Handbook for Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education Teachers

Focus on WIA Title II Accountability Requirements

An Interactive Resource Guide for New and Experienced ABE/ASE Teachers

California Edition 2013
Introduction

The CASAS Handbook for Adult ABE/ASE Teachers provides new teachers the instructions and guidelines they need to fulfill program, state, and federal accountability requirements. The handbook gives some basic tools to maximize instruction based on information gained through CASAS testing and demographic data collection. It also functions as a reference guide for more experienced teachers.

As an ABE/ASE teacher, you will become familiar with a variety of procedures and terms. After reading this manual, you should have a basic understanding of:

- The CASAS system
- CASAS Testing
- CASAS Reports
- How to determine class and students’ needs based on CASAS testing and reports

This manual is an interactive tool and a reference resource for teachers. It will help you become familiar with accountability procedures at your school site.

Where you see the icon, take time to answer the questions. You may need to ask for assistance from your supervisor or a lead teacher in order to gather all the information. There is an answer key at the end of this Handbook.

Where you see the icon, follow the link to the referenced document on the CASAS Web site at www.casas.org.

For the New Teacher

There is a wealth of information provided in this handbook. It is very important for you to understand how to use the CASAS system to help your students meet their learning goals. It is also important you understand what documents are required to maintain school funding. This handbook will help you see how all your work in testing and data collection can benefit you, your students, and your agency.

For the Experienced Teacher

Much of this information may be review for you, but chances are you will find out some things you didn’t know about CASAS. Tips are provided to help with data management, to read various reports, to target instruction based on testing outcomes, and to find corresponding instructional materials.

Special thanks to Kathy Bywater and Laurel Leonard for their work in developing and creating this handbook. Many thanks go to Linda Taylor for her vision, leadership and advice, and to Andrea Dolney for her technical prowess in making the handbook look so wonderful. And to those of you in the field who were so generous with your feedback – thank you!

Patty Long, CASAS Program Specialist
## Contents

**SECTION 1: WHAT IS ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND ADULT SECONDARY EDUCATION (ABE/ASE)?** ................................................. 1

- Types of agencies ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 1
- ABE/ASE program characteristics .......................................................................................................................................................... 1
- Adult ABE/ASE student characteristics ............................................................................................................................................. 1
- How are programs funded? ......................................................................................................................................................................... 2

**SECTION 2: WHAT IS CASAS?** .......................................................................................................................................................... 4

- What is TE? ................................................................................................................................................................................................. 4

**SECTION 3: COMPETENCIES, TASK AREAS, AND CONTENT STANDARDS** .................................................................................. 6

- What are Competencies? .............................................................................................................................................................................. 6
- What are Task Areas? .................................................................................................................................................................................. 7
- What are Content Standards? ..................................................................................................................................................................... 9

**SECTION 4: STUDENT REGISTRATION, ORIENTATION, AND PLACEMENT** ........................................................................ 12

- What is the process for student registration? ........................................................................................................................................ 12
- What is the process for student orientation? ........................................................................................................................................ 12
- What is the process for placement? ...................................................................................................................................................... 12

**SECTION 5: ACCOUNTABILITY** .......................................................................................................................................................... 14

- What is an Entry Record? ........................................................................................................................................................................... 14
- What is an Update Record? ....................................................................................................................................................................... 16

**SECTION 6: CASAS TESTING** .............................................................................................................................................................. 18

- Appraisal, Pre- and Post-Testing Overview ........................................................................................................................................ 18
  1. Place: Appraisals ................................................................................................................................................................................... 18
  2. Diagnose: Pretest ................................................................................................................................................................................ 18
  3. Instruct: Pretest .................................................................................................................................................................................... 19
  4. Monitor: Post-tests .............................................................................................................................................................................. 19
- HOW DO I FILL OUT THE TEST RECORD FORM? .......................................................................................................................... 20
- The CASAS Scale and Skill Level Descriptors .................................................................................................................................. 20
- CASAS across the Levels .......................................................................................................................................................................... 22

**SECTION 7: ADMINISTRATION AND STORAGE OF TESTS** ........................................................................................................ 23

- How do I Administer CASAS Tests? .................................................................................................................................................... 23
  - Needed for testing day .............................................................................................................................................................................. 23
  - Preparation for testing .......................................................................................................................................................................... 23
  - Getting started ..................................................................................................................................................................................... 23
  - Give the test ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 24
  - Test timing guidelines ...................................................................................................................................................................... 24

**SECTION 8: APPRAISALS, PRETESTS, AND POST-TESTS** ........................................................................................................... 25

- Appraisals ............................................................................................................................................................................................... 25
  - What’s the difference between an Appraisal and a Pre/Post-Test? .................................................................................................. 26
  - Appraisals ......................................................................................................................................................................................... 26
  - Pre- and Post-tests ................................................................................................................................................................................ 26
- Pretests: How do you know which pretest to give? ............................................................................................................................ 27
  - Select a Pretest Level based on an Appraisal Score ..................................................................................................................... 27
  - Scores Outside the Accuracy Range ............................................................................................................................................. 29
Post-tests ........................................................................................................................................... 30
CASAS Test Preparation ....................................................................................................................... 32
   Test Preparation Guidelines ............................................................................................................. 32
Sample Test Items ................................................................................................................................ 33
CASAS eTests ........................................................................................................................................ 33
CASAS Reading and Math Tests and the GED Test ............................................................................ 34
   Assessing Your ASE Students ......................................................................................................... 34

Section 9: Using Test Results ............................................................................................................. 36
   How do I use test results to guide instruction? ................................................................................ 36
   How do I share test results with my students? .................................................................................. 39
   Practice Activity: Develop a way to practice a competency in another topic area ......................... 41
   How do I find appropriate instructional materials to teach the competencies? ............................ 42
   CASAS QuickSearch Online ............................................................................................................. 43
   Multiple Measures of Documenting Student Progress .................................................................... 44

Review .................................................................................................................................................. 45
CASAS Training Opportunities .......................................................................................................... 45
Reflection ............................................................................................................................................. 45
Answer Key ......................................................................................................................................... 45
ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
Section 1: What is Adult Basic Education and Adult Secondary Education (ABE/ASE)?

Adult Education ABE/ASE programs provide adults with literacy and language development skills necessary to participate effectively in the United States as productive citizens, workers, and family members. Reading, writing, speaking, and math are taught in the context of real-life situations.

Types of agencies

In California, Adult Education ABE/ASE programs vary in size and program offerings. Agencies providing Adult Education can be

- School districts
- Community colleges
- Library literacy programs
- Correctional facilities
- County offices of education
- Community-based organizations (CBOs)
- Faith-based organizations

ABE/ASE program characteristics

Depending on the size of the program and community needs, agencies may provide

- One ABE/ASE class
- More than one hundred classes
- Classes at the main campus
- Classes at an off-agency location
- Different classes for each skill (reading, writing, math)
- Integrated skill classes
- Single level classes (ABE high, ASE low....)
- Multi-level classes (students of multiple levels in the same class)

Adult ABE/ASE student characteristics

ABE/ASE students come to your program with

- A wide range of educational and cultural backgrounds
- Specific or generalized goals
- Widely varying levels of English language proficiency
The ABE population includes but is not limited to the following individuals:

- Adults with limited or no formal educational experience
- Native speakers of English and reasonably fluent nonnative speakers of English who want to improve their basic skills and life skills
- Adults with learning difficulties who may need extra support
- Unemployed or displaced workers who lack skills required for jobs or career technical education programs
- Adults with or without a high school diploma who are unable to read, write, or compute at the secondary education level
- Adults seeking a GED or high school diploma who need remediation in literacy and numeracy before moving on to adult secondary education

The ASE population includes but is not limited to the following individuals:

- Adults who can function at the secondary level (generally agreed to be at or above ninth grade level) who want to earn a GED or high school diploma
- Adults with learning difficulties who may need extra support
- Adults who function at the ABE level in one skill area i.e. math or writing, but at the ASE level in another skill area, i.e. reading
- Adults who have transitioned from ESL or ABE instructional levels
- Workers seeking additional skills for career technical education, employment, or job advancement
- Adults who want to transition to postsecondary programs that require a GED or high school diploma

**How are programs funded?**

Your agency probably receives funding from a variety of sources, including

- State apportionment (Average Daily Attendance)
- Federal funds – Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II funds
- Any number of state programs

Agencies receiving CDE state apportionment* are encouraged to collect

- Student demographics (Entry Records)
- Track student progress and goals (Update Records)
  
  *Check with your agency regarding their policy.*

Agencies receiving federal funding are required to collect

- Student demographics (Entry Records)
- Track student progress and goals (Update Records)
- Pre- and post-test for each student (Test Records)

This handbook provides teachers with the information they need to meet state and federal requirements.
Gather the Information: Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher

1. What kind of agency do you work for (adult school, CBO, etc.)?

2. Is your class single-level or multi-level?

3. Is your class a single subject or a multi-subject class?

4. How many ABE/ASE classes are offered by your district or agency both on- and off-site?
Section 2: What is CASAS?

CASAS — Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems — is a nonprofit organization. It provides standardized assessments and other tools needed to collect and report student information and learning progress.

With the CASAS system, agencies can establish measurable goals, place students into appropriate instructional levels, document student progress and outcomes, and report program success to students, staff, local boards, and policymakers, while meeting the requirements of the WIA Title II program.

There are four key components of the CASAS system. This teachers’ handbook will direct you through each of the components and demonstrate how they work together.

Gather the Information: Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher

CASAS Training and Accountability contacts at my site:

Name: _______________  Phone: _______________  Email: _______________
Name: _______________  Phone: _______________  Email: _______________
Name: _______________  Phone: _______________  Email: _______________
What is TE?

California agencies use a computer-based management information system called Tracking of Programs and Students Program, or **TOPSpro Enterprise (TE)**, to track and process CASAS data. Information from Entry, Update, and Test Records are monitored through this software program.

TE can generate reports for students, teachers, and administrators. It also compiles data to meet both state and federal funding requirements. TE provides reports that help instructors target appropriate instruction based on what skills students have and need to have for level completion.

The **TE Management Information System**:

- Scores CASAS tests
- Identifies missing information in data collection
- Tracks student progress and goal attainment
- Suggests the next test
- Identifies inaccurate scores
- Generates reports for students, teachers, administrators and funding sources
Section 3: Competencies, Task Areas, and Content Standards

Competencies, Task Areas, and Content Standards create the foundation for the CASAS curriculum. Separately, they provide life skills contexts, a variety of visual prompts, and the underlying basic academic skills that together work as the ladder to successful attainment of the curriculum objectives.

What are Competencies?

A competency is a measurable learning objective written in a functional life skills context. CASAS Competencies specifically address essential skills for life and work. CASAS tests are aligned to these competencies.

There are nine CASAS Competency Content Areas:

0. Basic Communication
1. Consumer Economics
2. Community Resources
3. Health
4. Employment
5. Government and Law
6. Math
7. Learning and Thinking Skills
8. Independent Living
Under each of the nine Content Areas are Competency Areas. And finally, more specific Competency Statements give the clear objective for students to achieve.

Each Content Area is identified by a number, 0-8. This is followed by Competency Area and Competency Statement numbers, which creates the 3-digit Competency Coding System.

The CASAS Competencies identify essential life skills that youth and adults need to be functionally competent members of their community, their family, and the workforce. These critical competencies provide instructional objectives for curriculum, direct links to test content for monitoring student learning, criteria for program evaluation, and a referencing system for instructional materials.

The competencies are relevant across the full range of instructional levels, from beginning literacy through high school completion including transition to postsecondary education and training.

What are Task Areas?

Task Areas are the written or graphic prompts in CASAS tests. These Task Areas are vital to student instruction, as students must not only be able to read a sentence, but must be able to understand vocabulary in multiple contexts, e.g. advertisements, newspaper articles, utility bills, or charts and graphs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0. General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Charts, maps, consumer billings, matrices, graphs, or tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Articles, paragraphs, sentences, directions, or pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Signs, price tags, ads, or product labels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Measurement scales and diagrams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Oral Cue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teachers need to be familiar with these Task Areas so that they can target instruction for students to learn and practice a competency or content standard within these Task Areas. Note: Each Task Area shows as the fourth digit of the CASAS coding system, seen on many TE reports you will use to plan instruction.

The following sample test item assesses reading in the context of retail store chart. Each test item on a CASAS test is coded by competency and task area. This particular Level B test item has been coded to:

**Competencies:**
- 4.4.3 Interpret job-related signs, charts, diagrams, forms, and procedures, and record information on forms, charts, checklists, etc.
- 4.7.4 Identify, secure, evaluate, process, and/or store information needed to perform tasks or keep records

**Task Area:**
2 (Charts, maps, consumer billings, matrices, graphs, or tables)

**Content Standards:**
- M1.2.13 Add two or three-digit numbers
- M5.1.1 Identify, count and extract data in lists, tables and charts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon.</th>
<th>Tue.</th>
<th>Wed.</th>
<th>Thu.</th>
<th>Fri.</th>
<th>Sat.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chart shows the number of customers that entered Bertha’s Jewelry Shop during the week. What was the total number of customers on Friday and Saturday?

A. 150
B. 240
C. 250
D. 350
What are CASAS Basic Skills Content Standards?

Content Standards are the underlying academic basic skills that should be taught in the context of CASAS Competencies. Teaching Content Standards (e.g., reading numbers) provide students the basic skill foundation students need to be successful in mastering the competencies (e.g. interpret wages, deductions).

CASAS Basic Skills Content Standards are categorized by a letter and numbering system. The letter designates the skill area. For ABE/ASE, there are Content Standards for reading and math skills. Content Standards for writing and speaking are in development.

Within each Content Standard Category there are a number of content standards listed in order of difficulty.

**Reading**
- R1 Beginning literacy/phonics
- R2 Vocabulary
- R3 General reading comprehension
- R4 Text in format
- R5 Reference materials
- R6 Reading strategies
- R7 Reading and thinking skills
- R8 Academic-oriented skills
- R9 Literary Analysis (ABE/ASE only)

**Listening**
- L1 Phonology
- L2 Vocabulary
- L3 Grammar
- L4 General Discourse
- L5 Informational Discourse
- L6 Strategies and Critical Thinking

**Math**
- M1 Number Sense
- M2 Algebra
- M3 Geometry
- M4 Measurement
- M5 Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability

**Writing**
- W1 Beginning Literacy
- W2 Spelling and Mechanics
- W3 Grammar and Sentence Structure
- W4 Vocabulary/Word Choice
- W5 Organization
- W6 Content
- W7 Writing for Varied Purposes
- W8 Academic-oriented Skills

**Speaking**
- S1 Phonology/ Pronunciation
- S2 Vocabulary
- S3 Grammar
- S4 General Discourse
- S5 Informational Discourse
- S6 Strategies and Critical Thinking
Imagine you’re planning to teach a lesson on reading medicine labels to an intermediate low class. What are all the skills you must teach so that students can perform this task?

Look at the

Content Area
3. Health

Competency Area
3.4 Understand basic health & safety procedures

Competency Statements
3.4.1. Interpret product label directions and safety warnings

Once you determine student level and the Competency Statement, ask your agency’s TE staff for your Class by Competency Report that will provide you with the

Task Area
3. Stories, articles, paragraphs, sentences, directions, or pictures
4. Signs, price tags, ads, or product labels

Content Standards (Reading)

Vocabulary
R2.3 Interpret common high-frequency words and phrases in everyday contexts (e.g., labels)
R2.7 Interpret abbreviations in specialized contexts (e.g., tsp.)

General reading comprehension
R3.2 Read and understand simple sentences that contain familiar vocabulary
R3.6 Interpret simple written instructions
R3.10 Follow pronoun references within a text (e.g., This is important.)
R3.12 Use supporting illustrations to interpret text

Text in format
R4.10 Interpret written materials using formatting clues (e.g., headings, captions, bullets, print features such as bold)

Reading strategies
R6.1 Predict the content of a text from title, pictures, type of material
R6.2 Scan simple text (e.g., ads, schedules, forms, paragraphs) to find specific information
Think About It

1. What are two or three things that caught your attention in this section?

2. How can you use CASAS Competencies?

3. How can you use Task Areas?

4. How can you use Content Standards?
Section 4: Student Registration, Orientation, and Placement

What is the process for student registration?

During the registration process, personal information as well as certain demographic information required by the program is collected from the students. Sometimes this is a scan form (scannable “bubble sheet” form), or a regular paper fill-in form, or an online form. The information obtained at registration is necessary for the student Entry Record forms.

Additionally, an appraisal (or placement test) of students’ English language and math skills is conducted at this time for correct placement in their new class. Some agencies include a student orientation during the registration process.

What is the process for student orientation?

For students to meet their language-learning goals, a comprehensive orientation, including goal setting, needs to take place as close to the time of enrollment as possible. Some registration processes include orientations, while others expect teachers to provide an orientation for their students. Minimally, the following information should be shared with students:

• Programs offered/class schedules
• Rules and regulations
• Safety and emergency procedures
• How to set learning goals and steps to reaching goals

Needs assessments and goal setting are an important part of orientation. Identifying students’ needs and goals is a powerful way to guide instruction and encourage student motivation and retention. There are a variety of goal setting activities that the teacher can do at the beginning of a class. For example, teachers may use a goal-setting questionnaire and steps for goal achievement, list goals and record what students learn in each class in a daily log, or even have the students set a “whole-class” goal for each week or term.

What is the process for placement?

Students are generally placed in class by skill level area (ABE, ASE, GED Preparation), goal or by proximity to a class site. Once a student registers, the student should take an appraisal followed by a CASAS pretest.
Gather the Information

- Locate a registration form that your site uses and place it in this handbook. Is it a fill-in form, bubble-in form, or an online form?

Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher – Registration and Placement

1. Where do students go to register at your site?

2. When can they register?

3. What type of appraisal is given?

4. Who gives the appraisal?

5. Who determines class placement for each student?

6. How is class placement determined?

Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher – Orientation and Goal Setting

1. When is student orientation at your site?

2. Are there orientation materials available for you to use? If so, what are they? Place a master set in this packet for your reference.

3. What goal setting activities are conducted in your program?

4. What goal setting activities do you plan to use with your class?
Section 5: Accountability

All students in WIA Title II programs who have accumulated 12 or more hours must have an Entry Record and an Update Record along with a pre- and post-test. This section reviews the Entry and Update Records.

What is an Entry Record?

**Entry Records** are required for every student in your agency and include fields to collect demographics, such as student gender and date of birth. These records are used to monitor the student's reasons for enrollment, program they are enrolled in (ABE or ASE), and level.

Many agencies complete Entry Records through registration. However, if you are responsible for filling out the Entry Record with your students, remember that it is important to gather all the information. This information will help determine whether the students’ needs are being met by your agency. It is also vital for federal funding.

**Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher**

At your site, are teachers required to fill out the Entry Record form?

- If not, who completes it?
- When must it be completed?
Sample Entry Record

Please refer to the Administration Manual for California for more detailed instructions. Check with your administrator for any requirements your agency has developed for the completion of the Entry Record.

### Directions
If your students must complete the Entry Record, please review the directions with them.

### Highest Year
Number of full years attended in US or other country. Use leading "0" if fewer than 10 years.

### Highest Diploma or Degree
Mark one. Mark whether it was earned outside the US.

### Ethnicity
Mark one.

### Race
Mark one or more according to students’ origins. Refer to the Administration Manual for detailed definitions of each. (pg. 47)

### Native Language
Mark the prevalent language spoken in the home when the student was a child.

### Labor Force Status
All students must mark labor force status.

### Special Programs
Check with your administrator to make sure any of these apply to the class you teach. These refer to specially funded programs, not topics you may teach in class.

### Attainable Goal
Must be a realistic goal that the student can realistically attain before June 30th.

### Instructional Program
Mark the one that applies to your class. Check with your TE staff if you’re not sure which one to mark them.

### Special Programs
Check with your administrator to make sure any of these apply to the class you teach. These refer to specially funded programs, not topics you may teach in class.
What is an Update Record?

An **Update Record** provides important information about a student, including status in the program, progress, learner results, instructional level at update, and reason for changing or exiting the program or class. Teachers complete an **Update Record** to document completed student outcomes.

While some agencies are moving toward a system of completing Update Records online through their attendance system, most agencies still have their teachers fill out these forms by hand.

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**Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher**

1. Are Update Records automatically generated for your dropped students or do you need to request them?

2. If you need to request them, from whom do you request them?
   
   Name: _____________________ Phone: _____________________ Email: _____________________

3. List three ways you know if your students have reached their personal, family, and/or academic goals? (student portfolios, interviews, etc.)
Sample Update Record

Depending on your agency’s procedures, you will need to complete an Update Record at the end of a semester, end of the fiscal year, or once you have dropped a student from your class. Please refer to the CASAS Administration Manual for California (your administrator and TE staff will have a copy) for more detailed instructions.

Box 4 – Date of Class Update
Mark the last date of attendance for the student or the date you are completing the Update.

Box 5 – Date of Last Instruction
Mark the last date the student received instruction.

Box 7 – Status
Mark “Retained in Program” if the student has changed to another teacher’s class, you think s/he may return, or it’s June and the student plans to continue in the summer. Mark “Left Program” if the student has not been in class for 90 consecutive days.

Box 8 – Progress
Mark one. “Progressed...” for those who have not completed a level (e.g. Int. Low) or program (e.g. ABE). “Completed” for those who have completed a level or program, but are not currently receiving instruction at the next level or anywhere in your program. “Advanced...” for those now receiving instruction in your program at a higher level than stated on their Entry Record.

Box 9 – Learner Results
This is your chance to show all the things your student has accomplished while in your class.

Box 10 – Work
List any jobs that the student is working while in your class.

Box 11 – Instructional Level – Not Required
Mark the level that the student performs at in class. Use the CASAS Skill Level Descriptors to help you decide.

Box 12 – Home
List any home-related activities that the student is involved in.

Box 13 – Reason for Exiting
Must complete if Box 7 is marked “Left Program.” Otherwise, this is a great tool for determining agency needs. Mark the one that most closely applies. Mark “End of Program Year” if students will continue into the next fiscal year.

Box 14 – GED
For GED classes only. Mark each section passed.
Section 6: CASAS Testing

What is CASAS testing and what is my responsibility?

Appraisal, pre- and post-testing overview

1. Place

The purpose of the Appraisal Process is to:

• determine readiness for a program (ABE/ASE, VABE/ASE, etc.) and instructional level for the student
• identify the correct CASAS pretest level

At the time of registration, students should be given an appraisal to determine their English language skill and literacy level. Some agencies have developed their own appraisal system. Most often, the registration process for new ABE/ASE students includes a reading and/or math appraisal. Agencies use the CASAS Form 80 Appraisal for reading and/or the CASAS ECS Appraisal Form 130 for math and reading.

The appraisal is not a pretest, but a tool to determine the correct pretest.

2. Diagnose: Pretest

The pretest is given upon entry into the program. “Pretest” denotes the first CASAS test administered to students after an appraisal. The pretest measures what a student knows at the beginning of your class. The results of the pretest help determine the learning needs of your students and help guide instruction.
3. Instruct

Instruction is a time for ongoing, informal assessment. Instruction is guided by pretest results. You will learn more about test results reports and finding appropriate instructional materials in Section 9.

4. Monitor: post-tests

The post-test measures what the student knows after completing a substantial number of hours in your class. These test results help you monitor the progress the student is making in your class.

Each student takes a minimum of two (2) CASAS tests while enrolled in your class: a pretest and a post-test. Additional post-tests may be administered throughout the year to continue to monitor progress.

You must be trained to administer these tests by someone at your agency that has been certified by CASAS. Only staff who has completed CASAS Implementation Training may train you. These test trainers must re-certify their training each year.

Testing students with standardized tests helps in correct placement for class or level, measures learning from one test to the next, and provides information regarding strengths and weaknesses in particular skill areas so that they can be addressed. While CASAS has also developed assessments that are appropriate to measure writing and speaking skills. California agencies only report reading and math learning gains to meet federal requirements for ABE/ASE programs.

- For pre- and post-testing in reading, most ABE/ASE programs use the Life and Work Series. Some programs use the Employability Competency Series (ECS) to test reading if the students are focusing on job skills.

- For pre- and post-testing in math, most programs use the ECS Series; the Life Skills Series has also been used, if appropriate.

Each CASAS test series has its own Test Administration Manual. It is very important to refer to the Test Administration Manual of test series you are using, as score charts and testing instructions are different for each test series.

It is important to remember that if a reading pretest is administered, the post-test must also be a reading test in the same series; a math pretest must be followed by a math post-test. Reading and math tests are not interchangeable. However, you may pre- and post-test with a reading test and a math test. Check with your agency to find out what guidelines have been determined for your agency.

Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher

1. Which CASAS test series is used in your class?

2. Where can you access the Test Administration Manual?

3. Which skills are tested? Reading, Math, or both?
How do I fill out the Test Record form?

To ensure that all testing data is submitted correctly, you must fill in the Test Record form accurately. On the Test Record form, there are important fields that need to be completed. Some agencies preprint (or “pre-slug”) the forms with students’ information. Otherwise, each form needs to be filled in by hand.

Sample Test Record

1. Student Last Name
   Make sure that the name appears exactly as it does on your attendance records.

2. Instructor Name
   Please print if not pre-slug for you.

3. Student Identification
   Use the ID number found on your attendance records.

   Is this your SSN?
   Mark “No” if is blank or if using a site-assigned number.

4. Form Number
   This number is found on front of the test booklets. Use a leading 0—for example, write 082R or 082RX (Reading test).

5. Test Date
   Mark the date the student takes the test.

6. Class Number
   Mark your class number here.

7. Instructional Program
   Mark the one that applies to your class. Check with your TE staff if you’re not sure which one to mark.

   If you have a student who is unable to get a valid score on a form 27R or 28R, mark this box. Don’t forget to re-test the student after s/he has completed some class time!

8. Raw Score
   To scan information for forms 27R and 28R, write the number correct here.

9. Directions for marking answers
   Use this box to review with your students how to bubble in their answers.

Practice
Use this box for students to mark their answers to the practice items in the test booklet.
The CASAS Scale and Skill Level Descriptors

Results from CASAS tests are translated from a raw score (the number correct) to a scale score, and relate to a unique numerical scale showing level of proficiency.

Each proficiency level defined by this CASAS scale score range corresponds to descriptors of performance in terms of employment and adult life skills. These Skill Level Descriptors describe in positive terms what a person is able to do or learn within a range of the scale scores.

Keep in mind that the descriptors only apply to the type of test given. For example, if a student took a reading test, only the reading descriptors at that determined level are applicable to that student. Do not assume that the math, reading or writing skills are at the same level.

Below is an excerpt from the Skill Level Descriptors for ABE/ASE.

| ASE Levels | ABE Levels |
|------------|--|---|
| Advanced Adult Secondary | E | 246 + |
| Adult Secondary | D | 236-245 |
| Advanced Basic Skills | C | 221-235 |
| Intermediate Basic Skills | B | 211-220 |
| Beginning Basic Skills | A | 201-210 |
| Beginning Literacy/Pre-Beginning | | 150-200 |

**Intermediate Basic Skills**
Can handle basic reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles. Can read and interpret simplified and some authentic materials on familiar topics. Can interpret simple charts, graphs, and labels; interpret a basic payroll stub; follow basic written instructions and diagrams. Can complete a simple order form and do calculations; fill out basic medical information forms and basic job applications; follow basic oral and written instructions and diagrams. Can handle jobs and/or job training that involve following basic oral or written instructions and diagrams if they can be clarified orally.

**Beginning Basic Skills**
Can fill out simple forms requiring basic personal information, write a simple list or telephone message, calculate a single simple operation when numbers are given, and make simple change. Can read and interpret simple sentences on familiar topics. Can read and interpret simple directions, signs, maps, and simple menus. Can handle entry level jobs that involve some simple written communication.
**CASAS across the levels**

Here are examples of test items (or questions) at three different levels along the CASAS scale. Each test question has a display (a picture or a cue) which the student reads, and then a question with four multiple choice answers to select from.

**Competency 2.1.7: Take or interpret telephone messages**

![Image](image-url)

**A Level:** The student reads a simple note, and selects the answer A, B, C, or D to a simple question: “Who is coming?” This question is at a reading level of 185 on the CASAS scale.

**B Level:** The student reads the message and selects the answer to “When does the caller want to meet?” This type of question is at a reading level of 205 on the CASAS scale.

**C Level:** The question may require some critical thinking. “What should be done with this message” is a question that is at a reading level of 221 on the CASAS scale.

No entity (individual, school, program or business enterprise) may use or copy displays, questions, or answers that appear on any CASAS test to create materials to teach or to prepare students to answer CASAS test items.
Section 7: Administration and Storage of Tests

How do I Administer CASAS Tests?

Follow these guidelines to administer all CASAS tests.

Needed for testing day:

- Test Administration Manual
- If paper/pencil testing:
  - Test booklets (Number your booklets for tracking and security purposes.)
  - Answer sheets and #2 pencils
  - Overhead of the answer sheet (optional)

See the “Guidelines for Providing Accommodations for CASAS Assessment for Learners with Disabilities” (or find it in your Test Administration Manual) for alternate test forms available and for a list of approved accommodations.

Preparation for testing

- Students may not use dictionaries or calculators
- Teachers may not read questions or answers to the students

Getting started

- Provide a quiet testing room
- Space students apart
- Provide a proctor for every 25 students
- Explain purpose for testing
- Ease student anxiety
- If paper/pencil testing:
  - Pass out pencils, answer sheets, and scratch paper
  - Assist in completing the demographic portion of the answer sheet
  - Demonstrate how to mark answer sheets

Anyone who administers CASAS tests must be trained by a staff person who has been certified by CASAS.
Give the test

- For paper/pencil testing:
  - Pass out test booklets
  - Read the test directions and review practice items
  - Encourage test-takers to review their own answers
  - Write start and end times on the board
  - Begin the test
  - Monitor test-takers

Test timing guidelines

- **Appraisals** – Check the appropriate administration manual for the suggested times allotted for each section of the appraisal.

- **Pre- and post-tests** – allow about 45 minutes to one hour.
  - These tests are not strictly timed. See the Test Administration Manual for more information.
  - Allow the same amount of time for pre and post-tests.
  - Students who are not able to complete the test within the hour can be given a few extra minutes to complete the question they are working on.
  - Students are not allowed to “finish” the test at another time. However, please refer to the Test Accommodations section in the Test Administration Manual for students with disabilities.

If students are having a great deal of difficulty with test items, and obviously cannot complete them, they may be dismissed. Submit the test as is to your TE staff. They will score the test and let you know if the student received an accurate score or if they need to be retested at a lower level.

**Test security is vital.** All CASAS test materials including test booklets and answer sheets (which contain marks or responses) must be stored in a locked, preferably fireproof, file cabinet. After administering assessments, teachers must return all materials immediately to the program director or the director’s designees. Duplication of any part of CASAS tests is prohibited.

**Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher**

1. Where are CASAS test booklets stored at your site?

2. What is the check-in/check-out procedure when you take CASAS test booklets to your class?
Section 8: Appraisals, Pretests, and Post-Tests

Appraisals

See the Form 80 Appraisal Administration Manual for reading placement and the Form 130 Appraisal Administration Manual for math placement (and reading if more applicable to your program.)

The raw score is the number correct on the test. The raw score is not the score you will use. You will use a scale score. All CASAS test results are reported as scale scores, and all CASAS reports refer to scale scores, not raw scores.

Convert the raw score to the scale score using the Score Conversion Chart for the test that was administered. For example, if Maria Gonzalez has a CASAS Appraisal Reading raw score of 7, then her scale score is 204.

There are unique Score Conversion Charts for each test form. The test administration manuals contain the raw to scale score conversion charts for each test form. Use the Score Conversion Chart for the test you are using!

Once the appraisal has been completed, students are placed in a particular class or level. Some programs give the appraisal and the pretest before placing students in class. They use the pretest score to place students in class.
What’s the difference between an Appraisal and a Pre/Post-test?

**Appraisals**

There are 20-25 test items in the CASAS Appraisals (depending on which one is administered.) The items are widely distributed along the CASAS scale. They range from very easy items to difficult items.

![CASAS Scale](image1)

**Pre- and Post-tests**

There can be anywhere from 25 – 35 test items in the pre- and post-tests. These test items are clustered at a specific proficiency level, and include items from low to high difficulty within that specified range. The comparison between pre and post-test scores documents learning gains.

![Level B CASAS Scale](image2)
Pretests: How do you know which pretest to give?

TE has a Next Assigned Test Report to help determine which test forms to give next.

Select a Pretest Level based on an Appraisal Score

From the appraisal test score, find the next assigned test level to administer in a CASAS testing progression. The chart below indicates which test level to give your student.

**Appraisal Next Test Chart (excerpt)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECS Math</th>
<th></th>
<th>Life and Work READING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>Next Test Level</td>
<td>Score</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>180</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>183</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>191</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>193</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>196</td>
<td>B or A</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>197</td>
<td>B or A</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>203</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>205</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>211</td>
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<tr>
<td>206</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
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<td>216</td>
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<td>210</td>
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<td>212</td>
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<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>214</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>217</td>
<td>C or B</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>219</td>
<td>C or B</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>221</td>
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<td>230</td>
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<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>C</td>
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<td>224</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>226</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>228</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Our student, Maria Gonzalez, had a score of 204 on her reading appraisal. Her pretest level is Level B.

Then refer to the CASAS Test Forms Chart found in the Test Administration Manual to identify appropriate test form numbers. Select a pretest based on the series used at your agency. (This chart is for the Life and Work Reading Series.)

**Test Forms Chart – Life and Work Series**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Reading (L&amp;W)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>27R, 28R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rosalina should take an 83R or 84R for her pretest.

**Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher**

1. When is the pretest given at your site?

2. If the pretest is not given at the time of registration, when are you instructed to give the pretest in class?

3. Who is responsible for determining which post-test to give to each student?
Scores Outside the Accuracy Range

In spite of your best efforts to appraise students’ skills, occasionally students will not perform on their pretest as anticipated. Sometimes, students may score lower than expected or higher than expected and “top out” of the test.

For low pretest scores, the student may have been ill, or skipped a line on the answer sheet and marked the rest of the answers on the wrong line, or the wrong Test Form Number was bubbled in on the student’s answer sheet. A student may have received “help” on the appraisal and be given a pretest that is too hard for them.

For higher than expected test scores, a student may have received “help”, or have made some guesses.

The technical errors can be easily remedied, but the others cannot. Sometimes you have to retest the student. Other times a student is given a test form that is below his or her ability, and the student will “top out” of the test. In any of these cases, the student does not have an accurate pretest score – the base line from which their progress is measured by the post-test.

According to this score conversion chart, if a student only scores 1-3 answers correct on this test, the student should be given a test at a lower level. This test was too hard for them.

If another student scores 29 to 32 answers correct, the student should be given a test at the next higher level. This test was too easy for them.

A diamond ♦ score represents a “conservative estimate” of a student’s true ability. This score may be used if there is no opportunity to re-test the student at a higher level.

For example, a student post-tests at the end of the school year and receives a diamond ♦ score. The agency will be able to document the student’s learning gain by comparing the student’s pretest score to this diamond ♦ score.
**Post-tests**

The *post-test* results show the progress the student is making in your class and are an excellent way to monitor that progress.

Post-tests can be given multiple times throughout the year. However, be mindful of under- and over-testing. The *California Assessment Policy Guidelines* state that students cannot be post-tested before 40 hours of class time has been completed; however 40 hours is not the optimal time to test your students. Research shows that students show learning gains after completing 70-100 hours of class time. Your agency will have a testing policy and/or schedule of post-testing based on how long students typically remain in the program, intensity of program, and program schedule.

Your agency will have a testing policy and/or schedule of post-testing based on the *California Assessment Policy*, how long students typically remain in the program, intensity of program, and program schedule. For the California Assessment policy, go to:

![Home > Training and Support > CASAS Peer Communities > California Accountability](image)

Students pretest and post-test (and can continue to post-test) within a test level until the student scores high enough to move to the next test level. In other words, a student can continue taking tests within Level A, moving from $81R \rightarrow 82R \rightarrow 81R$. When a student scores high enough to move to the next test level, according to the Suggested Next Test chart, they should take $81RX$. The *post-test* results show the progress the student is making in your class and are an excellent way to monitor that progress. The *post-test* results show the progress the student is making in your class and are an excellent way to monitor that progress.

**First Post-Test**

Second Post-test

Student now has a high enough score to move to Level AX.

**Third Post-Test**

Student now has a high enough score to move to Level AX or B tests for next post-test.
TE has a [Next Assigned Test Report](#) to help you determine which test forms to give next. Here is an example.

![](Next%20Assigned%20Test.png)

Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher: How are post-tests administered at your site?

1. Who is responsible for determining which post-test to give to each student?

2. If the post-test is administered in your class, when are you instructed to give it?

3. Does your site have a testing calendar? If so, get a copy and place it in this handbook.

4. About how often do you post test your students? (Every quarter, before major holidays, etc.)

5. What can you do to ensure that students who are absent during post-testing eventually get tested?
CASAS Test Preparation

CASAS encourages the use of the Competencies, Content Standards, QuickSearch Online (introduced later in this handbook), and other materials to link assessment, curriculum, and instruction and prepare students for post-testing.

Test Preparation Guidelines

Appropriate strategies:

- Use diagnostic information from test results to “teach to:”
  - Task Areas
  - CASAS Competencies
  - Content Standards
- Use other CASAS support materials to link assessment, curriculum, and instruction (QuickSearch Online)
- Use CASAS answer sheers to practice test-taking skills
- Use the CASAS Sample Test Items for practice

Inappropriate strategies:

- Teaching to a particular test item
- Teaching specific vocabulary in a test item
- Limiting curriculum to what the test covers
Sample Test Items

Sample Test Items are a resource available to help:
- Familiarize students and teachers with the CASAS test format
- Practice test taking skills and ease test-taking anxiety
- Practice marking the answer sheet (You may use TE Test Records for practice.)

There are Sample Test Items available for Levels A, B, and C in the Life and Work Reading Series and Math sample items for Levels A, B, C and D. There are 5 to 6 test items for each of the three skill levels. Remember, these Sample Test Items are not a predictor of performance.

Gather the Information

1. Download the Reading Sample Test Items from the CASAS Web site. Take the Reading Sample Test Items. Then take the eTests Online sample tests for Math.

2. Identify the task area (type of question – forms, graphs, narratives) for each of the Reading Sample Test Items. See the list of task areas on page 7. There may be more than one task area for an item.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level A</th>
<th>Level B</th>
<th>Level C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers</td>
<td>Task Area</td>
<td>Answers</td>
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<td>1. _____</td>
<td>1. _____</td>
<td>1. _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. _____</td>
<td>2. _____</td>
<td>2. _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. _____</td>
<td>3. _____</td>
<td>3. _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. _____</td>
<td>4. _____</td>
<td>4. _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. _____</td>
<td>5. _____</td>
<td>5. _____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CASAS Reading and Math Tests and the GED Test

How do the CASAS reading and math tests relate to the GED Tests? At what CASAS test level do students have the highest probability of passing the GED Tests? What does the research tell us?

Answer: Based on a national study, CASAS tests are a strong predictor of scores on the official GED 2002 Tests.

In the study of 6,700 students from five states:

- 78 percent of those who scored at CASAS Level D in reading passed all GED subsections
- 94 percent of those who scored at CASAS Level E passed all subsections

(To pass the GED, students must achieve an average score of 450 or greater across all subsections with no individual score lower than 410.)

This study also shows that students who scored at a CASAS Level D in math have:

- 90 percent chance of passing the math subsection with a score of 450 or greater
- 97 percent chance of passing the math subsection who score at a Level E in math

Based on this research, CASAS recommends that students score at the CASAS Level E before attempting the individual GED subsections. In some cases students scoring at CASAS Level D may be sufficiently prepared to take the GED 2002 Tests.

Assessing Your ASE Students

With your adult secondary level learners there are many CASAS tools to help determine readiness for the GED test and to target instruction.

The Secondary Level Assessment series features a battery of eight high school subject tests:

- Mathematics
- Reading for Language Arts

Level D (High School Level) Assessments

- Employability Competency System (ECS) reading and math
- Life and Work reading
- Life Skills math

*The Secondary Level Assessment Reading for Language Arts* (Forms 513 and 514), *Mathematics* (Forms 505 and 506) and the *Level D assessments* can be used as pre- and post-tests for your program.
CASAS also offers the following assessment series to help further determine student needs; however, these assessments may not be used as pre- and post-testing tools:

- The **Secondary Level Assessment** series:
  - Reading for Biological Science
  - Reading for American Government
  - Reading for U.S. History
  - Reading for World History
  - Reading for Physical Science
  - Reading for Economics

- The **Functional Writing Assessment** includes writing tasks suitable for adult high school programs. In addition, the results of the CASAS GED Writing Skills Study show that the CASAS Functional Writing Assessment is a strong predictor of scores on the essay section of the GED Writing Test.

- The **Workplace Appraisal** (part of Workforce Learning Systems), Form 230 includes a reading and a math skills placement test and is accurate up to level E.

- The **Workforce Skills Certification System** assesses the readiness of high school level learners to enter the workforce. CASAS Workforce Skills Certification assessments certify basic skill proficiency in reading, math, critical thinking and problem solving – in multiple industrial contexts including banking, construction, healthcare, telecommunications and high-tech manufacturing – at a level identified by employers as critical for ongoing career growth.

- **Critical Thinking Assessments** for Social Studies, Science, and Employability are a collection of test items that assess a learner’s critical thinking and written expression skills. Each booklet contains 15 questions or hypothetical situations encountered in everyday life and in the workplace. Programs are authorized to duplicate these exercises for students.
  - **Social Studies** – American government and economics items, such as reading graphs found in newspaper articles.
  - **Science** – applications of biology and chemistry subject matter in practical situations (e.g., an article discussing the effects of spraying genetically altered bacteria on strawberries).
  - **Employability** – hypothetical situations encountered at the workplace.

- **CAHSEE Math Readiness Test** helps prepare adult learners planning to take the math portion of the CAHSEE. During the pilot study, examinees who scored 236 or greater on the CASAS-CAHSEE Math Readiness test, 92.9 percent passed the math portion of the actual CAHSEE.

- **CAHSEE English Language Arts Test** consists of 50 questions covering the five content strands – writing conventions, writing strategies, literary response, word analysis, and reading comprehension.
Once all the students in class have taken the pretest, you will receive (or need to request) a TE report that helps identify the areas your students are having difficulty with, allowing you to target your instruction accordingly.

**How do I use test results to guide instruction?**

Following testing, TE can provide various reports to help you gauge student level, guide classroom instruction, and inform students of their progress. While there are approximately 150 reports to choose from, the most helpful TE reports for teachers are:

- **Class Performance by Competency**
  - Shows percentage of correct answers for a class on a particular test

- **Learning Gains First to Last**
  - Shows individual student progress between pretest and most recent test

**Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher**

- **Who provides you with TOPSpro reports?**
  - Name: _______________________________
  - Phone: ______________________________
  - Email: ______________________________

- **When do you receive them?**
The **Class Performance by Competency** report tells which Competencies your class needs to work on.

Refer to the Class by Competency Report above

1. Identify two competencies that this particular teacher should focus on:

2. The task area shows how an item is presented. What is the task area for item #3? *Refer to page 7 for the Reading Task Areas Chart.*
Teachers can use the **Learning Gains First to Last** report to check the gains for each student from their pretest to their most recent post-test, and to obtain each student’s individual scale scores.

### Learning Gains

#### First to Last

| Agency: 4908 - Rolling Hills Adult School | Course: 1 |
| Site: 1 - North Campus | Teacher: 101 - Team One, Main Campus |
| Class: 1 - ABE | Modality: CASAS Reading |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>First Test</th>
<th>Last Test</th>
<th>Test Hours of Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D23945883 Ford, Trayla B</td>
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<td>09/01/2012 086R 217</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>938579384 Jacob, Leean</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>07/11/2012 082R 195</td>
<td>12/17/2012 085R 217</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>983579384 Bork, Rupert</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<td>02/13/2013 012R 186</td>
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<td>983598547 Somnambulant, Amnota</td>
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<td>11/13/2012 085R 213</td>
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<tr>
<td>983598757 Jones, Jimmie Z</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<td>10/11/2012 085R 221</td>
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<tr>
<td>997548383 Thrime, Chanisha M</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>07/19/2012 085R 224</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Look at the report above

1. What was the point gain between Maria Costas’ pretest and post-test?

2. How will you use information about student gains?

3. How can you use information about individual student scale scores for instruction?
How do I share test results with my students?

Encourage your students to track their progress by helping them create charts or graphs, or simply keeping a list of test dates and scores.

The Student Test History report provides the students’ scale scores from their first test of the fiscal year (July 1) to the most recent test, regardless of type of test (reading or math). It also will show tests students have taken in other classes in your program.

Share these scores with individual students using the Skill Level Descriptors Chart to explain what each score means. You can also give your students individual reports, such as the Individual Skills Profile report that shows how well they did by Competency Area, Content Standard and Task Area. This report also shows GED readiness.
When looking at your class test results, be aware that there are underlying skills that relate to more than that specific competency. Determine the task type (form, narrative, map, etc.) and think of other ways that the skills can be practiced in the competency area you are currently working on.

**Tie It Together**

1. How does this information relate to what you’re already doing?

2. What are some of the challenges you face with using test results?

3. What are some ways you can improve the process for getting and interpreting test results in your classroom or agency?
Practice Activity: Develop a way to practice a competency in another topic area

You’ve received your test results and have found that 58 percent of your students missed questions about “Filling out a Family Medical History Form” – Competency # 3.2.1

Your class studied health two months ago. Under what other Competency Areas and Topic Areas could you practice similar skills?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency Number Tested</th>
<th>Competency Area of Test Item</th>
<th>Alternate Content Areas</th>
<th>Alternate Sample Tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1</td>
<td>Understand forms related to health care</td>
<td>Employment, Consumer Economics, Health</td>
<td>Complete a job application form, Fill out forms related to banking, Complete a health plan application for their job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Competency # 3.2.1, instead of students learning how to fill out a family medical history form, they could practice the same skill under “Employment.” Students could

- Complete a job application form

Or under “Consumer Economics”, students could

- Learn to fill out forms related to banking

Or under “Health,” students could

- Complete a health plan application form for their job
How do I find appropriate instructional materials to teach the competencies?

The “Scope and Sequence” section in your textbook, generally found at the beginning of the text, can help you identify which CASAS Competencies are being addressed in each lesson. Competencies are taught in conjunction with grammar, vocabulary, math and critical thinking activities.

QuickSearch Online assists teachers in selecting appropriate instructional materials to meet the needs of their students. A user-friendly database, QuickSearch Online includes more than 2,300 print, audio, visual, and computer-based instructional materials that are commercially available and is updated every year.

Gather the Information

1. Which core text series do you use?

2. What level?

3. Is there a “Scope and Sequence” section?
   a. On what page can it be found?
   b. List two ways you can use it:
The CASAS QuickSearch Online is a user-friendly database that includes more than 2,300 commercially available print, audio, visual and computer-based instructional materials. QuickSearch Online is updated annually to include new materials from publishers and software companies.

With your class or student test results, you can search for materials to address specific competencies and match curriculum by:

- Title of instructional material
- Competency number
- Program, Level, and Skill (reading, writing, listening or speaking)
- Publisher
- CASAS Test (both level and series)

Below is a sample report from QuickSearch Online

**Competency selected for this report: 2.1.7**
Multiple measures of documenting student progress

While CASAS testing provides useful information about students’ skills and progress, you should monitor student progress through a variety of means.

Keeping a student portfolio (e.g., CASAS scores, tests, quizzes, writing samples, handouts, etc.) is important to provide a comprehensive picture documenting student progress. Items to keep in the portfolio might include:

- a list or graph of CASAS test results
- Instructor-generated tests and quizzes
- Samples of student work
- Needs assessments
- Alternative(performance-based) assessments

Portfolios can be created and updated by your students during class. Have students update their portfolios at the end of each week or unit identifying goals they have met or skills they have attained. “Student Record Sheets” can be used to document other achievements. You can also use a copy of your textbook’s table of contents to have students track what they have learned.

Ask a Supervisor or Lead Teacher

1. List two ways you monitor student progress:

2. What Student Portfolio items are required by your agency?

3. How do you have students participate in documenting their own progress?
**Review**

Review the table of contents for this handbook. Are there any areas that you need more information about? If so, who could you ask at your agency?

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

**CASAS training opportunities**

For additional training, consider completing one of the following, either in person or online:

- CASAS Implementation for New Users: Basic Assessment Training
- California Accountability for New Users

Go to [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) for a current list of regional and web-based training opportunities. You will also find a vast array of information, announcements, and documents about CASAS.

**Reflection**

Write two things you’ve learned from this handbook:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________

Write two things you want to learn more about:

________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________