

**National CASAS Consortium Basic Skills Content Standards Project
Report on Iowa Professional Development Content Standards Implementation Plans and
Results from April 2006 Training**

I. Results from Iowa Professional Development Content Standards Implementation Plans

This report presents a synthesis of the implementation strategies which Iowa's community college adult literacy programs are planning as they begin to integrate CASAS National Consortium Basic Skills Content Standards in the classroom. Each community college was required to submit a content standards implementation plan, as part of their yearly professional development plan, to the Iowa Department of Education. Each plan was reviewed to determine the approach each program intends to take as it progresses towards full implementation of content standards. The major themes and trends of the implementation plans are summarized below:

1. Anticipated Implementation Timeframe

The majority of community colleges plan to have fully implemented content standards by July 2009, although two community colleges target July 2010 and July 2011 as final implementation dates.

2. Program Areas (ABE, ASE, ESL) Targeted for Implementation

- No discernable pattern emerged with respect to which program areas should be the initial focus of implementation;
- Some community colleges will begin with only one program area (ABE, ASE, or ESL) and gradually phase in other areas;
- Other community colleges intend to begin with one or two classes in each program area, gradually expanding from there;
- A minority of community colleges plan to include all program areas and implement basic skills content standards in all classes simultaneously; and
- It should be noted that since community college size is not known; it is possible that the local literacy programs planning to implement fully during year one are relatively small. The identity of each community college was not revealed in order to protect anonymity.

3. Professional Development and Implementation strategies

- Virtually all community colleges listed in-house workshops and inservice trainings to assist staff understand how to integrate basic skills content standards and CASAS competencies. All community colleges intend to attend state sponsored and other professional development activities devoted to content standards.

Additional Implementation Strategies include:

- Identifying core instructors/training team members;
- Introducing vocabulary and providing overviews of the underlying concepts of basic skills content standards;
- Introducing a process of incorporating basic skills content standards into a new curricula;
- Piloting basic skills content standards at test sites; monitoring their progress; providing feedback, technical assistance, and support;
- Utilizing core instructors as the primary training team to assist in rolling out standards district-wide;
- Administering survey achievement tests to learners to help determine “priority competencies”; identifying three to five competencies as priorities for instruction and adding more as instructors become accustomed to using them;
- Starting to assemble curriculum materials that reflect the CASAS competencies and underlying basic skills content standards;
- Running class reports by class to identify competencies that should be a focus for instruction in each classroom;
- Identifying the most frequently missed Reading Competencies;
- Identifying relevant teaching materials using Quick Search;
- Assembling samples of materials for each frequently missed competency in a central location;
- Publishing newsletters with articles on implementing basic skills content standards; and
- Partnering to share resources and eliminate duplicating searches.

4. Evaluation Design

The local programs generally did not provide information on specific formative evaluation designs. Many community colleges addressed employing summative evaluation procedures to test the efficacy of pilot implementation strategies and to make ongoing refinements as programs develop greater expertise implementing content standards.

5. Anticipated Outcomes for Implementation include:

- Attaining bench mark goals and targeted skill levels;
- Creating efficient, accurate instruction;
- Achieving NRS educational goals;
- Attaining follow-up core measures;
- Increasing student retention as a result of more effective instruction;
- Increased participation hours.

II. Tri-Fold Workshops

Three **Implementing Basic Skills Content Standards in the Classroom** workshops were implemented across Iowa on April 4-6, 2006. The workshops were held at: (1) Kirkwood Community College; Cedar Rapids, Iowa, (2) Iowa Valley Community College District; Marshalltown, Iowa, and (3) Iowa Tech Community College; Sioux City, Iowa. These

workshops resulted from evaluations of earlier training efforts. The participants in previous training efforts indicated that while they understood the concepts from the workshops, they felt that they needed additional training so that they would be more comfortable training other instructional staff in their local adult literacy programs. Table 1 documents the participant evaluations of these training efforts.

Table 1 quantifies workshop participant rankings against workshop objectives on a scale of 1 to 4. The table presents data from each of the three workshops as well as a composite which presents the overall ratings for all three presentations. Each objective is listed in the table to facilitate interpretation. The ratings ranged from a low of 3.13 to a high of 3.83 suggesting high levels of participant satisfaction from the training sessions.

TABLE 1

**The CASAS National Consortium Content Standards Project
Iowa Content Standards Tri-Fold Workshops
April 4 – 6, 2006**

Participant Evaluation Summary

Evaluation Questions	Rating Scale from 1 = Vague—4 = Clear			
	4/4/06 Cedar Rapids N = 23*	4/5/06 Marshalltown N = 26*	4/6/06 Sioux City N = 12*	Composite N = 61*
1. Do you have a clear understanding of Basic skills content standards?	3.83	3.50	3.58	3.64
2. Do you have a clear sense of how to use the Life and Work Reading Series?	3.74	3.58	3.80	3.69
3. Do you have a clear sense of how to use the Basic Skills Content Standards when using the Life and Work Series?	3.70	3.31	3.58	3.43
4. Do you have a clear sense of how to use the Basic Skills Content Standards related to a specific CASAS Competency (Practice Exercise #1)?	3.66	3.62	3.75	3.66
5. Do you feel you have a clear understanding of the concept of how to use the TOPSpro Class Performance By Competency Report to identify priority competencies for instruction when using the Basis Skills Content Standards by Test Item Report (Practice Exercise #2)?	3.70	3.66	3.75	3.69
6. Do you feel that you have a clear understanding of how to identify Basic Skills Content Standards that should be taught when using the Life and Work Reading Series (Practice Exercise #3)?	3.61	3.44 *N=25	3.67	3.50 *N = 60
7. When using assessments other than Life and Work, do you feel that you have a clear sense of how to identify the Basic Skills Content Standards embedded in CASAS competencies (Practice Exercise #4)?	3.13	3.0 * N=25	3.36 *N = 11	3.23 *N = 59
10. Do you feel that you understand the main concepts of the training and can apply them (Objectives 1-5)?	3.74	3.14 *N=22	3.67	3.54 *N = 57

*Unless noted otherwise

III. Themes from Recommendations/Concerns/Remarks Section of Participant Evaluations

6. What I found most interesting was . . .

- Life and Work reading overview;
- Layout of basic skills content standards: easy to understand with respect to scope and sequence;
- The organization of basic skills content standards by instructional level is fantastic;
- Basic skills content standards will facilitate development of lesson plans;
- The opportunity to practice using content standards with CASAS competencies;
- Identifying the specific skills needed to be taught to improve test performance;
- TOPSpro Class reports that identify essential basic skills content standards;
- Practice exercises to assist in identifying basic skills content standards in CASAS competencies; I really like the Basic Skills Content Standards by Test Item resource;
- There is a real need for content standards and I am glad to have them addressed;
- Sharing ideas at the end of the day; and
- Networking—brain storming, and solving problems to improve our programs.

7. How do you plan to use basic skills content standards when you return to your local program?

- The basic skills content standards by instructional level is very helpful for teachers especially with respect to scope and sequence;
- TOPSpro content standards reports will provide another useful tool to inform instruction;
- Basic skills content standards need to be identified for the Employability Competency System series;
- I plan to practice integrating CASAS competencies with basic skills content standards;
- Information from a Class Performance by Competency Report will be integrated into a lesson plan;
- I plan to create a book of lesson plans that use content standards;
- I plan to utilizing content standards to improve performance for NRS;
- I plan to explore which skills need to be taught to improve student performance as well as to examine how well present texts are correlated to these skills;
- A group of ESL instructors will begin to plan programs for next year utilizing content standards;
- High priority competencies will be targeted and staff will begin to teach the underlying basic skills content standards;
- Strategies will be explored to present basic skills content standards to staff that are exciting and understandable;
- The concepts are easy to understand, but I don't know how to get my teachers to go for the extra work;
- I plan to identify 2-3 priority competencies and work on those to start;
- I think there could be even more of a breakdown of Listening content standards; the Reading standards are very good;

- I plan to develop lesson plans for future classes;
- My program will focus on basic skills content standards deficiencies in our classes;
- Many teachers, despite acknowledging the value, will not see this as “doable”; and
- I plan to obtain a report from the last CASAS assessments administered and set up a spreadsheet to determine the highest percentages of competencies that were incorrect; this information will be helpful in developing lesson plans.