



CASAS 2010-11 WIA Title II Promising Practices Awards

The Promising Practices Awards recognize California ABE, ASE and ESL adult education providers who 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 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. 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 2010-11 Promising Practices award recipients.

Asian American Resource Center CASAS Skill Level Descriptors

Category: Accountability

Asian American Resource Center has implemented a successful system that helps students to understand the importance of CASAS assessments. During the orientation process, each student is given the CASAS ESL Skill Level Descriptors to track their CASAS assessment scores. This is an effective procedure because students become informed about the importance of CASAS assessments and are motivated to track their own progress. They understand the purpose of the CASAS assessments and take responsibility for challenging themselves to improve. The administrative staff has developed a valuable information-sharing relationship with instructors to ensure they understand the importance of CASAS assessments and are aware of all resources available to them.

Since the implementation of these procedures, attendance has improved because students understand that attending classes helps them to improve their CASAS assessment scores. In addition, this agency met or exceeded the California state performance goals for all ESL levels in 2009-10.

Jewish Vocational Service Community Outreach Internship Program (COIP)

Category: Curriculum/Instruction

The Community Outreach Internship Program is a collaborative effort between Jewish Vocational Service (JVS) and the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). The goal is to recruit and train students for quality employment within the UCSF system. JVS and UCSF designed the program to prepare clients for medical administrative roles at the UCSF Medical Center and for general administrative roles within the University. Participants are trained in basic core competencies including computer skills, simple business writing, basic professional reading skills, math and financial literacy, and soft skills. Once participants complete training, they are placed in various clerical/administrative internships at UCSF. COIP has proven to be an effective method of providing employment opportunities for low-skilled, disadvantaged job-seekers.

The 2010 cycle of COIP resulted in 12 full-time job placements at UCSF and numerous other internship and temporary employment opportunities for students. Eighteen out of the twenty students who participated in COIP in 2010 demonstrated significant gains on CASAS assessments, and the agency overall has exceeded California state performance and persistence levels for the past two program years.

Mt. San Antonio College Using ESL Student Portfolios to Promote Level Progress

Category: Curriculum/Instruction

The noncredit ESL program at Mt. San Antonio College incorporates an evidence-based portfolio component that monitors student learning outcomes as students advance through the program and transition into college or career pathways. All students have a portfolio that represents their accumulated work. This includes a progress report form,

assessment criteria and scores, writing samples, project and presentation scores, CASAS outcomes, and indicators of class attendance and participation. Students have access to their portfolios and may add work samples throughout the term. All instructors use the progress report form and review the entire portfolio to determine whether or not the student has progressed to the next level. This has allowed for a standardized method of evaluating progress.

The effectiveness of these portfolios can be seen in the agency's persistence and performance rates, which are well above state levels for the past two program years. Students report that creating the portfolios gave them more confidence in their English skills, and that they enjoyed being able to track their progress.

Napa Valley Adult Education ***The Workplace Training Institute (WTI)***

Category: Workplace Instruction

The Workplace Training Institute is a customized language development and computer literacy program that provides local businesses and agencies with highly professional employee training. The WTI outreach coordinator makes contact with potential customers and then visits the workplace with a language or computer specialist to clarify the needs of the business. A written proposal of services and a cost schedule are created. The goal is to provide local businesses and agencies with a well-qualified workforce. The training provided through the WTI is effective because lessons are tailored to meet the specific workplace needs of each client. Past clients include local manufacturers, government agencies and small businesses.

The WTI has proven to be beneficial to both employers and employees, and feedback from past clients has been overwhelmingly positive. Participating students show learning gains well above the California state average despite limited hours of instruction, and the adult school overall exceeds state goals in all instructional levels for the 2009-10 program year. The WTI illustrates a successful partnership between Napa Valley Adult Education and the community at large.

Napa Valley Adult Education ***ESL Communities of Practice (CoP)***

Category: Professional Development

The purpose of the Communities of Practice at Napa Valley Adult Education is to bring teachers together to engage in collective learning to improve student learning outcomes. There are three ESL CoPs based on learner levels. The CoPs meet four times each year to discuss specific learning goals and effective teaching strategies. Goals for CoPs include improving CASAS scores, increasing learner transitions, and expanding reading strategies. Between meetings, teachers read and review research, view relevant videos, consult with colleagues, practice techniques shared at CoP meetings, and review student gains and outcomes. The program participants work in a collaborative environment that encourages sharing of expertise and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Since the CoPs were established in 2008-09, test scores have improved across all instructional levels, student persistence has increased, and teachers have greatly benefitted from the professional development. Performance levels at Napa Valley Adult Education have significantly improved over the last two program years, and both students and instructors report that the CoPs are successful in targeting the specific needs of the student population.

Rancho Santiago Community College District: Orange Education Center ***STARS (Students Transitioning and Registering Services)***

Category: Guidance

STARS is a program that offers noncredit students the opportunity to learn about how to transition to college credit classes at Santiago Canyon College. The program includes workshops that teach skills needed for transition and provides students with access to many resources that help them continue on to postsecondary education. Students are given academic planning guides, lists of college resources and services, course selection guides, and many other materials. Students benefit from the comprehensive support they receive while attending STARS. Counselors and outreach staff facilitate transitions by offering the guidance that students need to navigate the complex matriculation process.

Data conducted by the Rancho Santiago CCD Research Department shows that students at Santiago Canyon College who have attended adult education courses transfer to four-year universities at a higher rate than those with no background in adult education. The STARS project gives students the support and preparation needed to succeed in postsecondary education and beyond. Former STARS students report that they felt prepared for transition and are knowledgeable about the process.

Rancho Santiago Community College District: Santa Ana College of Continuing Education Vocational Business Skills Certificates

Category: Guidance

Santa Ana College of Continuing Education combines intensive counseling and student support with its vocational business certification programs. The counseling greatly helps the students meet numerous goals on their way to obtaining vocational certificates in areas such as customer service and administrative assistance. A counselor is assigned to the Business Skills Lab and meets individually with students to create an educational plan and to discuss students' progress. Counselors continually follow up with students throughout the program. This one-on-one guidance greatly helps students know exactly what they need to do to achieve a vocational certificate and obtain meaningful employment.

The Vocational Business Skills Certificate program is successful in that it directly addresses the need of students for skills that will help them enter into career pathways. It is estimated that approximately 40 percent of participants complete one or more vocational certificates. Students have reacted positively toward the Vocational Business Skill Certificate Programs at Santa Ana and have shown interest in other state-approved certificate programs. Santa Ana College is in the process of developing curriculum for more certificate programs, thus creating more opportunities for adult learners.

San Juan Unified School District Adult Education Distance Learning Off-Site Video Libraries: Howe Avenue Elementary School Model

Category: Technology/Distance Learning

The Distance Learning Program at Howe Avenue Elementary School directly addresses the need for flexible adult education options that are accessible and convenient for students. Because San Juan USD covers 75 square miles and is an extremely diverse community, additional outreach resources using innovative technology were needed. A Parent Resource Center at the Howe Elementary School campus was opened to address this need. The Resource Center includes a video library and provides a convenient meeting and study place for adult learners. Adult students also meet with a teacher regularly to discuss progress, turn in work, and check out new packets and DVDs.

This method of distance learning instruction has allowed San Juan USD adult students to continue to receive ESL instruction despite large budget cuts. Since the Howe Elementary site opened, there has been an increase in parent participation at the school. San Juan USD Adult Education has reached those who previously may have been unable to access services and has also exceeded state performance for all ESL levels in the past two years.

San Leandro Adult School ABE Bridge and Transitions

Category: Program Management

The ABE Bridge and Transitions program at San Leandro Adult School provides ESL students with the support to transition successfully into ASE and CTE programs. Students receive intensive training in reading, writing, and math and are introduced to Vocational ESL (VESL) programs. Prior to the implementation of this program, many ESL students remained in the ESL program year after year. The staff recognized the need for a transition program to allow ESL students to progress in their education and to allow for new ESL students to begin their studies. The students at San Leandro are enthusiastic about the program and see it as an opportunity to accomplish their educational goals.

Since the implementation of the ABE Bridge Program, student attendance and persistence have increased, and CASAS assessment scores have improved. Participating ESL students are excited about their education, and students are receiving the training they need to obtain meaningful employment.

San Leandro Adult School **ESL Intake and Orientation**

Category: Program Management

San Leandro Adult School has implemented an effective and efficient ESL orientation process in which they are able to register, assess, and place students all within a two-and-a-half hour period. The process includes a one-on-one interview with an ESL teacher, a brief writing sample, and a reading assessment. Lastly, the student has an additional interview with an instructor who fully assesses the student's placement level. This process has allowed San Leandro Adult School to register and place up to 200 students in a short period of time. Changes to the ESL intake and orientation procedures stemmed directly from feedback from students and instructors, and they have continued to provide suggestions for making the process even better.

The ESL intake and orientation procedures have led to more accurate student placement, which makes the classroom experience much more effective. San Leandro Adult School has exceeded the California state performance levels in all ESL instructional levels and has an extremely high persistence rate. The streamlined intake, orientation and assessment procedures are a great example of identifying a need and taking action to serve students better.

Sutter County Library **Citizenship Preparation Program — Citizenship Recognition**

Category: EL Civics and Citizenship

The extremely successful Citizenship Preparation Program at Sutter County Library provides comprehensive support and resources to students to help them in obtaining citizenship. The purpose of this program is to assist students during the citizenship process and help them become contributing members of the community. Through carefully structured curriculum, in-person presentations by USCIS, on-site language translators, and flexible scheduling, students receive information needed for citizenship, and they experience the greater impact that citizenship has on the community. When students return from their USCIS interviews, they share their experience with their peers. This helps other students to be more comfortable with the citizenship process. The agency also holds citizenship ceremonies to celebrate those who have become citizens.

The agency is proud to report that it has helped more than 1,600 students obtain their citizenship. Persistence rates in 2009-10 (90%) far exceed those of the state, and of 257 students enrolled in the program, 86 percent passed the Citizenship Interview Test and 94 percent passed the Government and History Test.