



NATIONAL CONSORTIUM MEETING  
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
JANUARY 23 AND 24, 2009

SUMMARY NOTES

**STATES/ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED:** COLORADO, IDAHO, INDIANA, KENTUCKY, NEVADA, OHIO, OREGON, RHODE ISLAND, PAYNE AND ASSOCIATES

**ECONOMIC CONDITIONS**

The National Consortium forum is critical in supporting states in these severe economic times. State budgets are strained throughout the country. Travel is frozen or severely limited. The consortium plans to address different strategies to communicate, operate and to provide much-needed support to the states to maintain high quality training and technical assistance, and sharing of best practices across consortium states.

**COMPETENCY REVALIDATION**

At Summer Institute 2008 the revalidated CASAS Competencies were rolled out and posted to the Web site. Recoding of reading, math, and listening test items is now underway. This new information will be incorporated into test administration manuals and TOPSpro. New materials in QuickSearch Online are now coded to new 2008 CASAS Competencies.

***National External Diploma Program (NEDP) Competencies***

The new validated NEDP Competencies address the essential skills needed to function effectively in the twenty-first century. These 70 new or revised NEDP Competencies are raising the standards students must demonstrate to receive their diploma. CASAS is now in the process of developing performance indicators to align with competencies. After a series of field reviews and review by the NEDP Technical Work Group, a draft document will be shared with the Consortium. To ensure that the performance indicators address higher level critical thinking and problem solving, NEDP is using Norman Webb's Depth of Knowledge\* model as a guide in developing the performance indicators. This effort helps to lay the groundwork for redesigning all NEDP assessments. NEDP also plans to offer an optional set of performance tasks that will qualify an individual for a workforce readiness certificate. Adults enrolled in NEDP persist in program and complete the program at higher rates than either the GED or adult high school credit program (Golpalakrishnan, 2008). NEDP practitioners report the positive changes they see NEDP students make as they transition to postsecondary and the workplace.

\* Norman Webb is a senior researcher at the University of Wisconsin. View his Depth of Knowledge model at [www.education.ky.gov/users/jwyatt/CoreContent/DOK%2012-151.PPT](http://www.education.ky.gov/users/jwyatt/CoreContent/DOK%2012-151.PPT)

#### **WIA AND NATIONAL REPORTING SYSTEM**

In April 2008 CASAS submitted six technical manuals, accompanied by test forms, to the NRS. Additional clarification information was sent to OVAE in November 2008. CASAS intends to make additional submissions in October 2009.

#### ***Secondary Level Assessment Series***

There are eight content area tests that comprise this series. These include Reading for Language Arts, U.S. History, World History, American Government, Biological Science, Physical Science, Economics, and Mathematics. Fourteen out of sixteen pre- and post-test forms have all been updated, as well as the supporting documentation to the series. Reading for Economics is currently under revision. Tests are at Level D (secondary education level) on the CASAS scale.

#### ***Federal Table 4C — Distance Learning***

States that offer distance learning programs need to have a written policy in their WIA II state assessment policy guidelines regarding distance learning. They must have a definition of the criteria that qualifies a learner as a distance learner and also describe how programs are to report hours of instruction for these learners.

**Action Item:** View the Distance Learning resources path:

OTAN | [Teaching Tools & Resources](#) | [Distance Learning](#)

#### ***NRS Common Measures for WIA Title I, Title II, and Workforce Development***

CASAS has goal of supporting the collaboration between WIA Title I, Title II, and Workforce Development programs throughout the states. Summer Institute is a forum to share resources and ideas across states to accomplish this. This is the time to share what your state is doing to make a difference. How is this being accomplished? What collaborations are in place in your state with workforce and education partners?

**Action Item:** Contact Jane Egüez at CASAS ([jeguez@casas.org](mailto:jeguez@casas.org)) about what your state needs to build this bridge and how CASAS can best support this effort.

**Action Item:** Offer panel discussions at Summer Institute focusing on WIA I and II partnerships to identify key elements in successful partnerships and also the challenges.

**Action Item:** Focus on professional development for ABE and ESL instructors to provide instruction of basic skills in a functional workforce context. Identify current instructional resources that can be shared across the Consortium.

### **CASAS ASSESSMENT POLICY GUIDELINES AND ISSUES**

State assessment policies are available on the National Consortium/Certified Trainer Virtual Community on the CASAS Web site.

**Action Item:** E-mail your state's assessment policy to [adolney@casas.org](mailto:adolney@casas.org) for posting on the CASAS Web site.

The recommendation of 70-100 hours of instruction between pre- and post-test is based on research indicating that many students show significant learning gains with this amount of instruction. Students with less than 40 hours of instruction do not usually make significant learning gains.

**Action Item:** CASAS will look at inserting additional language into the assessment policy that addresses exceptions. CASAS will craft language that discourages states from misinterpreting the exceptions policy. The language must yield a policy that is manageable for states to implement and for local programs to understand.

### **TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

#### ***Content Standards (Reading, Math, Listening)***

Content Standards help to identify underlying skills that students need to learn at each instructional level, and it is important to disseminate this information to enhance teaching and learning. The standards are now part of Implementation Training. The standards were updated last year and incorporated into a new document posted on the CASAS Web site.

- Numeracy / Computation / Mathematics Content Standards

The next step is to develop content standards for writing and speaking.

**Action Item:** See [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) / About CASAS / Basic Skills Content Standards as well as the update on the CASAS Content Standards Project which offers resources to assist states in implementing CASAS Content Standards.

**Action Item:** Reorganize training as a modularized approach offering a more developed lesson planning component. Design Implementation Training so it can be offered as distance training and move rapidly to convert more training workshops to a distance training format, especially via the Web.

### ***Content Standards for 2A to 4A Assessments***

**Action Item:** Those interested in becoming involved with a project to develop CASAS Content Standards at these levels should contact Ginny Posey at CASAS. Iowa, North Carolina, and California currently are involved.

### **TRANSITION TO POSTSECONDARY AND WORKFORCE**

Adult education programs are increasingly focused on ensuring that students transition successfully from ESL and ABE to ASE, postsecondary education, and job training. A seamless continuum will make transitioning students to community colleges and credit-bearing classes easier. Programs such as NEDP are ensuring that graduates are ready for postsecondary success. WSCS is being added to NEDP to ensure students have a high school diploma and a workforce certification credential.

**Action Item:** Summer Institute will offer sessions about transitioning to postsecondary education and training.

### ***CASAS Postsecondary Study***

CASAS has been working with several states to collect learner paired data on CASAS scale scores and COMPASS and Accuplacer scores. In addition, the study is collecting data that tracks these students into their first postsecondary education classes and documents completion and grades. Data is needed to report the success at the postsecondary level, where students were placed, and whether they persisted and completed classes at the collegiate level.

**Action Item:** Contact Debalina Ganguli, CASAS director of research, to participate in a study of CASAS to COMPASS or CASAS to Accuplacer to correlate these with CASAS levels.

**Action Item:** Debalina will e-mail consortium members to gather more data and start an analysis of those who are in adult education in June and enroll in the community college in fall 2009. The goal is an N of 300.

**Action Item:** Set up transition discussion panels at Summer Institute.

The Federal TRIO programs are educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes six outreach and support programs targeted to serve and assist low-income, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post-baccalaureate programs.

For more information see <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html>

## **LARGE-SCALE PERFORMANCE-BASED ASSESSMENT**

### ***Functional Writing Assessment***

CASAS is piloting computer-delivered written essay prompts with Singapore. Two California NEDP sites are set to pilot, also. One advantage of computer-delivered writing assessment is the ability to immediately send the writing sample to remote scorers who have been trained to score writing samples reliably.

### ***Scoring Service Model***

One scoring service model is a state-central scoring depository that maintains a cadre of six to eight trained scorers who are recertified periodically to ensure standardization across programs.

### ***Online Distance Training***

CASAS will use Moodle to develop training in an online-delivered format to better meet the training needs of organizations. CASAS will identify which trainings best fit into one of four online formats and if some training can be blended using the Genesys Meeting Center for synchronous delivery. The four distance training formats:

1. Web/Computer-Based Training (W/CBT)
2. Web/Electronic Performance Support System (W/EPSS)
3. Web/Virtual Asynchronous Classroom (W/VAC)
4. Web/Virtual Synchronous Classroom (W/VSC)

Additional training and technical assistance needs and options

### ***Government and History for Citizenship Test***

CASAS is now revising the Government and History test to match the revised USCIS questions. The test will be available this summer.

### ***Computerized Speaking Assessment***

Singapore is field testing a computerized speaking assessment that has two levels. The plan is to develop an advanced-level computer-delivered speaking assessment.

### ***Adult Transitions Curriculum***

CASAS received a grant funded by the California State Council for Developmental Disabilities (SCDD) to write 30 curriculum modules in a universal design for learning format. Curriculum content focuses on community participation and employment preparation for youth and adults transitioning into employment and other postsecondary environments.

The modules will feature multiple options for delivering instructional content and materials for multiple student skill levels ranging from CASAS Skill Level 4A to A. Assessments will link to self-

assessment strategies as well as the CASAS POWER, Adult Life Skills color photo tests, and Level A Life and Work tests. A highlight of the modules is online Web delivery at no cost and available to educators, support specialists, parents and guardians, and consumers themselves.

**Action Item:** If someone in your state may be interested or has materials for reference, contact Ginny Posey. [gposey@casas.org](mailto:gposey@casas.org)

Preliminary study findings of learning gains for adult learners with developmental disabilities show these students are making gains, but take longer to show gains and gains are mostly below a CASAS scale score of 200. The NRS Federal Tables for ABE do not show gains unless they are above 200. This is very important data for employers to know and realize the employment potential of adults with developmental disabilities. As we promote workforce skills of our learners, it is important to include adults with developmental disabilities.

**Action Item:** Develop a research brief to address the workforce audience and post on Web for anyone to download and promote.

#### LISTENING ASSESSMENTS

##### *Transition to Form 80 Appraisal and to Life and Work Listening Series*

CASAS is studying the transition from the Life Skills Listening (50 series) tests to the new Life and Work Listening series (80 series). In Broward County, Florida, students are taking tests from both series.

Kathy Santopietro Weddell also will provide data showing the correlation between the 50 series and the new 80 series.

#### TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Agencies are increasingly implementing CASAS eTests. Version 3.0 will be released at end of February. CASAS is also piloting Internet-based testing. The advantage is that agencies do not need established networks.

**Action Item:** Adapt software implementation guidelines from CASAS eTests for TOPSpro Enterprise.

##### *QuickSearch Online*

QuickSearch Online is now available at no charge on CASAS Web site. Visit [www.casas.org](http://www.casas.org) to access.

### ***Workforce Skills Certification System***

Melissa Dayton and Jane Egüez are available to help communities begin implementation of WSCS. There are several communities in Washington State, Connecticut, and California that are piloting WSCS.

**Action Item:** View VESL and VABE Public domain curriculum:

OTAN | [Research & Reference](#) | [Library Collections](#) | VESL Clearinghouse

### **ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM**

#### ***Handbook for Adult ESL Teachers: An Interactive Resource Guide for New and Experienced Adult ESL Teachers***

Draft copies of the national version are available. The project incorporated feedback from groups that met at Summer Institute. Each state will be able to customize the handbook. A handbook for ABE is also in development and will be disseminated for feedback and suggestions. The goal is to have one handbook for ESL and another for ABE.

**Action Item:** Linda Taylor will work with states to continue development.

### **2009 NATIONAL SUMMER INSTITUTE**

Planning is underway for the schedule of events, workshops, discussion groups, best practices, and training sessions.

#### ***Implementation Training at the Institute***

Marty Gustafson, CASAS training coordinator, presented a new format for Implementation Training at this year's Institute. Basic Implementation Training Part I will be offered on Tuesday morning, with a variety of specialized modules (Part 2) for ECS, ESL, ABE, and WSCS offered in the afternoon. CASAS is reviewing the process to become a state-level trainer and looks to the consortium for suggestions.

**Action Item:** OTAN will be asked to offer Moodle training to the National Consortium before Summer Institute.

### **OTHER STATE-LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY, ASSESSMENT, AND PROGRAM EVALUATION POLICY ISSUES**

CASAS is developing a beginning literacy assessment with a grant from Florida. Forty programs with beginning literacy students were surveyed. One finding shows that students at this level are often in multilevel classes. Once completed, the test will be available for all states.