



**Report on the Evaluation of Adult ESOL Programs and Service Delivery  
in Portland, Maine**

for the John T. Gorman Foundation

CAL Project #JTGF01-000-30

**Revised December 30, 2014**

Funded by the John T. Gorman Foundation, the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) conducted an evaluation of the adult English as a second language (ESOL) service delivery provided by Portland (ME) Adult Education (PAE) in May-June, 2014. The audit was designed and carried out by Miriam Burt, adult ESOL content specialist at CAL. This report documents the program's current policies and practices and summarizes the linguistic, workforce, and community life outcomes for adults who participate in it.

**Evaluation Goals and Procedures**

The evaluation had three goals:

- ◆ To identify the strengths of the existing program
- ◆ To document areas needing improvement and areas of unmet need
- ◆ To recommend programmatic and instructional improvements that reflect best practices and that should help improve academic achievement and English proficiency outcomes for adult English learners (ELs).

The following questions guided the evaluation:

1. What are the goals and objectives of instruction, and how are those addressed in the curriculum, assessment measures, and instructional practices employed? To what degree are participants able to achieve the goals?
2. How well does the instructional design work, including overall design, specific tasks and activities, and amount and type of interaction among participants and between instructor and participants? How does it contribute to achievement of program goals?
3. How do the characteristics of the instructors, in terms of professional background and experience, contribute to program outcomes? Should the program seek different or additional characteristics in its instructors?
4. How do the characteristics of the participants, in terms of level of participation, task completion, motivation, previous education level, and degree of literacy in English and in the native language, contribute to program outcomes?
5. How does the agency's involvement, in terms of recruiting participants and supporting their participation, contribute to program success?

To answer these questions, CAL carried out the following activities:

May 2014

- ♦ Analyzed PAE documents including course descriptions, teacher observation form, and other program classroom resources.
- ♦ Held preliminary telephone conversations with the following stakeholders: Bethany Campbell, PAE Director; Valerie DeVuyst, Coordinator of Portland ESOL; David Galin, Chief Academic Officer, Portland Public Schools; Grace Valenzuela, Multicultural Center Director; Arian Giantris, Program Associate, John T. Gorman Foundation; and Nicole Witherbee, Chief Program Officer, John T. Gorman Foundation.
- ♦ Developed protocols for in-person focus groups with teachers, administrators, and students.
- ♦ Selected and adapted an observation protocol to be used during on-site classroom visits.

June 2014

- ♦ Observed 13 classes, including examples of all ESOL classes, a computer class for ELs, and Language Arts for high school completion. All classes observed were composed of all ELs, with the exception of the Language Arts, which had two native speakers in the class.
- ♦ Held two focus groups with students.
- ♦ Held four focus groups with teachers.
- ♦ Held four focus groups and interviews with administrators.
- ♦ Interviewed Ms. Campbell and Ms. DeVuyst.
- ♦ Observed student intake.
- ♦ Analyzed NRS performance data from 2012-13.
- ♦ Used an online survey to gather information from teachers on their background and training needs.

December 2014

- ♦ Received updated data from PAE on completion levels, etc. from 2013-14.
- ♦ Input changes as needed in the evaluation report and resubmitted report to Portland.

Interviews and focus groups covered a wide range of topics, including program model(s) used, student assessment and progress monitoring, staff collaboration and professional development, and student access to academic support and enrichment services. Information related to district-wide policies was gathered from flyers and other print materials.

## **Structure of the Report**

Outcomes of the evaluation are reported in relation to the five research questions listed above. Information on research questions 2 and 3 is combined because observations showed that instructor characteristics were closely connected to the ways in which instruction was carried out and curriculum and assessment were used.

For each research question, the report cites one or more relevant indicators of best practices and outlines related PAE program strengths and challenges, as documented through observations, interviews, and document review. The report then provides recommendations for possible improvements to the program based on the relevant best practices. Further information on the best practices can be found in the references listed in Appendix 1.

The report concludes with appendices that provide supporting documentation:

- ◆ Appendix 2: Focus group protocols
- ◆ Appendix 3: Classroom observation protocol
- ◆ Appendix 4: Synthesis of information gained from classroom observations
- ◆ Appendix 5: Synthesis of information gained from online survey of teacher needs and background
- ◆ Appendix 6: List of quality indicators for adult education programs

### **Research Question 1**

*What are the goals and objectives of instruction, and how are those addressed in the curriculum, assessment measures, and instructional practices employed? To what degree are participants able to achieve the goals?*

Evaluation outcomes for this research question are reported in relation to three quality indicators:

- ◆ High expectations / high support
- ◆ Cultural competency
- ◆ Outcomes

#### ***High Expectations/High Support***

Quality indicator definition: The program helps participants develop high expectations by giving them the tools to define ambitious yet realistic goals and assess progress toward goal achievement. The program gives participants the skills and confidence to act as their own advocates in the workplace, home, and community. Participants are recognized and celebrated for their success. The program provides comprehensive supportive services to enable participants to persist in meeting their goals.

#### **Strengths**

In the focus groups and interviews held with teachers, students, and administrators, all groups named the importance of learning English in order to find work, graduate from high school, and be successful in the community. The array of courses provided at PAE enables students to achieve these goals. Success is celebrated at the end of the year when graduation parties are held in the classes. In addition, students achieving their high school equivalency receive their diplomas and certificates in a gala celebration at an auditorium downtown.

## Challenges

No overt goal setting by students was apparent in the curricula, the classes observed, or the interviews. Also, it was not clear whether and how student input was being solicited on all facets of the program.

## Recommendations

Institute a goal-setting activity through which students develop learning goals during the first week of each course. Add benchmarks to mark progress toward goal achievement. Participants should be able to set goals related to workplace, home/family, and community participation.

Templates for goal setting are available at the following websites:

<http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/74/reepcurriculum/index.html>

<http://www.cal.org/caela/tools/instructional/CombinedFiles1.pdf>;

<http://www.jeffco.edu/jeffco/images/business/pdfs/WorkkeysWIN/2.pdf>

Consider giving surveys to the students on a regular basis to ask if their needs are being met.

## ***Cultural competency***

Quality indicator definition: Program graduates have the cultural competence to successfully carry out their roles as parents, community members, and workers.

## Strengths

In the focus groups, both teachers and students mentioned that the ESOL program prepares them with the language and the information they need to be successful on their jobs and in the community. As one student said, “While we study English, we also learn about American culture.” Another pointed out that the program helped him to find a job by teaching him what was expected in an interview. Still another said that she is now more able to communicate with her children’s teachers, and so she can help her children do better in school.

While being aware of their responsibility of helping prepare students for life in the United States with the language and content they need, including cultural competency, PAE ESOL teachers are very respectful of their students’ culture and language. As one teacher said regarding PAE’s mission, they want the students to be comfortable with U.S. culture, but they do not expect that U.S. culture should replace the students’ original cultures. Teachers see themselves as giving the students something concrete to hold on to. They also think it is their responsibility to meet the students where they are in terms of language and cultural competency and go from there.

One student said he is asked to work as an interpreter/translator at the school at times, and this helps him feel more integrated into the culture.

## Challenges

Citizenship information is taught in a special citizenship class, which was not observed by the CAL auditor. Content around U.S. History and Social Studies is also taught in HSE classes that

were not observed. However, Civics content was not seen being presented in the other ESOL classes. While several of the higher level students made positive comments about how they are learning about U.S. culture from their classes, classroom observations revealed few attempts to connect classroom language and content with students' fulfillment of their roles as parents, community members, and workers. Too often the discussion was focused on a grammatical point, or a vocabulary item's meaning or pronunciation, or the text or worksheet. Teachers need to make connections to life and work explicit in the classroom, and encourage students to identify such connections themselves.

Because the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards are written to be used with students at all levels of proficiency this civics and workforce content should be present in all classes.

### Recommendations

Provide training and guidance that will enable teachers to be overt and mindful about the cultural competencies related to the language and content they are teaching. Teachers need to create learning objectives that draw on student learning goals and make explicit connections to cultural competence. They need to post these objectives in the classroom.

Revise the curriculum to include the following:

- ◆ Expectations for parental involvement in children's education
- ◆ Materials that address U.S. workplace norms and the language needed in the workplace
- ◆ Lessons and materials that address civics content and citizenship procedures at all ESOL levels
- ◆ Forms for learners to complete that include goals and benchmarks for progress on the job, in the community, and with their own or their children's education

### ***Outcomes***

Quality indicator definition: The program maintains a high rate of completion and success. Graduating participants are knowledgeable about community resources and opportunities to continue their studies in adult basic education (ABE), secondary completion, and postsecondary options such as higher education or workforce training.

### Strengths

PAE achieved the following outcomes in 2012-2013

- ◆ 436 High School Completion students earned 143 GEDs and 26 high school diplomas
- ◆ 184 Workforce Certificates awarded for Certified Nursing Assistants and Office Skills
- ◆ 87% of participants in the New Mainers-Refugee Workforce Development Project achieved employment
- ◆ 1,292 students from 82 countries studied English for Speakers of Other Languages, with approximately one third increasing their English literacy level by two grade levels
- ◆ 39 students enrolled at the Street Academy for Homeless Youth; 33 received GEDs and 42 received employment services
- ◆ 75 College Transitions students have enrolled in college since 2009

These outcomes, particularly the achievement of the level gains in ESOL, mean that the Maine Department of Education, Department of Labor, and State Workforce Investment Board will receive \$819,433 in federal incentive funds for meeting adult education and workforce development goals. The federal Department of Labor gives out grants to states based on the performance of statewide adult education and workforce systems. Only eight states, including Maine, met their goals in 2012-13 and will receive the extra incentive monies. Maine officials say the grant will be used to fund partnerships with industries. Maine last qualified for this kind of incentive grant 12 years ago.

PAE achieved the following outcomes in 2013-2014:

- 447 High School Completion students earned 163 GEDs and 40 high school diplomas
- 135 Workforce Certificates awarded for Certified Nursing Assistants and Office Skills
- 87% of participants in the New Mainers-Refugee Workforce Development Project achieved employment
- 1610 students from 82 countries studied English for Speakers of Other Languages, with approximately one third increasing their English literacy level by two grade levels
- 180 students enrolled at the Street Academy for Homeless Youth; 30 received GEDs or high school diplomas and 41 received employment services
- 80 College Transitions students have enrolled in college since 2009

In 2013-2014, the number of students achieving high school diplomas or certificates rose slightly with 40 students attaining their high school diplomas and 163 students passing the high school equivalency exams (GED ® or HiSET). Of the 447 enrolled in high school completion courses, this 203 represents 45%

### Challenges

Of the 1,202 students reported through June 30, 2014, 546 or 45% completed their levels and were eligible to either exit the program or advance to the next level. The percentage of those who completed their levels is broken down here by class:

- ESOL Literacy 37%
- Low Beginning ESL 46%
- High Beginning ESL 34%
- Low Intermediate ESL 20%
- High Intermediate ESL 22%
- Advanced ESL 10%

Although the overall numbers are high, a sharp decrease in number is noted between the beginning levels and the intermediate and advanced levels, where the completion rate fall to 22 % and below.

### Recommendations

Specific recommendations for strengthening the curriculum and instruction are provided in the responses to research questions 2, 3, and 4 below. These recommendations include supporting teacher professional development and increasing students' ability to set learning goal and measure progress toward goal achievement. By increasing the program's focus on the needs of the learners and connecting instruction to their roles in the community and the workplace, these recommendations will support an improvement in the achievement of level gains.

Specific recommendations regarding the scheduling of academic courses are provided in the response to research question 5 below. These recommendations include offering more intensive classes both for ESOL and for the academic courses so that students can exit the program in a shorter period of time. This recommendation will support an increase in the numbers of students attaining a high school diploma or high school equivalency credential each year.

### **Research Questions 2 and 3**

*How well does the instructional design work, including overall design, specific tasks and activities, and amount and type of interaction among participants and between instructor and participants? How does it contribute to achievement of program goals?*

*How do the characteristics of the instructors, in terms of professional background and experience, contribute to program outcomes? Should the program seek different or additional characteristics in its instructors?*

Evaluation outcomes for these two research questions are reported in relation to two quality indicators:

- ◆ Curriculum and Instruction
- ◆ Assessment

#### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

Quality indicator definition: The program has a curriculum in place that is based on participant needs and is appropriate for adult learners. Instruction is provided by trained instructors who understand the characteristics of adult learners and the nature of adult second language acquisition. The program reviews its curriculum and instructional approach(es) regularly to ensure that they remain current with pedagogical research findings and content themes and that they align with participant needs and goals.

#### **Strengths**

PAE has worked hard to design curricula that meet the needs of its diverse student population. For example, in addition to classes that mirror the six NRS performance levels for adults enrolled in ESL, there are classes for students who progress at a different rate or need to focus on a specific skill:

- ◆ Reading 10 for literacy level learners who are having trouble progressing to Level 1
- ◆ Intermediate Reading for those stuck between levels 2 and 3

- ◆ Intermediate Reading/Writing for those who have passed level 4 or 5 but still need more concentrated practice in literacy skills
- ◆ Reading/Writing 101 for HSE students who need focused reading and writing practice as they take high school completion or other academic classes
- ◆ Advanced Grammar for those who have completed Reading/Writing 101 and need more focused instruction on this component
- ◆ Writing Step by Step, a course for learners who have completed level 4 but need more writing and grammar instruction before enrolling in high school equivalency or college courses

ELs are also enrolled in large numbers in the academic courses that are taken in preparation for earning a high school diploma or passing a high school equivalency exam. These include such courses as Language Arts, Math, Applied Algebra, Readings in Social Studies, U.S. History, and Readings in Science.

Finally, ELs are enrolled in job skill classes such as ELL Basic Computers, Computers for Seniors, Workplace Communications, and Job Hunting Skills. In a focus group, one student mentioned the value of all that PAE offers, including the open schedule, the free classes, keyboarding classes, and help in obtaining a high school equivalency.

In PAE, ESOL levels correspond to the six NRS levels for ESL, from Literacy Level to Level 5. CASAS test scores are cross walked to the NRS levels. At intake, students are placed in classes according to their scores on the CASAS reading and writing exam. They are promoted to the next level by a combination of progress made on the CASAS post-test and teacher recommendation based on class work and class participation.

PAE has established benchmarks and descriptions for all the courses. An interesting and useful practice utilized in the program is to systematically practice vocabulary from the 100 most frequent words list. The teachers together decide on the books to be used in the program. Every other year books from the *Venture* series are used. Because so many students repeat a level, in the off years the teachers select different books for the students to avoid repetition.

PAE participates in the Maine Humanities Council (MHC) program New Books New Readers. According to the MHC website:

*New Books, New Readers* is a book discussion program for adults who are new readers or who are not in the habit of reading. It opens the world of books and ideas using literature that is accessible and thought-provoking and encourages reading as an enjoyable lifelong personal and family activity. Participants learn to love reading by engaging in facilitated discussions that relate a book's themes to their own lives. They are given a copy of every book in the series to keep and are encouraged to share their enjoyment with family and friends.

Humanities-based book discussion using the *New Books, New Readers* model was designated a "Promising Practice" by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, in partnership with the New England Literacy Resource Center, in 2004. More information can be seen at [the NELRC website](#).

Although it was not seen during the classroom visits, the instructor said that students in an advanced class were particularly engaged in one book and able to relate their life experiences to that of the protagonist and enjoyed talking about the challenges they and their children face. It was later reported to the CAL observer that the instructor of this class uses the Maine reading activities as a hook to get students to the library. Further, one student shared information with this instructor that he had so loved reading the book that he had begun a book club in his neighborhood.

The teachers are dedicated to their students and seemed to genuinely like and respect them. In one observed classroom, the teacher asked students to talk about themselves; the teacher then invited the class to ask one another questions. The students were very interested and anxious to do this activity. Most of the teachers observed had clearly made a plan for the class, and some had the agenda on the board. Some of the teachers observed had been trained in a method, such as Step by Step Writing, Wilson Reading, or STAR Reading, and this training was applied effectively in the classroom. For example, one teacher trained in the STAR direct method of reading asked her students to show her where in the text they could find the answer to a question. This is in line with one of the foci of the College and Career Readiness Standards: using evidence in the oral or written text to support an answer.

### Challenges

#### *Curriculum*

Although PAE has established benchmarks and descriptions for the ESOL classes, the style, format, content, and skills described differ greatly among the levels. For example, the curricula for one level class describes the oral, listening, reading, and writing skills at that level and provides “teaching suggestions” in a section called “alphabets.” They are not teaching suggestions, however, but rather describe what the learner can do at this level. Another level is arranged by domains (called categories), such as personal, social, cultural, community, housing, occupation, health and safety, and so on. The domains are divided into topics with associated skills (like language functions), language skills, and grammar structures. Other levels are organized by parts of speech and language skills, and no content is listed. These differences may make it difficult for teachers and students to move from one level to another with a true sense of continuity.

In a couple of focus groups, teachers and administrators talked about the gap between the top level ESOL classes and Language Arts, the class to prepare students for a high school equivalency certification. Students are not necessarily prepared to read short pieces and write essays about them on a regular basis, as they must do in Language Arts. The administrators also mentioned that in the language arts classes so much time is devoted to getting the students' writing up to speed that grammar as a topic and focus may be crowded out. Students are also aware of the importance of writing, and one mentioned that he wished there were a level 5 writing class. Note, however, that PAE does offer a “Writing Workshop” for students who have either completed level 4 or level 5.

Students also cited the following instructional needs:

- ◆ A free accent reduction course (PAE offers an accent reduction class by a speech therapist for a fee of \$20)
- ◆ More conversation and speaking
- ◆ More grammar
- ◆ More vocabulary
- ◆ More tests
- ◆ More writing
- ◆ Online homework
- ◆ More English
- ◆ Fewer students in the class

There were no suggestions for less of anything currently offered. One student said she wished there were more teachers and fewer volunteers/students working in the computer lab; however, using high level students as tutors and native language interpreters in the language lab is in line with best practices, because doing so can take advantage of high level students' English skills, content knowledge, and native language proficiency.

#### *Use of textbooks*

Of the 13 classes observed, only three used the textbook assigned to the class. When asked why they were bringing in photocopied pages from other books rather than using the assigned text, many teachers responded that they did not like the textbook chosen for the year. It seems every other year the *Ventures* series is used, and this series is satisfactory to instructors. However, to accommodate those students who take a little longer to learn and may repeat a level, in off years instructors use other texts. Instructors indicated that dissatisfaction is fairly common when the *Ventures* series is not being used. Because the students pay for their textbooks, it is unfortunate that there are so many classes in which the book is apparently not being used. Students did not mention this as a problem, however.

#### *Classroom strategies and activities*

In one class a children's book describing the bad day an elementary school child was having, was being read and discussed with the students. While it is possible that some of the students had children, no link was made with their backgrounds as parents or even as people who have ever had a bad day. Instead the teacher asked the students to tell her what they hate to eat, the protagonist did so frequently in the book. The students seemed perplexed by this task. One replied that he didn't hate anything. The lesson, well-planned as it was, would have been appropriate for primary school children, but was not compelling for adults.

In fact, in the 13 classes observed, little activity around building background and tying instruction to students' previous experiences and studies was evident. Classroom observations showed few examples of instruction linking the content, vocabulary, or structures to the students' backgrounds. Building background with students in this way is a core best practice, especially for adults who have come to the ESOL classroom with years of life and education experience (Miller, 2010; Peyton, Moore, & Young, 2010).

Most of the classes were teacher fronted and directed, with the teacher asking questions and student or students responding. There was very little student-to-student interaction observed, and little content being discussed. The focus was largely placed on grammar and vocabulary.

Classes where attempts to connect to the students' background were evident were the more content-rich courses. For example, in ELL Computer Basics the instructor asked the students to send emails to one another describing what they had done during the weekend. In an intermediate level class, the teacher asked the students to talk about themselves and to ask each other questions. The teacher did not supply the students with the questions, so the students were encouraged to generate their own language.

### *Teacher observation and professional development*

All contracted teachers are observed by the Director of PAE once every three years. The ESOL Coordinator, who has no supervisory responsibility, also may observe teachers as part of "peer support." How often this happens, is not clear. New teachers are observed more frequently during their first year of employment. The protocol used in the new teacher observations was drawn from the Danielson method, which is used in all of Portland public school education from kindergarten through adult. It does not include a component in which the amount and type of language used in the classroom by the teacher and the students is recorded. Its first category, creating an environment of respect and rapport, includes "teacher interaction with students" and "student interaction with teacher." There is no rubric to describe and rate these interactions, however, and **student-to-student interaction**, a key component of language learning (see, for example, Burt, Peyton, and Schaetzel, 2008.; Miller, 2010; and Peyton, Moore, and Young, 2010) is not mentioned.

All of the ESOL teachers who responded to the online survey reported that they had received training in the past year, mainly in the Danielson method. Training on policies and procedures and information the instructors needed to know was delivered in bi-monthly meetings, where the teachers' time was paid. Although the teachers did not mention this in focus group meeting, the CAL observer was informed later by the program that training was also offered in *Using Volunteers in the Classroom*, *Integrating Pronunciation Techniques into the ESOL Classroom*, and *Evaluating and Teaching Writing in the Classroom*. Details on teachers' responses to this survey are provided in Appendix 5.

### Recommendations

#### *Curriculum*

Consider developing unified curricula across all levels, with integration of topics, functions, language skills, and grammar. For an example of such a curriculum, see <http://www.apsva.us/cms/lib2/VA01000586/Centricity/Domain/74/reepcurriculum/index.html>.

It is also recommended that the College and Career Readiness (CCR) Standards (Pimentel, 2013) be included in the curricula as these standards need to be addressed in all levels of instruction.

### *Teacher evaluation*

Consider adding a language component to Danielson, and a rubric for describing it. For an example, of such a rubric, see Marshall and Young (2009). Provide training in the use of the new rubric for all teachers.

Teachers may be experienced without being expert. Although they still need training, their seniority and longevity should be acknowledged in professional development or there will be no buy in. Consider setting up a system where new and experienced teachers work together in peer coaching and teaching. See for example Rodriguez and McKay (2009).

<http://www.cal.org/adultesl/resources/briefs/experienced-teachers-working-with-adult-english-language-learners.php>

In many adult education programs, ESOL coordinators have supervisory responsibilities. This allows them to be true instruction leaders for their instructors and to train, observe, coach, and provide technical assistance to the staff. This is not the case in the Portland where the ESOL coordinator has no supervisory responsibilities. Given the size, depth, and breadth of the Portland ESOL program it would seem appropriate and useful that an adult ESOL coordinator have at least some of these responsibilities.

### *Professional development*

Provide training to all PAE teachers in the College and Career Readiness Standards. While these standards were released in May 2013, they are not yet being addressed in PAE ESOL classes. The coordinator of the Language Arts courses noted that she has been reading about the standards and plans to train the Language Arts teachers using the text *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement*. However, because the standards are meant to be addressed at all levels from the beginning, CAL recommends that the training be provided for all the ESOL teachers, not just those teaching at the high school equivalency level. This recommendation was echoed by 9 of the 15 instructors who responded to the question “What training would you like to receive?” Several states, including Florida, Massachusetts, West Virginia, and Kentucky, have provided training for ABE and ESOL instructors on the standards. For some online resources, see, for example, <http://kya.e.ky.gov/educators/ccr.htm>. For information on how to include instruction that meets the standards and addresses higher order thinking skills for students at all levels of proficiency, see *Promoting Learner Transitions to Postsecondary Education and Work: Developing Academic Readiness Skills From the Beginning* (Parrish and Johnson, 2010).

CAL also recommends that PAE provide training on working with adult learners. Some of the most experienced teachers clearly had good teaching skills but not all seemed to be making the change from working with children to working with adults. Perhaps this could be a topic for the “Fun Fridays” study circles offered by the Language Arts coordinator. A recommended brief might be [Professional Development for Adult ESL Practitioners: Building Capacity](#) (Schatzel, Peyton, & Burt, 2008).

Finally, encourage and support administrators and coordinators to go to national conferences such as the State Directors meetings, or TESOL and COABE, where both evidence-based training and the latest information on national priorities and policies are presented. Program

administrators for the New Mainers Resource Center and Job Skills Program brought up the fact that they would like to receive professional development that would embed them in the jobs their higher level students might be looking for, such as Social Worker for asylum seekers.

### ***Assessment***

Quality indicator definition: The program uses both standardized and formative assessments to measure participant progress on an ongoing basis. The program uses assessment data to inform curricular development as well as classroom instruction.

### **Strengths**

PAE uses the scores from CASAS, an assessment for adult programs that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education, to place and measure student progress. To decide on student progression through one level to the next, the program uses CASAS pre- and post-test scores and student work as reflected in attendance, portfolios, and teacher recommendations. The CASAS levels are cross walked to the Career and College Readiness Standards.

### **Challenges**

Although the CASAS post-test scores, given at the end of year, are just part of what determines whether a student passes or fails, the students seem to think that only the CASAS score determines their progress through the program. Several students complained about this during one of the focus groups.

This points to a larger challenge: making sure the curriculum and assessments address the students' needs and goals, and that the links are made explicit to teachers and students alike. Both students and teachers need to have access to documentation of what students are learning, how they will be learning it, and how success in learning will be measured. In addition, the CCR Standards need to be part of the discussion in all the ESOL classes.

### **Recommendations**

Ensure that the students' voices are part of the equation, both at the level of the program planning and in the classroom.

Most adult education programs, particularly those serving adults learning English, serve learners with differing levels of language and literacy skills and past schooling. Program administrators need to ensure that all learners' needs are met; otherwise, learners may drop out without voicing dissatisfaction. Needs assessments can also provide insight into learner transition patterns and can guide the development of curricula that are responsive to learners' needs. For these reasons, programs need to assess learner needs and abilities shortly after intake and consistently evaluate progress throughout enrollment. Needs assessment tools for use with learners at all levels of English proficiency can be found in the *Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners* (National Center for Family Literacy & Center for Applied Linguistics, 2008).

Many program administrators use a variety of assessment tools to determine and track learner progress on a range of competencies (e.g., language proficiency, numeracy, health literacy). Standardized assessments are important for outcome and accountability reporting and for tracking learner progress and program effectiveness.

#### **Research Question 4**

*How do the characteristics of the participants, in terms of level of participation, task completion, motivation, previous education level, and degree of literacy in English and in the native language, contribute to program outcomes?*

Evaluation outcomes for this research question will be reported in relation to one quality indicator:

- ◆ High expectations / high support

#### ***High Expectations/High Support***

Quality indicator definition: The program helps participants develop high expectations by giving them the tools to define ambitious yet realistic goals and assess progress toward goal achievement. The program gives participants the skills and confidence to act as their own advocates in the workplace, home, and community. Participants are recognized and celebrated for their success. The program provides comprehensive supportive services to enable participants to persist in meeting their goals.

#### **Strengths**

Portland Adult Education (PAE) serves a highly diverse student body of over 5,000 students, over 1,700 (34%) of whom are in English as a second language (ESOL) classes. As evidenced in the comments from the student focus groups, students are well aware of the importance both of improving their language skills and in obtaining a high school equivalency diploma or certificate or progressing to further education. They deeply value the instruction PAE provides, including the ESOL classes, the Job Skills classes, the Transition classes, and the high school equivalency (HSE) content classes of science, math, language arts, and social studies. They also take advantage of opportunities to use their native language and previous education as interpreters and translators at the school, and as volunteers in the Computer Lab.

#### **Challenges**

Maine has long been an attractive location for immigrants, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, and has welcomed various population groups, including Southeast Asians, East Africans, and most recently, Central Africans. Over 30 languages are represented by these English learners (ELs), and no single language is spoken by a majority of them.

In addition to coming from many different language and cultural backgrounds, PAE students have varying degrees of English proficiency and literacy. They also have different goals and reasons for being in the program. Many want to access further education or to secure a job that can support them and their families. Others, however, particularly older students, may not plan to pursue a degree or to even work outside the home. These students find that the program meets their needs on a social level and may remain “stuck” in a level for years. Still others may wish for more direct instruction and for connections to parent groups in school.

Classroom observations revealed some tension in some classes, and teachers and administrators reported that for the first time they saw students in their classes who appeared to not necessarily want to be there. In some observed classes, some students were barely civil to the teachers and certainly less than civil to the other students. The noise level was high and not necessarily related to the task at hand.

### Recommendations

Promotion of greater learner engagement at all levels of instruction and throughout the learning process, from intake to graduation, may help to address classroom management issues.

Techniques for promoting learner engagement include the following (Peyton, Moore, & Young, 2010):

- ◆ Encourage constructive interaction among learners
- ◆ Connect instruction with learners’ lives
- ◆ Teach learning strategies explicitly
- ◆ Provide mechanisms that allow students to assess their own learning and that of their peers

When instruction is planned with learners’ needs and goals in mind, actively involves students in learning from one another, taps into their life experiences, and is challenging at learners’ varying levels, learner engagement is likely to be strong, and learning is more apt to occur. However, students need to know why they are learning what they are learning. For example, if they are reading a children’s book, why are they reading that book? What will they learn from it? What vocabulary? How will this vocabulary be useful to their lives? How will the grammar they are using now be important to them in the workplace and in the community? How will their writing assignment prepare them for writing in college? Put the objectives of each day’s lessons on the board and talk about them with the students. Talk about them at the end of the class to see how/if the objectives were met. Talk and write about real issues and topics in the students’ lives.

Instructional approaches that can facilitate learner engagement include task-based learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning, literature circles, and classroom-based assessment. For suggestions on activities and strategies to build learner engagement, see [Promoting Learner Engagement When Working With Adult English Language Learners](#) (Miller, 2010).

The recommendations provided in the section on community involvement below may also help to promote learner engagement and address student motivation issues.

## Research Question 5

*How does the agency's involvement, in terms of recruiting participants and supporting their participation, contribute to program success?*

Evaluation outcomes for this research question will be reported in relation to two quality indicators:

- ◆ Resources and Operations
- ◆ Community Collaboration

### ***Resources and Operations/***

Quality indicator definition: The program has adequate funding and funding development mechanisms to ensure sustainability. Instructional resources are a budget priority and hours of operation are based on participant needs.

#### **Strengths: Funding and Funding Development**

Less than a decade ago, PAE had fewer than 500 individuals enrolled in ESOL classes. Having swelled to four times that size, the program has had to quickly develop staff and resources to meet that demand.

Funding for the program come from a combination of federal money, state money, and grants from private organizations. In addition to receiving money through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the state of Maine, Portland has received grants and is engaged in partnerships with the following organizations:

- ◆ City of Portland Community Development Block Grant, which supports Portland's Job Alliance
- ◆ The Evergreen foundations, which supports Maine's Workforce Alliance
- ◆ The John T. Gorman Foundation, which provided the computer lab that assists waitlisted and registered students with their English language skills
- ◆ The Emanuel and Pauline A. Lerner Foundation, which computerized and improved the student intake process
- ◆ The Maine Health Access Foundation, which supports the New Mainer's Resource Center that provides career guidance and job search training for new Mainers with a Bachelor's degree and above, and also provides job skills training for learners at all levels
- ◆ Friends of Portland Adult Education, which raises resources and awareness to support adults at PAE who are striving to become stronger citizens, employees, parents, entrepreneurs
- ◆ Individual volunteers, who provide over 4,000 hours of tutoring and assistance in the classroom

#### **Strengths: Instructional Resources**

Foundation partnerships make important contributions to the quality and success of the program. For example, the computer lab funded by the John T. Gorman Foundation functions not only as a

drop-in lab but also as the first class for students who enter the program between trimesters and must wait until class space is open for them. A certified adult education instructor manages the lab and counsels each student who enters on the appropriate starting level. One administrator pointed out that some students who have scheduled themselves into the computer lab regularly for an extended time — such as six to eight weeks over the summer, when the program is closed — have asked to be retested and have tested into a higher level on the NRS scale.

In three of the observed classes, each student had a small whiteboard to use to respond individually to questions the teacher was posing. This is a useful resource for several reasons:

- ◆ Students can give individual responses to each question or task and the teacher can see at a glance what each student does / does not understand.
- ◆ Quieter students who do not speak up, have superior reading and writing skills, or let others do the work in groups have the opportunity to show what they can do.
- ◆ Errors can be corrected and new information added to language tasks easily. This feature can help reduce reluctance in students who do not want to write something in English for fear of making a mistake.

Every class also had a textbook that was purchased by the student. In focus groups, teachers stated that they worked hard to ensure that textbooks were not too expensive. However, having the students purchase their own texts gives ownership and buy-in into the class.

#### Strengths: Scheduling

PAE classes are held in four sessions from morning to evening to meet the scheduling needs of the students. Students may choose from four possible time periods:

9:00 - 11:15 AM

11:45 AM - 2:00 PM

2:45-5:00 PM

6:00- 8:30 PM

Most classes meet 5-6 hours per week on either a Monday-Wednesday or a Tuesday-Thursday schedule. On Friday mornings some of the ESOL literacy level students receive an extra class session, as do one class of ESOL Level 1 and one class of ESOL Level 2.

Classes are provided at the Franklin Towers apartment complex for low income elderly participants. A couple of students mentioned that this is a good service.

#### Challenges: Resources

Before the adult education program moved to the location at Cathedral School, there was a bus that picked up students. This free service is no longer provided due to the cost to the program and to the fact that there is city bus service to the new location. In a focus group, a couple of students mentioned that they wished the bus were still provided.

### Challenges: Schedule

The class schedule and typical class size (approximately 30 per group) demonstrate that PAE has made the decision to serve as many students as possible. The schedule allows PAE to serve students throughout the day and evening. However, with this schedule, most students receive only 5-6 hours of instruction per week; as a result, learning can take place only slowly. More intensive instruction is needed in order for students to more quickly gain the language proficiency and the content knowledge they need to meet their work, community, and education goals.

### Recommendations

That language and level gains are tied both to hours of instruction and intensity of instruction is both intuitively and empirically true (Malone, Rifkin, Christian, & Johnson, 2004; Thompson, 2011; Young, 2007). In a qualitative study of adult ELs in two states, Young (2007) measured level gains against hours and intensity of instruction. Her study revealed that students who were studying English with high intensity, that is, a higher ratio of instructional hours to number of weeks in which the hours were fulfilled, performed better than those with less intensive courses. That is, a higher percentage of students studying in high intensity classes achieved level gains in English than those studying in lower intensity classes. Interestingly, in this study, students at the advanced levels were especially more likely to learn more when the intensity of the program was higher. In PAE, however, although some of the lower level ESOL classes offer up to seven or eight hours of instruction a week, all of the advanced level courses only offer five.

Whereas HS diploma students and those in level 5 ESOL and above are able to take up to four classes per semester in subjects such as math, reading in social studies, and reading in science, it seems that students are unaware of this option or hesitant to take it: Several students in the focus group spoke of the long time it will take for them to get a high school diploma. In addition, the CAL observer is not sure the schedule facilitates the taking of multiple classes.

It is recommended the program offer intensive hours for some sections of selected levels. This would enable those students who have the time to focus their attention on getting the language and content knowledge necessary for them to meet their work, community, and educational goals. One group to target would be students who have aged out of the K-12 system and need to attain their high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate. These students are already at an advanced ESOL level, but need many hours of instruction in language arts, social studies, math, and science. As one student pointed out in a focus group, he is already 22 and he needs to get his high school diploma. Since 11.5 required courses and 9 elective courses are required to graduate with a high school diploma, this student will need to remain with the PAE program for at least two more years to acquire enough hours to achieve that goal. PAE could offer a compressed course of 4-6 hours per day for 8-10 weeks in the summer for higher level students, such as those in ESOL 5, language arts, math, and the high school equivalency course. Another possibility would be to consider Friday afternoon and Saturday hours during the regular year for these students, as no classes are currently scheduled after 11:30 AM on Fridays.

A look at the data on student employment seems to support the recommendation above of more intensive classes. In 2014, only 13% of the PAE students were employed fulltime, and 16% were employed part time. 38% were unemployed, and 33% were not in the labor force, indicating they are not looking for work at this time. It seems that with this schedule, even with family and other responsibilities, a large percentage of students would be able to enroll in a more intensive course of English. Certainly, the comments of the teachers, administrators, and students point to the interest in pursuing this topic.

### ***Community Collaboration***

Quality indicator definition: The program values community engagement and creates structures and resources to promote them. Participants are actively engaged with community services and resources provided through the program and partner organizations.

### **Strengths**

PAE responds to the need for specific in-depth instruction for students regarding workplace, family, and community affairs via job skill classes and additional workshops in collaboration with community partners on such topics as financial literacy and health literacy. For example, on a Friday during the observation week in June, some dentists came to the program to talk about oral hygiene with students.

In addition, there were multiple flyers about community events posted inside and outside classrooms throughout the Cathedral School. Some of the flyers announced programs inside PAE and others referred to community programs outside of the school. For example, the College Transitions Program is free for all adults with a high school diploma or GED certificate. This program is sponsored by PAE and provides financial aid, career advising, Accuplacer testing, computer access at school, workshops and college tours, and courses and books to help prepare students for higher education also brings in the community to the school..

PAE students are planning to produce a student newspaper, which should be unveiled in winter 2014-15.

The same group of students are also planning to start a student government body, or association. A Student Government Association (SGA) is a student-led organization of student-elected representatives. Each class votes on representatives who make sure the ideas of each class are heard. The SGA sets priorities and develops projects for the school and the community based on feedback from classmates. This is a way to allow students to give back to the school and the community, and to practice leadership skills. It seems that the students are already primed to be leaders and to participate in their education: Students from PAE marched on City Hall to protest their lack of space. As a result, all classes were moved to the Cathedral School.

### **Challenges**

The data reported to CAL on the education levels of the students enrolled in PAE ESOL in 2013 – fall 2014: reveal a fairly wide range

- 26% have a college or professional degree
- 14 % have some college experience
- 26 % have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate
- 9% have 9-12 years of school in their native country, but no diploma
- 18% have completed 1-8 years of school

In addition to educational background, the student vary widely by age, English level, native language, previous educational and work background (as was seen above in the section on curriculum). Because the backgrounds of the students are so varied, their needs also vary. In addition, the status of the students differ, being that refugees, immigrants, and those requesting asylum are all served by the program. Some have been in the country for years, others are newly arrived. For example, one group of students may need orientation to using public transportation, another might need to know how to use free health clinics. Yet another might need assistance in translating educational documents and work certificates. In fact, these are all topics brought up by the students in the focus groups. Furthermore, some students may need the information in the native language; and some of the native languages represented in the school have so few speakers, that translation services are not always available.

### Recommendations

PAE could institute a more focused needs assessment effort in which program administrators and staff meet with students regularly. For example, the program could regularly schedule “listening tours” where students can speak to or ask questions of program administrator. For those students at the lower levels, a higher level student could accompany them to such a meeting to apply interpretive services as needed. This would also be a good way to encourage involvement of students at the higher level. The program could then prioritize topics, plan, and schedule events such as speakers, or family meetings at school.

In addition to the graduation ceremonies held at the end of the year, the program might consider offering certificates to students who have achieved other milestones, such as making the most progress in English or obtaining a job.

### **Summary**

Portland Adult Education operates a large program with marked variety among the English learners in terms of language backgrounds, educational backgrounds, countries of origin, goals for being in the program, age, years in the United States, levels of English, and socioeconomic status. The program is strong in several areas:

- ◆ Most teachers are experienced and certified, if not in ESL, in some educational field (see appendix 5)

- ◆ Staff have positive attitudes about ELs
- ◆ Teacher passion and commitment is high
- ◆ Staff are welcoming and helpful, and see diversity as a strength
- ◆ Students are motivated
- ◆ PAE has all classes and students in one location; it is truly an adult school including academics, job skills, and the New Mainer’s Resource Center under one roof
- The Friends of Portland Adult Education help bring community partners together to compile human, capital, and space resources to serve the diverse needs of ELs
- PAE tries hard to meet every challenge and address the needs of the students as they see them

PAE has grown rapidly in less than a decade and the program has expanded and adapted to meet the needs of the diverse population it serves. It has done a good job with “just in time” classes and services. Now is the time to take a long look at the program’s policies, procedures, services, practices, resources, instruction, assessment, and partnership. It is time to make the program more unified and coherent. The program certainly has the dedicated, qualified professionals needed to do so.

The following are the key recommendations from this audit to help the PAE ESOL program fulfill its mission and better serve its adult English learners:

- ◆ Standardize the curriculum across ESOL levels and from ESOL to Job Skills and Language Arts classes and begin the process of incorporating the Career and College Readiness Standards into the ESOL curriculum at all levels of instruction
- ◆ Increase the intensity of some classes offered, especially those for students with higher levels of English proficiency and for out of school young adults studying to complete their high school equivalency. Consider offering additional classes on Fridays, Saturday mornings, and in the summer to handle the room/space instructor issue.
- ◆ Provide professional development to ESOL teachers on teaching language through content, using learner input in curriculum design and in classroom activities, developing academic vocabulary, providing opportunities for student to student interaction, and using the CCR Standards in lesson planning.
- ◆ Add a language component to the Danielson Teacher Evaluation Form.
- ◆ Continue to utilize community resources and partnerships to serve English learners.

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## **Appendix 2. Focus Group Protocols**

### ***Focus Group Questions: Students***

1. What are your goals for enrolling in adult ESOL classes?
2. How is the program helping you meet your goals?
3. What class are you in now? Will you continue to study here? Why? Why not?
4. If yes, what do you plan to take next? When do you think you will be in the class?
5. Do you have a job? Has the program prepared you for the job? How?
6. What do you find useful about the program (for example, curriculum, additional services, offered, other...)?
7. What else would help you meet your goals? Are there additional services you would like to see the program offer (for example, job counseling and placement, help with immigration, child care, transportation)?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Are there any questions you would like to ask me?

### ***Focus Group Questions: Administrators***

1. On the Portland Public Schools home page it says “The mission of Portland Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is to educate citizens who demonstrate the academic, team work, and personal management skills needed to function effectively in a global society.” Is this also the mission of the Portland adult ESOL program? What do you see as the mission of Portland’s adult ESOL program?
2. How do you see the program meeting its mission?
3. What percentage of the adult ELL population is being served? What would be needed to serve more?
4. In Maine, what is the percentage negotiated with OCTAE for students in adult ESOL who are moving up a level? Is Portland making that level?
5. How is the program changing (population served, standards, new high school equivalency, other)?
6. What is the program doing to address these changes? (for example, providing training, rewriting curriculum, other)? What else is needed?
7. How are you being prepared to address these changes?
8. What, if any additional training would you like to receive?
9. I understand that teachers are evaluated on the Danielson model? How has the program prepared both you and the teachers for that?
10. Is there something I didn’t ask you, but should have asked you? Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Do you have questions for me?

### ***Focus Group Questions: Teachers***

1. On the Portland Public Schools home page it says “The mission of Portland Public Schools, in partnership with the community, is to educate citizens who demonstrate the academic, team work, and personal management skills needed to function effectively in a global society.” Is this also the mission of the Portland adult ESOL program? What do you see as the mission of Portland’s adult ESOL program? How do you see the program meeting its mission?
2. How does the program prepare you to meet this mission?
3. How is the program changing (population served, standards, new high school equivalency, other)?
4. How are you being prepared to address these changes?
5. What, if any additional training would you like to receive?
6. How are you evaluated? Can you tell me about it? Do you feel this is an appropriate and useful way to be evaluated in your role as and adult ESOL instructor? Why or why not?
7. Is there something I didn’t ask you, but should have asked you?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me? Do you have questions for me?

### Appendix 3. Classroom Observation Protocol

## Classroom Observation Form

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and Time: \_\_\_\_\_  
Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Class/Level of Students: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of students: \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ F

### Major focus of observation (collaborative/formative supervision)

**Area of strength:**

**Area where suggestions would be welcome:**

**On Board:**

### Seating Chart and Student Participation:

(Mark following next to each student who participates:

A - Answered; AG – Answered with extended language; VA – Volunteered A

Q – Asked question; VQ – Volunteered Q

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of students who talked  
\_\_\_\_\_ Number of students who volunteered  
\_\_\_\_\_ Number of students who asked questions

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of students who generated language

\_\_\_\_\_ Percentage of time teacher talked; \_\_\_\_\_ Percentage of student talk

**Examples of Questions teacher asked:**

Recall

Comprehension

Summary

Opinion/Evaluation

**Examples of Answers students provided:**

One word or brief

Repetition or paraphrase

Student-generated with examples, reasons, etc.

**Examples of Student Volunteered Questions:**

**Examples of Student Volunteered Answers:**

**Pair work - how often and approximate time:**

**Small group work – how often and approximate time:**

**Large group work – how often and approximate time:**

**Activities that focus on**

**Listening:**

**Speaking:**

**Reading:**

**Writing:**

Adapted and used with permission from Crandall, J. (2009). *Classroom Observation for Supervision and Professional Development*. Institute given at University of Maryland, Baltimore City.

#### Appendix 4. Synthesis of Classroom Observation Data

13 classes observed (ESOL Literacy, ESOL 1; ESOL 2; ESOL 3; ESOL 4; ESOL 5; Reading 10; Intermediate Reading; Intermediate Reading/Writing; Reading/Writing 101; ELL Basic Computers; Language Arts).

Classroom Arrangement: All seated at tables facing front; in two classes observed, students moved to form groups.

T = Teacher; S/Ss = Student/Students; x = observed

Class in order of % Ss talk	% T/Ss Talk	% Ss Talk	% Ss Volunteer	% Ss Ask Qs	% Ss *Generate Language	Ss work in small groups	Ss work in pairs	T and full group only	On front board	Teacher Qs: Recall Comprehension	T Qs Summary Evaluate	**Text-based work	Objectives on board or discussed
1	25/75	100	33.33	100	100	x			agenda	x	x		
2	40/60	100	100	100	100	x			agenda/ warm up activity	x			
3	40/60	100	66	66	0		x		nothing	x			
4	45/55	100	0	50	0	x			nothing	x			
5	50/50	100	100	100	100	x			vocabulary items	x	x		
6	50/50	100	71	8	8	x			nothing	x	x		
7	60/40	100	88	0	17			x	agenda	x	x	x	
8	65/35	100	0	20	100			x	nothing	x	x		x
9	70/30	100	0	0	0			x	agenda	x	x	x	
10	70/30	100	18	100	70	x	x		dates warm up activity	x	x		
11	80/20	100	0	0	0			x	alphabet	x			
12	80/20	100	0	0	0			x	alphabet calendars	x			
13	85/25	100	0	0	0			x	agenda warm up			x	

\*Generate language means that students ask questions of the teacher or one another, or make comments that are not solicited by teacher prompts.

\*\* Text based work means that teacher asks students to give answers from the text and to cite evidence for their answers.

## Appendix 5. Synthesis of Responses to PAE ESOL Instructor Survey

Nineteen teachers participated in the survey:

- ◆ 4 contract
- ◆ 14 hourly
- ◆ 1 did not indicate status

For each question, respondents were offered a series of choices; in some cases multiple options could be selected. Some questions also had a space where respondents could provide additional information.

1. What courses did you teach this past year (2013-14) at Portland Adult Education? Please check all that apply.

Beginning ESOL Literacy  
ESOL 1  
ESOL 2  
ESOL 3  
ESOL 4  
ESOL 5  
Language Arts  
Reading 10  
Reading/writing  
ESOL Job skills  
Computer Lab  
Other: Please list

2. How many years of experience do you have in adult ESOL instruction? (19 respondents)

Less than two	2
2-5 years	2
6-10 years	9
11-15 years	3
16-20 years	1
20-30 years	0
30+ years	2

3. What certificates and diplomas do you hold? Please check all that apply. (19 respondents)

Adult Education Endorsement	8
K-12 Education	7
High School Equivalency Endorsement	0
Praxis: English	8
Praxis: Math	1

Other: TESL(2) ; endorsements in ESL and special education; adult education; RSA;

BA/BS

13

**Fields of Study:** English (3respondents); Linguistics; German, Sociology; Western Civilization; History (3); Psychology; Fine Arts (Sculpture); Elementary education; (5); Secondary education in social studies; Secondary education in language arts; American Studies (3); Literature (2); Italian

MA 13

**Fields of study:** Adult Education/emphasis ESOL; MSc in Public Health; American Studies; Screenwriting /film : EdM in Human Development

PhD

0

4. What professional development (PD) have you had in the past year? Please check all that apply. (16 respondents)

Bimonthly meetings at Cathedral School: 14

Friday Study Circles at Cathedral School: 7

State or National Conferences: 2

*Write ins:*

1 respondent: Students Taking Ownership of Learning Residence at School for International Training: received MA in TESOL

1 respondent: District-wide course on impact of poverty in the classroom

1 respondent: Graduate certificate received in December

1 respondent: NNETESOL conference; MAEA Conference

5. What were the topics of the PD? Please check all that apply. (12 respondents)

HiSet: New high school equivalency exam: 2

Standards: 7

Danielson Method of Evaluation: 6

*Write ins:*

1 respondent: TESL Topics; utilizing volunteers in the classroom; evaluating writing samples of ESOL students; determining benchmarks for ESOL levels

1 respondent: Generation 1. 5 academic study skills; writing instruction

1 respondent: Student assessment; teaching techniques; classroom strategies

1 respondent: utilizing volunteers in the classroom; evaluating writing samples of ESOL students; determining benchmarks for ESOL levels

1 respondent: TESL Topics

6. What would you like to have training in? Please check all that apply. (15 respondents)

New high school equivalency exam: 4  
Integrating the Career and College Readiness Standards in instruction and assessment of English language learners: 9  
Danielson Method of Evaluation: 2  
Working with English language learners with emergent literacy: 6  
Preparing learners for success in the workforce or in further study: 8  
How adult English language learners differ from ABE learners: 5  
Integrating civics content with language instruction: 0

*Write-ins*

1 respondent: Student assessment; ways to teach reading and writing; ways to empower students; teaching vocabulary

1 respondent: Student assessment; student ownership of learning; teaching writing to learners

1 respondent: More tech training – using computers in the classroom

1 respondent: How to assess listening and speaking skills

1 respondent: Facilitating students' transition from ESOL classes to the high school programs offered by PAE and beyond

## **Appendix 6. Quality Indicators for Adult Education Programs (Burt & Coon, 2014)**

### **1. High expectations / high support**

The program helps participants develop high expectations by giving them the tools to define ambitious yet realistic goals and assess progress toward goal achievement. The program gives participants the skills and confidence to act as their own advocates in the workplace, home, and community. Participants are recognized and celebrated for their success. The program provides comprehensive supportive services to enable participants to persist in meeting their goals.

### **2. Cultural competency**

Program graduates have the cultural competence to successfully carry out their roles as parents, community members, and workers.

### **3. Outcomes**

The program maintains a high rate of completion and success. Graduating participants are knowledgeable about community resources and opportunities to continue their studies in adult basic education (ABE), secondary completion, and postsecondary options such as higher education or workforce training.

### **4. Curriculum and instruction**

The program has a curriculum in place that is based on participant needs and is appropriate for adult learners. Instruction is provided by trained instructors who understand the characteristics of adult learners and the nature of adult second language acquisition. The program reviews its curriculum and instructional approach(es) regularly to ensure that they remain current with pedagogical research findings and content themes and that they align with participant needs and goals.

### **5. Assessment**

The program uses both standardized and formative assessments to measure participant progress on an ongoing basis. The program uses assessment data to inform curricular development as well as classroom instruction.

### **6. Resources and Operations**

The program has adequate funding and funding development mechanisms to ensure sustainability. Instructional resources are a budget priority and hours of operation are based on participant needs.

### **7. Community Collaboration**

The program values community engagement and creates structures and resources to promote them. Participants are actively engaged with community services and resources provided through the program and partner organizations.