



Fall 2010

Welcome to the tenth issue of *NEDP News*, an informational newsletter for NEDP directors, coordinators, assessors, and advisors.

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NGA Common CORE Standards

Author: Jim Harrison

The Common Core State Standards Initiative is a multi-state initiative coordinated by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). Common Core Standards were developed in collaboration with teachers, school administrators, and experts to provide a uniform framework to prepare learners for postsecondary education and the workforce. These standards define the knowledge and skills high school graduates need to be able to succeed in credit-bearing college courses and in the workforce. Forty-eight of fifty states have signed on to the Common Core State Standards. The standards*:

- Align with college and work expectations;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Build upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- Have been informed by top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in a global economy; and
- Are evidence or research-based.

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Alignment with the Common Core Standards is imperative for all states and for all high school completion programs. To this end, NEDP aligned its math and communication competencies, through contractual arrangements with standards professionals, to the Common Core College and Career Readiness Standards.

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As a result of this formal alignment, it was necessary to make some changes to the 70 revised NEDP competencies:

- NEDP Math and Language arts competencies have been revised to reflect formal alignment with the Common Core;
- Changes to Revised Competencies:
 - Math competencies require more geometry
 - Communications competencies expanded
 - History performance indicators modified to reflect more American history
- Other minor refinements, primarily for language precision

The revised competencies are in draft form and have been reviewed by the competency revalidation workgroup. The revised list of 70 competencies will be distributed to the field in the near future.

NEDP Task Development Underway

Author: Melissa Dayton

NEDP Task development is underway. Over the next twelve to eighteen months, CASAS will be developing, field-testing, and validating redesigned tasks in a new online format.

Leading up to task development, CASAS updated the performance indicators for the ten revalidated NEDP competency areas. The performance indicators define the standard for each task and provide guidelines for the assessment item writers responsible for creating the new tasks.

Task item development brings together many types of expertise:

- Assessment item writers, trained in performance-based assessment, to create the items that will appear on the computer screen (currently contained in the Task Booklets);
- Subject matter experts, or SMEs, to ensure the content accuracy of each item;
- Fairness and sensitivity panel to screen items for unintentional bias;
- software developers to program the items into a user-friendly, online format connected with the NEDP Portfolio;
- Measurement experts to evaluate validity and reliability of each item;
- NEDP practitioners and participants, to test the items in a controlled setting and provide feedback and other data.

The redeveloped tasks will maintain the existing NEDP assessment format of take-home activities, in-office spot check/interviews, and post-task assessment. They will support the relationship between NEDP Assessor and Candidate – replacing paper-and pencil-booklets with easy-to-navigate computer-based assessments.

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Each task item contains multiple elements that must fit together as a seamless whole and include introduction, online resources (currently contained in the Appendix), the item display (prompt), a display for entering the response, and scoring rubrics and guidelines for verifying demonstration. The item writing team begins each item with the end in mind – looking at the skills embedded in a performance indicator and determining how the item will measure those skills, along with acceptable responses for Assessors to verify their demonstration.

Item writers must also ensure there is consistency between item content and online resources, item displays are realistic, and the task is practical and suited to real life. Each of these elements must be clearly formatted before the item can be forwarded to the software development department for online programming.

Field-testing is a critical step in the task development process. Field-testing ensures that every task item performs as intended for the diverse range of NEDP clients. Field-testing involves having current NEDP participants take new task items, compiling their responses, collecting demographic and geographic information, and analyzing the results. Results may indicate that an item is ready for implementation or may require additional revisions.

This fall CASAS will recruit NEDP sites to participate in task item field-testing. Clients will be asked to take the new field-test items and provide feedback on their experience, e.g., ease of online navigation, practicality and interest level, and the time needed to complete the item. NEDP Assessors will be asked to score these items, comment on the ease and clarity of scoring, and provide additional comments on the clients' experiences.

Field-testing will begin with redeveloped Health Literacy items. Based on field feedback and suggestions, Health Literacy was identified as a critical area for updating and initial field-testing. Subsequent field-tests will roll out competency area by competency area. Once validated, task items will be arranged in thematic Task Areas, similar to the-current format of the program.

CASAS will issue a memorandum shortly that provides field-test details including timelines, technical requirements, data collection procedures, and information about Assessor training. For more information, contact Jim Harrison (jharrison@casas.org) or Melissa Dayton (mdayton@casas.org).

CASAS celebrated its 30-year anniversary at the Summer Institute, held June 17 – 19, 2010. More than 500 participants attended from 32 states, American Samoa, Canada, Costa Rica, Guam, El Salvador, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Singapore. This year the Institute provided more than 80 training sessions and workshops in areas such as:



- Adult Basic Education (ABE) and Adult Secondary Education (ASE)
- English as a Second Language (ESL) / English Language Learners (ELL)
- Serving learners with intellectual disabilities
- Policy, research, and development
- Technology for assessment, instruction, and accountability
- Workforce development
- Transition to postsecondary and jobs

More than thirty NEDP professionals attended the NEDP sessions, with a large majority from Connecticut. We hope that more NEDP sites will find a way to participate in this valuable professional development and networking opportunity. The NEDP presentations from the summer institute are posted on the Website at www.nedp.org. Select *NEDP Presentations at Conferences* from the menu at the left and select *CASAS Summer Institute 2010: NEDP Presentations*. Mark your calendar and start planning to attend the 2011 CASAS National Summer Institute, June 14 – 16, 2011. Registration opens December 1. Go to www.casas.org/si to register.

CASAS Recognized By California State Senate



During the 2010 (30th annual) CASAS National Summer Institute, the California State Senate recognized and commended CASAS for its contributions to the field of adult education and literacy throughout California and nationally. More than 500 Institute attendees from 27 states and seven countries were honored to share in acknowledging the [resolution of the California State Senate](#), introduced by State Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny.

Sharing in this honor and recognition are hundreds of professional adult educators who have collaboratively helped develop CASAS over the years.

For more information, go to www.casas.org and select *About CASAS* and then select *CASAS Recognized by California State Senate Resolution*.

Article Submitted by NEDPC Conference Committee

The NEDPC Conference was held in Hartford, Connecticut, on September 19-21, 2010. Attendees from Rhode Island, New York, Maryland, California as well as the District of Columbia joined host state Connecticut for a nostalgic look back at 25 years of NEDPC history. New NEDPC officers were elected and installed and the past presidents in attendance were recognized. Informative workshops including maintaining boundaries with students, upcoming technological changes from CASAS, and creative marketing techniques were well received. Highlights of the conference included a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception at the Mark Twain House in Hartford, where conference-goers were joined by Mark Twain himself and treated to an after-hours tour of the historic Victorian home and a boat tour down the Connecticut River to enjoy Hartford's spectacular fall weather. Co-Chairs Bette Huckabee and Sharon Muldowney and their entire planning committee provided a wonderful opportunity for professional growth and collegial sharing in Connecticut's capital city.



Jim Harrison presented the keynote address for the NEDPC conference and many other CASAS representatives attended the conference and presented sessions. These presentations are now posted on the NEDP Website. Go to www.nedp.org and select *NEDP Presentations at Conferences*.

Four NEDP Professionals Recognized at the NEDPC Conference

In recognition of their many years of work in the NEDP program, Merle Gold and Bonnie Gooley from Questar III were presented with the NEDPC Leadership Award. Marge Tuccio and Gail D'Elia from Trumbull Continuing Education each received the NEDPC Outstanding Advisor/Assessor of the Year Award. Congratulations to all four of these remarkable women.

Meet the CASAS Staff

The National External Diploma Program is supported at CASAS – Comprehensive Student Assessment Systems by a core staff of six talented individuals. Many of you have had a chance to meet them at the Summer Institute or the NEDPC conference. If not, here is a chance to put a face with a name.

Jim Harrison, NEDP Project Director, is responsible for overall policy and planning for the NEDP redevelopment. Jim brings more than thirty years of experience in adult education as a program director, consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education, and as Director, Strategic Planning, Policy, and Implementation with CASAS. Jim has an extensive background in policy development, program design, program improvement initiatives, forming interagency partnerships, assessment, and data management.



Melissa Dayton coordinates NEDP redevelopment activities related to performance indicator validation and task item development. Since joining CASAS in 2005 as a Workforce Program Specialist, she has been involved in the development of workforce skills assessments and providing training and technical support to the field. As a CASAS state trainer in Connecticut, Melissa worked with adult education providers and employers to develop customized workplace education programs. Her experiences included implementation of an NEDP program for employees of a large Connecticut manufacturer.

Andrew Evans has been a CASAS employee for more than ten years. He is a national certified trainer in CASAS implementation, TOPSpro and CASAS eTests. He has a background in data collection, analysis, and reporting and holds a graduate degree in Public Administration. As the technical coordinator for NEDP, Andrew is currently responsible for data collection and reporting, NEDP Portfolio development, and the implementation of O*NET.



Joan Polster, the newest member of the NEDP team, has now assumed the role as the NEDP Director of Operations. With twenty-four years in adult, alternative, and career and technical education, she has served as education resource specialist, vice principal of an adult school, director of the Staff Development Institute, state director of adult education for the California Department of Education, and associate superintendent in two urban districts in the Sacramento area. Joan brings significant strength to our team to help with NEDP strategic planning, policy implementation, and operations.

Mary Fox has been part of the staff since arriving at CASAS in 2006. She is the coordinator of NEDP operations, including setting up new sites, supporting existing sites, and handling all training activities. As the NEDP and NEDP training are redesigned, Mary's technical background and her master's degree in instructional design and expertise in custom-training development will prove valuable.

Christine O'Hara has been part of the NEDP staff since October 2008. Christine's primary responsibilities are handling orders and materials, communicating with sites, updating the Website, and assisting with data collection. Christine has a technical background and a lot of organizational experience that is benefiting NEDP operations and improving many other NEDP projects.



Operations Team (Left to Right):
Christine O'Hara, Joan Polster, Mary Fox

The National External Diploma Program is continuing to change the lives of hundreds of people around the nation. In 2008-2009 there were 1,700 graduates of the program. Each graduate has a story to tell and many of them are honored for their achievements. In May, at the annual New York Association for Continuing/Community Education (NYACCE) Conference, fourteen outstanding adult education students were recognized during the 26th Annual Student of the Year awards. Five of these students are NEDP graduates. We have posted their stories on the NEDP Website:

Ann Bevins – After she was laid off due to a back injury, Ann tried to pass the GED to open some new doors but was not successful. She decided to enroll at St. Lawrence Lewis BOCES to improve her skills and discovered the NEDP program, where she was able to complete her tasks with high quality and only minor corrections. She received her diploma and is now taking a number of computer courses hoping to put her skills to use in an office setting.

Regan Peterson – In August 2007 Regan was a homeless teen parent, raising a child and trying to hold down two jobs. After first taking advantage of other programs at Herkimer BOCES, Regan discovered NEDP and was able to complete her diploma in May of 2009. After graduating, she immediately enrolled in a Business Information Program where she was a leader in her class. Regan is now enrolled in the Human Resources Management Program at Herkimer County Community College.

LaSonya Thompson – When LaSonya started with OCM BOCES in March 2008 she was on public assistance and had only eighth grade reading skills and fifth grade math skills. Once she discovered she could get a diploma through NEDP, she was determined to increase her skills and worked hard to enter the program in July 2008. In November, after only four months, LaSonya was able to complete the requirements and earn her diploma. This success inspired LaSonya to continue her education. In less than one year, she completed the Central Services Technician Program at OCM BOCES and now works as a technician at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center. Her public assistance case has been closed and she has a promising career ahead.

Donna and Wilfredo Vega – In June of 2009, Wilfredo and Donna Vega graduated from GST BOCES earning both an NEDP diploma and a Microsoft Office Specialist certification at the same time. With three children at home and little outside support, this couple faced many challenges along the way. Donna, a first generation high school graduate, and Wilfredo have now broken the cycle. With their example and encouragement, their oldest daughter graduated from high school in 2010 after almost dropping out a few times. Wilfredo is now staying home with their four-year old teaching him Spanish and Chinese and reading with him daily. Donna is now on the dean's list pursuing her Associate Degree in Business Administration and is hoping to get a job in event planning. NEDP was just the beginning of a new life for Donna and Wilfredo Vega and their family!

For more on these stories and other NEDP graduate success stories, go to www.nedp.org and select *NEDP Success Stories* from the menu on the left. If you have a story to post or share, please contact Mary Fox at mfox@casas.org.

Following the NEDPC conference CASAS was please to hold a **Train-the-Trainer** Session for six new trainers on September 22.

Congratulations to our trainers on completing the first step toward becoming an NEDP certified trainer. Front row: Astrid Robitaille, Merle Gold (trainer), Jean Marrapodi; Back row: Francine Jackson, Pat Katz (trainer), Kay Hartley, Patricia Frye, Vivian Stern



Over the past year, several new staff training workshops were held in Connecticut, Maryland, New York, and Washington D.C. We have highlighted some of these trainings below.

Connecticut: Laurie Tischler and Bette Huckabee, with the help of Astrid Robitaille, trained nine new staff members in August.

Shown in photo – Back row: Robert Durant, Leo Zirolli, Donna Lang, Roz Nesin, Andrea Bonazolli, Owen Davis, Ken Roshkowski; Front row: Bette Huckabee(trainer), Laurie Tishler (trainer), Astrid Robitaille (technical assistant), Nojemy Rojas, Carol Ort



Maryland – Maryland held a training session April 20 – 22, 2010, for new staff.

New York – Merle Gold and Pat Katz conducted training for new staff in June for twelve new advisor/assessors. New York welcomed two new sites as a result of this training.

Washington D.C. – The Office of State Superintendent of Education in Washington is now providing oversight for the NEDP Program. They sponsored a training session in October for sixteen new advisor/assessors. As a result of this training, we welcome two new sites in Washington D.C.



Seated from left: Patricia Frye, Sister Rosetta Brown, Sister Joanne Schneberger; Josephine Garland; Trainees standing from left: Robin Blackwood, Lynette Young, Maritza Romero-Casso, Shirley Jackson, Letticia Nichols, Veronica Williams, Patricia Dicks, Paige Reuber, Judy Kittelson, Carolyn Bledsoe, Jodi Birkey, Stacey Downey.

CASAS welcomes all the new staff to the NEDP professional family.

Contact Us

We are ready to answer your questions and to assist you with your program needs. Please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

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NEDP News – Previous Issues

The *NEDP News* is our primary vehicle for keeping NEDP practitioners and other stakeholders abreast of the latest NEDP developments, including the redesign. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to share the *NEDP News* with colleagues who may not be receiving our newsletter.

You may view previous issues on our Website at www.nedp.org; select *NEDP News*.

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