

*ADULT BASIC  
EDUCATION &  
COMMUNITY  
COLLEGES IN  
FIVE STATES*

A REPORT FROM THE  
COMPREHENSIVE ADULT  
STUDENT ASSESSMENT  
SYSTEM (CASAS)

to the

**Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy**

September 2003



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& COMMUNITY COLLEGES  
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Student Assessment System (CASAS)  
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September 2003



**Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy**

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## FOREWORD

In January 2003, the Council for Advancement of Adult Literacy (CAAL) launched a major project to examine the role and potential of community colleges in adult education and literacy. The study is being directed by Forrest P. Chisman and guided by a prestigious task force chaired by Byron McClenney, President of Kingsborough Community College, who serves as the representative of the American Association of Community Colleges. Their work will result in publication of several working papers and a final task force report with recommendations. (See Appendices A and B for a statement of overall project goals and a listing of the task force membership.)

This paper, *Adult Basic Education & Community Colleges in Five States*, is the first completed working paper. It was prepared by staff at the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). On its own, it is not a sufficient basis for making judgments about the current and potential community college role nationally. We must await other studies in process for that. But it is a fascinating glimpse into how five states conduct their adult basic education systems and should be of great interest to a diverse audience.

CAAL wishes to thank CASAS for taking on such a large job with very modest funding. Principle contributors at CASAS were Patricia Rickard, Richard Stiles, and Jared Jacobsen. Other contributors were members of the CASAS National Consortium Policy Council: Ajit Gopalakrishnan and Jim Harrison (CT), John Hartwig (IA), Steve Miyasato (HI), Sharlene Walker (OR), and Mary Weaver (CA).

CASAS provides a unique perspective based on vast experience in assessing adult basic skills within a functional life skills context. It has to its credit more than two decades of accumulated research and development work in adult assessment, instruction, and evaluation. Through its National Consortium – which has representatives from 28 states and the Pacific Rim – it maintains a regular communications and collaborative network with a vast array of domestic and international adult education programs.

CAAL's community college project and publication of this paper are made possible by funding from the Lumina Foundation for Education, Verizon, Inc., the Nellie-Mae Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc., Household International, and several individual donors.

Gail Spangenberg,  
CAAL President

## INTRODUCTION

This report by CASAS was commissioned as part of CAAL'S research program to build understanding and improve the role of community colleges in adult education and literacy. The topographical study provides data and analysis on many variables of community college service provision in five states – California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, and Oregon.

Two study limitations should be acknowledged at the outset, and both qualifiers should be kept in mind when reviewing, interpreting, and applying the study results. First, the states used in the analysis are not a representative sample of all states, and it is not possible to generalize the results to the national adult education delivery system. Second, there are significant differences among states that deliver adult basic education through a community college system. The five states included in this study are diverse, not only in their student demographic makeup but also in their state and local governance structure and state funding systems. However, it is beyond the scope of this paper to detail and analyze thoroughly the vast complexity of these systems.

Despite these qualifiers, this study should be a useful tool for analyzing how community college delivery systems are functioning within the states studied. It should also provoke questions and inspire future studies that will lead to a more complete understanding of the delivery of adult basic education generally. Recommendations for further research are listed throughout the report and in a summary at the end.

The next section of the report (I: *Background & Methodology*) gives a brief background on the states and the rationale for including them. This section is followed by the main body of the report (II: *Questions & Answers*), in which eight broad questions are posed and supporting data and analysis for each are presented. The report concludes with Section III: *Summary of Results*.

The eight questions posed in Part II are these:

1. How many community colleges provide adult basic education service, and how many students do they serve?
2. How do the demographics of adult basic education learners differ among providers and compared to the population as a whole?
3. What are the entry educational functioning levels for adult basic education learners? Are there differences in functioning levels between learners in community colleges versus other providers?
4. What are the program service patterns of community colleges, and how do they compare to nationwide service patterns?
5. How do learning gains and persistence rates compare among community colleges and other providers?
6. What are the labor force status and public assistance status of adult basic education learners served in community colleges, and how does this compare to other providers of adult basic education and to the overall unemployment rates of the state?
7. What are the staffing patterns of adult basic education classes in community colleges, and how do these patterns differ from other adult basic education providers and among states?
8. What are some of the characteristics of California adult basic education classes in community colleges, and how do these compare to those offered by other provider types?

## **PART I: BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY**

This analysis uses student level data from California, Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, and Oregon. These states were chosen for several reasons, including the following:

- They have consistent state policies for data collection and reporting (with a few exceptions) for their Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II programs.
- They use a common data dictionary, which allows accurate comparative analysis among states.
- They have worked together for many years to analyze federal reporting data for their Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II programs.
- They are all members of the CASAS National Consortium Policy Council, agreed to share their data for this study, and were able to provide CASAS with data in a very cost-efficient manner.

These five states illustrate the degree of diversity in governance systems and local provider delivery systems and allow for comparative analyses by provider types.

Two states, **Iowa and Oregon**, administer their adult basic education programs through a state community college system. Iowa uses an integrated community college delivery system that provides the delivery of adult basic education and literacy services outlined in Section 231 (b) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).<sup>1</sup> Adult basic education and literacy services are offered in all fifteen of the community college districts in Iowa. Each of the fifteen districts also coordinate and subcontract the provision of services with other literacy partners within their district. Iowa is able to use this system successfully, in part because of the consistent boundaries set across provider types and across geographies. This allows them to create partnerships within geographical regions that are stable over long periods of time.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Iowa's State Plan for Adult Basic Education: Fiscal Years 2000-2004

The **Iowa** system illustrates that states that deliver their adult basic education programs through a state community college system may subcontract with other providers similar to those in states where the program is not delivered through the state community college system. This should be taken into account in an analysis of the systems of the individual states.

In **Oregon**, administration is through a separate state agency that administers both WIA Title 1B and Title II Adult Education and Literacy services. This primary delivery of adult basic education services is through the community colleges. Colleges in Oregon have autonomous boards and local access for two additional funding streams: tuition and local taxing authority. All adult education students are reimbursed by state general funds at the same rate as all community college students. Local programs partner, collaborate, and share resources with other workforce and literacy partners within their district.

The other three states, **California, Connecticut, and Hawaii**, administer their WIA Title 1B and Title II programs through the State Department of Education.

**Connecticut** funds individual adult schools (local school districts), some CBOs and faith-based organizations, and currently one community college.

In **California**, state public funds for adult basic education are administered through two systems: community colleges (administered by the Community Colleges Chancellor's Office) and public adult schools (administered by the California Department of Education). Like Oregon, California has two governing boards: the Board of Trustees of Community Colleges and the State Board of Education. All providers are reimbursed by state general funds. In 2001-02, public adult schools were reimbursed \$2,196.74 per Average Daily Attendance (ADA) rate of 525 student attendance hours. Non-credit students enrolled in community colleges were reimbursed at an FTE unit rate of \$2,072<sup>2</sup> (adult basic education learners fall into the non-credit category). The majority of public adult schools participate in WIA Title II funding, while only 15 percent (16 of 108) of

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<sup>2</sup> Source: California Community College Chancellor's Office



California community colleges participate. WIA Title II funding is administered by the California Department of Education.

The **Hawaii** State Department of Education funds eleven community schools for adults across the state. It is important to note that Hawaii does serve learners classified as ABE and ESL through a separate community college system of seven colleges. Although these classes are identified with the same title (Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language), they differ significantly in administration and the functional level of participants. For example, learners enrolled in the Hawaii Department of Education's eleven community schools for adults qualify for state and federal funding, and schools are required to submit the NRS Federal Tables (those reported in this table are at significantly lower educational functioning levels than those enrolled in the community college system). The vast majority (96 percent) of students served by the community schools for adults have no high school diploma or GED. These learners have an average age of 41, and their primary goal is to "improve basic skills."

In contrast, most learners (95 percent) enrolled in the seven Hawaii community colleges possess a high school diploma or GED but are placed in the ABE or ESL (Remedial/Developmental) classes because they were not yet prepared, based on placement tests, to enter the degree programs at the community college. These learners have an average age of 23 and their primary goal is to reach an educational level that will allow them to make the transition into the degree programs.

An additional difference between these two programs is funding. The community college's ABE and ESL courses are supported by students' tuition and, in cases where the course is for credit, by federal assistance. The Department of Education's Adult Literacy program, like the other programs analyzed in this study, is financed through state and federal funding.

Those learners enrolled in the Hawaii community college programs are not further analyzed in this report; however, the reader and those conducting future research should be aware of this delivery system in Hawaii.

Note that the adult basic education data used in this study includes learners who enrolled in either an ABE, ASE, or ESL program funded through WIA Title II and qualified for the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) Federal Tables during the 2001-2002 program year. So, in an analysis of adult basic education data in community colleges, all learners would be classified as non-credit.

Note further that WIA Title II provides supplemental funding to support literacy instruction to adult learners. The Act promotes the development of integrated services that incorporate adult basic education, English language and literacy instruction, and civics education. For inclusion in the NRS Federal Tables, learners must have attended 12 or more instructional hours during the program year, be at least 16 years of age, and not be concurrently enrolled in a K-12 program. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, adult basic education learners are those who meet the previously mentioned criteria rather than all learners enrolled in adult education programs in the five states studied.

## PART II: QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### **1. How many community colleges provide adult basic education service, and how many students do they serve?**

**Table 1**

*Total Community College Enrollment*

State	Credit Enrollment	Non-Credit Enrollment	Total Enrollment	Non-Credit as % of Total	Adult Basic Education as % of Non-Credit	Adult Basic Education as % of Total Enrollment
California	2,418,034	393,385	2,811,419	13.9%	16.9%	2.4%
Iowa	105,719	331,948	437,667	75.8%	5.8%	4.4%
Oregon	170,217	236,217	406,434	58.1%	11.1%	6.5%
Hawaii	--	--	--	--	--	--
Connecticut	44,887	14,555	59,442	24.5%	--	--

\*Connecticut data is the most accurate currently available but may be updated with further research.

Sources: California Community College Chancellors Office

2002 Condition of Iowa Community Colleges Report

OCCURS – Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development

Connecticut Community Colleges – Office of Planning, Research, and Assessment

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- The calculation and reporting of total community college enrollment can differ among states. Connecticut’s enrollment is measured for the fall 2002 term. California, Iowa, and Oregon are measured by the fiscal year 2002. Data was not obtained from Hawaii. While interpreting these numbers, the reader should be aware that when enrollment numbers are based on fall enrollment numbers, total annual enrollment is probably larger.
- Community college enrollment differed significantly across the states in terms of total enrollment and in terms of the proportion of students enrolled in credit versus non-credit programs. These numbers should be interpreted with caution because the definition of non-credit classes and the classification of students as credit versus non-credit are not consistent across states. State policy and local community college policy determine who is classified as non-credit. In California, for example, three factors that contribute to the

classification of learners as credit or non-credit include the ability of credit students to earn Pell grants, the higher reimbursement of credit programs by the state, and higher instructor pay for credit programs. This is illustrated in California, which has the lowest percentage of total enrollees classified as non-credit (13.9 percent) and the highest proportion of non-credit learners enrolled in adult basic education (16.9 percent). Overall, adult education is a relatively small percentage of the total enrollment of community colleges, and this may have implications in the prioritization of program development and resource allocation within the specific colleges.

**Table 2**

*Total Enrollment in Federally Funded Adult Basic Education Programs, 2001-02*

State	Community Colleges			Other Providers		
	Enrollment	Agencies	Average Enrollment	Enrollment	Agencies	Average Enrollment
California	66,556	16	4,160	460,399	207	2,224
Iowa	19,367	15	1,291	0	0	--
Oregon	26,314	18	1,462	0	0	--
Hawaii	0	0	--	11,065	11	1,006
Connecticut*	--	1	--	32,470	75	433

\*Connecticut has one community college provider with limited enrollment. Therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, all learners are classified under Other Provider.  
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- Average enrollment differed significantly across the states. Many factors may account for the differences, such as demographics, size of population, and similar factors. In California, community colleges showed higher enrollment compared to other providers. Iowa, Oregon, and other providers within California (when removing Los Angeles Unified School District) showed average enrollment ranging from 1,006 to 1,574. Connecticut had a significantly lower average student enrollment.
- In Iowa, federally funded adult basic education enrollment by college ranged from 260 to 4,833, with a median of 1,004 and an average of 1,291. All fifteen community colleges provide adult basic education services.

- In California, enrollment by community college ranged from 99 to 21,331, with a median of 2,071 and an average of 4,160. One reason for the higher enrollment may be that those community colleges that participate tend to be the larger community colleges in urban areas. Conversely, adult school providers cover the entire state spectrum of remote, rural, suburban, urban, and metropolitan areas.
- In California, enrollment by other provider types ranged from 8 to 136,116, with a median of 823 and an average of 2,224. Removal of the Los Angeles Unified School District (with an enrollment of 136,116) brings the average enrollment to 1,574.

**2. How do the demographics of adult basic education learners differ among providers and compared to the population as a whole?**

**Table 3**

*Age Distribution in Federally Funded Adult Basic Education Programs, 2001-02 (Percent)*

State	16-18	19-24	25-44	45-59	60+	Total
California – CCD	5.8	23.0	52.9	13.0	5.4	100.0
California – Other	9.9	23.6	49.8	11.8	4.9	100.0
Oregon	15.5	26.2	47.5	9.0	1.8	100.0
Iowa	16.9	29.5	39.8	10.4	3.4	100.0
Hawaii	21.7	18.4	34.2	16.4	9.3	100.0
Connecticut	17.7	25.3	43.2	11.0	2.8	100.0

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- A distinct difference in age distribution between community colleges and other providers is not apparent. Generally speaking, all providers show the largest adult basic education enrollment in the 25-44 age group followed by the 19-24 age group. Nationwide, among all community college students, the average age is 29 years.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Source: American Association of Community Colleges

- California, in community colleges and among other providers, has a relatively low proportion of adult basic education learners between 16 and 18 years old. Compulsory high school attendance laws in California for youth below the age of 18 contribute to these differences.

**Table 4**

*Ethnicity Distribution in Federally Funded ABE Programs, 2001-02 (Percent)*

State	AI/AN	Asian	Black	Hispanic	NH/PI	White	Other*	Total
California – CCD	0.7	18.8	1.6	66.5	0.6	11.8	n/a	100.0
California – Other Provider	2.7	14.1	5.0	63.4	4.4	10.4	n/a	100.0
California Total Population**	0.5	10.8	6.4	32.4	0.3	46.7	2.9	100.0
Oregon	3.2	6.7	4.1	43.2	0.9	41.9	n/a	100.0
Oregon – Total Population**	1.2	2.9	1.6	8.0	0.2	83.5	2.6	100.0
Iowa	1.8	5.7	9.8	19.1	0.4	63.2	n/a	100.0
Iowa – Total Population**	0.3	1.2	2.1	2.8	0.0	92.6	0.9	100.0
Hawaii	0.9	39.3	1.9	7.8	34.6	15.5	n/a	100.0
Hawaii – Total Population**	0.2	40.8	1.7	7.2	9.0	22.9	18.2	100.0
Connecticut	0.5	6.9	20.7	41.6	0.2	30.1	n/a	100.0
Connecticut – Total Population**	0.2	2.4	8.7	9.4	0.0	77.5	1.8	100.0

\* The Other category includes all persons not Hispanic or Latino who are classified as two or more races or some other race.

\*\* Source: 2000 U.S. Census Data

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- Similar to other providers, enrollment in adult basic education programs is related to the ethnicity distribution of the state population but is comparatively higher in ethnic minority groups. A distinct difference in ethnic distribution between community colleges and other providers is not apparent.
- In California, differences in ethnic distribution between community colleges and other providers may be attributed to the diverse populations served by other providers (correctional programs, state agencies, etc.). For example, Black learners comprised 1.6 percent of the community college enrollment and 5.0 percent of the enrollment in other providers. However, this gap is narrowed when we look at the proportion of

Black learners in the “Other Provider” category less correctional programs (3.6 percent). Another factor that may affect the disparity of Black learners between community colleges and other providers is the high proportion of ESL enrollment in California community colleges (see Table 8). In addition, the different geographical locations of community colleges compared to adult schools may explain some of the differences.

**3. What are the entry educational functioning levels for adult basic education learners? Are there differences in functioning levels between learners in community colleges versus other providers?**

**Table 5**

*Entry Educational Functioning Level Distribution for ABE Learners, 2001-02*

Educational Functioning Level	Percent of ABE Learners					
	CA - CCD	CA - Other	OR*	IW	HW	CT
ABE Beginning Literacy	3.3	9.8	11.4	20.2	34.2	11.5
ABE Beginning Basic	8.6	14.8	20.4	9.7	9.2	11.4
ABE Intermediate Low	18.0	22.8	33.0	25.9	28.8	31.6
ABE Intermediate High	70.1	52.6	35.2	44.2	27.8	45.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon’s numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.  
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- Consistently across all five states, the majority of ABE learners enter their programs in the intermediate low and intermediate high levels.
- Within California, community colleges served a relatively low percentage of learners at the ABE beginning levels and a higher percentage at the ABE intermediate high level compared to other providers.
- Hawaii and Iowa showed the highest percentage of learners at the ABE beginning literacy level. In Iowa, learners enrolled in programs serving adults with

developmental disabilities influence this high proportion. Further research is needed to investigate the high proportion of learners entering at ABE beginning literacy in Hawaii.

**Table 6**

*Entry Educational Functioning Level Distribution for ASE Learners, 2001-02*

Educational Functioning Level	% Of ASE Learners					
	CA – CCD*	CA - Other	OR**	IW	HW	CT
ASE Low	71.0	74.4	79.3	80.0	70.4	84.7
ASE High	29.0	25.6	20.7	20.0	29.6	15.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\*For California, ASE High was adjusted by removing the data from two agencies with incomplete data.

\*\*In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon's numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.

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- Among California's community colleges, other providers, and the other study states, the majority of ASE learners began the program in ASE Low.

**Table 7**

*Entry Educational Functioning Level Distribution for ESL Learners, 2001-02*

Educational Functioning Level	% Of ESL Learners					
	CA - CCD	CA - Other	OR*	IA	HI	CT**
ESL Beginning Literacy	3.8	6.4	26.9	20.2	26.2	11.2
ESL Beginning	24.7	32.5	31.9	33.6	29.1	28.0
ESL Intermediate Low	31.6	29.1	18.9	20.3	20.3	29.3
ESL Intermediate High	16.7	14.5	11.8	13.4	10.1	16.5
ESL Low Advanced	20.0	15.2	8.7	10.3	9.2	15.1
ESL High Advanced	3.1	2.3	1.8	2.2	5.2	--
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon's numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.

\*\* Connecticut does not report on the ESL high advanced level since students at that level are not considered to be in need of basic education in the English language.

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- Within California, community colleges served a relatively lower percentage of learners at the ESL beginning levels and a higher percentage at the ESL intermediate and advanced levels compared to other providers.
- Distribution was consistent among the other four states in that the majority of learners either entered in the beginning or intermediate low instructional levels.
- While California, compared to the other states, served a similar proportion of learners at ESL beginning, it served a relatively low proportion of learners at ESL beginning literacy. This proportion is consistent with the results from the 2000-01 and 1999-00 program years. Therefore, additional analysis is necessary to research this difference.
- It is also important to note that the number of high-level ESL learners served may be understated. This is because high-level ESL students are often classified as credit students when served in community colleges or as ASE learners.

**4. What are the program service patterns of community colleges, and how do they compare to nationwide service patterns?**

**Table 8**

*Instructional Program Distribution, 2001-02 (Percent)*

State	Instructional Program			Total
	ABE	ESL	ASE	
California – CCD	5.9	91.2	2.9	100.0
California – Other	14.1	72.5	13.4	100.0
Oregon*	46.3	45.2	8.5	100.0
Iowa	58.1	25.8	16.1	100.0
Hawaii	12.3	33.2	54.5	100.0
Connecticut	18.5	47.3	34.2	100.0
Total U.S.	38.3	42.1	19.6	100.0

\* In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon's numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.  
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- Due to the diversity of the states in terms of demand, the priorities and service patterns for delivery of adult basic education among the instructional programs differs significantly. California’s adult basic education providers have a significantly higher percentage of learners enrolled in ESL programs compared to the national average. This proportion is even more pronounced in the community college programs. ASE enrollment comprises a relatively small percentage of total enrollment because California state policy limits to 10 percent the total federal WIA Title II funding allocated to ASE.
- Oregon and Iowa both have a relatively high percentage of learners enrolled in ABE programs, while Hawaii and Connecticut have high proportions enrolled in ASE programs. Further research is necessary to analyze these differences.

**5. How do learning gains and persistence rates compare among community colleges and other providers?**

Level completion rates listed in Tables 9 and 10 are calculated as they are reported in the NRS Federal Tables. Each NRS level has been assigned a corresponding CASAS test scale score range based on the CASAS educational functioning levels. Learners can complete a level by either achieving a CASAS post-test score that places them in a higher functioning level, passing the GED or specific subsections of the GED, or obtaining a high school diploma.

**Table 9***ABE and ASE Level Completion, 2001-02*

Educational Functioning Level	% Level Completion					
	CA - CCD	CA - Other	OR*	IA	HI	CT
ABE Beginning Literacy	33.6	25.5	45.9	13.4	14.0	29.6
ABE Beginning Basic	27.9	36.7	47.5	24.8	21.6	56.9
ABE Intermediate Low	39.5	37.6	53.3	42.8	34.8	39.0
ABE Intermediate High	28.7	30.0	50.5	43.1	43.2	57.9
Total ABE**	30.8	32.3	50.3	35.3	28.8	48.6
ASE Low	43.6	25.0	50.7	55.0	38.0	32.9
ASE High***	28.3	25.8	51.1	51.0	51.6	42.8
Total ASE**	40.0	25.2	50.8	54.2	42.0	34.4

\* In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon's numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.

\*\* Weighted total

\*\*\* For California, ASE High was adjusted by removing the data from two agencies with incomplete data.

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- In California, the completion rates for ABE learners are similar, while California community colleges show higher completion rates at the ASE levels compared to other providers.
- A preliminary analysis, using California data, shows that those learners enrolled in community colleges with a primary or secondary goal of postsecondary education are more likely to report the learner result of entrance into college. These results are based on self-reported data. Future research is needed to determine if ASE learners who enroll in community colleges enter with higher basic skill levels and are more goal-oriented toward continuing toward postsecondary education goals within the same institutional setting.
- Connecticut reported a high completion rate among learners enrolled in ABE programs, and Iowa showed a high completion rate among learners enrolled in ASE programs.
- Comparisons between Oregon and other states are not made because of differences in Oregon's methodology. However, in future program years Oregon's methodology

will be aligned with the other study states making more accurate comparisons possible.

**Table 10**

*ESL Level Completion, 2001-02*

Educational Functioning Level	% Level Completion					
	CA - CCD	CA - Other	OR*	IA**	HI	CT
ESL Beginning Literacy	45.9	30.8	29.9	6.1	63.7	24.5
ESL Beginning	37.5	27.1	25.9	14.3	39.2	37.6
ESL Intermediate Low	47.7	38.2	29.7	19.2	49.7	29.8
ESL Intermediate High	49.0	41.7	24.8	20.6	45.3	35.3
ESL Low Advanced	24.8	22.2	13.5	9.7	51.9	41.2
ESL High Advanced	22.7	18.4	10.8	6.3	45.0	--
Total***	40.0	31.7	26.2	13.8	49.8	34.0

\* In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon's numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.

\*\* In Iowa, the majority of enrollment is in ABE/ASE programs, ESL programs account for only 25.8 percent of total enrollment.

\*\*\* Weighted total

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- In California, community colleges showed a greater level completion rate than other providers at each educational functioning level.
- In the other four states, the overall completion rates varied significantly. Hawaii and Connecticut showed higher completion rates compared to Oregon and Iowa. Additional research is necessary to investigate these differences.
- In Iowa, it should be noted that the majority of enrollment is in ABE/ASE programs. Iowa ESL programs account for only 25.8 percent of total enrollment.
- Comparisons of Oregon with other states would require additional research due to differences in Oregon's methodology. However, in future program years Oregon's methodology will be aligned with the other study states making more accurate comparisons possible.

**Table 11***Level Completion**ABE and ESL Combined, 2001-02 (Percent)*

State	Total % Level Completion
California - CCD	39.9
California - Other	30.9
Oregon*	39.5
Iowa	32.8
Hawaii	43.0
Connecticut	36.8
Total U.S.**	35.0

\* In Tables 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, Oregon's numbers are from a special data analysis conducted in July 2003. These data also use test scores to determine functioning levels. Therefore, reading is used more frequently than writing to determine functioning levels and level completion. While this methodology is more closely aligned with that of the other study states, differences still exist.

\*\* Source: The Adult Basic and Literacy Education Act of 2003 – Summary of Major Provisions  
CASAS 2003

- Table 11 shows the overall completion levels, by state, when combining the ABE and ESL programs. The reader can compare the completion levels from the study states to the national level.

**Table 12***Learner Persistence, 2001-02*

State	Total Learners	Mean Hrs. Instruction Total Learners	Learners with Paired Data	Mean Hrs. Instruction With/ Paired Data	% With Paired Data
California - CCD	66,556	141.9	43,364	181.6	65.2
California - Other	460,399	140.0	225,942	201.2	49.1
Oregon	26,314	85.6	18,986	98.8	72.2
Iowa	19,367	81.2	12,677	80.4	65.5
Hawaii	11,065	71.8	--	--	--
Connecticut*	32,620	86.5	14,632	98.6	44.9

\*2000-2001 Connecticut data is used for this table so that results could be estimated using a methodology similar to other states.  
CASAS 2003

Learner persistence, as reported in Table 12, is measured by the presence of paired test data. All states that participated in this study use CASAS tests. Each CASAS test is organized to measure a specific instructional level (A through D). CASAS pre-tests are normally given shortly after program enrollment to document an accurate reflection of student entry-level proficiency. Post-tests are normally administered at the end of each semester, term, or quarter to document continuous program improvement. Students are not to be administered a post-test at a lower level than the pre-test and are not to receive the same test form consecutively. Generally, positive learning gains are documented on CASAS tests after 80 to 100 hours of instruction.

- In California, community colleges had a higher percentage of learners who persisted in their programs.
- Iowa showed a very similar rate to California's community colleges. Connecticut had a similar proportion compared to California's other providers. Additional research would be required to compare Oregon to other states because of differences in methodology.
- In both community colleges and other providers, California showed significantly higher hours of instruction. This is likely due to the large number of classes in California urban areas that have greater intensity of instruction (15 to 20 hours of weekly instruction) compared to other states.

**6. What are the labor force status and public assistance status of adult basic education learners served in community colleges, and how do these compare to other providers of adult basic education and to the overall unemployment rates of the state?**

**Table 13***Labor Force Status for Federally Funded Adult Basic Education Learners, 2001-02*

Employment Status	California - CCD	California -Other	Oregon	Iowa	Hawaii	Connecticut
Employed	51.8	44.6	37.9	45.2	40.5	44.3
Unemployed	29.6	35.9	41.4	42.2	45.0	30.8
Not in the Labor Force	18.6	19.5	20.7	12.6	14.4	24.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

CASAS 2003

**Table 14***Unemployment Rates for the Total Population, July 2001*

Unemployment Rate	California	Oregon	Iowa	Hawaii	Connecticut
Not Seasonally Adjusted	5.7	6.2	2.9	4.7	3.8
Seasonally Adjusted	5.3	6.4	3.4	4.5	3.5

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

- The data show that both community colleges and other providers serve a large proportion of adult basic education learners who are classified as unemployed.

**Table 15***Public Assistance for Federally Funded Adult Basic Education Learners and Total Population*

State	Adult Basic Education Public Assistance (% of Total Enrollment) 2001-02	TANF Recipient Rates* (% of Total Population) 1999
California - CCD	3.1	n/a
California - Other	6.9	n/a
California - Total	6.4	5.4
Oregon	7.8	1.3
Iowa	8.9	2.1
Hawaii	7.5	3.8
Connecticut	2.6	2.5

\*Source: Total state population results are from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Census Bureau. The most current data is from 1999.

CASAS 2003

- The data appear to indicate that adult basic education programs serve a higher percentage of learners receiving public assistance compared to overall state averages. This is especially apparent in Oregon, Iowa, and Hawaii. In some states this may be the result of policies that require welfare recipients with low basic skills to participate in adult basic education programs as a condition of receiving welfare payments. Additional research is necessary.
- In Iowa, there is a concentrated cooperation among delivery systems. Adult basic education programs obtain learner referrals from the agencies that provide welfare services.

**7. What are the staffing patterns of adult basic education classes in community colleges and how do these patterns differ from other adult basic education providers and among states?**



**Table 16***Staffing Summary, 2001-02*

Function	<b>Adult Education Personnel</b>		
	Part-time Personnel	Full-time Personnel	Unpaid Volunteers
<b><u>States with a Community College Delivery System</u></b>			
<b>Oregon</b>			
State-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	5	4	0
Local-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	22	57	0
Local Teachers	474	149	1
Local Counselors	16	9	0
Local Paraprofessionals	206	82	1,636
<b>Iowa</b>			
State-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	0	4	0
Local-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	23	22	4
Local Teachers	474	17	144
Local Counselors	2	0	1
Local Paraprofessionals	29	8	279
<b><u>States with Other Providers or Both Delivery Systems</u></b>			
<b>California</b>			
State-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	1	34	0
Local-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	423	696	606
Local Teachers	8,318	5,111	551
Local Counselors	230	515	5
Local Paraprofessionals	1,575	1,225	1,058
<b>Hawaii</b>			
State-level Administrative/Supervisory/Ancillary Services	1	4	0
Local-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	15	51	0
Local Teachers	752	45	45
Local Counselors	2	0	0
Local Paraprofessionals	769	13	13
<b>Connecticut</b>			
State-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	0	15	0
Local-level Administrative/ Supervisory/Ancillary Services	227	107	0
Local Teachers	1,364	74	447
Local Counselors	96	13	0
Local Paraprofessionals	281	20	0

CASAS 2003

- Oregon and Iowa make extensive use of volunteer paraprofessionals. In Iowa, volunteer paraprofessionals are unpaid volunteers who assist the instructors and fall into the same classification as teacher aides in the K-12 program. In some cases, they may be advanced adult learners who assist the lower-level learners, and in other cases they may be

community volunteers. In Oregon, the volunteer paraprofessionals are TELT-trained<sup>4</sup> certified literacy tutors who may tutor one-on-one or as volunteers in basic skill classrooms.

- Future studies, based on data availability, would benefit by further analyzing adult basic education staffing patterns by the specific instructional programs.

**Table 17**

*Staffing – Instructor Ratios, 2001-02*

State	Local Teachers			Total	Ratio Part-time to Full-time (A/B)	Ratio Learner to Teacher (Total NRS Learners/D)
	Part-time	Full-time	Volunteers			
	A	B	C	D	E	F
California	8,318	5,111	511	13,940	1.6	37.8
Oregon	474	148.5	1	624	3.2	42.2
Iowa	474	17	144	635	27.9	30.5
Hawaii	752	45	45	842	16.7	13.1
Connecticut	1,364	74	447	1,885	18.4	17.2

CASAS 2003

- The ratio of full-time to part-time instructors varied significantly among the states participating in this study. Additional research into individual state policy is necessary to investigate these differences.
- Oregon and Iowa report higher learner-to-teacher ratios than Oregon and Iowa.
- Current data does not allow separate examination of California community colleges and other providers. Beginning with 2002-03 data, this analysis will be possible.

<sup>4</sup>TELT = Training Effective Literacy Tutors

**8. What are the some of the characteristics of California adult basic education classes in community colleges, and how do these compare to those offered by other provider types?**

**Table 18**

*California Classroom Characteristics, 2001-02*

Classroom Characteristic	Community Colleges % Of Students	Other Providers % Of Students*
Have Computer Access	45.1	51.1
If Access to Computers, Have Internet Access	90.9	70.8
Have Instructional Aide	31.4	30.9
Teacher Is Part Time	81.0	62.8
Class Size, 1-20	15.4	20.6
Class Size, 21-40	66.6	50.4
Class Size, 41+	18.0	29.0
Supplemental Learning Lab Access	63.4	46.4

\* For analytical purposes, learners enrolled in section 225 funded agencies are removed from this category.  
CASAS 2003

California classroom characteristics data were obtained from Classroom Questionnaire Surveys completed by instructors from April to June 2002. The results include data from 11,166 classes that represents 373,132 learners when matched with the CASAS WIA Title II California student-level database.

- Community college classes are more likely to consist of twenty-one to forty learners, be taught by part-time instructors, and have access to a supplemental learning lab.
- Learners in community college classes, who have access to computers, are more likely to also have Internet access.

### **PART III: SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

In summarizing the findings, it is important to note again certain qualifiers. The states used in this analysis are not a representative sample of all states and cannot be used to generalize the results to the national adult education delivery system. The five states included in this study are all members of the CASAS National Consortium Policy Council, and because of their consistent state policies for data collection and a common data dictionary, they were able to provide data in a cost-efficient manner appropriate for a comparative analysis. This analysis is designed to help inform a broader CAAL study of adult basic education within a community college delivery system.

The results reported in this study will contribute to an understanding of how community college delivery systems are functioning within the study states. Moreover, the study should be a valuable tool to help inform additional research directions.

The data indicate the following:

#### **CONCLUSION 1: AMONG THE STATES STUDIED, COMMUNITY COLLEGES ARE VIABLE PROVIDERS OF ADULT EDUCATION AND APPEAR TO DELIVER ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AT LEAST AS WELL AS OTHER PROVIDERS.**

- Persistence rates of community college providers, measured by the presence of paired test data, are relatively high. They suggest that community colleges do a good job of keeping learners in the program long enough to take a pre- and post-test.
- In California, where the direct comparison between adult basic education in community colleges and other providers is possible, overall completion rates are

higher among both ASE and ESL learners enrolled in community colleges and slightly lower among ABE learners enrolled in community colleges.

- All study states serve the full range of adult basic education learners. The differences among the states in the proportion of learners at each instructional level do not appear to be dependent on whether the state is served through a community college delivery system.

**CONCLUSION 2: AMONG THE STATES STUDIED, COMMUNITY COLLEGES APPEAR TO BE SERVING THOSE POPULATIONS IN NEED.**

- A comparatively high percentage of adult basic education learners is unemployed at the time of data collection.
- Ethnic minorities make up a very high proportion of learners, compared to the overall state population.
- A high proportion of learners receives public assistance, compared to the overall state population.
- The largest proportion of learners is between the ages of 25 and 44.
- A significant proportion of learners, especially in Oregon and Iowa, enter the programs functioning at the beginning or low intermediate levels.

**CONCLUSION 3: AMONG THOSE STATES STUDIED, COMMUNITY COLLEGES USE A VARIETY OF STAFFING PERSONNEL TO DELIVER ADULT BASIC EDUCATION, INCLUDING VOLUNTEERS.**

- Oregon makes extensive use of paraprofessionals.

- Iowa makes considerable use of paraprofessionals and volunteer local teachers.
- Additional research comparing staffing among different providers in California will be possible for future analyses.

**CONCLUSION 4: THERE IS A NEED FOR FOLLOW-UP STUDIES TO ANALYZE FURTHER THE STATE DELIVERY OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION BY COMMUNITY COLLEGES, STATE EDUCATION AGENCIES, WORKFORCE BOARDS, AND OTHER PROVIDERS.**

Specifically, future studies may focus on:

- The nationwide enrollment pattern of community colleges compared to other providers. Do economies of scale exist?
- The implications that adult basic education's small proportion of total community college service may have for setting program development priorities and allocating resources within the specific colleges.
- The differences among community college delivery systems. Future analyses may go beyond identifying a state as a unit that delivers adult basic education through community colleges and further categorize these states based on additional differences in delivery systems. Examples are the degree of autonomy at the local community college level, the parity of state funding to support college credit and non-credit adult basic education programs, the different types of providers that may be subcontracted to provide specific services, and the use of different enrollment systems such as managed enrollment.

- The differences in state funding of adult basic education programs among states and how these differences may relate to the quality and efficiency of delivery systems.
  - Type of funding – state, federal, local, or other sources.
  - Amount of funding – the proportion of federal, state, and local funding streams available to the local adult basic education programs. (Future research into the parity of funding should adjust real dollar amounts to account for differences in the cost to provide services among different geographic areas.)
  
- The reasons for differences among the student populations in the study states and whether these differences are consistent over time.
  - Additional research in Hawaii to investigate the high proportion of learners entering at ABE beginning literacy.
  - Additional research in California to determine the low proportion of learners entering at ESL beginning literacy.
  - Additional research in Hawaii and Connecticut to investigate the high proportion of total enrollment in ASE programs.
  
- Reasons for enrollment and learner outcomes in adult basic education programs administered through community colleges to determine if learners are more oriented toward postsecondary education goals compared to learners enrolled in other provider institutions.
  - Additional research into the goal-setting processes for the individual states would also be beneficial.
  - Additional research to determine if there is a difference, based on provider type, in the amount of counseling available to assist learners in pursuing their goals.
  - Additional research into the availability of extra counseling in community colleges and whether that counseling is available only

to credit students and not adult basic education learners enrolled in non-credit programs.

- Level completion rates.
  - Make more valid comparisons among states once Oregon's methodology becomes more consistent with the other states in the study.
  - Conduct research into the differences in completion rates among instruction levels in other study states.

Note that any future studies conducted across states, if focusing on level completion data, should verify that the methodology used to calculate these rates is consistent and comparable.

- Additional research into state policies that provide adult basic education programs to welfare recipients who lack basic skills or a high school diploma or equivalent. How do these policies differ among states and how have they changed in recent years?
- Analyses that further examine adult basic education staffing patterns.
  - By instructional program.
  - By provider type.
  - With regard to state policy, teacher credentialing requirements across states, and employee union agreements, analyses that determine how such factors affect the ratio of full-time to part-time instructors and the use of volunteers.
  - In relation to class size, on a nationwide basis, studies of how class size compares among provider types, and how performance relates to class size.



**Project Goals for CAAL's Community College Project**

*(as developed by the Project Task Force)*

Overall goal: To develop educational opportunities for adults through basic skills upgrading, further education, and English language programs that support their successful transition from the adult education and literacy system to postsecondary education, career opportunities, and fulfilling lives as family and community members – all essential components of lifelong learning in America.

Specifically:

1. To determine the nature and magnitude of contributions community colleges presently make to achieving this overall goal through their support of adult education and literacy service – both as providers of instructional service and as partners with other providers – as well as the role of institutional and public policies in shaping their contributions.
2. To determine how community colleges can enhance their contributions through strengthening linkages among instructional systems, enhancing support services, revising resource allocations, improving management and other means: (a) within their institutions, and (b) between those institutions and other components of the adult education, literacy, and related systems.
3. To demonstrate the benefits that accrue to colleges, other adult education providers, and the population in need of service when colleges are proactive partners in a comprehensive adult education and literacy system.
4. To raise the visibility of community college contributions to lifelong learning and educational transitions through support of adult education and literacy, and to promote appropriate actions by colleges, adult educators, policymakers, and others to strengthen those contributions.

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