



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

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Message from Jim Harrison, CASAS NEDP Project Director

The *NEDP News*, issued quarterly, 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. CASAS is continuing to make enhancements to the NEDP program as part of the redesign effort. This month, the newsletter includes an update on the performance indicator development and an overview of the role of technology in redesign efforts.

CASAS is pleased to announce that we have joined the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) as a Professional Development Affiliate. P21 is a leading, national organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for all learners. For NEDP, we believe that this affiliation will increase our visibility and symbolize our commitment to preparing clients for success in today's world. In the next issue, we will highlight the benefits of this new partnership.

I hope you will take the time to view the new success stories posted on our Web site www.nedp.org and send us more narratives to include. In a data-driven era, it is still important to have these qualitative, personal testimonials to serve as another validation of the efficacy of our work. Each of these stories keeps us focused on our commitment to our clients and why we must continue to expand and improve NEDP.

Be sure to start planning now to attend the CASAS Summer Institute (SI) in June and the NEDPC conference in October. More information is included in this issue of *NEDP News*. Both conferences are not only excellent opportunities to meet and exchange ideas with other NEDP colleagues from around the country, but also to engage in dialog with NEDP CASAS staff relative to redesign efforts.

Author: Melissa Dayton

The spring 2009 NEDP newsletter described the function of performance indicators and the process for validating them in preparation for Task redevelopment. This article provides a further, more detailed update on the performance indicators and the development of computer-delivered Task templates.

I. Performance Indicators

Performance Indicators can be defined as “clear, specific descriptions of knowledge or skill that students should acquire in order to demonstrate mastery of competencies” (from Kendall, *A Technical Guide for Revising or Developing Standards and Benchmarks*, 2001). NEDP performance indicators define the skills and knowledge that candidates are required to demonstrate in Generalized Assessment.

At this time, the majority of NEDP performance indicators have been redrafted and are undergoing formal review by outside subject matter experts, or “SMEs.” As performance indicators are completed, CASAS is forming SME panels to cover each competency area. SMEs are being contacted from the NEDP field, K-12 and higher education, business and industry, and other organizations related to each competency area.

Subject matter experts play a critical role in the assessment development process:

- a) They apply their content knowledge and professional judgment to the evaluation of draft performance indicators – providing an external “reality check.”
- b) They provide a diversity of demographic and geographic perspectives to ensure that the performance indicators are relevant and accessible for all NEDP clients.

Panels of SMEs are asked to rate each draft performance indicator in a competency area according to standardized criteria, applying a 1-to-4 (low-to-high) scale:

- *Relevance:* How relevant is the performance indicator to defining the competency at a high school level?
- *Criticality:* How well does the performance indicator capture a critical or essential aspect of the competency?
- *Frequency:* How often is the performance indicator required in everyday life or work?
- *Webb Depth of Knowledge Level:* What level of complexity does the performance indicator represent, according to Norman Webb’s Depth of Knowledge model?

Next, panelists refer back to the original competency statement to evaluate the entire set of performance indicators in terms of:

- *Breadth of Content:* Do the performance indicators adequately capture the breadth of content described by the competency statement?
- *Additional Performance Indicators:* If there is a gap in coverage, what additional performance indicators would address the gap?
- *Fairness and Equity:* Are the performance indicators relevant and accessible to all NEDP candidates and free of unintentional bias?

- *Validation Sources and General Comments:* Are the cited validation sources appropriate and complete? Should additional standards be consulted? It should be noted that in addition to content-area standards, NEDP performance indicators are being aligned with P21 Skills (Partnership for 21st Century Skills) and the National Governors Association Common Core State Standards.

Panelists submit their completed findings to CASAS, and CASAS technical staff analyze the results to confirm that there is satisfactory agreement among the SME ratings (a lower level of agreement may require additional SME reviewers) and to make any necessary revisions. Final drafts are then forwarded to a CASAS bias and sensitivity panel. This panel screens the performance indicators for factors that could reduce their validity such as overly specialized language, cultural assumptions or stereotypes, and content that is unnecessarily controversial.

Once these steps are completed, the finalized performance indicators will go to the NEDP Advisory Committee and NEDP Technical Advisory Group for review and validation. Once validated, the performance indicators are ready to be formatted into Task items.

Health Literacy will be the first area to complete this process, enabling the redevelopment of the Health Literacy Task items.

II. Computer-Delivered Task Development

Meanwhile, work has begun to develop computer-delivered templates for NEDP Tasks. CASAS staff is creating a standardized format to translate the current paper booklets into easy-to-navigate computer screens. These include:

- A Task item display containing the introduction and instructions for completing the Task activity
- An area for candidates to record their work according to the type of response – for example, short text response, extended narrative, or fill matrix
- A section on resource containing information required to complete a Task item – similar to the current appendix, but accessed by a click of the mouse.

During the spring, CASAS will begin clinical tryouts of new computer-delivered Task items with selected sites. Feedback from NEDP candidates and staff will be critical to the refinement of the new system. NEDP sites interested in participating in these clinical tryouts should contact Melissa Dayton at mdayton@casas.org.

The NEDP redevelopment process involves the coordinated movement of numerous “moving parts.” It is a dynamic process combining the validation of performance indicators, the update of Task activities, and development of an online portfolio system that is user-friendly – for NEDP candidates, assessors and program administrators. CASAS will continue to update NEDP professionals as the process continues forward.

As CASAS revalidates the NEDP performance indicators and updates all aspects of the program, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) presents both exciting opportunities and new challenges, for client and practitioners alike. CASAS recognizes that these changes have implications for local providers – in terms of capacity, professional development and client resources.



There is a clear consensus among education and business leaders: every high school graduate must demonstrate basic proficiency with computer-based technology tools. Now common in schools, homes and the workplace, these tools include word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software; internet browsers and search engines; and email programs. Individuals rely on ICT every day facilitate communication, productivity and creative expression.

CASAS is completing draft ICT performance indicators that will define the technology skills clients need both in NEDP Diagnostics and Generalized Assessment. The performance indicators are designed to be integrated with the other NEDP competency areas in authentic ways. Realistic examples may include: using the internet to conduct research, using word processing software to draft a resume, or sending an email and attachment. Each of these skills can be applied to a range of life and work-related contexts.

Before these changes take place, however, several issues must be addressed. During February, 2010 CASAS will distribute three technology surveys, targeted at: 1) agency administrators; 2) NEDP advisor/assessors; and 3) NEDP clients. The responses will provide CASAS with information to address the following questions:

First, *can agencies provide NEDP clients and staff adequate access to ICT?* Issues such as computer availability, Internet access, and software program versions may present a challenge. The agency administrator survey will query agency leaders about these issues and others – for example, whether clients have access to the Internet at the NEPD agency, at home, or a public location.

Second, *are advisors, assessors and portfolio reviewers prepared to evaluate client skills and task performance?* For example, if a client must complete a task by creating a graphical presentation, is the assessor able to verify task completion independently and if necessary, at post-task assessment? A separate survey will ask NEDP staff members to describe their uses of ICT, self-reported levels of proficiency, and what they know about their clients' ICT access and skills. The information collected in this survey will guide the content of subsequent professional development for NEDP staff.

Technology in the Redesign of NEDP (continued)

Finally, *do clients have the necessary ICT skills to ensure success in Generalized Assessment?* To ensure clients do not enter the assessment phase without possessing the minimum ICT skills, agencies must know what will be measured during Diagnostics and Generalized Assessment. As the ICT performance indicators are validated this information will be shared with the field. In addition to basic skill levels, questions remain about client access to ICT, in particular, the Internet. Further, determining how current clients use ICT in their personal, professional, and scholastic lives will help CASAS provide practitioners with guidance for client remediation.

CASAS will be distributing the surveys during February and will share results with the field. The results will be used to inform professional development and other capacity building efforts – including providing agencies with information and guidance on how to access resources that can help support these efforts. Questions may be directed to Andrew Evans at aevans@casas.org.

NEDP Success Stories Now Posted

The NEDP Web site now features a section with NEDP client success stories. For NEDP graduates, completing a high school diploma opens the opportunity to transition to postsecondary education, improve employment options, provide positive role models for their children, and improve their lives in other significant ways. These success stories are important to share in order to motivate current and future clients and to encourage agencies to offer NEDP to more individuals. Please take a moment to visit this section of the Web site. Go to www.nedp.org and select *NEDP Success Stories* from the menu on the left.



Change font size: A- A+

Welcome, Christine

Logout

Students

NEDP Success Stories

Adult Education and
Postsecondary

Current NEDP Locations

NEDP Professionals

Contact Information

NEDP News

NEDP Training

Opportunities

CASAS Summer Institute

NEDP Presentations at
Conferences

CASAS



NEDP Success Stories now available on the Web site!

CASAS would like to add more graduate and program success stories. If you have a story to share, please contact Mary Fox at mfox@casas.org.

NEDP Inspires Student to Dream and Write About It

Barbara Caceres, an NEDP graduate from Renton Technical College, Washington, has been inspired by the NEDP program to pursue her dream of writing and has been successful at publishing a number of articles. Barbara shared her inspirational story with CASAS. Barbara wrote:

I actually dropped out of high school — not once but twice! I was always a good student, but like many who quit school, I had a troubled family life and grew up in housing projects with no father and an alcoholic mother.

I loved to read and especially loved to write. When I was just 10 years old I started writing poetry and amassed over 100 poems by the time I was 17. Music and books became my “balm”, soothing an aching heart and wounded spirit.

I got pregnant at 19 and started working menial, low-paying jobs at the luxury hotels in downtown Seattle. I stayed off welfare and supported not only myself and my son, but my mom too. We managed to stay off welfare and out of the projects — only because at that time (in the 1980's) there were still low-income neighborhoods and affordable rentals.

I married a wonderful, kind, and loving man in 1989 and we had a daughter in 1990. In 1999, my son graduated from Kent Meridian High School. It was seeing him in his cap and gown that motivated me and led me to the EDP. It took almost a year, but I've never before had such a feeling of pride and accomplishment. NEDP gave me confidence. In addition to earning the high school diploma, I learned that I could start something and follow it through to completion.



My daughter is now 19 and a sophomore at the University of Washington. With the kids grown I've had much more time to myself and I've started writing. Although I didn't get to pursue my dream when I was young — the dream remains strong and has resurfaced, propelling and prompting me to try.....*just try and see what happens....*

Obtaining her high school diploma has not only inspired Barbara to pursue her writing interests but has also improved her employment options and given her confidence to pursue a degree. Barbara is working for Group Health Cooperative, one of largest healthcare organizations, processing referral requests on-line from providers. She has continued on to Highline Community college and has 56 credits towards an AA degree. Congratulations Barbara! Keep pursuing your dreams!

NEDP Transcript Review Committee

As the NEDP is updated to reflect more rigorous high school standards, the transcript must also be improved to reflect these improvements. In October, CASAS launched a transcript review committee to research other transcripts and recommend improvements to the current format. The goal of the committee is to produce a transcript that reflects the newest competencies and performance indicators, reflects academic achievement, and appears more like other traditional transcripts.

The committee includes members from most states where NEDP is offered. The committee hopes to have a revised transcript to submit for review and comment by June 1, 2010. Margaret Kirkpatrick is the chair of this committee. CASAS is pleased to have someone with Margaret's expertise in adult education to head up this effort. If you have any comments or ideas related to the transcript, contact Margaret Kirkpatrick at makirk@earthlink.net or Mary Fox at mfox@casas.org.

CASAS Summer Institute 2010



Come join CASAS in a celebration of
30 years of service to students and
adult education professionals.

June 17-19, 2010
Town and Country Resort & Convention Center
in San Diego

Visit www.casas.org/si/ to register online or
to print a registration form.

Online registration and room reservations
are now open. Register early!

The biggest change this year is that the Institute takes
place Thursday – Saturday. NEDP professionals may
participate in the all-day WSCS training on Thursday
and attend NEDP workshops on Friday and Saturday.

Questions?

www.casas.org/si/

Phone: 1-800-255-1036 ext. 131

E-mail: casas-si@casas.org

NEDPC Biannual Conference – September 19-21, 2010

The National External Diploma Program Council – NEDPC has
announced that the bi-annual conference is September 19-21, 2010,
in Hartford, Connecticut, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel. Mark your
calendar and plan to attend. It is a great chance to network with other
NEDP professionals. Check the Web site www.nedpc.net or contact
Sharon Muldowney at smuldowney@maect.org or Bette Huckabee at
betthuck@aol.com for more information!



Training Scheduled for April

A training workshop for new NEDP Advisors/Assessors will be held April 27-30, 2010 in Albany, New York. Contact Mary Fox at CASAS to obtain information about NEDP site requirements and to obtain registration information for the training (800-255-1036, ext. 136 or mfox@casas.org). The training registration deadline is March 25, 2010. Act quickly to take advantage of this opportunity.

Western Suffolk BOCES Graduates Record Numbers

On January 13, 2010, Western Suffolk BOCES held a ceremony for 66 graduates — the most graduates ever! Congratulations to all 66 graduates. The next newsletter will feature an article from Stephanie Englemann, highlighting one graduate's success story.

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

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Visit Our Web Site at www.nedp.org