

The California Adult Education 2007—08 Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Program: A Review



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Executive Summary

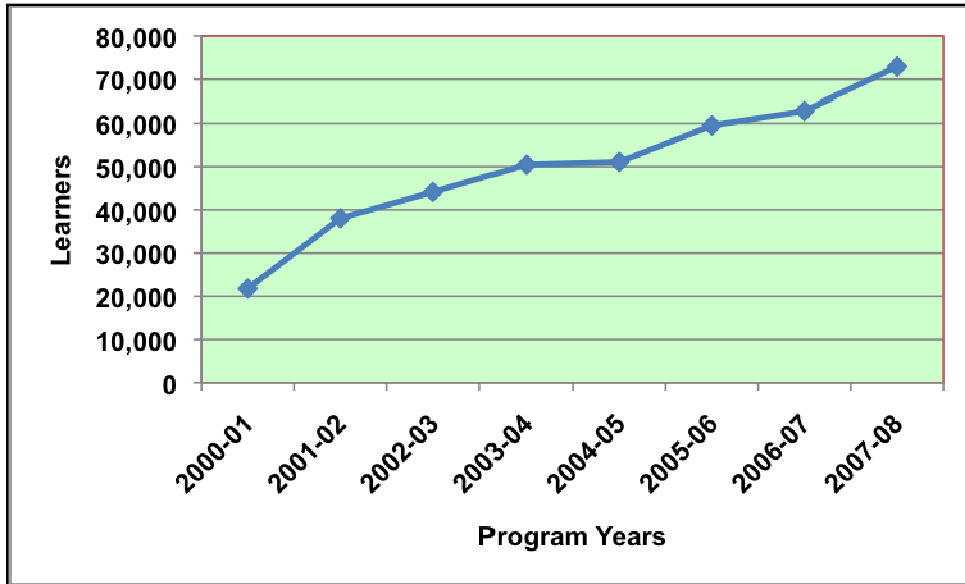
State legislation permits California adult schools to spend up to five percent of their apportionment on non-traditional educational approaches. The resulting “Innovation Programs” continue to grow while overall adult education remains relatively static. In program year 2007-08 over 72,000 adult learners participated in Innovation Programs, all of which were distance learning in nature.

This report draws information from the annual Innovation Program applications, the statewide student information system — TOPSpro, and from statewide CASAS reading and listening tests. The availability of these standardized data enables researchers to describe and examine distance learning program characteristics, learner characteristics, and learner progress and outcomes using several measures.

For the third year, the report is able to compare and contrast key outcome data between classroom, distance–learning–only, and blended learning. The importance of blended learning as an effective intervention whenever possible is clearly documented, which has major program implications at the state and national levels. When comparing classroom data with Innovation Programs data, it is clear that the blended learning programs that combine classroom and distance learning instruction are particularly successful in providing English as a second language (ESL) learning opportunities.

In California adult education, the distance learning blended model has a very specific description. It refers to adult schools with Innovation Programs that offer somewhat simultaneous classroom and distance learning courses in which students can dual enroll. The key considerations are that each course must have its own approved course outline, course number, assigned instructor, separate student roster, and distinctive and different full length course materials. The courses can share the same course outline (A22), meaning the courses cover the same designated competencies, but the course materials must be different, and each course has its own course number.

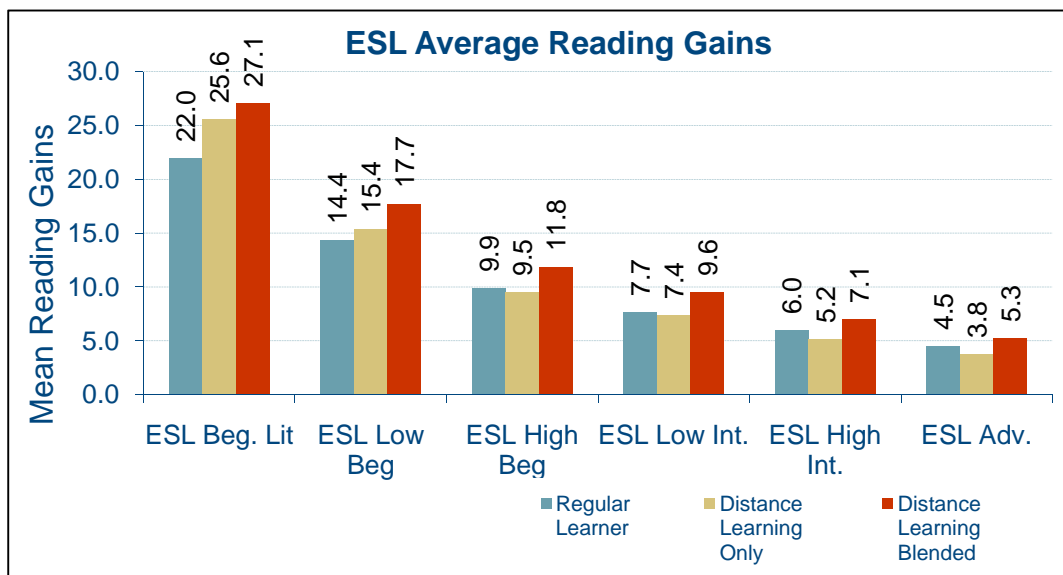
One hundred adult schools were approved to offer distance learning programs. Over 72,000 students participated. The following graphic charts the growth of distance learning in this decade. It shows steady growth in student participation.



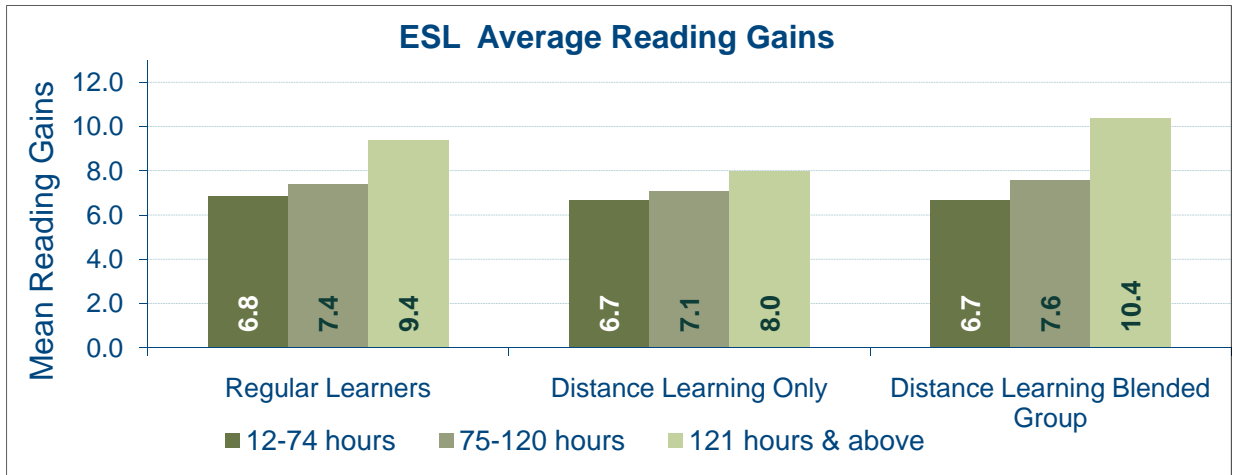
Source: CASAS 2008

ESL Distance Learning Effectiveness

The following two charts document the reading gain scores in 2007-08 by level of instruction for ESL, which is the predominant program area. The first describes relative ESL average reading gain scores, and the second describes reading gains by hours of instruction. Data in the first chart generally reflect the historical CASAS data trends where beginning learners with limited basic skills make the most gains and learners at higher proficiency levels begin to top out of basic skills and show more limited gains. Overall, distance learning interventions perform comparatively well for the ESL beginning literacy through the ESL low intermediate segments, while blended learning performs the best at all levels.



Source: CASAS 2008

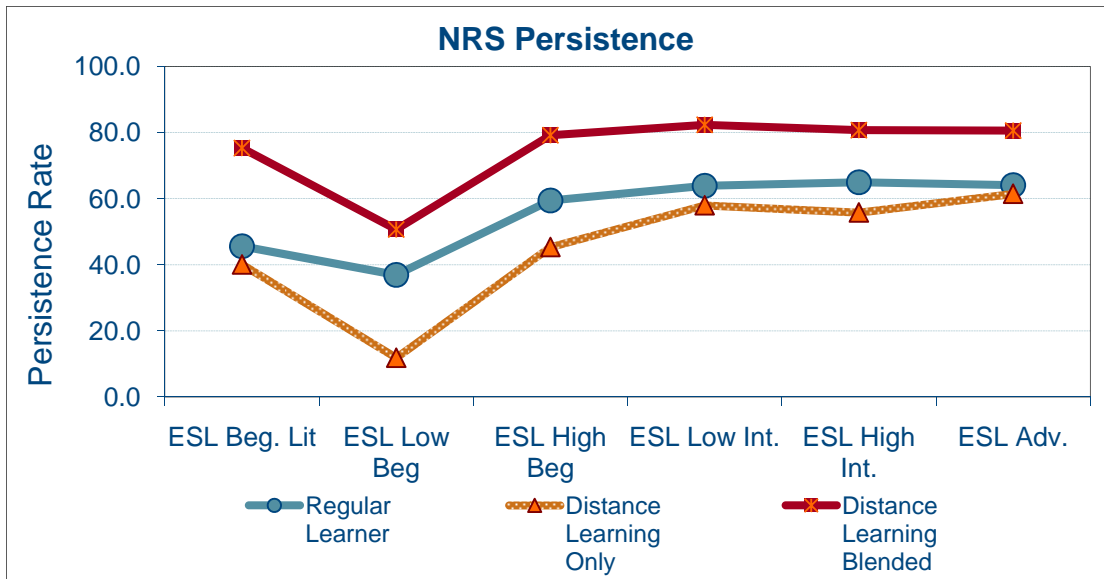


Source: CASAS 2008

The following chart compares the ESL reading gains for learners reported in the federal Workforce Investment Act Title II (WIA II) National Reporting System (NRS) in 2007-08. It indicates that blended learners perform the best and that the distance learning cohort as a group performed lower but somewhat comparable to regular learners.

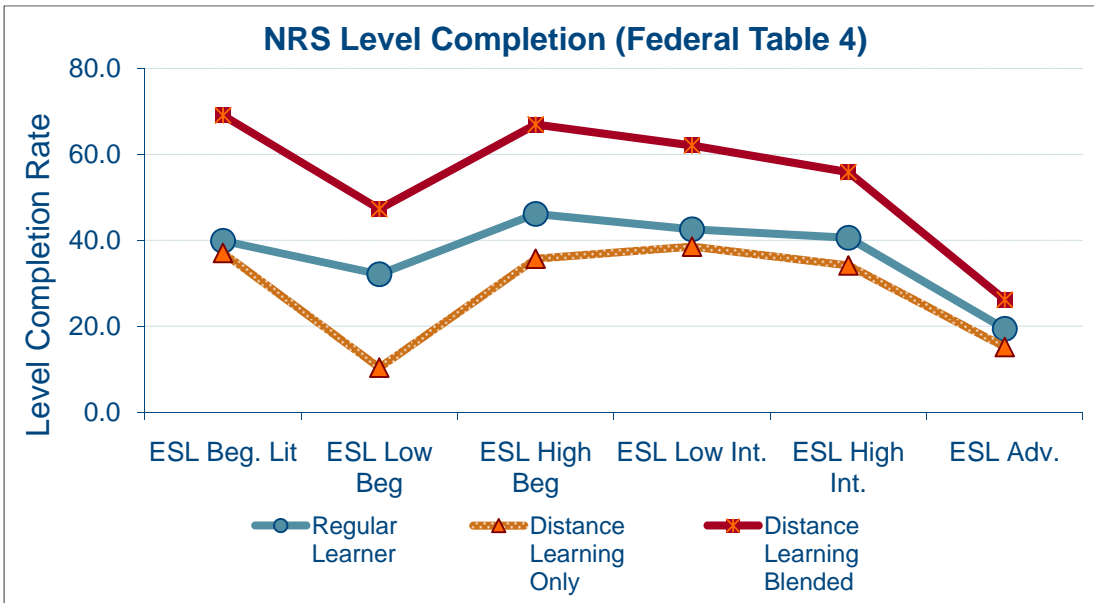
Learner Persistence and Completion Rates

Overall, Innovation Program persistence rates are higher than the classroom programs. However, distance learning-only programs showed the lowest levels of persistence. Persistence is defined as completing a paired CASAS pre- and post-test.



Source: CASAS 2008

The following chart shows that blended learning in most cases and most importantly, in ESL beginning through intermediate, has the highest completion rates. Completion means that a student has completed a NRS learning level (e.g. ESL low-beginning). The drop in completion rates at the ESL Advanced level is typical and represents a small percentage of learners.



Source: CASAS 2008

Reasons for Distance Learning

Distance learning provides significant and meaningful alternatives for adults for multiple reasons, including that adults may:

- Need more practice of skills to achieve mastery
- Have work and family obligations that make attending a regular class time difficult
- Lack the full confidence to participate in a large classroom setting in front of other students
- Want the participation, assistance, and support of their families in their learning
- Live in locations without convenient access to traditional classes
- Live in areas where desired programs are either full or not available
- Be interested in pursuing their education in work settings with co-workers
- Learn more effectively from video, audio, and web-based media when moving at their own pace
- Have other reasons that they cannot access traditional classroom programs.

It is important to remember that adults are voluntary learners. They participate to advance themselves in multiple ways. Distance learning adds another intervention option to assist them.

Program Year Statistics

Video and audio checkout programs were the most common delivery modalities followed by online instruction. Telecourses may serve the largest numbers per class, but only anecdotal data are available on overall numbers.

English as a second language instructional programs represent the bulk of the Innovation Program enrollments (85.02%) in 2007-08. Los Angeles County adult schools dominate the enrollment statistics (69.2%) and the outcomes data. Women represent almost two thirds (64.8%) of the basic education participants in the Innovation Programs. The core basic education programs are English as a second language (ESL), adult basic education, and GED/adult secondary education (ASE).

In 2007-08, age group participation was balanced between the 21–30 (26.7%) and the 31-40 (26.9%) age groups. Hispanics accounted for 70.7 percent of the enrollments with Asians representing 17 percent. Spanish was the primary language spoken by 70.7 percent of the student population.

Over 46 percent of the Innovation Program participants reported having nine or less years of schooling. Over half (54.3%) of the 2007-08 participants reported having no earned degrees with 27.3 percent having high school diplomas or GEDs. Over 25 percent of the ESL learners were at the beginning or beginning literacy levels at the time of entry and 53 percent were determined to be at the intermediate levels.

Over 83 percent of all the learners reported that improving basic skills or their English skills were their primary reasons for enrolling in 2007-08. Improving their English skills accounted for 67.5 percent and improving basic skills was 16 percent.

Conclusions

The Innovation Program participants' level of program completion was better than adult school classroom programs with blended learning showing the highest completion rate. Overall Innovation Program persistence rates are higher than the classroom programs. However, distance learning–only programs showed the lowest levels of persistence. Persistence is defined as completing a paired CASAS pre- and post-test.

Tested learners in the Innovation Programs' ESL/ESL-Citizenship programs showed higher mean reading gains for the <180, 181-200, and 210-220 CASAS scoring ranges than the CASAS historical norm. Their comparative listening score mean gains also are greater than the historical norms.

The Innovation Programs follow the same accountability requirements as class-based apportionment programs. Over the past seven years the Innovation Programs have been successful in standardizing their reporting procedures, while still maintaining alternative instructional delivery methods. All Innovation Program students are expected to be tracked in the TOPSpro system, and all programs are using a standardized format for both program applications and annual evaluation. This format makes gathering of data and program monitoring more substantive and meaningful.

CASAS pre- and post- reading and listening testing are not required for state programs, only those that participate in the Workforce Investment Act Title II (WIA II) programs. However, it has been strongly encouraged. Pre- and post-testing are more difficult than in traditional settings. The tests are not standardized for programs other than ESL, ABE and GED/ASE. In the past, the Innovation Program coordinators have noted that they collect more program documentation and learner progress information than do the classroom programs.

The Innovation Programs continue to meet the three crucial benefit–cost criteria often used to evaluate the utility of a program intervention. They are:

1. **Effectiveness** — CASAS pre- and post-test data indicate that the Innovation Programs' ESL program participants, on average, show substantial learning increases in reading and listening. Much of this is attributed to the results of the blended learning model. The ABE/ASE participants show learning gains consistent with historical CASAS testing data.
2. **Efficiency** — Participant and program cost data indicate that the Innovation Programs are cost effective. Common sense tells us that the programs would not be offered if they were not cost effective.
3. **Equity** — Reported years in school, primary language, reading and listening scores on entry, and ethnic data indicate that lower level, often hard-to-serve learners are the primary participants in the Innovation Programs.

These rich data provide the most detailed comparative examination of adult basic education learning interventions that are available in the United States. They result from a statewide data system, standardized testing and assessment, and the foresight of California legislators to permit school districts to use distance learning as an instructional intervention.

This is the seventh year that similar summary conclusions have been reached. A closer look at comparative classroom, blended learning, and distance-learning-only data follows in the full report.

The California Adult Education 2007 — 2008 Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Program

This report is the ninth in a series of research papers on the California Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Program.ⁱ The purpose is to provide current information on the implementation of California Education Code (EC) 52522, provide an overview of the adult education Innovation Program initiative, and provide comparative information on adult education distance learning in California.

The report draws data from three sources as follows:^{ii iii}

- 2007-08 Innovation Program applications
- 2007-08 Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro) Entry and Update records
- 2007-08 CASAS reading and listening pre and post tests

These data sets provide a detailed examination of adult school distance learning programs in California.

The Legislation

In 1993 the California legislature passed EC 52522 permitting the Superintendent of Public Instruction to approve adult school plans to spend up to five percent (5%) of their block entitlement on innovation and alternative instructional delivery. This authorization and the subsequent initiative are titled Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Programs, commonly known as the Innovation Program initiative.

Types of innovative programs identified in the legislation follow.^{iv}

1. Worksite adult basic education skills instruction
2. Distance learning using video and other communication technologies
3. Home-based and community-based independent study approaches using instructional technologies
4. Tests of alternative reimbursement approaches other than average daily attendance to determine whether they are reasonable and feasible, to the extent that there is no decrease in the number of students served nor an increase in cost to the state

Any adult school wishing to request authorization for the innovative programming submits an annual application to the California Department of Education. The application form is available on the CDE Adult Education Office Web site — <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae/ga/> — under Governance and Accountability. Authorized programs are required to submit an annual report outlining budget information, student activities, learners served, accomplishments, the alternative instructional delivery design, average daily attendance (ADA) accounting procedures, and how the program is evaluated and continuously improved.

Current Uses

The Innovation Program initiative began in earnest in 1995. Almost all the approved innovative programs have fallen under the California adult education definition of distance learning. Early guidelines identified the following operational definition of distance learning wherein several key requirements should be met.

They are:

- The separation of teacher and learner in space and/or time during at least a majority of each instructional process
- The provision of two-way communication between teacher, tutor, or educational agency and learner
- The use of educational media and technology to unite teacher and learner and carry course content
- The control of the learning pace and frequency by student rather than the distance instructor^v

There is a continued stress on the importance of the two-way communication. While some people equate distance education with impersonal self-directed learning, California adult education emphasizes the role of the instructor in providing the learning intervention. In fact, feedback and comments from the field indicate that the relationship between the teacher and the learner that occurs in distance learning is often rated as more responsive and personal than in traditional classes.

One Hundred Participating Adult Schools

The statewide Innovation Program has reached extensive acceptance by the adult education field. In program year 2007-08, 100 adult schools were approved to operate Innovation Programs.

Feedback from the field indicates that an Innovation Program for small adult schools is too time consuming, particularly if the purchase of specialized equipment or materials is necessary. The smaller adult schools have little incentive to participate, which is unfortunate, because the opportunity to offer non-traditional learning opportunities could help address problems of distance, limited curricula, and oversight, which are challenges often faced by these small or more isolated programs. This problem requires finding new approaches, further research, varied technology, and/or more flexible policy to allow cost-effective services to these small programs.

Current Participation

Table 1-A describes the distribution of current distance learners in program year 2007-08. According to TOPSpro data collected by CASAS, 72,900 learners participated in Innovation Programs in program year 2007-08. This represents an increase of 8.6 percent from the previous year.

Table 1-A

Innovation Program Participation in 2007-08

Program	N	%
ABE	1,036	1.4%
ESL	61,978	85.0%
HS/GED	4,045	5.6%
Citizenship	94	0.1%
Career Tech Ed. (CTE)	1,252	1.7%
Adults w/Disabilities	108	0.2%
Health & Safety	298	0.4%
Home Economics	62	0.1%
Parent Ed.	3,826	5.3%
Older Adults	201	0.3%
Total	72,900	100.0%
<i>Unduplicated</i>	70,301	

Source: CASAS 2008

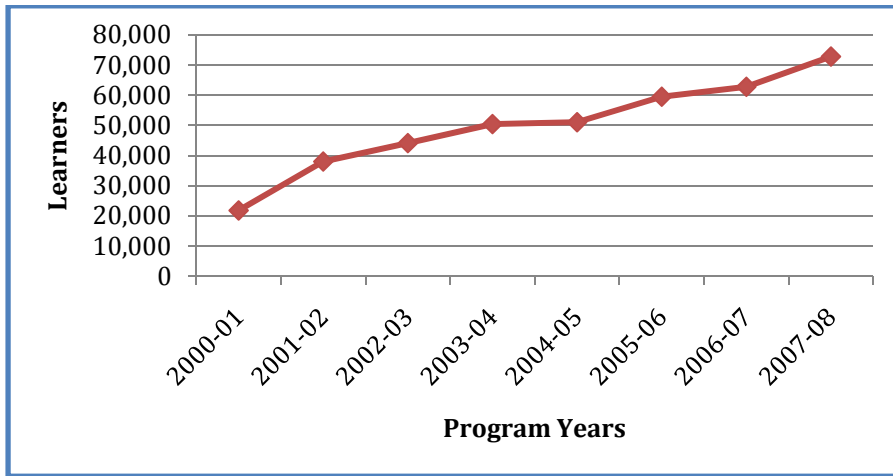
Changes in Participation Since 2000

Chart 1 displays the growth in the Innovation Programs since standardized data have been available. In the earlier days, some Innovation Programs did not document their “distance learning” participation, so there may be a slight undercount in programs year 2000-01.

The graphic shows a steady growth in Innovation Program participation though overall adult school apportionment has remained reasonably stable for this time period. The explanations for this steady increase is the rise in participating adult schools and more adult schools seeking waivers to allow them to operate at seven percent of their apportionment, especially Los Angeles Unified.

Chart 1

Participation in Innovation Programs from 2000 to 2008



Source: CASAS 2008

The changes in program participation from 2001 to 2007-08 are displayed in Table 1-B. Citizenship, Adults with Disabilities, Health and Safety, Home Economics, and Older Adults programs had the lowest enrollment rates and have experienced only modest fluctuations in enrollments since 2000-01. However in comparing the overall enrollments from 2000-01 across all programs to 2007-08, there was an overall increase of 234.6 percent – ABE (188.6%), ESL (212.5%), Career Technical Education (244.0%), High School/GED Prep (554.5%), and Parent Education (965.7%) had year to year increases and had the greatest increases in distance learning enrollments since 2000-01.

Table 1-B
Participation in Program Areas 2000 to 2008

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>N</u>
ABE	359	486	335	398	526	750	722	1,036
ESL	19,835	35,468	40,581	46,621	47,140	53,766	55,905	61,978
HS/GED	618	714	753	1,152	1,039	1,885	2,221	4,045
Citizenship	34	19	183	95	111	130	89	94
Career Tech Ed.	364	456	622	592	693	714	923	1,252
Adults w/Disabilities	66	96	34	163	33	72	48	108
Health & Safety	1	55	27	74	108	53	96	298
Home Economics	1	24	55	82	73	44	45	62
Parent Ed.	359	589	1,414	1,113	1,116	1,921	2,614	3,826
Older Adults	152	127	145	175	250	210	199	201
Total	21,789	38,034	44,149	50,465	51,089	59,545	62,862	72,900
<i>Unduplicated count</i>						57,629	60,794	70,301

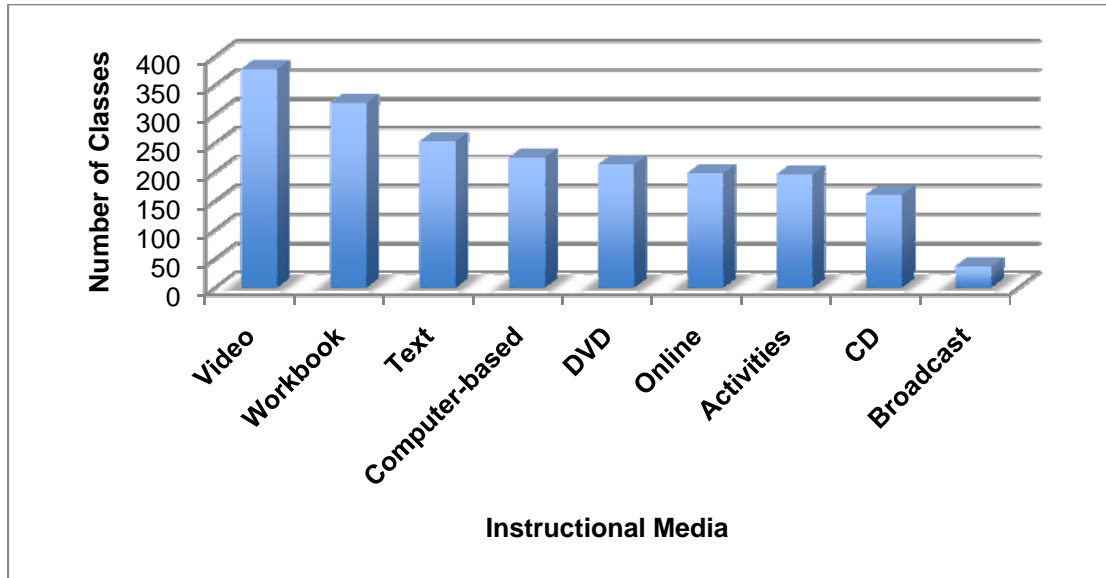
Source: CASAS 2008

Distribution by Instructional Media Delivery Type

Chart 2 summarizes the most popular instructional media types proposed for FY 2007-08. These numbers reflect multiple classes offered at some adult schools. Video/DVD checkout remains by far the most popular media used in Innovation Programs.

Chart 2

The Most Popular Instructional Delivery Modes Used in the Innovation Program Courses in FY 2007-08



Source: 2007-08 Applications

The video and audio media are normally provided on a checkout basis with workbooks, study packets, work assignments, or activities included. Since video checkout usually is combined with one or more other delivery methods, it makes determining the statewide percentages of the delivery modes difficult.

The checkout model is flexible and easy to manage. The availability of pre-produced and school-site-produced videos continue to make checkout a popular model. Multiple delivery methods can be used for any approved course.

The “Other” category encompasses a wide range of activities including “software to develop English and life skills,” community activities, group discussions, DVDs, “learning events,” and career plans and practice interviews.

Class Distribution by Instructional Areas

Innovation Programs are permitted to offer multiple classes. It is not unusual for an adult school to offer several levels of English as a Second language (ESL), an adult basic education course (ABE) as well as a parent education course. Table 2 describes the fiscal year 2007-08 distribution for the 10 areas of authorized instruction.^{vi}

ESL is the predominant instructional course offered (2,609). Those courses represent 77.9 percent of the total courses offered. GED/ASE (10.6%) and career education (6.3%) are the next most popular. There is a substantial decrease in the parent education courses offered from the two years previously (27% to 4.6%) – however, the enrollment was up from prior year).

The CDE Adult Education Office modified the course coding system effective in the 2005–06 fiscal year that slightly changes the authorized areas of program instruction.

Table 2

Distribution of Innovation Program Classes by Instructional Area (FY 2007-08)

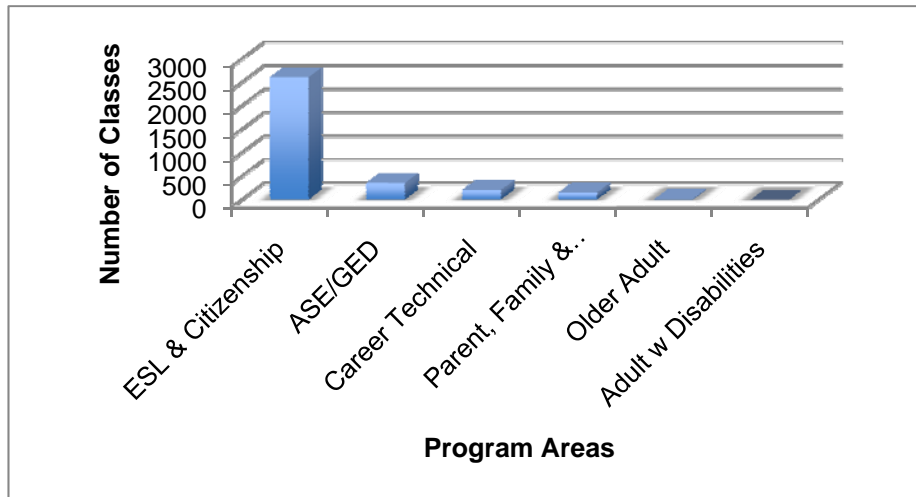
Program Areas	Number of Classes	Percent
ASE/GED	356	10.6%
ESL	2609	77.9%
Adults with Disabilities	2	0.1%
Career Technical Education	211	6.3%
Parent, Family & Consumer	154	4.6%
Older Adults	17	0.5%
	3349	100%

Source: 2007–08 Applications

These data are based on approved courses and classes, not necessarily those actually offered. Chart 3 provides the rank order and numbers of courses proposed for each program area. ESL offerings continue to predominate.

Chart 3

Rank Order Distribution of Innovation Program Classes by Instructional Area (FY 2007–08)



Source: 2007–08 Applications

Most of the adult high school subjects (adult secondary education – ASE) are in fact, GED test preparation. Few high school subjects are offered via the Innovation Program initiative. The Independent Study option often is considered more useful for high school subjects because it is not capped at five percent, although other rules apply to this delivery method.

Estimated Cost per Learner

There is a very wide range of local averages for cost per learner per course. Innovation Program applications show the estimated average cost per learner ranging from \$0 to \$3,055. End of the year program evaluation reports indicate that the average distance learning cost per student was \$393. The median was \$259. They are not new funds, but rather a portion of each adult school’s state apportionment.

Student – Teacher Contact

Learners and teachers are expected to maintain contact throughout each distance learning class. This contact can include student orientation, assessment, demonstrating student progress, tutoring, progress monitoring, advising, and explaining new assignments. The distribution among the primary methods of student-teacher interactions follows.

The data in Table 3 represent the primary methods of contact. Note that many programs offer multiple ways for student contact.

Table 3

Distribution of Offered Contact

General type of contact offered	Number of classes
Face-to-face	3,322
Teacher initiated (not face-to-face)	3,168
Student initiated (not face-to-face)	2,288

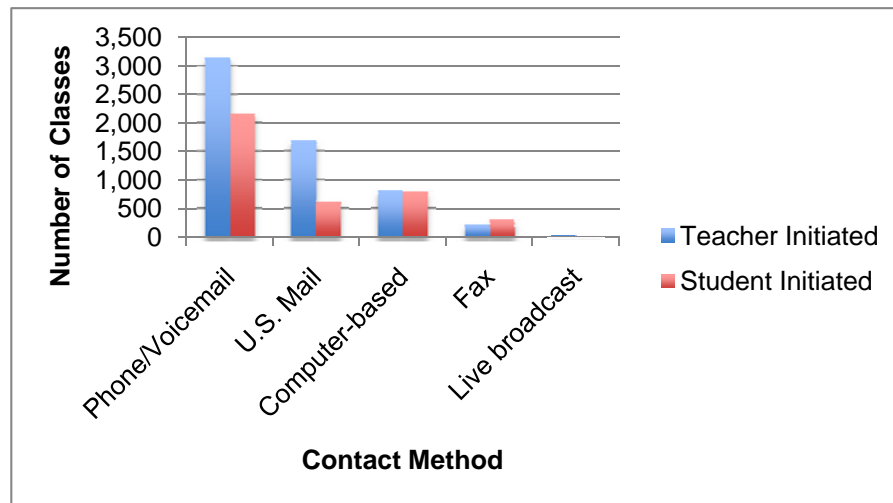
Source: 2007–08 Applications

Remote Contact

The distribution of the remote teacher initiated contacts is set forth in Chart 4. Phone and voice mail contacts account for 49 percent of these proposed methods of contact.

Chart 4

Distribution of Remote Contacts by Class (FY 2007–08)



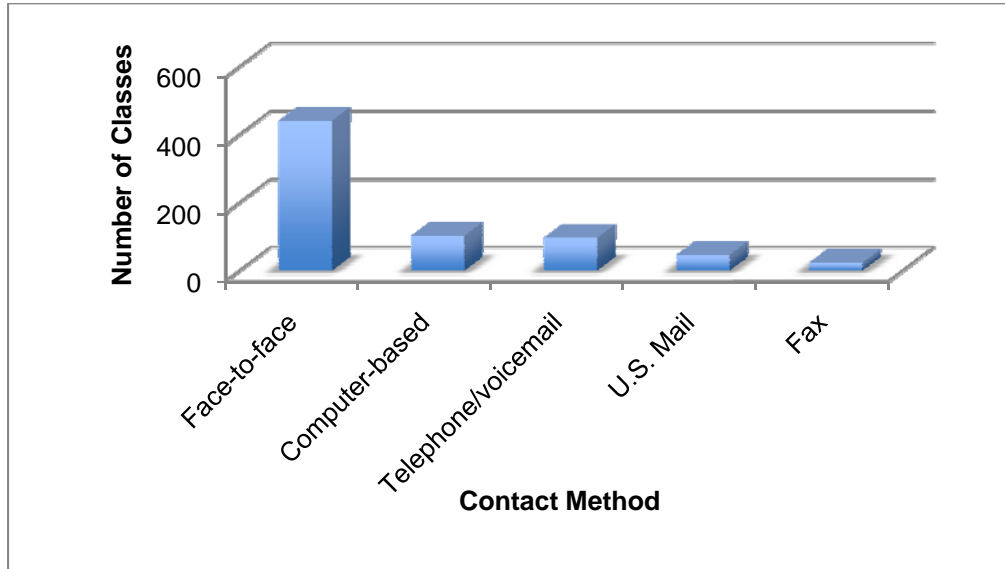
Source: 2007–08 Applications

Student Initiated Contacts

It is expected that all students receive a solid orientation to distance learning as well as their learning options before starting a class. Face-to-face orientation on the distance learning courses was by far the most prevalent approach used to place learners into the appropriate courses. Current data in Chart 5 show that in 72 percent of the offered classes the orientations were offered face-to-face and while the orientation was offered via phone and voicemail and via email in slightly over 13 percent of the classes.

Chart 5

Distribution of Remote Student Initiated Contacts (FY 2007–08)



Source: 2007-08 Applications

Monitoring Student Progress

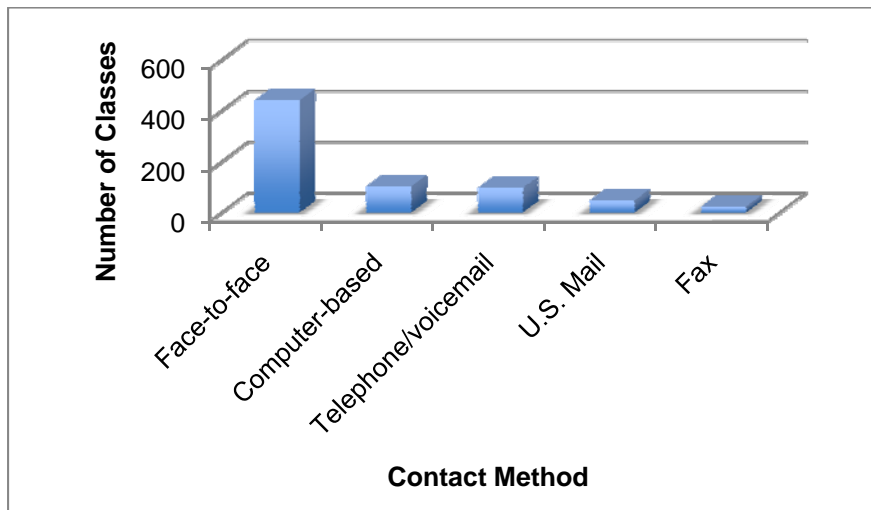
Three key events are identified in measuring student progress — the placement into a course, the initial orientation, the pre- post-testing, and the TOPSpro data entry. The following three charts (Chart 6-Chart 8) document how the contact occurs for each event.

Student Placement

Face-to-face communications between the student and teacher for the distance learning classes was the most common placement approach (Chart 6). Computer based and email were the next most common approaches used in placing learners into the proper course.

Chart 6

Learner Orientation by Course (FY 2007–08)



Source: 2007–08 Applications

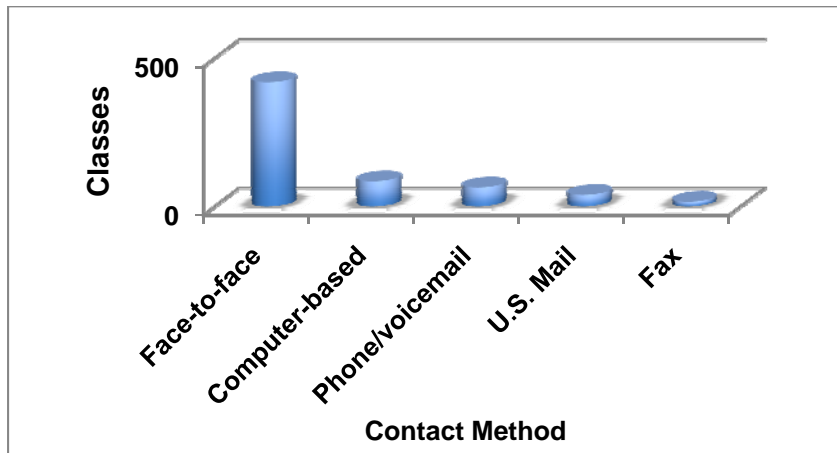
Matched pair pre- and post-testing, especially post-testing, is difficult in distance learning programs. This is especially true for the enrollees in the distance-learning-only model. The optimal approach is a proctored face-to-face setting. However, this cannot always occur. Currently, other options such as secure Web sites and computer test facilities do not exist. Test security issues also complicate this area. This is an area that needs research and development.

For learner placement, the offered methods of communication are about the same as for the student placement with mail and computer-based testing being slightly greater (Chart 7). The comparative use of the computer increased and phone and U.S. mail slightly declined from the previous program year.

There are no data on which options were in fact used by the Innovation Programs, only on those offered.

Chart 7

Learner Placement (FY 2007–08)

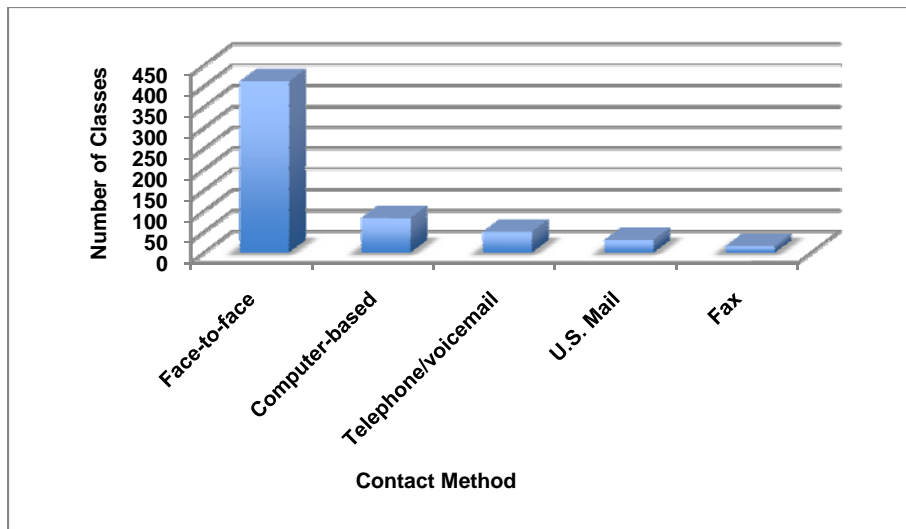


Source: 2007-08 Applications

Face-to-face data collection is offered in 69.7 percent of the courses. Innovation Programs use the Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro) Entry and Update records (Chart 8). All adult schools are required to utilize these data elements as part of their apportionment related reporting.

Chart 8

Approaches to TOPSpro Data Entry Data Collection by Course (FY 2007-08)



Source: 2007–08 Application

Accountability

All adult schools are required to utilize the Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro) Entry and Update records for their student participation reporting. As displayed in Table 4, this also applies to the Innovation Programs. Other program outcomes are included in the annual performance reporting submitted by the Innovation Programs to the Department of Education’s Adult Education Office. This interactive report form is available to the Innovation Program administrators via the Internet at <http://adulthood.otan.us>.

2007–08 Learner Statistics

The following tables are drawn from TOPSpro data collected by CASAS for fiscal year 2007–08. They are based on programs that identify their learners as participating in distance learning programs, and, consequently, are a very good approximation of the statewide Innovation Programs’ learning populations. The data are based on unduplicated counts.

Participation by Instructional Program

Eighty-five percent of the learners recorded via TOPSpro participated in ESL programs. The adult secondary education/GED programs represent a distant second at 5.5 percent followed by the parent education programs (5.2%).

Table 4

Students Participating in Innovation Programs by Instructional Program (FY 2007–08)

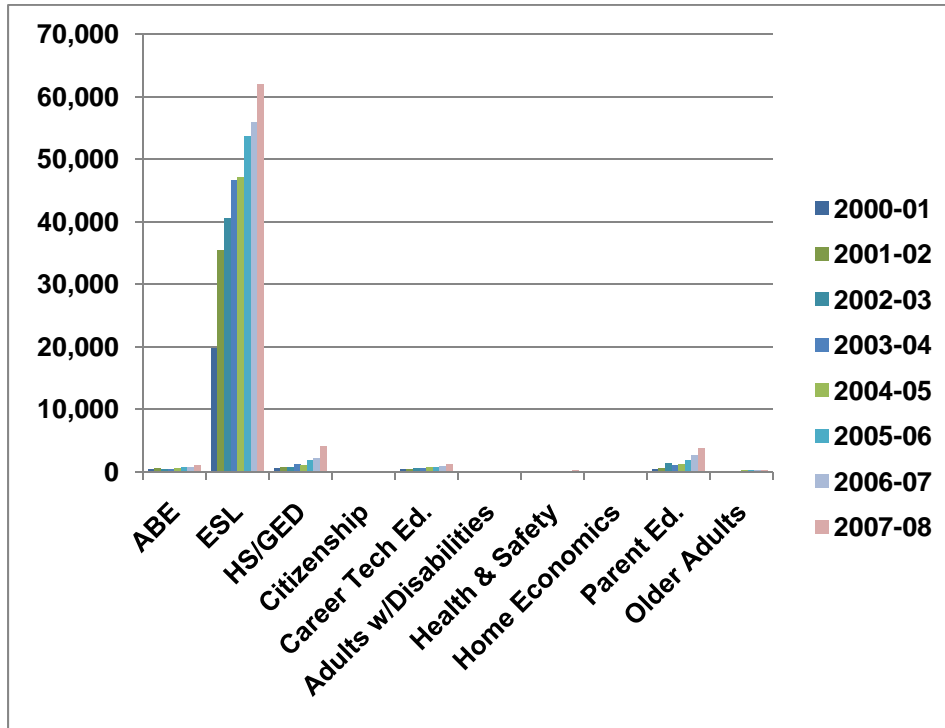
Program	N	%
ABE	1,036	1.4%
ESL	61,978	85.0%
HS/GED	4,045	5.5%
Citizenship	94	0.1%
Career Tech Ed.	1,252	1.7%
Adults w/Disabilities	108	0.1%
Health & Safety	298	0.4%
Home Economics	62	0.1%
Parent Ed.	3,826	5.2%
Older Adults	201	0.3%
	72,900	100.0%

Source: CASAS 2008

The percentage of participation over the last six program years is remarkably similar with over 85 percent of the learners participating in ESL. Overall there has been a steady increase in Innovation Program participation from inception with an increase of 10,038 learners from 2006-07 to 2007-08.

Chart 9

Comparison of Annual Population Participating in Innovation Programs by Instructional Program Fiscal Years 2000–01 through 2007–08



Sources: CASAS 2008 and previous

Enrollment by Geographic Region

The distribution of Innovation Programs by region remains very uneven — see Table 5. Los Angeles County and the Los Angeles Unified School District, in particular, dominate the enrollment statistics with 69.2 percent of the participants residing in Los Angeles County.

Table 5

Innovation Programs Enrollment Distribution by Region, FY 2007–08

CDE Geographic Region	N	%
Bay Region	6,447	8.8
Capitol Region	4,692	6.4
Central Valley Region	837	1.1
Costa del Sur Region	1,994	2.7
Delta Sierra Region	3	0.0
Los Angeles Region	50,451	69.2
North Coast Region	1,078	1.5
Northeastern Region	118	0.2
Rims Region	897	1.2
South Bay Region	3,599	4.9
Southern Region	2,784	3.8
Total	72,900	100%

Source: CASAS 2008

Distribution by Gender and Program

Table 6 shows that women participated in far greater numbers than men (64.8 % to 35.2%). The preponderance of women was even greater in career and technical education (72%), parent education (68%), and older adult programs (78%). The overall averages are about the same as the previous year with a very slight decrease in women’s participation (0.6%).

Table 6

Gender of Students Enrolled in Innovation Programs by Instructional Program, FY 2007-08^{vii}

Program	Female %	Male %	Total
ABE	65.4	34.6	1,036
HS/GED	60.4	39.6	4,044
ESL	64.7	35.3	61,951
Citizenship	79.8	20.2	94
Career Tech Ed.	72.3	27.7	1,251
Adult w/ Disabilities	59.3	40.7	108
Health & Safety	67.4	32.6	273
Home Economics	90.3	9.7	62
Parent Ed.	68.0	32.0	3,821
Older Adults	78.1	21.9	201
Total	64.8	35.2	72,841

Source: CASAS 2008

Participation by Age Group

In Table 7, participation by age groups show the 21-30 and 31-40 year old age groups being the largest cohort with about the same percentage (26.7% and 26.9%). The third largest cohort was the 41-50 year olds at 19.0 percent. Fifteen percent (14.5%) of the participant were 51 years old or older. Among the ESL learner, the 21-30 and 31-40 age cohorts, were the same (27.7%)

Table 7

Learner Age Enrolment in Innovation Programs by Instructional Program, FY 2007-08

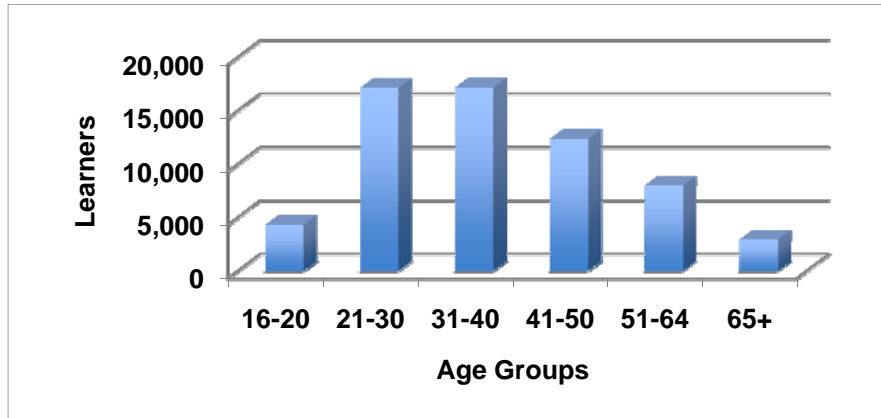
Age	ABE		ESL		Citizenship		HS/GED	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-20	201	19.5	4,327	7.0			1,327	33.3
21-30	303	29.4	17,135	27.7	5	5.3	1,054	26.5
31-40	267	25.9	17,164	27.7	16	17.0	836	21.0
41-50	155	15.0	12,358	20.0	39	41.5	518	13.0
51-64	84	8.2	7,997	12.9	26	27.7	212	5.3
65+	20	1.9	2,937	4.7	8	8.5	36	0.9
Total	1,030	100.0	61,918	100.0	94	100.0	3,983	100.0
Age	CTE		Adults w/ Disabilities		Health & Safety		Home Economics	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16-20	80	6.4	2	1.9	1	0.5		
21-30	262	20.9	38	35.5	10	5.3	3	4.9
31-40	341	27.2	34	31.8	18	9.5	17	27.9
41-50	326	26.0	22	20.6	25	13.2	17	27.9
51-64	214	17.1	9	8.4	75	39.7	14	23.0
65+	29	2.3	2	1.9	60	31.7	10	16.4
Total	1,252	100.0	107	100.0	189	100.0	61	100.0
Age	Parent Ed.		Older Adults		Total			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
16-20	1,915	53.2		0.0	7,853	10.8		
21-30	535	14.9	9	4.7	19,354	26.7		
31-40	792	22.0	11	5.7	19,496	26.9		
41-50	256	7.1	24	12.4	13,740	19.0		
51-64	75	2.1	54	28.0	8,760	12.1		
65+	28	0.8	95	49.2	3,225	4.5		
Total	3,601	100.0	193	100.0	72,428	100.0		

Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 10 provides a graphical picture of the age distributions for the ESL students. The 31-40 age cohort is the largest (19,496) closely followed by the 21-30 cohort (19,354).

Chart 10

ESL Learner Age in Innovation Programs – FY 2007-08

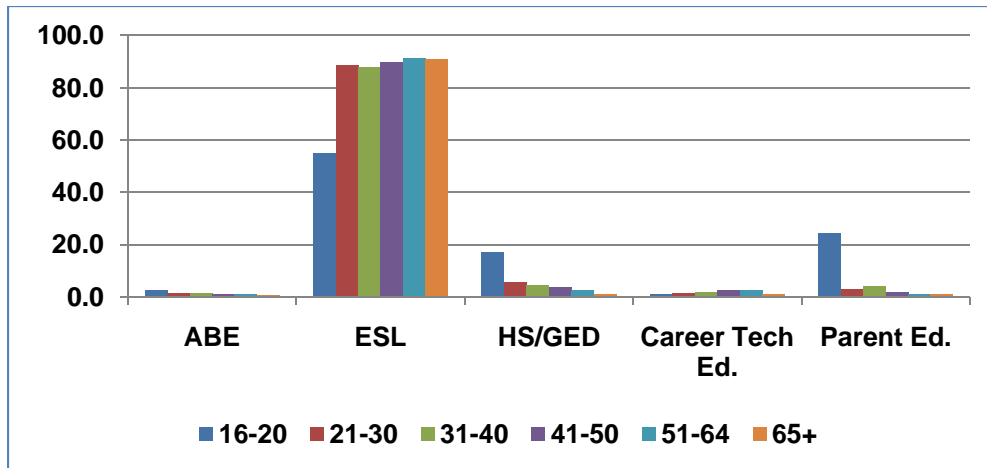


Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 11 provides a graphical picture of the distance programs where each age group cohort enrolled. Enrollments in ESL were at or near 90 percent across all age cohorts except those in the cohort 16-20 years of age. In that age cohort, the percent ESL enrollment of the cohort was 55 percent, followed by Parent Education at 24 percent, and High School/GED Preparation at 17 percent.

Chart 11

Innovation Programs Where Six Different Age Cohorts Enrolled – FY 2007-08



Source: CASAS 2008

Ethnicity by Instructional Program

Table 8 shows that Hispanics comprise 70.7 percent of the distance learning participants. This is a very slight increase from the previous year (70.4%). Asians made up 17 percent, which also is a slight decrease increase from the previous year (17.6%). White non-Hispanics represented 6.3 percent of the participants while Native American and Native Alaskan learners made up 2.7 percent of the participants. Hispanics dominated (more than 50%) in ABE, ESL, Citizenship, ASE/GED, career technical education and parent education while white learners had the largest enrollments in Adults with Disabilities and Older Adults Programs.

The absence of Black (non-Hispanic) learners participating in the Innovation Program (1.9%) continues to be striking and disappointing. The Black learner participation percentage is about same as the previous programs years.

Table 8
Innovation Programs' Learner Ethnicity by Instructional Program – FY 2007-08

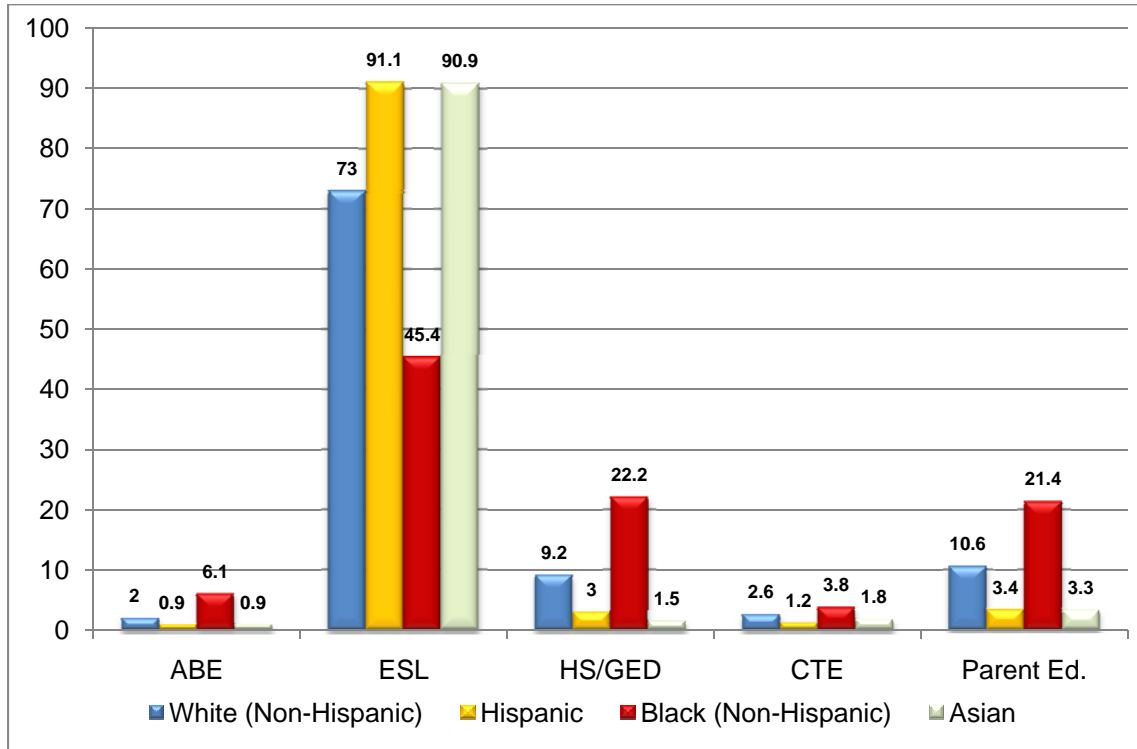
	ABE		ESL		Citizenship		HS/GED	
Ethnicity	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
White (Non-Hispanic)	105	10.2	3,042	4.9	8	8.6	673	16.7
Hispanic	651	63.0	44,381	72.1	65	69.9	2,504	62.3
Black (Non-Hispanic)	87	8.4	488	0.8		0.0	443	11.0
Asian	126	12.2	11,684	19.0	16	17.2	201	5.0
Pacific Islander	5	0.5	82	0.1	1	1.1	36	0.9
Filipino	19	1.8	174	0.3	1	1.1	80	2.0
Native American	40	3.9	1,720	2.8	1	1.1	81	2.0
Native Alaskan		0.0	25	0.0	1	1.1	1	0.0
Total	1,033	100.0	61,596	100.0	93	100.0	4,019	100.0
	CTE		Adults with Disabilities		Health & Safety		Home Economics	
Ethnicity	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
White (Non-Hispanic)	144	11.6	11	10.3	62	38.5	6	9.7
Hispanic	681	54.7	68	63.6	32	19.9	41	66.1
Black (Non-Hispanic)	108	8.7	12	11.2	1	0.6	1	1.6
Asian	215	17.3	13	12.1	65	40.4	14	22.6
Pacific Islander	18	1.4	2	1.9		0.0		0.0
Filipino	54	4.3	1	0.9	1	0.6		0.0
Native American	24	1.9		0.0		0.0		0.0
Native Alaskan	2	0.2		0.0		0.0		0.0
Total	1,246	100.0	107	100.0	161	100.0	62	100.0
	Parent Education		Older Adults		Total			
Ethnicity	N	%	N	%	N	%		
White (Non-Hispanic)	437	11.5	59	30.6	4,547	6.3		
Hispanic	2,626	69.3	34	17.6	51,083	70.7		
Black (Non-Hispanic)	241	6.4	7	3.6	1,388	1.9		
Asian	314	8.3	89	46.1	12,737	17.6		
Pacific Islander	7	0.2		0.0	151	0.2		
Filipino	81	2.1		0.0	411	0.6		
Native American	84	2.2	3	1.6	1,953	2.7		
Native Alaskan		0.0	1	0.5	30	0.0		
Total	3,790	100.0	193	100.0	72,300	100.0		

Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 12 shows in each of the five predominant distance learning programs where each of the four major ethnic groups participated. The five programs accounted for 97 percent to 99 percent of each ethnic cohort enrollment in distance learning. ESL drew the majority of each ethnic cohort except for Blacks where a plurality of 45.4 percent participated followed by their enrollment in High School/GED Preparation (22.2%), Parent Education (21.4%), ABE (6.1%), and Career Tech Education (3.8%).

Chart 12

Predominant Programs Where Each of Four Major Ethnic Cohorts Enrolled



Source: CASAS 2008

Innovation Program Participants' Primary Language

The large number of primary languages spoken by Innovation Programs participants is a clear indicator of participant diversity. More than 71 percent (71.7%) of the participants reported speaking Spanish as their primary language. Chinese is a distant second at 8.1 percent, followed by English (6.2%) and Korean (2.5%).

Table 9

The Primary Language Spoken by Innovation Programs' Participants by Instructional Program, FY 2007–08

Primary Language	ABE		ESL		Citizenship		HS/GED	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	295	29.0	233	0.4	1	1.1	1,915	48.1
Spanish	552	54.3	45,457	75.9	66	71.0	1,778	44.7
Vietnamese	6	0.6	1,349	2.3	1	1.1	18	0.5
Chinese	27	2.7	5,268	8.8	12	12.9	55	1.4
Hmong	9	0.9	187	0.3		0.0	15	0.4
Cambodian	5	0.5	232	0.4	1	1.1	9	0.2
Tagalog	15	1.5	175	0.3	1	1.1	36	0.9
Korean	15	1.5	1,689	2.8		0.0	10	0.3
Lao	1	0.1	43	0.1		0.0	5	0.1
Russian	9	0.9	916	1.5	4	4.3	7	0.2
Farsi	16	1.6	853	1.4		0.0	21	0.5
Other	66	6.5	3,489	5.8	7	7.5	112	2.8
Total	1,016	100.0	59,891	100.0	93	100.0	3,981	100.0
Primary Language	CTE		Adults with Disabilities		Health & Safety		Home Economics	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	357	28.8	63	59.4	64	43.0	7	11.9
Spanish	571	46.1	30	28.3	26	17.4	38	64.4
Vietnamese	20	1.6		0.0	5	3.4	1	1.7
Chinese	105	8.5	5	4.7	29	19.5	2	3.4
Hmong	7	0.6		0.0	1	0.7		0.0
Cambodian	1	0.1		0.0		0.0		0.0
Tagalog	42	3.4	3	2.8	1	0.7		0.0
Korean	19	1.5	1	0.9	2	1.3	6	10.2
Lao	1	0.1		0.0		0.0		0.0
Russian	9	0.7		0.0	1	0.7		0.0
Farsi	15	1.2		0.0	3	2.0	2	3.4
Other	91	7.4	4	3.8	17	11.4	3	5.1
Total	1,238	100.0	106	100.0	149	100.0	59	100.0

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Primary Language	Parent Education		Older Adults		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	1,397	39.0	56	30.1	4,388	6.2
Spanish	1,861	51.9	28	15.1	50,407	71.7
Vietnamese	9	0.3	6	3.2	1,415	2.0
Chinese	141	3.9	56	30.1	5,700	8.1
Hmong		0.0		0.0	219	0.3
Cambodian	4	0.1		0.0	252	0.4
Tagalog	50	1.4		0.0	323	0.5
Korean	14	0.4	13	7.0	1,769	2.5
Lao		0.0		0.0	50	0.1
Russian	8	0.2	7	3.8	961	1.4
Farsi	15	0.4	5	2.7	930	1.3
Other	87	2.4	15	8.1	3,891	5.5
Total	3,586	100.0	186	100.0	70,305	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Years of Schooling

Over 45 percent (46.2%) of the learners are reported in Table 10 as having nine or less years of schooling at the time of enrollment. About half of these (23.6%) have six or fewer years of prior schooling. This continues to suggest that the Innovation Programs reach lower level learners in need of adult education services.

Further, it suggests that lower level learners can, in the judgment of program operators, be effectively served by distance learning interventions. This is reinforced by the fact that 50.4 percent of the participating ESL learners report having nine or fewer years of education.

Table 10

Years of Schooling for Innovation Programs' Participants by Instructional Program – FY 2007–08

Program	<=3Years		4-6 Years		7-9 Years		10-11 Years	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ABE	35	0.9	79	0.6	144	0.9	321	3.1
ESL	3,477	92.5	11,680	95.9	13,858	90.4	5,857	56.5
Citizenship	5	0.1	21	0.2	24	0.2	7	0.1
HS/GED	108	2.9	121	1.0	591	3.9	2,325	22.4
Career Technical Education	27	0.7	84	0.7	141	0.9	165	1.6
Adults w/ Disabilities	4	0.1	8	0.1	8	0.1	11	0.1
Health & Safety	6	0.2	7	0.1	11	0.1	7	0.1
Home Economics	2	0.1	7	0.1	7	0.0	7	0.1
Parent Education	92	2.4	165	1.4	527	3.4	1,664	16.0
Older Adults	4	0.1	5	0.0	11	0.1	6	0.1
Total	3,760	5.6%	12,177	18%	15,322	22.6%	10,370	15.3%

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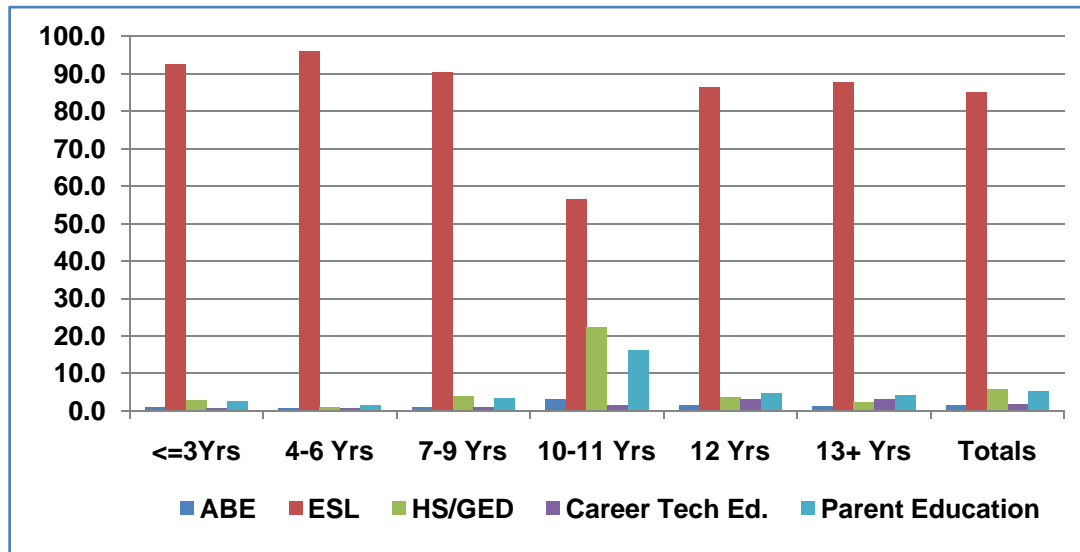
Program	12 Years		13+ Years		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
ABE	235	1.6	146	1.3	960	1.4
ESL	12,825	86.3	9,867	87.7	57,564	85.0
Citizenship	18	0.1	17	0.2	92	0.1
HS/GED	531	3.6	246	2.2	3,922	5.8
Career Tech Ed.	440	3.0	336	3.0	1,193	1.8
Adults w/ Disabilities	36	0.2	5	0.0	72	0.1
Health & Safety	28	0.2	48	0.4	107	0.2
Home Economics	18	0.1	20	0.2	61	0.1
Parent Education	679	4.6	465	4.1	3,592	5.3
Older Adults	47	0.3	97	0.9	170	0.3
Total	14,857	21.9%	11,247	16.6%	67,733	100.0%

Source: CASAS 2008

As graphically displayed in Chart 13, enrollment in ESL dominates the majority of 'Years of Schooling' groups at or around 90% enrollment for each cohort with the exception of the 10-11 years of schooling cohort. Their ESL enrollment was 55 percent followed by 24 percent in Parent Education, and 17 percent for High School and GED Preparation.

Chart 13

Percent Years of Schooling Cohort for Innovation Programs' Participants Enrolled In Five Prominent Distance Learning Instructional Programs – FY 2007-08



Source: CASAS 2008

Highest Degree by Instructional Program

Over half (54.3%) of the Innovation Programs' learners reported having no earned degrees or certificates at the time of enrollment — about the same as the previous year (51.7%). Over 27 percent (27.1%) reported possessing a high school diploma or GED, while 5.2 percent said they had a technical or Associate of Arts (AA) degrees. Over eight percent (8.8%) of the learners reported having a college degree or some graduate study.

Table 11

Highest Educational Level Attained by Innovation Program Participants in Instructional Programs FY 2007–08

Program	None		GED		HS Diploma		Technical		AA Degree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ABE	479	1.4	34	2.9	210	1.3	44	1.9	22	1.4
ESL	28,660	82.3	954	81.9	14,567	89.8	1,997	86.3	1,341	82.6
Citizenship	56	0.2	1	0.1	15	0.1	3	0.1	4	0.2
HS/GED	2,882	8.3	75	6.4	384	2.4	111	4.8	39	2.4
Career Tech Ed.	317	0.9	45	3.9	428	2.6	81	3.5	83	5.1
Adults w/ Disabilities	30	0.1	2	0.2	23	0.1	4	0.2	11	0.7
Health & Safety	25	0.1		0.0	34	0.2		0.0		0.0
Home Economics	24	0.1	2	0.2	10	0.1	4	0.2	2	0.1
Parent Education	2,308	6.6	47	4.0	494	3.0	61	2.6	107	6.6
Older Adults	23	0.1	5	0.4	48	0.3	9	0.4	15	0.9
Total	34,804	54.3%	1,165	1.8%	16,213	25.3%	2,314	3.6%	1,624	2.5%

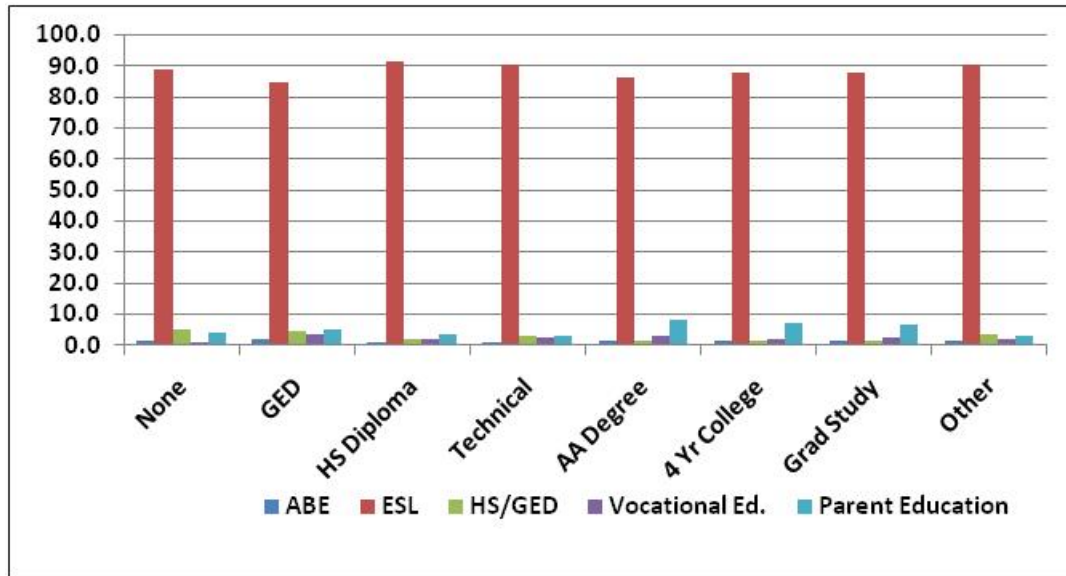
Program	4-Year College		Grad Study		Other		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ABE	50	1.1	23	1.2	40	2.6	902	1.4
ESL	4,055	88.0	1,580	85.5	1,275	81.9	54,429	84.9
Citizenship	8	0.2	2	0.1	1	0.1	90	0.1
HS/GED	78	1.7	42	2.3	80	5.1	3,691	5.8
Career Tech Ed.	108	2.3	61	3.3	24	1.5	1,147	1.8
Adults w/ Disabilities	17	0.4	10	0.5		0.0	97	0.2
Health & Safety		0.0		0.0	3	0.2	62	0.1
Home Economics	7	0.2	7	0.4		0.0	56	0.1
Parent Education	250	5.4	105	5.7	126	8.1	3,498	5.5
Older Adults	37	0.8	19	1.0	7	0.4	163	0.3
Total	4,610	7.2%	1,849	2.9%	1,556	2.4%	64,135	100%

Source: CASAS 2008

As displayed in Chart 14, regardless of educational level attained, ESL dominated other programs at 80 percent to 90 percent of the enrollment for each educational level grouping. Although small in percentage, enrollment in Parent Education was an obvious distant second choice of those having an Associate's Degree or better. Likewise High School/GED Prep was the second choice for those without a diploma or degree as well as those preparing for the GED.

Chart 14

Highest Educational Level Attained Cohort Percentages by Innovation Program Participants in Instructional Programs – FY 2007-08



Source: CASAS 2008

ABE/ASE Instructional Level on Program Entry

Upon entry over six percent (6.7%) of the adult basic education and adult secondary education learners were tested and enrolled in the beginning literacy or beginning levels adult basic education in contrast to 6 percent in the previous year — in fact no one was tested at the beginning literacy level in the prior year. Over 61 percent (61.5%) of the learners were enrolled in intermediate ABE instruction while over thirty percent (31.8%) were enrolled in adult high school subjects, GED, or pre-GED.

Table 12

Adult Basic Education Instructional Level of Innovation Programs’ ABE and ASE Program Participants Upon Entry – FY 2007–08

Level Upon Entry	Score Range	ABE		ASE		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Beginning Literacy	200 & below	26	5.0	12	0.8	38	1.9
Beginning	201–210	50	9.7	48	3.2	98	4.8
Intermediate-Low	211–220	102	19.8	169	11.2	271	13.4
Intermediate-High	221–235	238	46.2	734	48.7	972	48.1
ASE Low	236–245	74	14.4	338	22.4	412	20.4
ASE High	246+	25	4.9	205	13.6	230	11.4
Total		515	100.0	1506	100.0	2021	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

ESL and ESL–Citizenship Level on Program Entry

The instructional continuum of adult basic learning goes from beginning ESL literacy through advanced adult basic education to adult secondary education/GED. Beginning literacy is very difficult to provide in a

distance-learning format and is usually discouraged. This is because students need a certain foundation level of literacy in order to access the curriculum and program components.

Participation in the lower level programs (beginning-low ESL and above) serves as another indicator of whether the distance learning programs are reaching the hard to serve and/or the most in need of adult basic education services.

Beginning literacy and beginning ESL learners represented 25.9 percent of the students receiving English language instruction while intermediate low learners represented 35.8 percent. These data reflect the statewide focus in lower level ESL instruction and continue to suggest, as do other measures, that distance learning can be used to reach and serve learners once they demonstrate beginning literacy.

For example, the following are the kinds of reading and listening life skills stressed in the beginning low courses.

- Relating phonological sounds to letters and clusters of letters (sound/symbol correspondence)
- Recognizing basic sight words
- Interpreting sentences using vocabulary and structures previously learned orally

Language practice and drill types of activities often are a part of the beginning-low instruction. These drill and practice activities lend themselves well to at-home practice and repetition.

Those students in the intermediate-low and above levels probably benefit the most from blended classroom and distance learning alternatives because of the improving quality of the available learning materials, opportunities for repetition and review at times convenient to the learner, potential family support, and the opportunity to incorporate life skills and higher-order thinking skills with the language acquisition instruction.

Table 13

ESL and ESL – Citizenship Instructional Level of Innovation Programs’ Participants on Entry, FY 2007–08

Level Upon Entry	Score Range	ESL	
		N	%
Beginning Literacy	180 & below	1,735	3.6
Beginning-Low	181–190	2,668	5.5
Beginning-High	191–200	7,658	15.7
Intermediate-Low	201–210	18,399	37.8
Intermediate-High	211–220	8,749	18.0
Advanced-Low	221–235	8,810	18.1
Advanced-High	236–245	658	1.4
Total		48,677	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Primary Reasons for Enrollment

The goals of improving basic skills and English skills account for more than 83 percent of the primary reasons for learners reported for enrollment (83.5%). This is the same as the previous year. Direct work-related reasons (get a job and retain a job) make up only 2.16 percent of the primary reasons for enrolling. However, improving skills probably have implications for work preparedness and therefore link these two reasons for enrollment.

Basic skill and language improvement was most important for ABE learners (81.3%). Improving English skills was the most important for ESL learners (73.2%). Basic skills and family goals were the most important for learners in parent education (34.8% and 26.7%).

Note that the adults with disabilities program is not included Table 14. There were 108 participants of whom 84.3 percent stated that their goal was to improve basic skills.

Table 14
The Innovation Programs' Participants Primary Reason for Enrolling in FY 2007-08

Primary Reason	ABE		ESL		Citizenship		HS/GED		CTE	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improve Basic Skills	664	64.1	7,445	12.0	4	4.3	1,791	44.3	356	28.4
Improve English Skills	179	17.3	48,482	78.2	38	40.4	272	6.7	98	7.8
HS Diploma or GED	100	9.7	243	0.4		0.0	1,552	38.4	24	1.9
Get Job	13	1.3	719	1.2		0.0	42	1.0	194	15.5
Retain Job	6	0.6	424	0.7		0.0	14	0.3	154	12.3
Enter College or Training	6	0.6	176	0.3		0.0	38	0.9	21	1.7
Work-Based Project		0.0	56	0.1		0.0		0.0	30	2.4
Family Goal	4	0.4	582	0.9	3	3.2	27	0.7	31	2.5
U.S. Citizenship		0.0	1,416	2.3	32	34.0		0.0	1	0.1
Military	1	0.1	6	0.0		0.0	2	0.0		0.0
Personal Goal	44	4.2	1,854	3.0	17	18.1	191	4.7	253	20.2
None/ Not Identified	13	1.3	433	0.7		0.0	79	2.0	37	3.0
Other	6	0.6	142	0.2		0.0	37	0.9	53	4.2
Total	1,036	100.0	61,978	100.0	94	100.0	4,045	100.0	1,252	100.0

Primary Reason	Health & Safety		Home Economics		Parent Education		Older Adults		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	4	2.0	N	%
Improve Basic Skills	1	0.3	11	17.7	1,330	34.8	5	2.5	11,697	16.0
Improve English Skills	3	1.0	2	3.2	107	2.8		0.0	49,188	67.5
HS Diploma or GED		0.0		0.0	787	20.6		0.0	2,706	3.7
Get Job	1	0.3		0.0	3	0.1		0.0	972	1.3
Retain Job	2	0.7		0.0	4	0.1		0.0	604	0.8
Enter College or Training	1	0.3		0.0	6	0.2	2	1.0	248	0.3
Work-Based Project	2	0.7		0.0	1	0.0	15	7.5	91	0.1
Family Goal	5	1.7	8	12.9	1,021	26.7	1	0.5	1,697	2.3
U.S. Citizenship		0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	1,450	2.0
Military		0.0		0.0		0.0	156	77.6	9	0.0
Personal Goal	280	94.0	31	50.0	479	12.5	15	7.5	3,317	4.6
None/ Not Identified	2	0.7	9	14.5	57	1.5	3	1.5	647	0.9
Other	1	0.3	1	1.6	31	0.8			274	0.4
Total	298	100.0	62	100.0	3,826	100.0	201	100.0	72,900	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Learner Progress

Learners are monitored on their progress throughout their participation. Table 15 shows that over 25 percent of the ESL participants completed or moved to a more advanced course (25.3%) compared with 27 percent the previous year. Over half (50.3%) of the ESL enrollees were retained at the same level. For students remaining at the same level, more information is needed about the year in which they enrolled and progress within their given level.

Just less than half (47.7%) of the ABE learners remained at the same level. Adult secondary education/GED (27.5%), career tech education (35.5%), and parent education (36.7%) learners completed and/or advanced a course.

Table 15
Innovation Programs' Participants Status by Program – FY 2007-08

Program	Completed & Moved Up		Left After Completion	
	N	%	N	%
ABE	62	7.8	54	6.8
ESL	11,553	20.2	2,925	5.1
Citizenship	0	0.0	14	17.9
HS/GED	525	15.4	411	12.1
Career Tech Education	163	15.0	223	20.5
Adults w/ Disabilities	1	1.1	1	1.1
Health & Safety	15	5.3	7	2.5
Home Economics	13	27.1	2	4.2
Parent Ed.	446	13.8	740	22.9
Older Adults	25	15.0	10	6.0

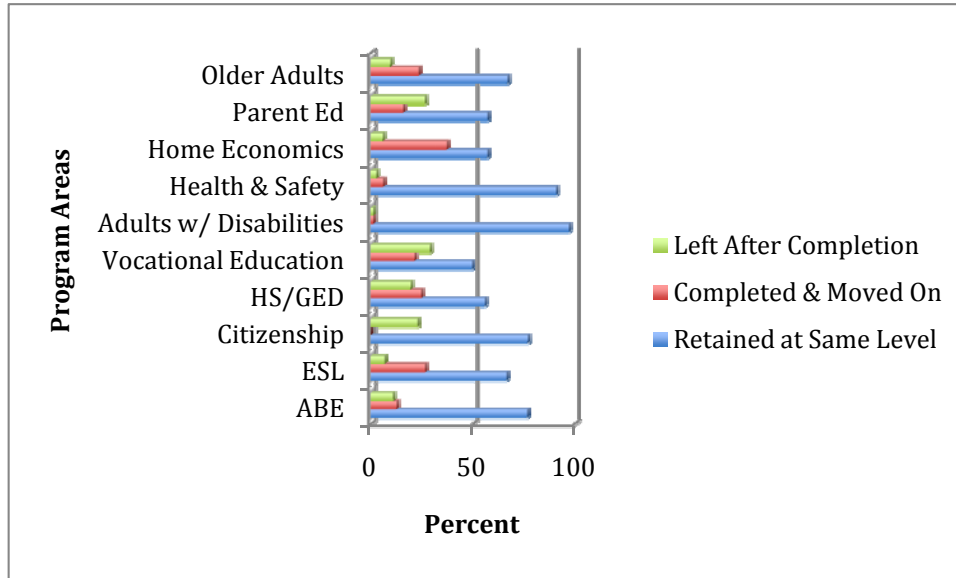
Program	Retained at Same Level		Left Before Completion		No Show or < 12 hrs		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ABE	379	47.7	207	26.1	92	11.6	794	100.0
ESL	28,766	50.3	8,031	14.0	5,904	10.3	57,179	100.0
Citizenship	47	60.3	13	16.7	4	5.1	78	100.0
HS/GED	1,184	34.8	708	20.8	572	16.8	3,400	100.0
Career Tech Education	380	35.0	162	14.9	158	14.5	1,086	100.0
Adults w/ Disabilities	76	84.4	5	5.6	7	7.8	90	100.0
Health & Safety	225	78.9	3	1.1	35	12.3	285	100.0
Home Economics	20	41.7	10	20.8	3	6.3	48	100.0
Parent Ed.	1,599	49.4	216	6.7	233	7.2	3,234	100.0
Older Adults	71	42.5	27	16.2	34	20.4	167	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 15 displays the learner status by program. 'Completed and moved up,' and 'left after completion' are the two measures of progress; however, much depends on when the student entered the course. Besides high school/GED prep (44.2%) and ESL (33.5%), where learner status is determined by test performance on standardized assessments, teacher judgment identified learners enrolled in career tech education (50.4%), home economics (42.8%), parent education (42%), and older adult (33%) programs as making progress and showing promising results.

Chart 15

Innovation Programs' Learner Status by Program – FY 2007–08



Source: CASAS 2008

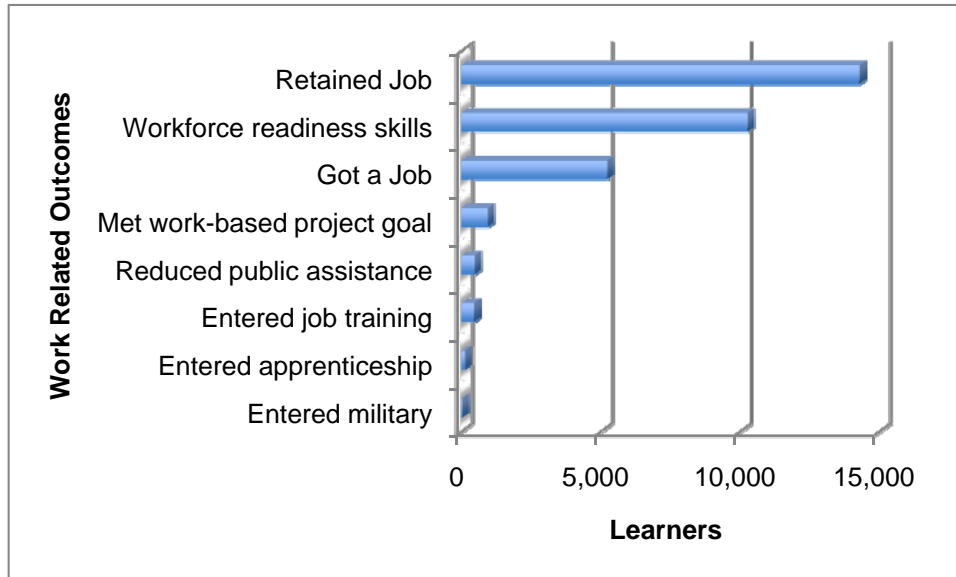
Learner Outcomes

Work Related Outcomes

Among the learners identifying work related outcomes, 32.9 percent reported that they obtained or retained a job. The “other” category accounts for 27.5 percent of the responses while acquiring workforce readiness skills accounts for 13.8 percent.

Chart 16

Reported Innovation Programs’ Learner Work Related Outcomes – FY 2007-08



Source: CASAS 2008

Personal Outcomes

Learners identified as meeting a personal goal(s) account for 55.5 percent of the personal outcome responses. Over 10 percent (10.5%) of the learners identifying personal outcomes said that they have increased their involvement in their children’s education and 10.5 percent said that they had increased their involvement in their children’s literacy activities. Nineteen percent said they had met another family goal. The “other” category accounts for 26.4 percent.

Table 17

Reported Innovation Programs’ Learner Personal Outcomes – FY 2007-08

Personal/Family Outcomes	N	%
Increased involvement in children's education	8,333	14.0
Increased involvement in children's literacy activities	6,237	10.5
Met other family goal	11,252	19.0
Met personal goal	32,927	55.5
Other	15,675	26.4
TOTAL	59,319	

Source: CASAS 2008

Community Outcomes

Learners reporting community outcomes identified increased community involvement in 25.5 percent of the cases and “other” outcomes in 28.7 percent of the responses. Over eight percent (8.4%) of the learners identified achieving U.S. citizenship skills as their primary community outcome.

Table 18

Reported Innovation Programs’ Learner Community Outcomes – FY 2007–08

Community Outcomes	N	%
Achieved U.S. citizenship skills	4,986	8.4
Registered to vote or voted first time	618	1.0
Increased involvement in community	15,138	25.5
Other	18,725	31.6

Source: CASAS 2008

Educational Outcomes

Overall, 64.3 percent of the recorded learners were reported as having identifiable educational outcomes led by those having mastery of course competencies (18.8%), followed by those who gained computer/tech skills (15.3%). Ten percent of learners reported passing the GED, earning a certificate or high school diploma, or entering college as their educational goal.

The “other” category accounts for over 35 percent of the responses (35.7%) and provides little information regarding what the respondents had in mind.

Table 19

Reported Innovation Programs’ Learner Educational Outcomes – FY 2007-08

Educational Outcomes	N	%
Returned to K–12	470	0.8
Passed GED	493	0.8
Earned Certificate	4,562	7.7
Earned High School diploma	446	0.8
Entered college	438	0.7
Entered training program	401	0.7
Gained computer/tech skills	9,085	15.3
Mastered course competencies/Education Plan	11,172	18.8
Other	21,192	35.7
TOTAL	59,319	

Source: CASAS 2008

Reading Pre-test Scores

The following tables are taken from CASAS reading and listening test data. The reader can observe the comparatively smaller number of tested learners as opposed to enrolled learners.^{viii} As noted, CASAS pre- post-testing for all ESL, ABE, Citizenship, and ASE/GED learners in distance learning programs is difficult due to non-traditional schedules, infrequent visits to campus, and other factors associated with the very reason they are enrolled in a distance learning program.

ABE/ASE reading level 181-200 denotes beginning and pre-beginning literacy. Reading levels 201-210 and 211-220 reflect beginning and intermediate basic skills learners respectively, while level 221-235 identifies the pre-GED/advanced basic skills learners. Level 236-245 is adult secondary education, and

the 246+ grouping identifies the advanced adult secondary learner including those in GED preparation courses.

The small numbers of learners involved in the ABE/ASE reading pre-test do not provide useful information other than to identify the reading level characteristics of the Innovation Programs ABE/ASE learners. The largest percentage (4.4%) was tested in the pre-GED/advanced basic skills level.

For the ESL/ESL-civics learners the data are more useful. A reading score level at or below 180 identifies beginning literacy and pre-beginning ESL learners. The 181-200 reading score level identifies the low and high-beginning ESL CASAS instructional level. Levels 201-210 and 211-220 identify the low and high-intermediate ESL learners while level 221-235 defines the advanced ESL reading group. ESL learners with reading pre-test scores of 236-245 are ready for adult secondary education. However, it is not unusual that they do not feel comfortable with their language skills and wish to receive more language training.

The ESL learners reading at the intermediate and advanced levels form the majority of the Innovation Programs participants (67.3%). This seems appropriate because the learning resources are often the most robust for these groups.

Table 20

Innovation Programs' Participant Reading Pre-test Mean Scores – FY 2007-08

CASAS Reading Score Range	Mean Pre-Test Score	<u>N</u>	%
ABE/ASE			
181-200	—	16	1.0
201-210	207.3	56	3.4
211-220	216.8	130	7.8
221-235	229.0	593	35.8
236-245	240.3	522	31.5
246+	250.9	340	20.5
ABE/ASE Overall	235.0	1,657	100.0

ESL/ESL-Cit			
<=180	173.2	1,722	3.6
181-190	186.1	2,576	5.3
191-200	196.2	7,495	15.5
201-210	206.6	18,309	37.9
211-220	216.0	8,652	17.9
221-235	227.0	8,854	18.3
236-245	239.4	738	1.5
ESL/ESL-Cit Overall	208.6	48,346	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Listening Mean Scores

The ESL/ESL citizenship listening scores fall into the same categories as the reading scores — levels at or below 180 and 181-200 are beginning/pre–beginning literacy ESL learners. Levels 201-210 and 211-220 are intermediate ESL learners while level 221-235 is the advanced ESL group. ESL learners with listening pretest scores of 236-245 are ready for adult secondary education.

For all Innovation Programs the overall mean listening pretest score for ESL learners was 210.9, the ESL beginning/ESL intermediate score range.

Table 21

Innovation Programs’ Participant Listening Pre-test Mean Scores – FY 2007-08

CASAS Score Range Listening	Mean Pre-test Score	<u>N</u>	%
ESL/ESL–Cit			
<=180	176.0	31	1.0
181-190	186.6	158	5.2
191-200	196.0	434	14.3
201-210	205.7	791	26.0
211-220	215.2	817	26.9
221-235	226.0	771	25.4
236-245	238.3	36	1.2
ESL/ESL–Cit Overall	210.9	3,038	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Reading Score Gains

CASAS has maintained a long history of research on reading gains. This research shows that learners testing 210 or below on the CASAS reading pre-test on average show greater than seven point gains after 80-100 hours of instruction. Learners testing 211 or above on average show greater than a four point reading gain with 80-100 hours of instruction. All mean scores with the exception of the ESL/ESL citizenship 236-245 group tested at approximately the average when comparing the Innovation Programs with this longitudinal CASAS data.

The Table 22 reading score gains for ESL/ESL citizenship learners’ pre-testing <180 and 181-200 respectively are substantial (12.7 and 10.8 points respectively). The overall reading score mean gains (7.2) are encouraging. Comparative data on classroom, distance-learning-only, and blended learning are reported in another section.

Table 22

Innovation Programs' Participant Reading Score Mean Gains – FY 2007-08

CASAS Reading Scoring Range	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Learning Gain Mean	<u>N</u>	%
ESL/ESL-Cit					
< 180					
181-190	193.4	206.0	12.7	317	17.2
191-200	196.1	206.9	10.8	227	12.4
201-210	205.6	213.4	7.8	432	23.5
211-220	215.0	220.8	5.8	460	25.0
221-235	225.8	227.7	1.8	402	21.9
236-245		—	—		0.0
ESL/ESL-Cit Overall	209.1	216.3	7.2	1,838	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Listening Gains

The same history of CASAS research shows that learners testing 210 or below on the CASAS listening test on average show greater than six point gains after 80-100 hours of instruction. Learners testing 211 or above on average show greater than two point listening gains with 80-100 hours of instruction.

The Table 23 listening gains were highest with the lower level ESL/ESL citizenship learners. All groups performed above average with exception of the higher groups. The <= 180 and the 221-235 groups performed below average.

Table 23

Innovation Programs' ESL/ESL Citizenship Participant Listening Score Mean Gains – FY 2008-09

Listening Scoring Range	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Learning Gain Mean	<u>N</u>	%
ESL/ESL-Cit					
< 180					
181-190	193.4	206.0	12.7	317	17.2
191-200	196.1	206.9	10.8	227	12.4
201-210	205.6	213.4	7.8	432	23.5
211-220	215.0	220.8	5.8	460	25.0
221-235	225.8	227.7	1.8	402	21.9
236-245		—	—		0.0
ESL/ESL-Cit Overall	209.1	216.3	7.2	1,838	100.0

Source: CASAS 2008

Program Effectiveness and Student Persistence

Learner persistence became a California strategic focus to enhance adult education program improvement in 2007. In adult education, student persistence is often defined as the length of time that learners participate in active instruction. Another definition sees persistence as the learner staying engaged in some kind of formal learning structure even if not enrolled in specific adult education classes. Increasing persistence addresses methods to retain adult learners in programs long enough to significantly improve their skills — usually in the range of 80-100 hours of instruction. CASAS defines persistence as completing a paired pre- and post-test, which usually equates to 70 hours or more of instruction.

Increasing persistence is very important for learners enrolled in ESL programs. A study (Stiles 2004)^{ix} of ESL learner gains in California over a four-year period showed CASAS reading test scores for ESL learners increased as the number of hours of instruction increased, although the actual gains in reading scores varied across years and program levels.

Research conducted in 1999 by Comings, Parella, and Scoicone defines persistence broadly as “adults staying in programs for as long as they can, engaging in self-directed study when they must drop out of their programs, and returning to programs as soon as the demands of their lives allow.”^x The Comings *et al*/contribution recognizes that adult learners’ lives and responsibilities make it difficult to participate consistently in learning over the approximately 80 hours often necessary to demonstrate learning gains. The study discusses several strategies to facilitate persistence, and elaborates at some length on self study interventions. However, it does not dwell on the possible roles for distance learning. Distance learning may also provide a “bridge or link” so that students stay involved and keep learning during times when they are not able to attend traditional classroom programs. Further study on this topic is necessary.^{xi}

There are some semantic and contextual difficulties with the ways the terms student retention and student persistence are applied. In some cases, they are treated as having almost synonymous meanings. However, retention refers to keeping a learner enrolled long enough to show learning gains while persistence promotes flexibility allowing students to leave and return to learning somewhat seamlessly. Persistence refers to the strategies and compromises that learners make to maintain participation in formal instruction — to persevere. Retention relates to institutional strategies while persistence refers to student strategies.

Distance learning is a viable instructional strategy to address both goals. From the analyst’s perspective the easiest way to increase student persistence data is to post-test more adult learners. However, the foci in the persistence discussions address retention strategies to reduce student drop out and to re-engage them when they “stop out.” What is missing is a strong emphasis on systematically encouraging and introducing independent learning in curricular strategies including more emphasis on distance and alternative forms of instruction to serve as a bridge back and forth for students stopping out and as a way to encourage students to see their learning as continuous and not limited to one form of instruction.

Distance learning and interventions like hybrid and blended learning offer ways to make learning more convenient and accessible to many adult learners. They allow the student to continue learning when classroom or site-based attendance is difficult for various reasons. They should receive substantially more prominence as a significant intervention strategy.

From the distance learning perspective there is no need to “stop out” from learning if the reasons for the break in learning are not catastrophic in nature. Learning can continue through asynchronous distance lessons that place the learner in charge of the pace of instruction. Research data indicate that distance learning and blended learning can be quite effective in this regard.

In distance learning and other non-traditional instruction, learning outcomes are usually measured in terms of instructional units completed successfully. Increasing learning modality options should help improve student persistence. It should be the basis for providing instructional strategies that accommodate adults’ multiple responsibilities that impact their continuing participation in and access to learning services.

The Distance Learning Blended Model

In California adult education, the distance learning blended model has a very specific description. It refers to adult schools with Innovation Programs that offer somewhat simultaneous classroom and distance learning courses in which students can dual enroll.^{xii} The key considerations are that each course must have its own approved course outline, course number, assigned instructor, separate student roster, and distinctive and different full length course materials. The courses can share the same course outline (A22), meaning the courses cover the same designated competencies, but the course materials must be different, and each course has its own course number.

As a standard practice, the distance learning portion of blended learning and distance-learning-only classes are based entirely on learner outcomes. For each unit or module of instruction there is a test or method to demonstrate mastery (usually at about 80 percent correct answers). When a unit of instruction is completed, approved hours of average daily attendance (ADA) are claimed. Any direct teacher contact time is included in the claimed hours, not claimed separately.

To a certain extent, the blended model was a 'ground up' design based on student requests for additional material to study on their own. This is especially the case for students in classes that meet less often. They desire to learn more rapidly than traditional classroom instruction allows.

The blended model has been used almost exclusively with adult education ESL courses which have not involved elective or other credits towards a high school diploma. For example, it is the Los Angeles Unified School District Adult and Career Education (LAUSD DACE) policy that a student can only earn class credits one time when he or she takes a DL course involving credits and also takes the classroom version of that course. Credits cannot be awarded twice when the student completes both courses—only once, no exceptions.

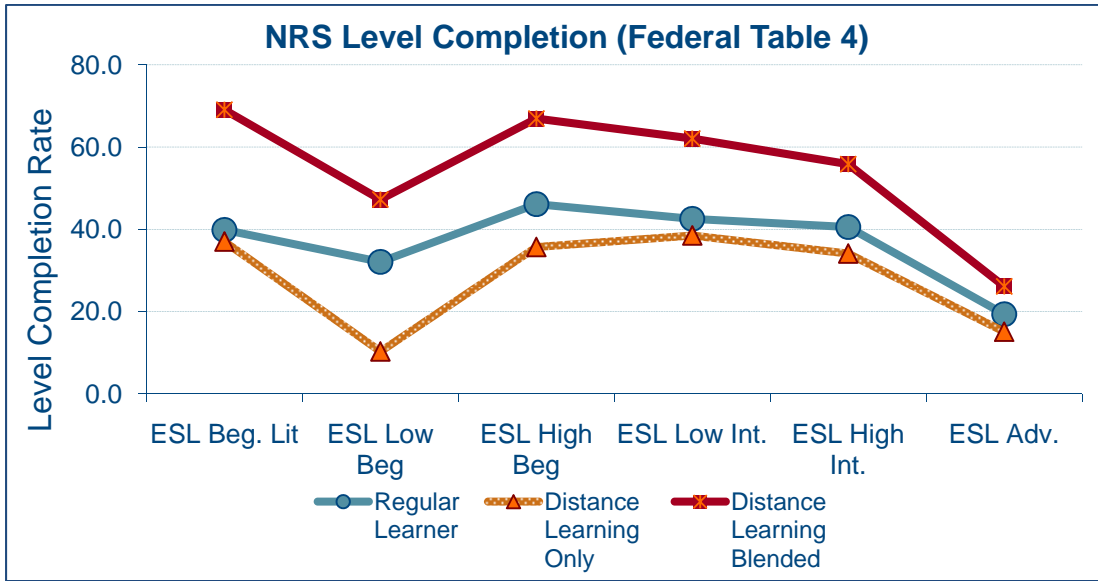
This means that a student, whether blended or distance-learning-only, can only be awarded hours of attendance one time per completed unit of a distance learning course. Once all of the units of a DL course have been completed, the student can never retake those units and have hours claimed by a school. In a traditional ESL class, a student can retake the same class multiple times and hours can be claimed for each re-taking of the class without limit—assuming the student is appropriately placed in the course multiple times.

The following charts (16-21) are developed by Dr. Stiles and CASAS staff. This is the third year that these data have been reported. They are based on data from the National Reporting System (NRS – WIA Title II reported data). The data reflect 21,571 distance-only learners and 34,991 blended learners. They clearly demonstrate the utility of distance learning (a combination of blended and distance-learning-only) and in particular the role of blended learning in producing effective completion, reading and listening gains.

Chart 16 shows that blended learning in most cases and most importantly in ESL beginning through intermediate has the highest completion rates. Completion means that a student has completed a learning level (e.g. ESL low-beginning). The blended rates also drive the distance learning rates in the chart. For the ESL low-beginning learner distance-learning-only as an intervention performed less effectively in comparison to classroom and blended learning. This primarily was due to extremely low persistence rates (post-testing rates) of ESL low-beginning at 11.9 percent compared to other five ESL levels ranging from 40.1 percent for ESL beginning literacy to 61.5 percent for ESL Advanced.

Chart 16

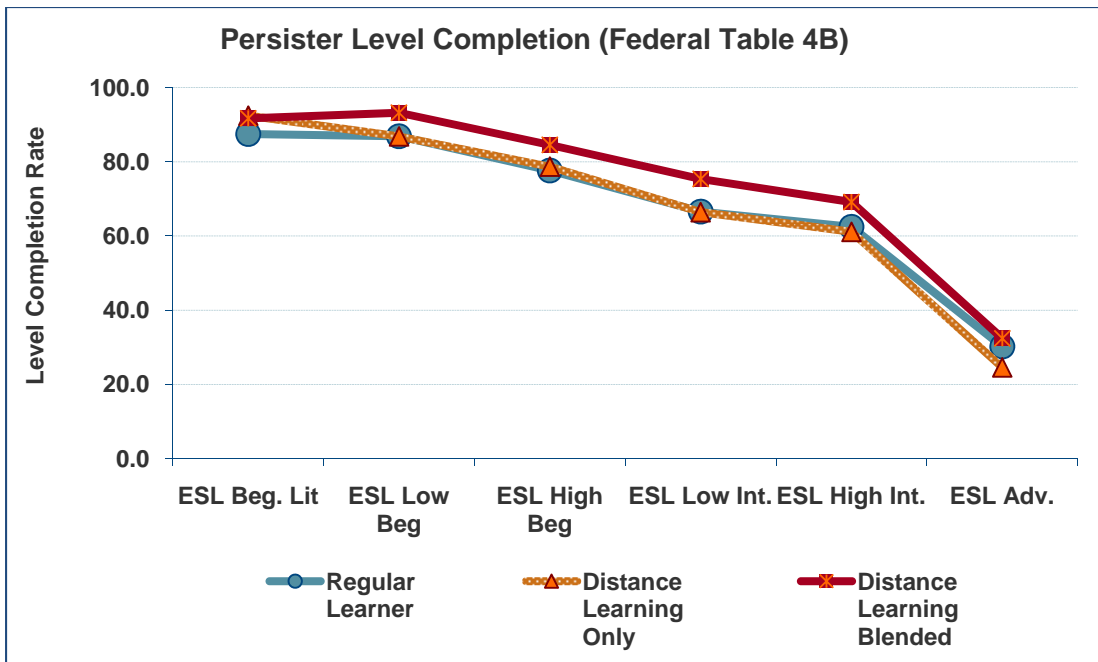
Completion Rates in Federal Table 4: ESL Distance Learners Contrasted with Regular Learners, FY 2007-08



Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 17

Completion Rates in Federal Table 4B (Learners with Matched Pre- and Post-tests: ESL Distance Learners (Only and Blended) Contrasted with Regular ESL Learners – FY 2007-08



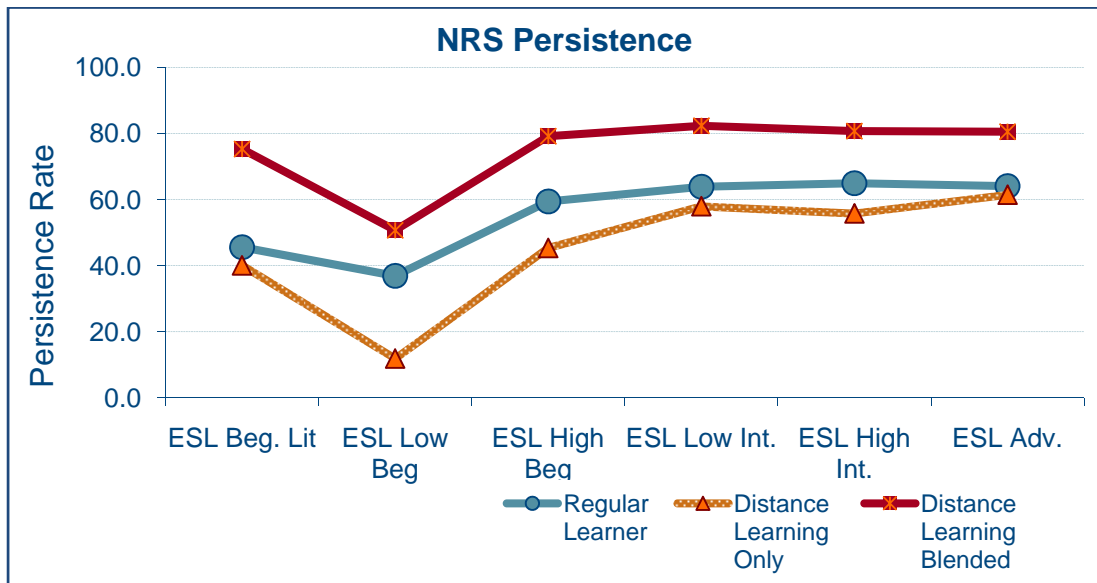
Source: CASAS 2008

The superior persistence rates in Chart 18 can account for some of the dramatic differences found among the three interventions. Using data from only those learners completing a matched pre- and post-test of level completion performance, a comparison was made among distance-learning-only, blended model of distance learning, and regular ESL classes. The blended model of distance learning proved superior to the other two interventions.

Blended learning shows higher persistence rates with the federally reported WIA Title II learners (Chart 18). In this chart the CASAS definition of persistence is used – completing a CASAS post-test. Learners in the blended model and regular classes in the ESL low-beginning level also experienced lower persistence rates than those at the other five levels

Chart 18

Distance Learners Contrasted with Regular Learners Federal Table 4

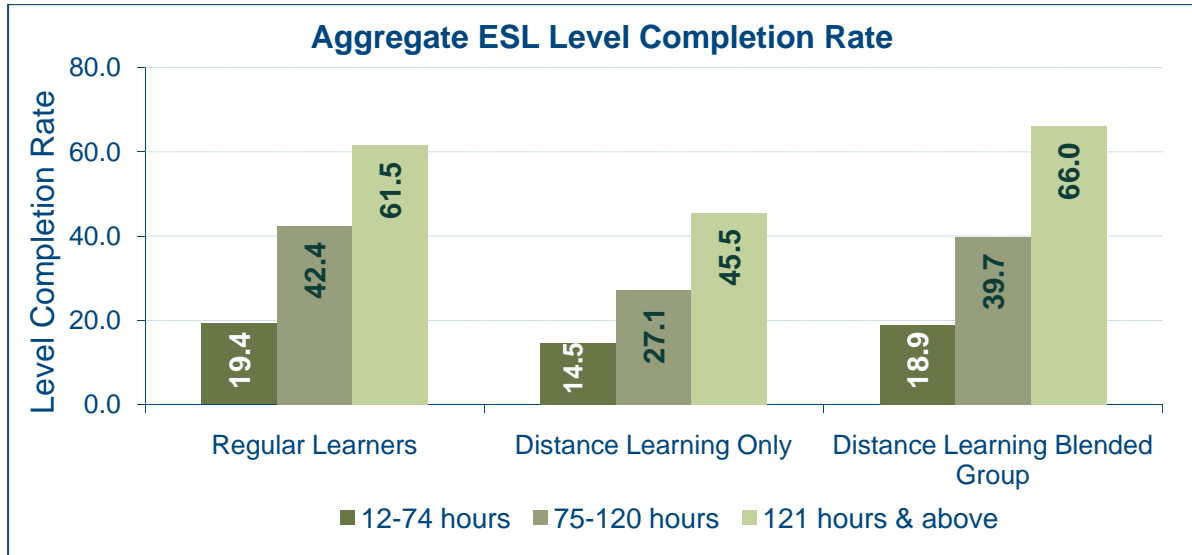


Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 19 compares the level completion rates for WIA II ESL learners in 2007–08. It indicates that blended learners perform the best and that the distance learners as a group perform the least effectively of the three interventions.

Chart 19

National Reporting System ESL Level Reading Gains by Hours of Instruction: ESL Distance Learners contrasted with ESL Regular Learners

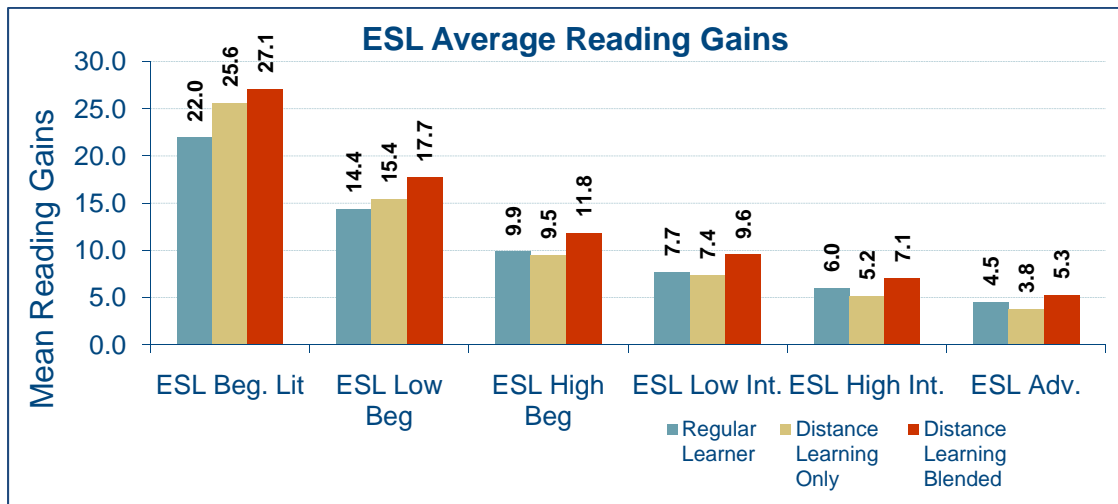


Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 20 describes relative ESL average reading gain scores. Distance learning interventions perform comparatively well for the ESL beginning literacy through the ESL low-intermediate segments, while blended learning again performs the best. The finding that distance-learning-only is superior to regular classroom at the two lowest levels is surprising since the common belief has been that learners at that level needed the support and structure of the classroom to succeed. It is also positive that distance-learning-only learners have fairly comparable results to regular learners at the other levels of ESL.

Chart 20

ESL Comparative Reading Gain Scores

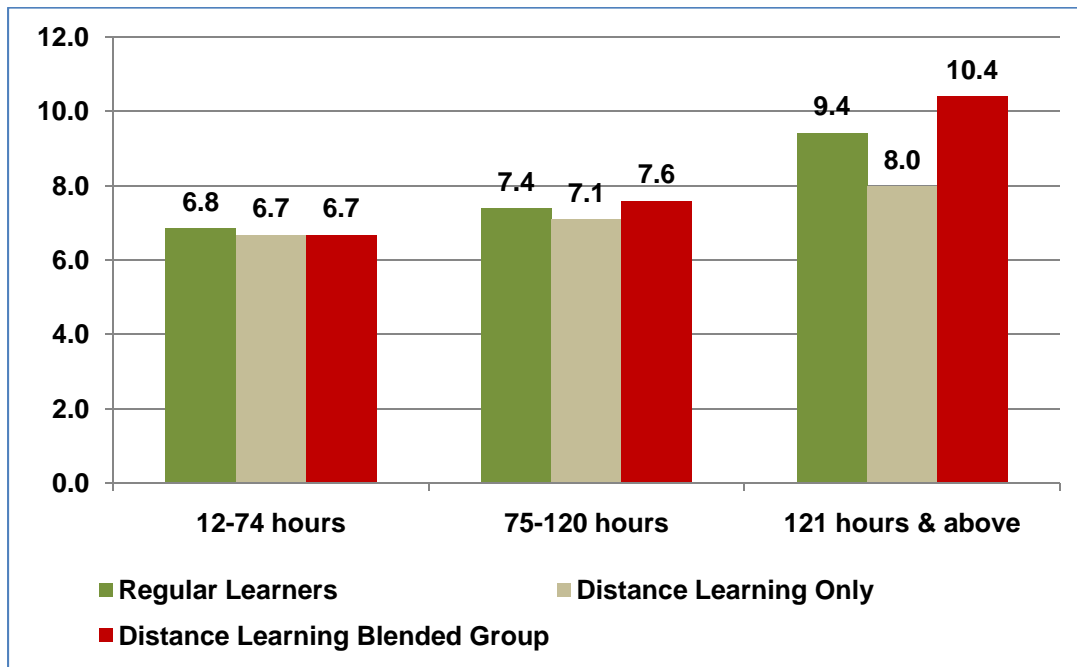


Source: CASAS 2008

Chart 21 compares reading gains based on mode of delivery and hours of instruction. All modes and hours of delivery show better gains than the historical norm. Blended learning performs the best followed by classroom only instruction and distance-learning-only instruction.

Chart 21

Mean Reading Gains: ESL Distance Learners contrasted with ESL Regular Learners by Hours of Instruction



Source: CASAS 2008

The researcher’s ability to examine key outcome data comparatively provides a better view of how distance-learning-only instruction performs in comparison to the classroom only and blended learning modes. Common sense tells us that blended learning instruction, where two curricula are provided and the resultant interventions are more substantive, would produce the best results. However, using the same data, but emphasizing the hours of instruction, the three modes of instruction are fairly comparable until the hours of instruction exceed 120.

The overall reading gains continue to increase, with the blended mode showing the greatest gains, followed by the regular mode of instruction. Of special note, the distance-learning-only modality holds up very well against the other two modes of instruction when considering that “no instruction” would likely reveal a “zero” gain in reading; whereas distance-only learners distance-learning-only continue to make gains without face-to-face instruction.

Conclusions

Over the last 15 years, the California Innovation Program initiative and distance learning have become well accepted and vital parts of adult basic education. The data reported here indicate that the original goal of increasing access to learning opportunities continues to be addressed. The program has increased access to a variety of learners who would have a difficult time attending traditional in-classroom courses or who might not progress at the same rate in a traditional program.

The role of blended learning as an effective method to serve the adult basic education student; especially the ESL student is firmly documented. This finding has important statewide and national implications.

The Innovation Program Initiative continues to provide significant and meaningful alternatives for adults

- Needing more practice of skills to achieve mastery
- Having work and family obligations that make attending a regular class time difficult
- Lacking the full confidence to participate in a large classroom setting in front of other students
- Wanting the participation, assistance, and support of their families in their learning
- Living in locations without convenient access to traditional classes
- Living in areas where there is no space in traditional classes
- Learning more effectively from video, audio, and Web-based media when moving at their own pace
- Who cannot access traditional classroom programs

When comparing classroom completion and persistence data with the Innovation Programs, it is clear that the distance learning programs, especially blended learning, are particularly successful in providing ESL learning opportunities. Other local research data on student persistence and retention support these findings. The availability of engaging life-skills-based instructional materials is in all likelihood a key factor.

The Innovation Programs continue to meet the three crucial benefit–cost criteria often used to evaluate the utility of a program intervention. They are:

1. **Effectiveness** — CASAS pre- post-test data indicate that the Innovation Programs' ESL program participants show, on average, substantial learning increases in reading and listening. Much of this is attributed to the results of the blended learning model. The ABE/ASE participants show learning gains consistent with historical data.
2. **Efficiency** — Participant and program cost data indicate that the Innovation Programs are cost effective. Common sense tells us that the programs would not be offered if they are not cost effective.
3. **Equity** — Reported years in school, primary language, reading and listening scores on entry, and ethnic data indicate that lower level, often hard-to-serve learners are the primary participants in the Innovation Programs.

This is the seventh year that similar summary conclusions have been reached. However, they now are enhanced by a closer look at comparative classroom, blended learning, and distance-learning-only data.

The Innovation Programs follow the same accountability requirements as class-based apportionment programs. Over the past seven years, the Innovation Programs have been successful in standardizing their reporting procedures, while still maintaining alternative instructional delivery methods. While not required, all Innovation Program students are expected to be tracked in the TOPSpro system. All programs are using a standardized format for both program applications and annual evaluation. This format makes gathering of data and program monitoring more substantive and meaningful. Pre- and post-testing are more difficult than in traditional settings. It is not standardized for programs other than ESL,

ABE and GED/ASE. In general, the Innovation Programs collect more program documentation and learner progress information than do the classroom programs.

These rich data provide the most detailed comparative examination of adult basic education learning interventions that are available in the United States. They result from a statewide data system, standardized testing and assessment, and the foresight of California legislators to permit school districts to use distance learning as an instructional intervention.

References

- ⁱ The research papers can be found on the OTAN Project Web site (www.otan.us) under the online research documents. Click on Distance Education.
- ⁱⁱ The research and data collection for this paper are funded by Federal P.L., 105–220, Section 223, from the Adult Education Office, Secondary, Postsecondary, and Adult Leadership Division, California Department of Education. However, the conclusions and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the position of that department or the U.S. Department of Education.
- ⁱⁱⁱ The Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) is a nonprofit organization that “partners with a national consortium of state and local agencies to provide valid competency and standards-based assessment systems, research services, and professional development. CASAS also provides alternative high school credentialing options through the National External Diploma Program.” See <https://www.casas.org/home/index.cfm>.
- ^{iv} The worksite – workplace learning skills focus has proven unattractive to adult schools, and the test of alternative reimbursement approaches poses very difficult policy and program issues. This leaves the distance learning and off–site instructional approaches as the primary foci. They are essentially the same.
- ^v This is due to the asynchronous nature of most instruction. Each learner interacts with the learning materials and the instructor on an individualized basis.
- ^{vi} Tables 1 – 9 display data from the FY 2007-08 applications.
- ^{vii} Forty-nine learners failed to indicate gender.
- ^{viii} Programs utilizing federal adult education funds must test all learners. Participants in state apportionment programs are not required to pre and post–test learners using standardized tests, although it is strongly recommended.
- ^{ix} Stiles, R., 2004. The Relationship of California Adult ESL and ESL–Citizenship Reading Performance to Amount of Instructional Time. *California Adult Education: Research Brief, 2*, San Diego: CASAS. Retrieved June 10, 2010, from <https://www.casas.org/home/index.cfm?fuseaction=home.showContent&MapID=1562>
- ^x Comings, J.P. Parella ,A. & Socione, L., 1999. *Persistence among adult basic education students in pre–GED classes*. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy, Cambridge, MA., p.3. Retrieved June 7, 2010 from <http://www.ncsall.net/?id=29> – report 12.
- ^{xi} See for example, “Distance Learning for the Adult Learner: Improving Persistence and Effectiveness: A Working Paper,” Fall 2006”. OTAN Document Library, www.otan.us.
- ^{xii} The enrollments are simultaneous in the sense that a student will enroll in either a classroom or a distance learning program and subsequently enroll in the other. Sometimes students enroll in distance learning because of a classroom waiting list but remain in the distance learning class also.