the way students interact with one-stops and other employment agencies. A formal agreement between Santa Fe Springs and the vocational rehabilitation center ensures that students referred to the vocational center with the WSCS Profile are automatically qualified to receive job assistance and resources. Instructors report that students are more motivated and driven because they see that their hard work can translate into long-term employment. Since the start of the WSCS pilot in January 2010, 7 students have entered the vocational rehabilitation program, 3 students have gone on interviews after being referred to the one-stop center, and 4 students have obtained jobs (with numbers projected to increase). CCCOE has shown improvement in most of the NRS instructional levels from 2007-08 to 2008-09, as compared to the California state performance averages.

Inglewood Adult School CCAEE Meets the Inglewood Student Council

Category: Outreach

In 2008, students from the Inglewood Student Council were given the unique opportunity to attend the California Council for Adult Education (CCAEE) Conference to learn more about adult education issues. The members of Inglewood's very active student council had expressed interest in knowing more about the management of the adult school, and were curious about conferences and professional development. When a WASC team suggested that the students attend the upcoming CCAEE conference, the school arranged for 5 students to go. Before the conference, students went to an orientation and learned more about CCAEE and professional conferences, and selected the sessions they wanted to attend. At the conference, the students participated fully, and were able to provide their valuable input during the sessions. They were particularly interested in talking with administrators from other agencies in order to learn more about how other adult schools operate.

After attending, students reported that they were much more knowledgeable about the adult education system, and felt more invested in the success of their adult school. They wrote about their experience and shared these stories with other students. After CCAEE, instructors and administrators report that there has been more collaboration and cooperation between students and administration. Inglewood was in the top quartile of WIA II agencies for program year 2008-09 (based on student performance, persistence and level completion), and was above the state averages for all instructional levels.

Los Angeles USD: Abram Friedman Occupation Center Managing ABE & ASE Testing Through Accurate Reporting

Category: Program Management

In order to manage a large student population and improve performance, LAUSD adopted an integrated student contract and test management system. The agency has standardized testing procedures, which has greatly increased the percentage of paired scores and proper student placement. The agency is able to keep track of testing history and use data to improve program management. They are able to ensure that students are tested in the correct modality and at the proper time.

One facet of this program is the integrated student contract. All students in the ABE and ASE independent student labs at Abram Friedman have a contract by which they work toward their individual goals. Testing is integrated into the student contract. When students reach a certain point in the instructional process, the contract indicates that the student should be tested. When students earn a benchmark, they receive a certificate. This practice has motivated students to do well, and has greatly improved program management. Another facet of this program is that teachers receive reports about their class performance every two weeks. They are able to identify the correct posttests for students, and communicate testing in a clearer way to their classes. The Abram Friedman Occupational Center exceeds the 2008-09 California state performance averages in almost all instructional levels. In addition, the level of paired scores at Abram Friedman has increased 13% over the past year, indicating that there may also be a higher number of benchmarks earned since the implementation of this new system.

Mira Costa College Using EL Civics Assessments to Prepare for Post Secondary Transition

Category: Transitions

Mira Costa College has integrated their EL Civics curriculum into a transition program to help students progress from noncredit adult education classes into credit community college and vocational classes. Within this seamless transition program, students begin to create academic and career goals upon entry, and learn about transition options throughout their time in ESL. This program is much more effective than having separate workshops or sessions to inform students about transitions, and sends the message that transitioning is an accessible and viable option for students.

In the Level 7 "Bridging" ESL classes, EL Civics units are tailored specifically to teach students about transitioning to credit courses. Students are given focused writing instruction, and are able to participate in a tutoring program. Students study the MiraCosta College course catalog, complete an admission application, and learn about how the credit college system is structured. A recent addition to the Bridging Class is a portfolio requirement, which is similar to writing projects in credit English courses. MiraCosta also has a full-time staff member who coordinates all transition efforts, and has created a program called NC2C (Noncredit to Credit). Students who show interest in NC2C are identified and given support throughout the transition process. Over the past two years, the NC2C program has helped 21 students transition from noncredit to credit coursework. 105 students complete the bridging course every year, and at least 10% of those have transitioned into at least one credit course. MiraCosta College performed above the California state averages in all ESL instructional levels in 2008-09.

Sacramento City USD: Charles A. Jones Career and Education Center ABE to CTE Pathways Program

Category: Transitions

In response to budget cuts, the Charles A. Jones Center restructured its ABE program to focus on giving students a specific pathway from adult education into career and vocational training and the workforce. The restructured ABE program was designed only for students planning to advance into a career or training program. This eliminated students who had been enrolled in classes, in some cases, for years. Students were given a time limit to show improvement in their scores while in ABE classes, and were required to maintain at least a 90% attendance rate. Those who fell below the requirements were replaced with students from a waiting list. With these new requirements, Charles A. Jones has been able to serve the same number of students with two fewer classes, and with only one teacher instead of three.

Using CASAS pretest scores as an entry requirement into the ABE pathways class ensures that students are prepared for the course material. Instructors plan curriculum specifically designed for transitioning into a career training program and the attendance requirements ensure that students are present to receive necessary instruction. With a clear goal in mind and a realistic timeframe to achieve it, students progress through the ABE program in a timely manner. This also allows other students to enter the program and follow the same pathway. Charles A. Jones monitors the success of the program by studying TOPSpro reports on a monthly basis. School administrators use Federal Table 4 data to evaluate student performance and improve the program. The adult school met the 2008-09 persistence average for the state (58%), and met or exceeded the state performance for all ABE instructional levels.

Sacramento City USD: Florin Technology Center ESL Orientation/Success Class

Category: Program Management

Florin Technology Education Center created an ESL Orientation/Success Class, which all incoming ESL students are required to take before entering a level ESL class. This 2-week course gives incoming ESL students the knowledge and skills required to succeed at the adult school. Students discuss the importance of class attendance, working in groups, and setting long and short-term goals. The class was created in 2008 to address Florin's low ESL persistence rates, which was due to irregular attendance, lack of study skills or lack of unrealistic goals. One common barrier to persistence, gained from student feedback, was that the students did not know anyone in their ESL class and felt uncomfortable entering the new environment alone. The ESL Orientation/Success Class gives students the opportunity to form a peer group even before starting regular ESL classes. Many of the students that attend the same Orientation/Success Class continue support each other while in ESL classes.

Since implementing the ESL Orientation/Success Class, there has been a significant increase in learner persistence. The percentage of students attending ESL classes for 20 or more hours at Florin Technology Education Center has increased from 75% to 89% since the implementation of the class. The agency surpassed the 2008-09 California student-level performance for all but one ESL instructional level.

San Diego Community College District I-BEST Model Applied to VESL Personal Care Assistant/Caregiver Class

Category: Curriculum/Instruction and Vocational ESL

San Diego CCD created a Personal Care Assistant/Caregiver Class based on the I-BEST model of instruction. Students receive Vocational ESL (VESL) instruction and vocational training at the same time, which provides a more focused curriculum designed to transition students into the workforce or continued education. This class was created due to a high demand in the community for Personal Care Assistants. San Diego CCD decided to follow the I-BEST model, used in Washington State, in order to eliminate the need for students to attend a VESL course before the vocational training course. This class is team-taught by both a VESL instructor and a vocational instructor. They work in tandem to introduce concepts and language to the students, and then use those new language skills to learn practical application of the concepts. Students have both hands-on training to prepare them for the workplace as well as intensive curriculum to understand all of the material. This class creates a bridge for ESL students to enter the health care field, and ensures that they are prepared for the workplace.

The original class was taught in the Fall of 2009, and had a beginning enrollment of 54 students. Of these students, 44 students completed the class and earned a certificate of completion, 11 students enrolled in a Certified Nursing Assistant class and will graduate in June, and at least 5 have secured employment as caregivers. San Diego CCD exceeded the 2008-09 California state persistence level of 58.0% with a level of 63.2%, and has shown improvement in student performance in ESL levels over the past three program years.

For more information about Promising Practices, please visit www.casas.org and click on "Promising Practices"

2009-10 EL Civics: Making a Difference in the Community Awards

A key focus of the California English Literacy and Civics Education (EL Civics) program is for adult students to acquire the language and literacy skills to become citizens, exercise the rights and duties of citizenship, and enrich the communities in which they live. This award recognizes EL Civics programs that teach skills required for citizenship and empower students to make a difference in the community. CASAS, in conjunction with the California Department of Education, identifies programs that make a difference in the community through EL Civics lessons and activities. To be recognized as a Making a Difference Award recipient, agencies must meet specific data collection criteria, document the effectiveness of their project, and show that the project goes beyond the classroom to affect the community in a positive manner. We are pleased to honor the 2010 EL Civics Making a Difference in the Community Award recipient:

Fremont Adult School Saving Fremont Adult School!

Advanced Level ESL students at Fremont Adult School heard about a proposed \$2 million dollar reduction to the adult school's budget, which would cut 40% of the funds for the 2010-2011 program year. The budget had already been cut by 30% in September 2009, and the students knew that with an additional 40% cut Fremont Adult School would be in a very unstable position. This announcement came just as the students were studying EL Civics COAPP #39.5 (Government). This educational unit focuses on democratic government practices, voting, civil rights, and participating in local politics. The students quickly began a grassroots campaign in which they applied EL Civics lessons in order to save their adult school. The students put these EL Civics lessons into action, and mobilized their peers and community to fight against the budget cuts. In the end, the students helped to convince the School Board to reduce the adult education budget cuts by 25%, from \$2 million to \$1.5 million.

The campaign began with students educating fellow classmates (in all programs and levels) about the budget cuts. Students visited different classes to inform them about the budget cuts, warn them about the impact they would have, and encourage them to take action. Many of the students wrote letters to the School Board, stressing the importance of keeping the adult education program alive. Students used online social networks to spread the word of these cuts to the community, and mobilized people to attend school board meetings in January and February 2010. They spread the word to their family and friends, who also took action to try and stop the budget cuts. Regardless of their level of English skills, students were able to contribute to the effort. Within a few weeks, the Adult School community became a vocal and public voice in opposition to the budget cuts.

In order to make a big impact at the School Board meetings, students wrote testimonials and spoke on behalf of different immigrant groups. These students presented their speeches at School Board meetings, where they were joined by many adult school students and supporters who also wanted to have their voices heard. They described the negative impacts that the budget cuts would have on their families and the entire community. This grassroots campaign was successful in reducing the budget cuts, and garnered local publicity for Fremont Adult School. More importantly, it allowed the students to work together and created a strong sense of pride in the school. In addition to the reduction in budget cuts, this project has led to increased attendance and registration at Fremont Adult School. The attendance levels during the time of the grassroots campaign (January-March 2010) increased significantly, and 90% of the students re-registered for the Spring Quarter (after the budget hearings), despite a \$30 materials fee. Students reported that they were proud of the work that they did, and that they improved their English skills during this process. In addition, Fremont Adult School exceeded the California State performance averages in all ESL levels in 2008-09.