The California Adult Education 2011-12 Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Program

A Review

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Contents

The California Adult Education 2011-12 Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Program — A Review

Prepared with data from CASAS and assistance from Dr. Richard Stiles, Consultant to CASAS

Executive Summary

This report is the eleventh 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 distance learning (DL) and offer comparative information on adult education DL in California.[ii] For ease of reading, the program will be referred to as "Innovation Programs" throughout the report.

The report draws data from two sources as follows: [iii] [iv]

- Innovation Program applications: 2011-12 and prior years
- Federal P.L. 105-220, Workforce Investment Act, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Section 223, Section 225, Section 231 (AEFLA)—which contained
    - Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro) Entry and Update records 2011-12 and prior years
    - CASAS reading and listening pre- and post-tests 2011-12 and prior years

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

The Legislation

On July 1, 1993, AB 1943 became law (Education Code 52522), allowing adult education programs the option, after approval by California Department of Education, to use up to five percent of their block entitlement for innovative techniques and nontraditional instructional methods with new technologies. According to Education Code, participation in this option was permissive, by application only. Adult schools were required to submit an application and receive approval before program implementation. All proposed instruction was intended and designed for adult populations. All criteria specified in Education Code Section 52523 applied to all instruction provided. Expenditures used to implement this option were not to exceed five percent of the district's adult education block entitlement. The five percent, or any smaller part thereof, was not additional funding but was contained within the district's adult education block entitlement. Reimbursement for instruction through this option was computed on other than seat time accounting.

In 2008, legislation expanded the permission to use block entitlement funding from 5 to 15 percent for Innovation Programs, based on specific requirements. The resulting Innovation Programs continued to grow while overall adult education remained relatively static. However in the 2009-10 program year, legislated flex funding was instituted for school districts in California, allowing funds allocated for adult education to be used for any purpose local school boards of education deemed necessary. School districts were no longer bound by the California Education Code in relation to adult education; State reporting requirements were no longer required. This action impacted the reported number of adult learners participating in the Innovation Program during the following three years of flex funding implementation (2009-10 to the current reporting

program year 2011-12), resulting in an 80 percent drop in enrollment (70,472 in 2008-09 to 13,825 in 2011-12). Some school districts have continued and even expanded their delivery of instruction via DL, but many others made major cuts to DL programs, in some cases eliminating them entirely.

However, under current conditions that include, in some cases, the flexing of adult education state funding, the Education Code no longer applies. This meant that federal requirements were still in place for AEFLA, but state requirements were now optional through flex funding. There was no legislated floor nor ceiling limit on the amount of budget spent on adult education as well as its programs like DL; there was no requirement for adult schools participating in the Innovation Program to submit an annual application nor annual evaluation. Adult schools were encouraged to submit an application and maintain the same records as before because accountability would remain critical to the furtherance of DL in the future. However preparing applications and maintaining records incur costs that have deterred many adult schools from submitting applications and the accountability documentation.

Having availability of the federal AEFLA data enabled researchers to describe and examine DL program characteristics, learner characteristics, and learner progress and outcomes using several measures. However, the lack of a State requirement with supportive fiscal resources for a statewide adult student data collection and reporting system has diminished the complexity and diversity of the educational gains adult learners made through their involvement in the Innovative Program of DL.

Innovation Program participation was and continues to be available only to state-funded adult schools in the K12 system. In 2008-09 the federal Office of Vocational and Adult Education issued assessment requirements and guidelines for programs seeking AEFLA reimbursement for learner gains in DL courses; California began requiring all AEFLA funded agencies to submit an Innovation Program application if any of their federal fund reimbursements were generated from use of DL instruction. To date no additional agencies have applied, since no additional funding was attached to DL.

For the seventh year, the report compared and contrasted key outcome data between classroom learning, distance learning only (DL Only), and a blend of classroom and distance learning (DL Blended). The importance of DL Blended as an effective intervention whenever possible is clearly documented. This has major program implications at the state and national levels. When classroom and the Innovation Program data were compared, it was clear that the DL Blended approach provided consistently superior results than either classroom or DL Only by themselves in increasing student learning outcomes.

In California, the adult education DL Blended model has a very specific description. It refers to adult schools with Innovation Programs that offer somewhat simultaneous classroom and DL courses in which learners 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.

N.B. Prior annual reports of the Innovation Program charted enrollments of all state funded instructional programs from all adult school programs offering DL instruction as an option in addition to adult literacy providers receiving AEFLA Federal Funding. Over the past 12 years,

enrollment from state-funded-only adult schools accounted for an average of five percent, but ranged between four and nine percent. Data collection and reporting has become optional for state funded programs due to flex funding, and many adult schools have chosen not to collect and submit program data voluntarily. Only the federal program requires data collection and reporting from adult literacy providers participating in AEFLA Funding. As a result, data sources used in this report came from only the Innovation Program Applications submitted by adult schools and the AEFLA data base and its funded programs of English as a Second Language (ESL), Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE), exclusively. Historical and trend data have been adjusted in this report to reflect only the AEFLA data for ESL, ABE, and ASE.

Changes in Participation Since 2000

Chart 2 displays the growth and change in the Innovation Program from 2000-01 to 2011-12 when standardized non-duplicated student enrollment data has been available. In 2011-12, fifty-six adult schools were approved to offer DL programs, and forty submitted year-end evaluations. Nearly 14,000 learners participated in these programs and 11,224 qualified for inclusion in the National Reporting System (NRS) Tables for federal AEFLA accountability. The chart displays the growth of DL over the initial nine years (2000 through 2008-09) as well as the dramatic drop in reported enrollments for the ensuing three year of flex funding (2009 through 2012). Overall, Chart 2 shows a steady growth in student participation in DL over a nine-year period until the budget crisis and implementation of flex funding that occurred in 2009. From 2000-01 to 2008-09 the program grew in enrollment 239 percent (20,812 to 70,472). With the implementation of flex funding, enrollment plummeted during the next three years to only 13,825 for an 80 percent drop in enrollment from program year 2008-09. This presented a denial of educational access for 56,477 least educated most in need learners and their families who were previously engaged in critical core curriculum programs of adult literacy that were assisting them to become more independent and more economically self- sufficient. Flex funding is currently extended through 2014-15.
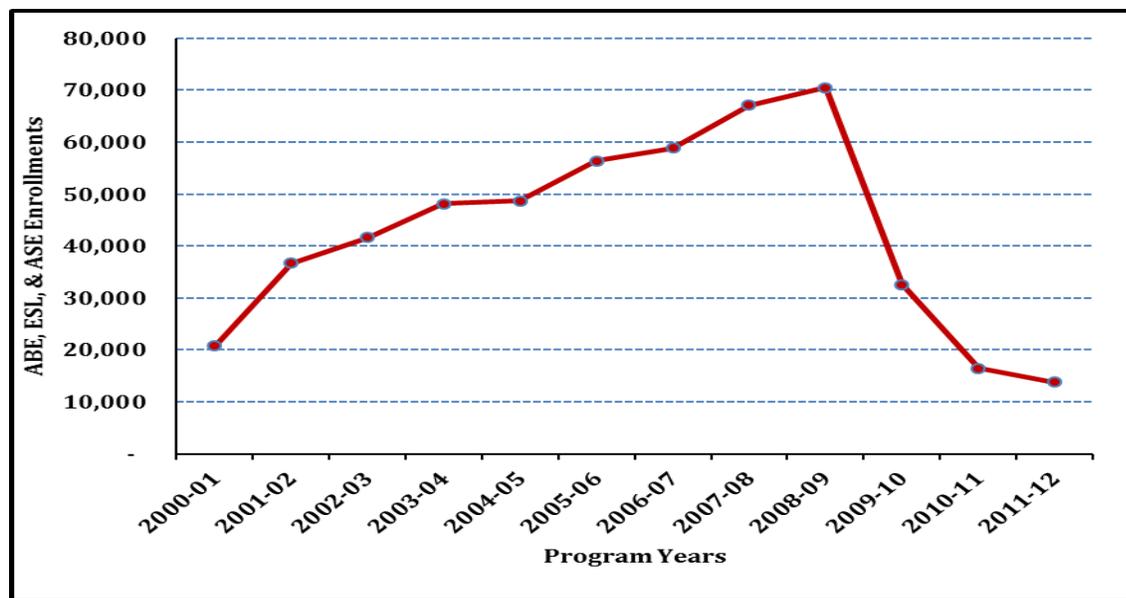

Chart 2: Enrollment/Participation of AEFLA Learners in ABE, ESL, ASE Enrolled in the Innovation Program from 2000 to 2012 showing a 3-year 80% enrollment loss from 2008-09.(Source: CASAS 2012)

ABE and ASE Distance Learning Effectiveness

Chart 24 displays the National Reporting System (NRS) Functional Instructional Level completion rates of ABE/ASE over six years for both DL instructional modalities and classroom learning. DL Blended and classroom learning had the highest level completion rates. They continued on a somewhat parallel course of increasing rates of level completion while DL Only at 15.6 percent below classroom learners in 2006-07; despite the negative fiscal impacts of flex funding, adult schools persisting to provide DL Only almost doubled the completion rate from 2009-10. All three learning interventions showed increases in NRS Instructional Level completion rates leading up to and including 2011-12.
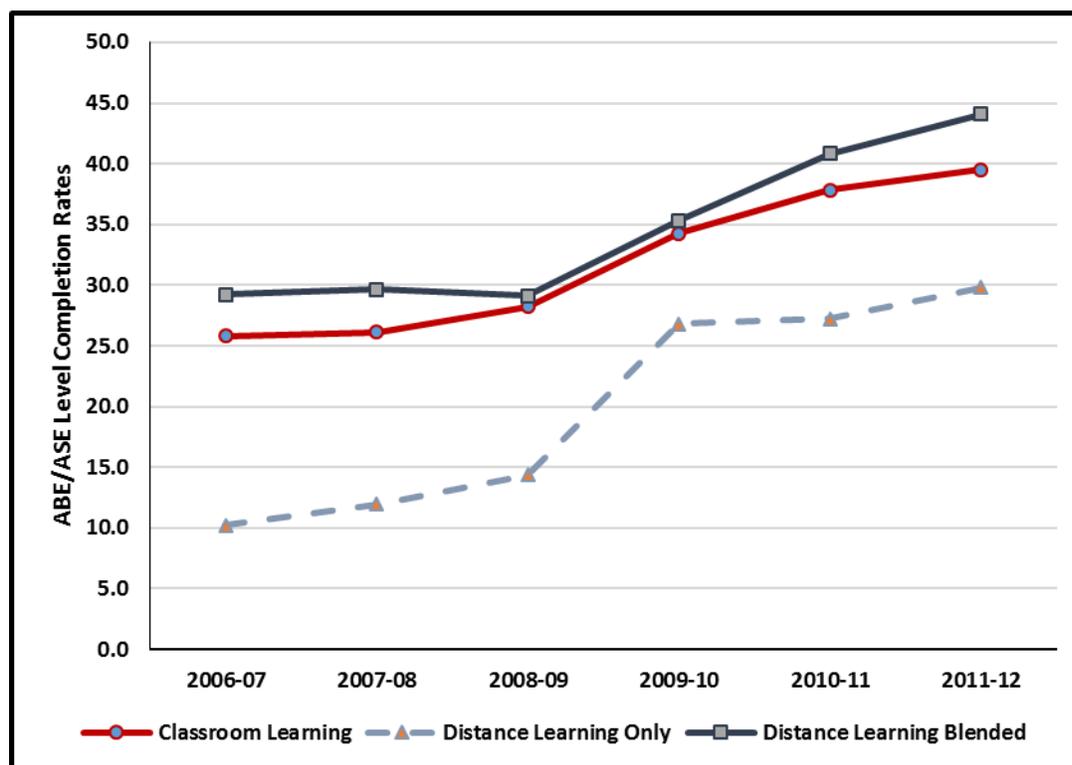
Chart 24: Federal AEFLA Table 4 NRS Level Completion Percent Rates of ABE/ASE Distant Learners Participating in the Innovation Program 2006-12 versus Classroom ABE/ASE Learners (Source: CASAS 2006-2012).

ESL Distance Learning Effectiveness

Chart 26 shows that the NRS Level completion rates for DL Blended learners were consistently superior to either classroom learning or DL Only rates over the six-year period. Although classroom learning was superior to DL Only in NRS Instructional Level completion rates over the six-year period, DL Only consistently closed the gap in the level completion rate between it and classroom learning from 11.4 percent in 2006-07 to 1.5 percent in 2009-10, 2010-11 (1.4 percent), and the current reporting year 2011-12 (3.1 percent).
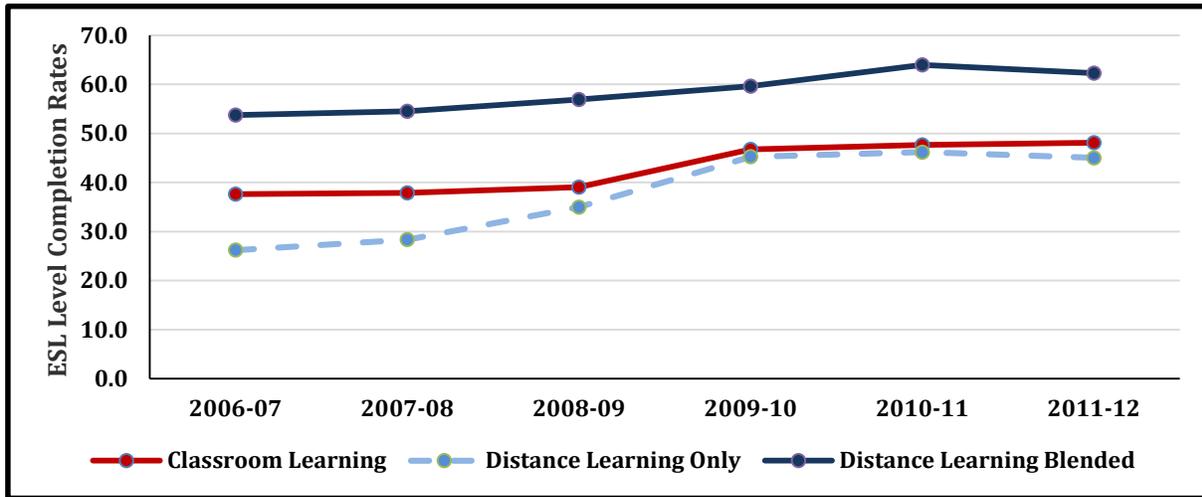
Chart 26: Federal California AEFLA Table 4 NRS Level Completion Percent Rates for 2006–12 of ESL DL Participants in the Innovation Program versus ESL Classroom Learners (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012).
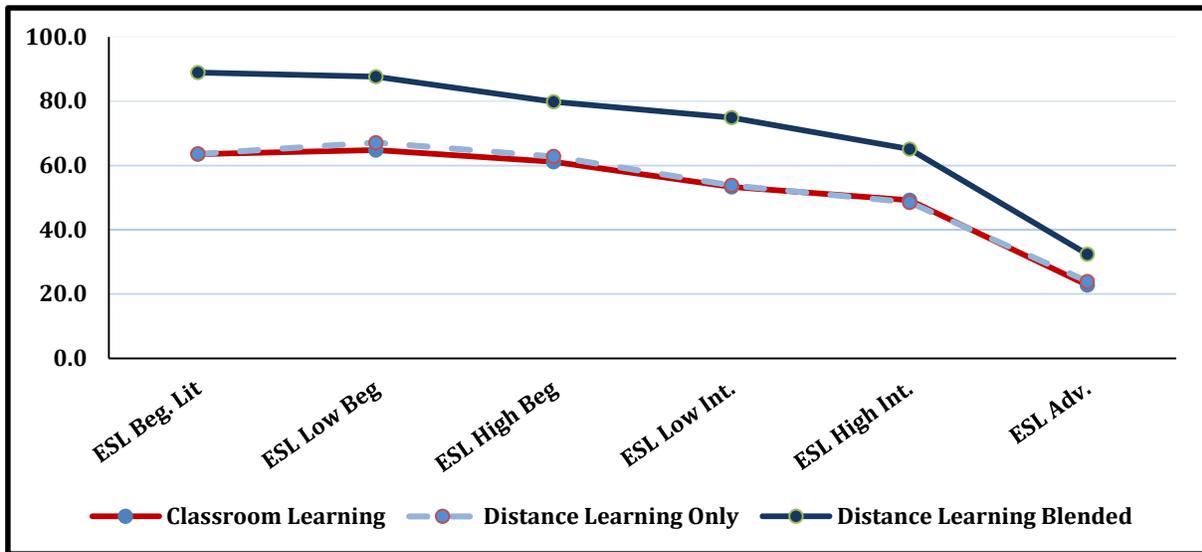

Chart 28: NRS Instructional Level Completion Rates by Instructional Level in NRS Table 4 of ESL Distance Learners Participating in the Innovation Program Contrasted with Classroom Learners – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

As shown in Chart 28, DL Blended shows higher parallel and somewhat converging level completion rates with both classroom and DL Only across all six instructional levels of ESL. The results in 2011-12 were similar to those found in prior years which typically showed a downward curved line, from beginning levels of ESL, (where the gains are the greatest) down to the advanced level. However this year the level completion rates for both classroom learning and DL Only were convergent and virtually identical across all six instructional levels.

Chart 29 shows a comparison of the CASAS Reading Scale Score gains for AEFLA learners in 2011-12 for the two DL instructional delivery modalities with classroom instruction. Data in the chart indicates that, except for the ESL low beginning level where DL Only outscored DL Blended by 0.1 percent, DL Blended performed consistently better than either classroom

learning or DL Only across the other five NRS Instructional Levels. DL Only appeared to be better than classroom learning in the first five levels of ESL and slightly lower by 0.2 percent at the ESL advanced level. The results for 2011-12 were similar to those attained in 2010-11 except the results at the two lowest ESL instructional levels (ESL Beginning literacy and ESL low beginning) were slightly higher this year than last for both DL instructional modalities.
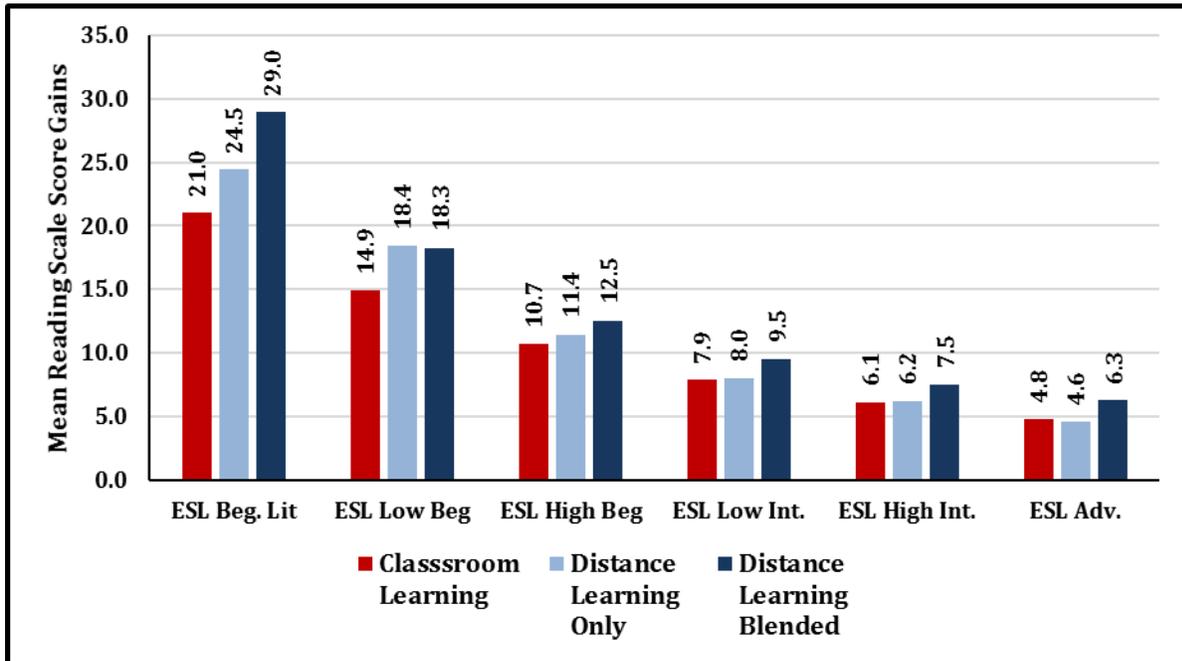
Chart 29: ESL Comparative Reading Gain Scores by NRS ESL Functional Instructional Levels for Classroom and DL (Only and Blended) 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Chart 30 poses new data that previously has not been disclosed in this series of annual reports on the Innovation Program. Although the historical data of reporting scale score gains in relation to hours of instruction by modality as found in Chart 34 has been informative and useful in the past, data in the new chart dramatically shows the power and value that hours of instruction have on NRS Instructional Level completion gains in accountability. Regardless of instructional modality, hours of instruction plays a major role in significantly enhancing gains in NRS
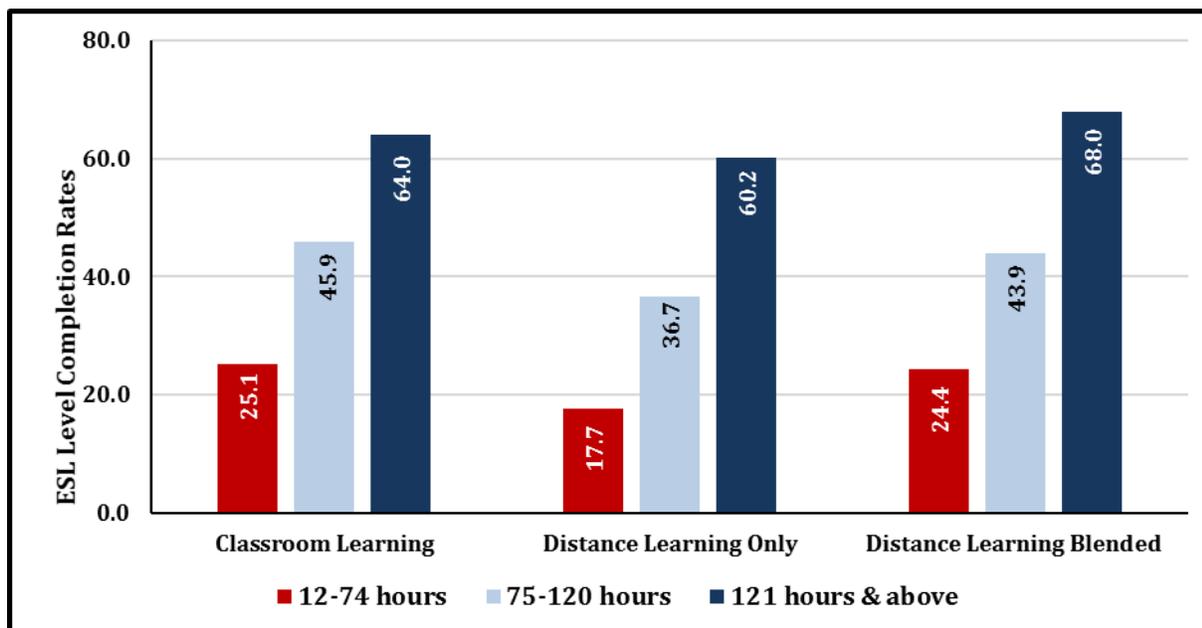
Chart 30: NRS Instructional Level Completion Rates for ESL Learners by Hours of Instruction: ESL DL Learners contrasted with ESL Classroom Learners 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Instructional level completion rates. The NRS Functional Instructional Level Completion rate is literally the index or report card that states and local literacy providers receiving AEFLA Funds deliver to Congress and the public that represents how well their learners are performing with the educational interventions provided them supported through public funding.

Learner Progress or Status by Program

Learners are monitored on their progress throughout the time they are enrolled. Chart 12 displays the enrollment and course completion status in ABE, ESL, and ASE for learners participating in the Innovation Program for 2011-12. The highest percentage of learners retained at the same level in 2011-12 were enrolled in ESL (50.1 percent), followed by ABE (41.5 percent), and ASE (45.8 percent). The highest percentage of learners not showing up for class or attending less than twelve hours enrolled in ASE (14.1 percent) which also had the highest rate of learners leaving before completing an NRS Functional Instructional Level (20.5 percent). Not showing up for class or attending less than twelve hours and leaving the program before completing an NRS Functional Instructional Level were the two conditions regarded as a negative impact on program progress.
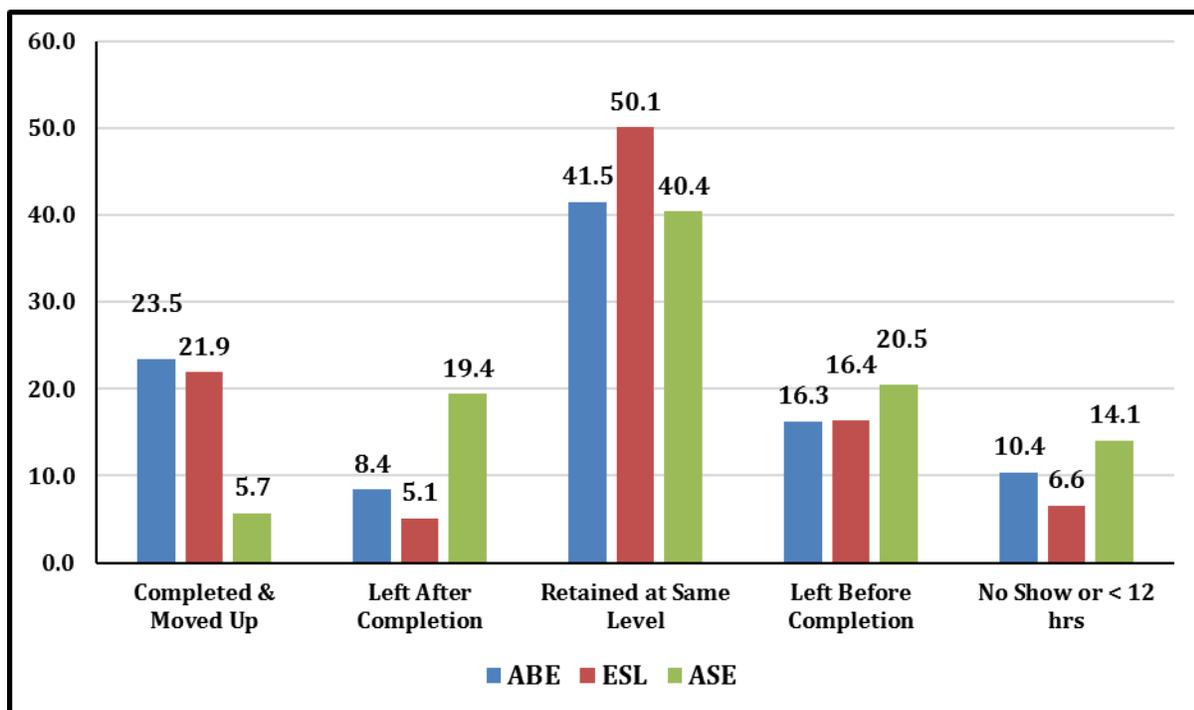
Chart 12: Innovation Program Learner Status by Instructional Program – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Chart 13 displays the stacked positive results of learners (positive program progress impact) in the Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, and ASE in 2011-12. The ABE Program had the highest proportion of enrollees completing an NRS Instructional Level—31.9 percent completed a level and either moved up or left the program after level completion. Participants in ESL showed the highest positive impact status of the three programs with 27.0 percent completing an instructional level and either moved up or left the program after level completion and 50.1 percent remained in program and continued progressing at the same instructional level for a total positive impact of 77.1 percent.

The ASE programs participating in the Innovation Programs had the lowest overall positive status impact at 65.5 percent— a quarter of ASE learners either completed an instructional level and moved up (5.7 percent), or left program after completing a level (19.4 percent), and 40.4 percent remained at the same level working toward a diploma or certificate. Most ASE learners garnering either a high school diploma or GED certificate would exit the program which account for practically all of the 19.4 percent exiting after level completion.

Chart 13: Percent of Innovation Program Learner Positive Status ABE, ESL, and ASE—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Learner progress is a key indicator of the impact and effectiveness of instructional service delivery. Results of learners participating in the DL Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, and ASE are graphically displayed in Chart 13.The ESL positive impact percentages were consistently in the mid to high 70's over the last five years and was 77.1 percent for 2011-12. ASE learner performance fluctuated from the low to high 60 percent's—65.5 percent for 2011-12. ABE learners have been the lowest positive impact performers at low 60's to low 50's over the first four years (see Chart 14 in Report Narrative), however their 73.4 percent performance in 2011-12 showed ABE learners escalating to 20 percentage points over their 2010-11 positive impact percentage and outperforming the ASE learners for the first time since tracking these data. This growth was largely due to the large increase in the percentage of ABE learners completing a level and moving up in the ABE program—8.1 percent in 2010-11 and 23.5 percent in the current year.

Conclusions

Over the last 17 years, the California Innovation Program and DL 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 a concern. Up to the implementation of flex funding, the program had 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. Local adult schools reported implementing fees, limiting access, extending DL Blended learning options to regular classrooms and implementing online instruction as some of the means to maintain DL as a viable instructional modality option. The data shows as learners have more access to instructional resources to increase their time on learning activities the completion rates for instructional levels increase significantly.

The role of DL Blended as an effective method to serve the adult basic education learner, especially the ESL learner, is firmly documented. The researcher's ability to examine and compare key outcome data provides a better view of how DL Only instruction performs in comparison to the classroom only and DL Blended learning modes. Common sense tells us that the DL Blended learning instruction, where two curricula are provided, and the resultant interventions are more substantive, would produce the best results. Data clearly indicate that it does.

Of special note, the DL Only modality holds up very well compared with the other two modes of instruction when considering that "no instruction" would likely reveal a "zero" gain in reading and listening; whereas learners in DL Only continue to make gains independent of face-to-face instructional intervention and sometimes comparable to the results attained through regular face-to-face classroom instruction. This finding has important statewide and national implications.

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

- 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 there is no space in traditional classes

- Learn more effectively from video, audio, and Web-based media when moving at their own pace

- Cannot access traditional classroom programs on a regular basis

When comparing classroom completion and persistence data within the Innovation Program, the DL programs, especially DL Blended learning, were particularly successful in providing ESL learning opportunities. Local research data on learner persistence and retention has supported these findings. The availability of engaging life skills instructional materials is, in all likelihood, a key factor.

The Innovation Program continues to meet the three crucial benefit-cost criteria often used to evaluate the utility of a program intervention. They are:

Effectiveness — CASAS pre- and post-test data indicate that ESL learners in the Innovation Program, on average, show substantial learning increases in reading and listening. Much of this is attributed to the results of the DL Blended learning model. The ABE/ASE learners show learning gains consistent with historical data.

Efficiency — Participant and program cost data indicated that the Innovation Program were cost effective. Major adult schools continued to participate in the Innovation Program even though State apportionment funding was not directly in support of these DL programs. Even with the use of flex funding limiting direct stable access to fiscal resources needed to maintain

programs, many local adult schools reported implementing fees, extending DL Blended learning options to regular classrooms and implementing online instruction to current enrollees as well as adults on lists waiting for classes to open up for enrollment.

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 included as participants in the Innovation Program.

This is the eleventh year that similar research conclusions have been reached. However, they are now supported by a closer look at comparative classroom, DL Blended learning, and DL Only data. The Innovation Program has followed the same accountability requirements as classroom based apportionment programs supported by Federal AEFLA Funds. Over the past eleven years the Innovation Program has been successful in standardizing their reporting procedures, while still maintaining alternative instructional delivery methods. In this current year (2011-12) with flex funding, all Innovation Program learners are encouraged rather than expected to be tracked in the TOPSpro system, and all programs are encouraged rather than required to use a standardized format for both program applications and annual evaluation. The prior mandated format made gathering of data and program monitoring more substantive and meaningful; whereas adult school reactions to flex funding and reporting data has possibly compromised this process.

CASAS pre- and post- reading and listening testing are not required for state programs, unless those adult schools participate in the AEFLA program. However, state-funded programs have been strongly encouraged to implement standardized testing. Pre- and post-testing are more difficult in DL Only environments than traditional classroom settings. In the past, the Innovation Program coordinators have noted that they collect more program documentation and learner progress information than do the classroom programs. However, this rich data provides the most detailed comparative examination of adult basic education learning interventions that are available in the United States. It results from a statewide data system, standardized testing and assessment, and the foresight of California legislators to permit school districts to use DL as an instructional intervention.

The California Adult Education 2011-12 Innovation and Alternative Instructional Delivery Program

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Innovation Program participation was and continues to be available only to state-funded adult schools in the K12 system. In 2008-09 the federal Office of Vocational and Adult Education issued assessment requirements and guidelines for programs seeking AEFLA reimbursement for student gains in DL courses; California began requiring all AEFLA funded agencies to submit an Innovation Programs application if their federal funds reimbursements were based on DL modalities for a majority of the instruction. To date no additional agencies have applied, since no additional funding is attached to DL.

Programs wishing to request authorization for DL must submit an annual application to the California Department of Education. The application form is available on the CDE Adult Education Office Web site - 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 a description of how the program is evaluated and continuously improved.

Current Uses

The Innovation Program initiative began in earnest in 1995, based on the California adult education definition of DL, meaning that the following requirements must be met:

- 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[ix]

There is a continued stress on the importance of two-way communication. While some people equate distance education with 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 in DL is often rated as more responsive and personal than in traditional classes.

Current Participation

The statewide Innovation Program has reached extensive acceptance by the adult education field. In program year 2011-12, 56 adult schools were approved to operate Innovation Programs and submitted data for inclusion in this report.

Feedback from the field in 2009-10 indicated that an Innovation Program for small adult schools was too expensive and time consuming to implement with a smaller budget. Last year (2010-11) however, some small adult schools indicated they had increased DL options by adding blended learning (blended DL) and online learning. One of the small adult schools said, "Because we are now allowing students to do specific work from home (distance learning) but cannot provide a book for them to take home, students are encouraged to purchase their own books…" They went on to say "…We encourage all GED and high school subjects students to purchase any books that they will be using, and then donate them back for use by students who cannot afford to purchase their own books." This particular small adult school had to cut their instructional hours because, for 2011-12, the district diverted over 40 percent of their state apportionment for other than adult education purposes.

Chart 1 shows the multiple response data received from 40 of 56 adult schools that participated in the Innovation Programs and submitted year-end narrative evaluations on their 2011-12 DL programs. For the past couple of years, many adult schools reflected on the effects of the state budget crisis and the sometimes drastic cuts that were made to adult education programs on the local level, and on distance learning programs in particular. Last year, (2010-11), emphasis was to reduce courses, staff, or hours followed by charging or increasing fees. This year, (2011-12), the most prevalent response was to vary the fee structure. For both years, adult schools enhanced a model of blended DL; through online, at home, in lab settings, and/or expanding the use of DL in other innovative way that best serve their learners.
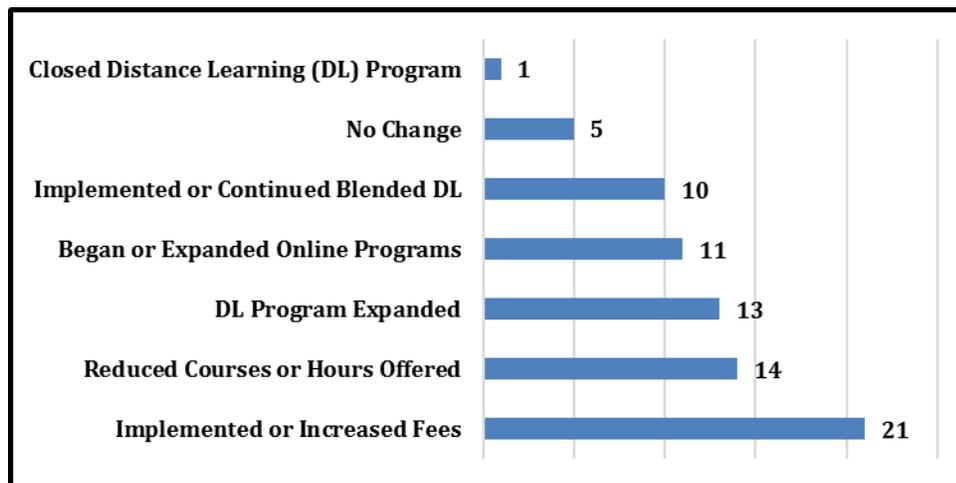

Chart 1: Multiple response data from 40 of 56 adult schools participating in Innovations Programs in 2011-12. (Source: Innovation Programs Evaluation 2011-12).

For some programs, the implementation of fees had devastating effects on enrollment while others were able to successfully cover at least partial costs of the program. Some adult schools have seen their enrollments increase in spite of requiring participants to pay fees.

The implementation or continuation of blended DL and the resurgence of online instruction by adult schools along with the indication of extending the use of DL reflects flexibility in response to flexible funding. On the positive effects of flex funding, programs were freed from the rigid definitions of DL and were able to experiment with various delivery models. In many cases the curriculum which had been maintained as a separate DL curriculum was now being used in both classroom and distance instruction, so students were able to study the same materials both in school and at home. One small agency indicated they can now "…accommodate more students with the decrease in teachers and hours." Another small adult school indicated "…We are pleased with the Distance Learning blended model which allows for increases in instructional intensity for students who are currently enrolled in seat-time classroom instruction programs." A medium sized adult school stated, "…we began offering students on the waiting list for traditional ESL classes the option of registering in entirely online class…" giving a chance to students to engage in the learning process who otherwise would have to wait some period of time before they could attend classroom instruction that may or may not be opened up for enrollment. Another medium sized adult school commented:

> *"The classroom environment was not effectively retaining students long enough for pre/post testing so the program reassigned hours from the classroom to distance learning instead. One night a week, a computer lab is used as a holding tank for students waiting for distance learning appointments and they can utilize a number of online instructional materials while they wait. A teaching assistants' availability was expanded and heavily utilized by teachers. New curriculum was researched and implemented for very low and pre-literacy students; teachers used the new curriculum to bolster the pre-literacy students' basic English skills making the transition into the existing curriculum more successful."*

In addition to these responses, a few schools observed no substantial change in their DL program, one school indicated they closed or discontinued their DL program and another reported they were not offering DL in the future (2012-13).

Table 1 describes the distribution of distance learners in program years 2000-01 and 2006-07 through the current reporting year 2011-12. In prior years data was collected originally on all ten program areas and later it was limited to reporting on the five programs with the largest enrollments that included Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Secondary Education (ASE), English as a Second Language (ESL), Career and Tech Education (CTE), Parent Education classes. With flex funding, sufficient data was only available from the three program areas supported by AEFLA, (ABE, ESL, and ASE), where federal data reporting was required from participating agencies. Historically the other seven programs accounted for approximately five percent of the total DL enrollment. In 2011-12, there were 13,825 learners participating in the

Program Year	2000-01	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ABE	359	722	1,036	1,119	751	407	469
ESL	19,835	55,905	61,978	65,030	28,477	14,267	11,977
HS or GED (ASE)	618	2,221	4,045	4,323	3,360	1,821	1,379
Total Enrollments	20,812	58,848	67,059	70,472	32,588	16,495	13,825

Table 1: Eleven Years of Innovative Programs Participation in Three Major Program Areas. (Source CASAS 2000-01 and 2006-07 to 2011-12)

three major instructional program areas of the Innovation Programs. This enrollment total was 33.6 percent lower than the total enrollment in 2000-01 when these annual reports were first published. The data and their totals represent the reconfiguration of prior data to include just those DL enrollments in ABE, ASE, and ESL. Enrollments in 2011-12 dropped 80.0 percent below the last program year before the implementation of flex funding in 2008-09—70,472 down to 13,825.

Changes in Participation Since 2000

Chart 2 displays the growth and change in the Innovation Program from 2000-01 to 2011-12 when standardized non-duplicated student enrollment data has been available. Fifty-six adult schools were approved to offer DL programs, and forty submitted year-end evaluations. Nearly 14,000 learners participated in these programs and 11,224 qualified for inclusion in the National Reporting System (NRS) Tables for federal AEFLA accountability. The chart displays the growth of DL over the initial nine years (2000 through 2008-09) as well as the dramatic drop in reported enrollments for the ensuing three year of flex funding (2009 through 2012). Overall, Chart 2 shows a steady growth in student participation in DL over a nine-year period until the budget crisis and implementation of flex funding that occurred in 2009.From 2000-01 to 2008-09 the program grew in enrollment 239 percent (20,812 to 70,472). With the implementation of flex funding, enrollment plummeted during the next three years to only 13,825 for an 80 percent


Chart 2: Enrollment/Participation of WIA Title II Learners in ABE, ESL, ASE Innovation Programs from 2000 to 2012 showing a 3-year 80% enrollment loss from 2008-09.(Source: CASAS 2012)

drop in enrollment from program year 2008-09. This represented a denial of access for 56,477 learners and their families who were previously engaged in critical core curriculum programs of

adult literacy that assist the least educated and most in need adults become economically self-sufficient. Flex funding is currently extended through 2014-15.

N.B. Prior annual reports charted enrollments of all state funded instructional programs from all adult school programs offering DL instruction as an option in addition to adult literacy providers receiving AEFLA Federal Funding. Over the past 11 years, enrollment from state-funded-only adult schools accounted for an average of five percent, but ranged between four and nine percent. With the advent of flex funding, adult schools are not required to report data on programs beyond those included in WIA Title II and in this current year (2011-12) most schools did not report the enrollment in these other program areas leaving the data insufficient for reporting purposes. The data were therefore adjusted for Chart 2 and were limited to ABE, ASE, and ESL enrollments.

Distribution by Instructional Media Delivery Type

Chart 3 summarizes the most popular instructional media types proposed for use in FY 2011-12. These numbers reflect multiple responses and classes offered at some adult schools. Video, including DVD checkout and online streaming, was the most popular media mode used in Innovation Programs.

The video, DVD and audio media are normally provided on a checkout basis with workbooks, study packets, work assignments, or activities included. Since DVD 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, and the availability of pre-produced and school-site produced videos continues to make checkout a popular model. However, it's expensive to support because the instructor generally meets with each student individually once a week for 20 to 30 minutes. There will likely be a decline in video checkout offerings, and because resources have declined for the development, implementation, and maintenance of more online curriculum there will be a move toward more online instruction. As one adult school reported, "…our staffing has shrunk, our budget has shrunk, our enrollment has grown and we have learned to do more with less." One way to do more with less may well be the use of online instruction that has demonstrated effectiveness.
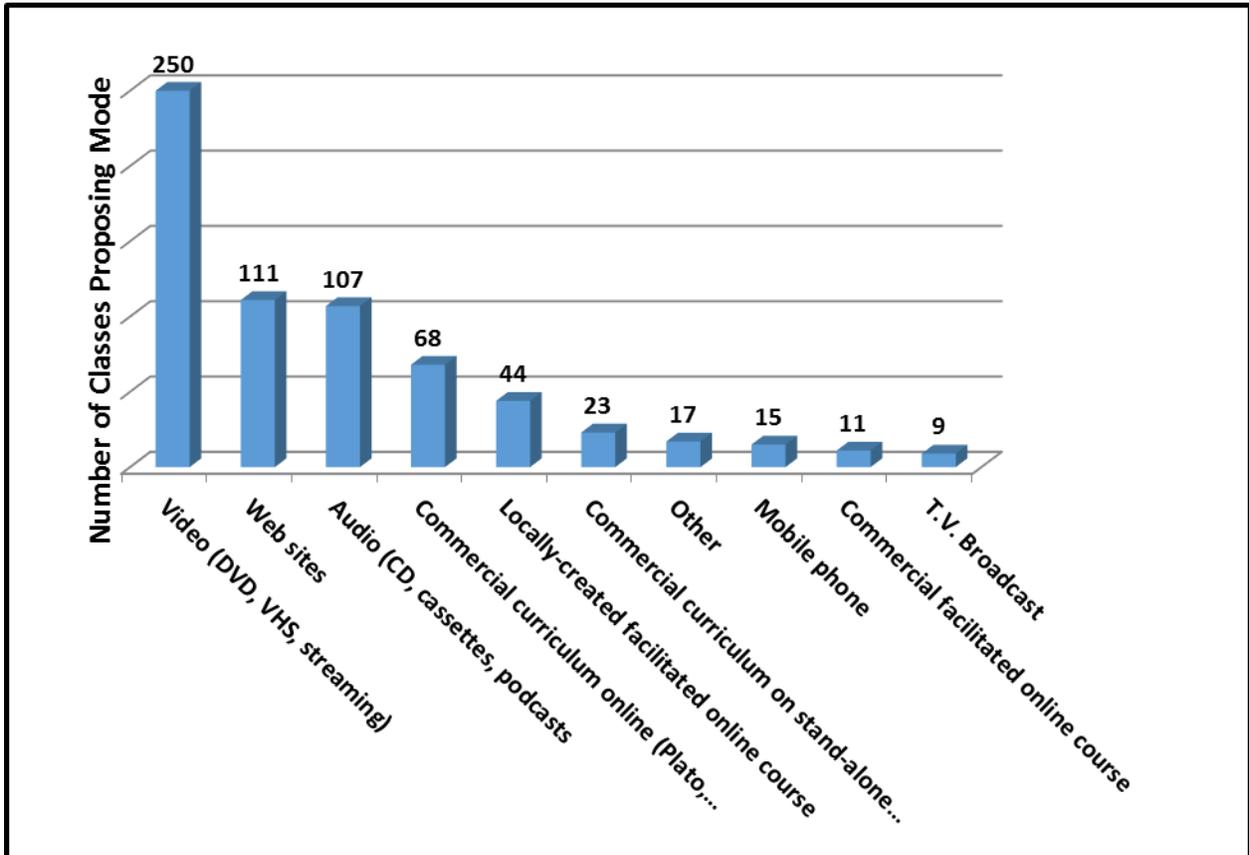
Chart 3: Instructional Delivery Modes Proposed for Use in the Innovation Program Courses in FY 2011-12 (Source: 2011-12 Applications)

## *Proposed Class Distribution by Instructional Areas*
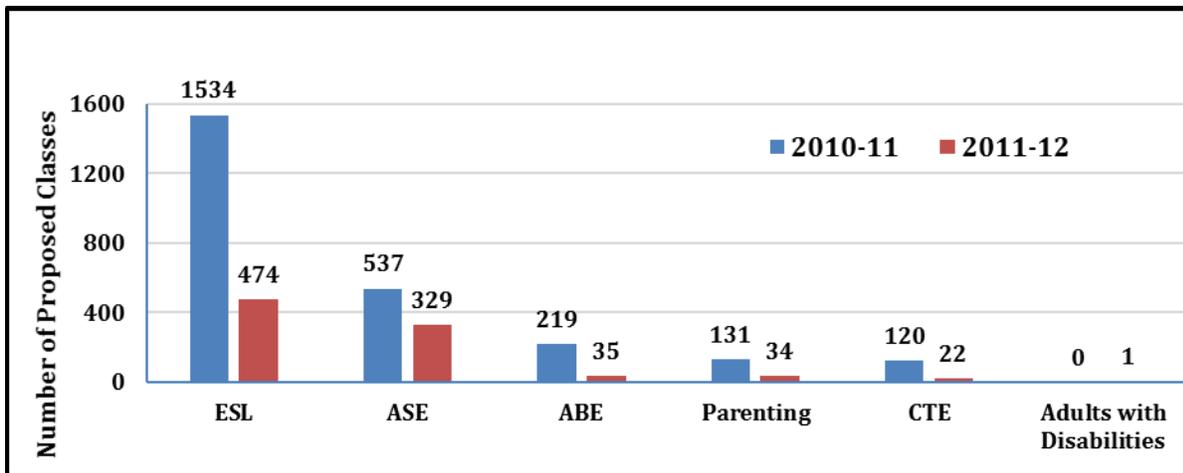
Chart 4: Comparison of the Number of Proposed Innovation Program Classes by Instructional Area for 2010-11 Compared to 2011-12. (Source: Program Applications 2010-11 and 2011-12

This data is based on approved courses and classes that were proposed to be offered in the last two years but actually were not necessarily offered. Chart 4 provides the number of courses

proposed for each program area for both the 2010-11 and 2011-12 program years. In the past, it was not unusual for an adult school to offer several levels of ESL, ABE, ASE, as well as multiple classes of CTE and parent education. Chart 4 displays the proposed number of classes and their distribution in 2010-11 and 2011-12 for AEFLA programs as well as three other major state-funded instructional program areas reported in prior Innovation Programs (Parent Education, CTE, and Adults with Disabilities). As mentioned previously, insufficient data were submitter to be reported for those three other major state-funded instructional program areas. ESL continued to have greatest number of proposed classes for both program years, almost a 70 (69.1) percent drop in proposed classes for 2011-12 at 474. The number of proposed ASE classes dropped 38.7 percent at 329 and proposed ABE classes dropped by 84 percent at only 35 classes.

The number of all proposed classes to be included in Innovation Programs has diminished since flex funding, (the last three years). As the annual proportion of proposed classes available diminished for ESL learners over the past five years, the availability of proposed classes for ABE and ASE learners increased (see Chart 5). This may possibly be a reflection of adult schools moving to become more integrated with their districts' priorities in serving the needs of children attending their K-12 schools; in order to survive, a number of schools are now offering online credit recovery courses for concurrent students.
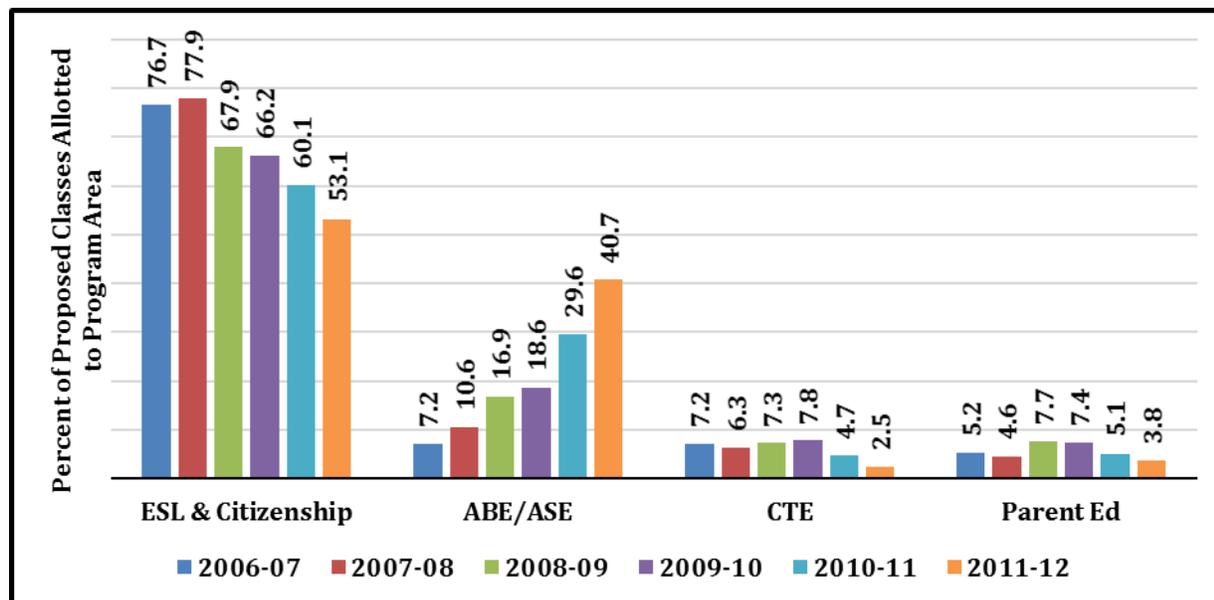

Chart 5: Annual Percentage of Proposed Courses in Each of Four Program Areas from 2006-07 to 2011-12. (Source: 2006 through 2011-12 Program Applications)

Chart 5 provides the proportion of proposed classes allotted for each program area for the past six years. Innovation Programs are permitted to offer multiple classes. The proportion of proposed classes for ABE and ASE learners has increased over 565 percent during the last six years. The proportion of proposed classes for CTE and Parent Education learners remained fairly stable for each of those programs over the past five years and none exceeded eight percent. Insufficient data was submitted for either CTE or Parent Education to be reported.

Student –Teacher Contact

Learners and teachers are expected to maintain contact throughout each DL class. This contact can include student orientation, assessment, demonstrating student progress, tutoring, advising, progress monitoring, and explaining new assignments. Chart 6 documents the proposed primary methods of student-teacher contact during the past two years (2010-11 and 2011-12). Many programs offer multiple ways for student contact; however face-to-face communication remains the preferred method. Email, online chat, phone, and mail methods of teacher contact with learners following in descending order. For 2011-12, there was a drop in the number of all proposed student-teacher methods of contact from those reported in 2010-11. Phone contacts had greatest drop from the prior year at 66.0 percent to Online Chat at 55.2 percent.
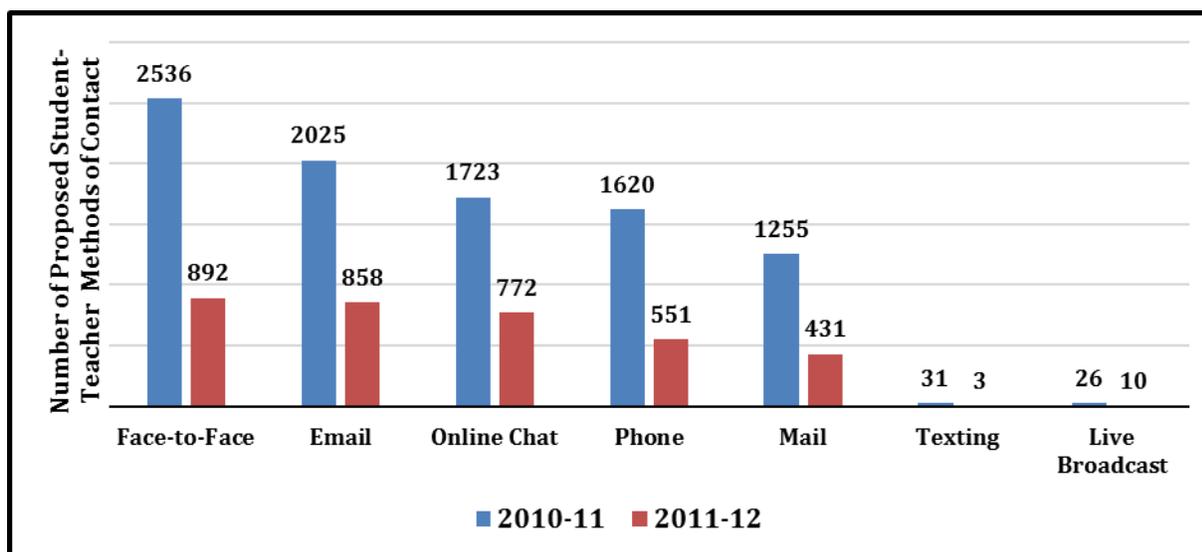
Chart 6: Two-Year Distribution of Proposed Student – Teacher Contact Methods (Source: 2010-11 and 2011-12) Applications)

Accountability

Innovation Programs use the Tracking of Programs and Students (TOPSpro) Entry and Update Forms to maintain student information congruent with the reporting methods required for federal accountability under AEFLA. All adult schools are encouraged but not required to utilize the data elements contained in TOPSpro Entry and Update Forms for their student participation reporting. Other program outcomes are included in the annual performance reporting submitted by the Innovation Programs to CDE's Adult Education Office. This interactive report form is available to the Innovation Program administrators via the Internet at: http://adulted.otan.us.

2011-12 Learner Statistics

The following tables and charts are drawn from TOPSpro data collected and updated by CASAS for fiscal year 2011-12. They are primarily based on federally funded AEFLA programs that identify their learners as participating in DL programs and consequently are a very good approximation of the statewide Innovation Program learning populations during 2011-12. The data are based on unduplicated counts.

Participation by Instructional Program

In Chart 7, the percent of annual enrollments in the three main instructional program areas for the Innovation Program for program years 2000-01, and 2006 through 2012 are displayed. Over the 11 year period, the annual proportional distribution of enrollment revealed the percent of learners participating in ESL through DL modalities decreased by almost 10 percent; whereas, ASE classes more than tripled their enrollment share over the same period. ABE classes doubled their enrollment share over the same period. ESL programs had over 90 percent of the enrollments recorded via TOPSpro participated from 2000-01 through 2005-06 and dropped to 86.6 percent in 2011-12. After 2004-05, the enrollment share for ESL gradually eroded from 96.8 percent to 86.6 percent this current year, (2011-12); ASE, on the other hand, gained from 2.1 percent to 10.0 percent during the same period.

	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
ASE	3.0%	1.9%	1.8%	2.4%	2.1%	3.3%	3.8%	6.0%	6.1%	10.3%	11.0%	10.0%
ESL	95.3%	96.7%	97.4%	96.8%	96.8%	95.3%	94.0%	92.4%	92.3%	87.4%	86.5%	86.6%
ABE	1.7%	1.3%	0.8%	0.8%	1.1%	1.3%	1.2%	1.5%	1.5%	2.3%	2.5%	3.4%
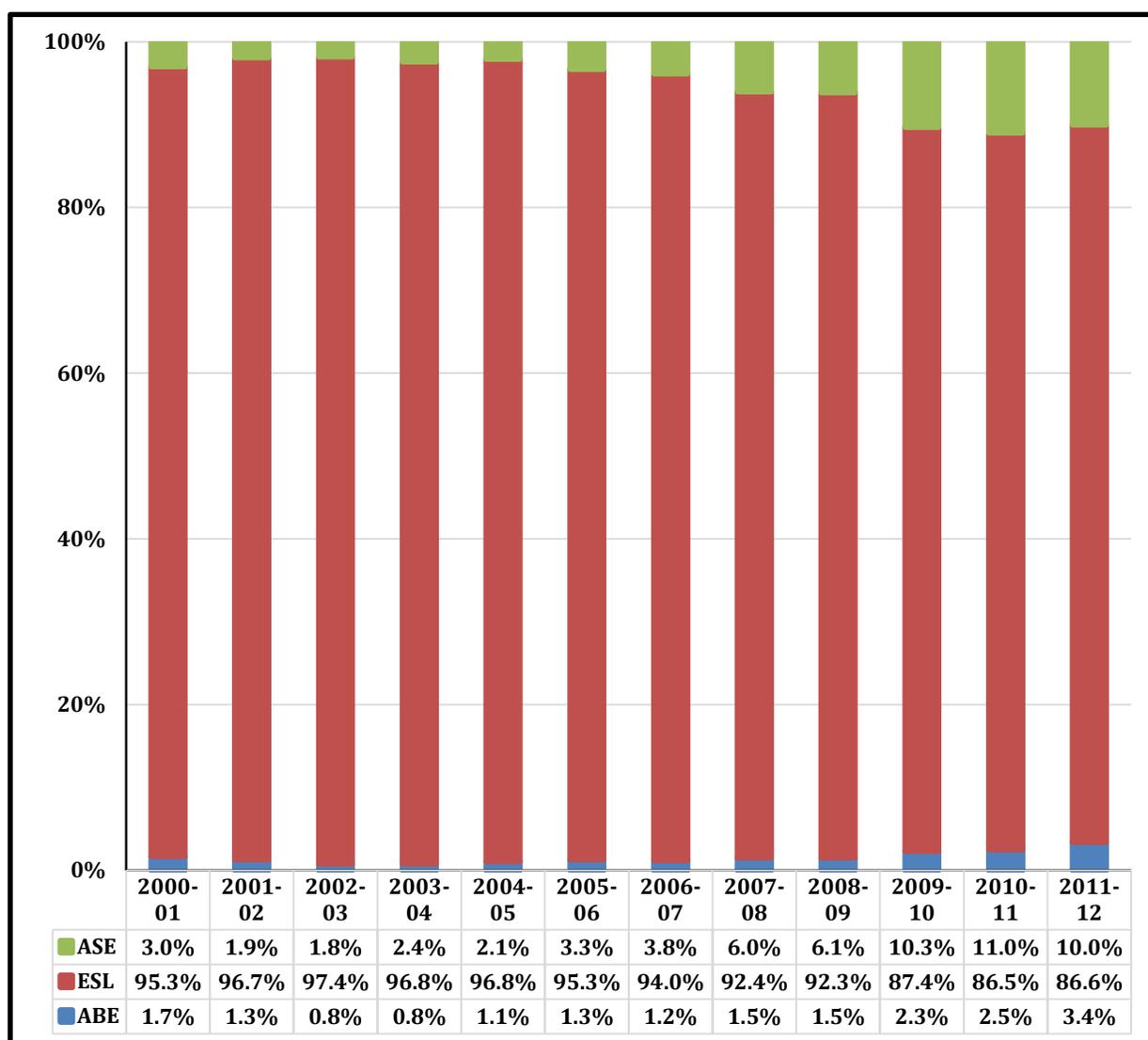
Chart 7: Percent Distribution of Enrollments for the Innovation Program in ABE, ESL and ASE over 12 Years from 2000-01 to 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2000-01 through 2011-12)

Enrollment by Geographic Region

Program distribution by region remained very uneven. Even though Los Angeles County (including Los Angeles Unified School District) enrollment share declined from 64.9percent in 2008-09 down to 55.1 percent this past year, it continued to be the major player in Innovative Programs in California. Los Angeles County's enrollment share dropped slightly. Other geographical regions (Central Valley, Costa del Sur, Northcoast, Northeastern, Rims, and Southern Regions) made percent enrollment share during that time. However, these percentage share gains tended to fluctuate from year to year during this three year period of flex funding. See Table 2.

CDE Geographic Regions	2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Bay	6,176	8.1	866	2.5	909	5.2	903	6.5
Capitol	5,081	6.7	3,170	9.2	1,568	9.0	652	4.7
Central Valley	1,550	2.0	1,990	5.8	655	3.8	496	3.6
Costa del Sur	2,083	2.7	913	2.7	939	5.4	991	7.2
Delta Sierra	4	1.8	109	0.3	89	0.5	-	0.0
Los Angeles	49,416	64.9	21,932	63.9	10,937	63.1	7,612	55.1
Northcoast	1,396	0.0	698	2.0	209	1.2	112	0.8
Northeastern	84	0.1	137	0.4	232	1.3	28	0.2
Rims	1,018	1.3	586	1.7	519	3.0	221	1.6
South Bay	6,166	8.1	2,817	8.2	706	4.1	715	5.2
Southern	3,113	4.1	1,082	3.2	570	3.3	2,095	15.2
Total	**76,087**	**100.0**	**34,300**	**100.0**	**17,333**	**100.0**	**13,825**	**100.0**

Table 2: Number and Percent Enrollment Distribution of Innovative Programs for Three Instructional Program Areas 2008-09 to 2011-12 across CDE Geographic Regions. (Source CASAS 2007 to 2012)

Distribution by Gender and Program

Table 3 displays the percent of enrollment distribution by gender in the three main instructional programs participating in Innovation Program. Over the five year period from 2007-08 to 2011-12, about two-thirds of the participants in the Innovation Programs were women.

	2007-08		2008-09		2009-10		2010-11		2011-12	
Program	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Male %**	**Female %**	**Male %**	**Female %**
ABE	1.5%	1.6%	1.4%	1.7%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%	2.6%	3.6%	3.3%
ASE	6.7%	5.7%	6.5%	6.0%	12.3%	9.3%	14.0%	9.6%	13.7%	8.4%
ESL	91.8%	92.8%	92.1%	92.3%	85.4%	88.4%	83.7%	87.8%	82.7%	88.3%
Gender Totals	35.6%	64.4%	37.2%	62.8%	33.9%	66.1%	32.6%	67.4%	30.1%	69.9%

Table 3: Distribution of Student Gender Enrolled in the Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, and ASE—2007 to 2012. (Source: CASAS 2007 to 2012.)

Participation by Age Group

Participation by age groups shows that the Innovation Program primarily served students between the ages of 21 and 50. See the data in Table 4 and the graphical representation of all the data in Chart 8.

Chart 8 provides a graphical picture of the percent of enrollment by age group for each of the three instructional programs participating in the Innovation Program during 2011-12 listed in Table 5. At 72.3 percent, the three middle age groups, (21-30, 31-40 and 41-50) accounted for the majority of enrollments in the Innovations Program for 2011-12. Youth and young adults (ages 16-30) continued to be the main participants in ASE (High School Subjects and GED Preparation classes) at 67.2 percent. The age grouping 16 to 50, comprised 74.3 percent of the ABE enrollment. A grouping of learners, 21 to 50, comprised 73.7 percent of the ESL enrollments for the Innovation Program during the reporting year.

Age	ABE		ESL		ASE		Total	
	N	%	**N**	%	**N**	%	N	%
16-20	108	23.0	497	4.2	462	33.7	1,067	7.7
21-30	139	29.6	2,497	20.9	459	33.5	3,095	22.4
31-40	102	21.7	3,392	28.3	238	17.4	3,732	27.0
41-50	72	15.4	2,936	24.5	157	11.5	3,165	22.9
51-64	40	8.5	1,990	16.6	48	3.5	2,078	15.0
65+	8	1.7	661	5.5	6	0.4	675	4.9
Total	**469**	100.0	**11,973**	100.0	**1,370**	100.0	**13,812**	100.0

Table 4: Distribution of Learner Ages in Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, and ASE in 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)
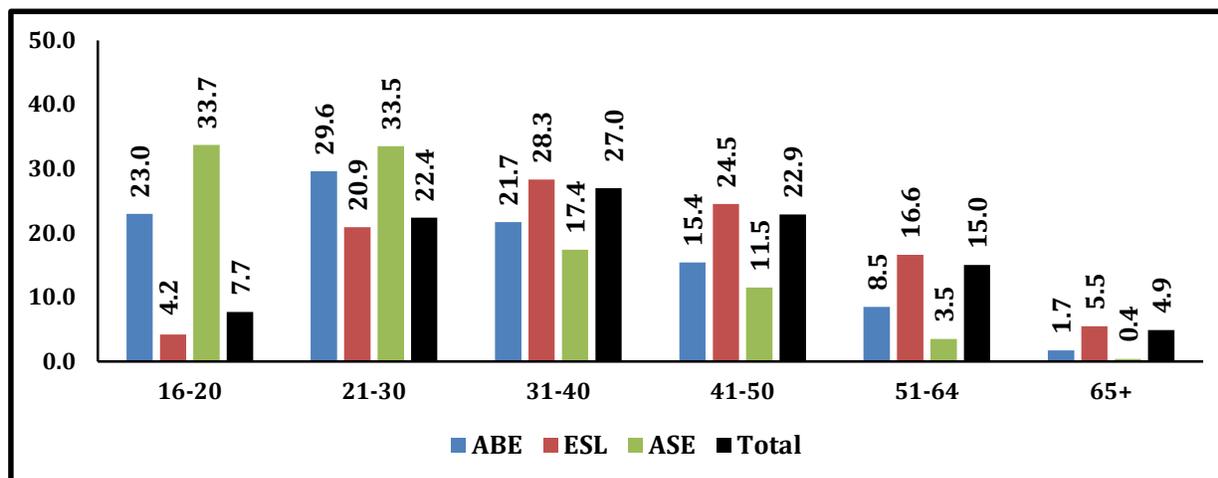
Chart 8: Percent of Enrollment Distribution for Participant Age Groups in Innovative Programs ABE, ESL, ASE, and of Total Enrollment—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Chart 9 shows a relative constant percent distribution of program enrollments over the six year period (2006–07 to 2011-12) for each of the age cohorts. For the flex funding years (2009-10 to
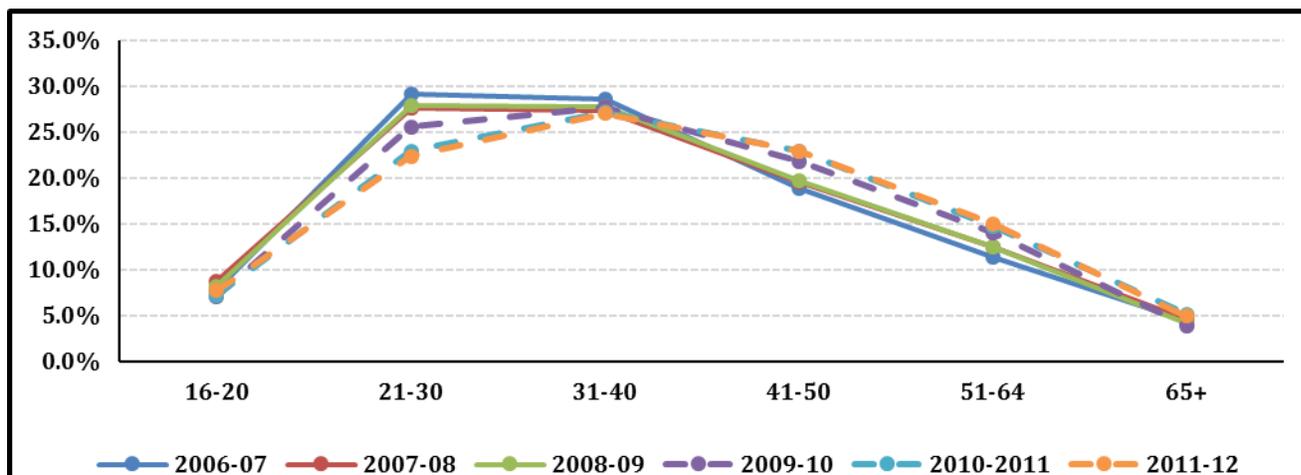
Chart 9: Percent Distribution of Participant Ages in the Innovation Program over a Six Year Period – 2006-2012. (Source: CASAS 2006-2012)

2011-12), participation rates for those aged 21 to 30 were increasingly lower and increasingly higher for those aged 41 to 64 compared with pre-flex funding years (2006-07 to 2008-09).

Ethnicity by Instructional Program

The data displayed in Table 5, showed as in prior years, that Hispanic learners had a higher number of enrollments than any other ethnic group in each of the three instructional programs for 2011-12; overall Hispanic comprised 69.2 percent of the enrollments for the Innovation Program current reporting year (2011-12). Asians made up 18.6 percent, White non–Hispanics continued to be represented at 7.3 percent of the learners. The Black learner participation percentage was 2.0 percent. Although the distribution of ethnic groups served through the Innovation Program was similar to the distribution of all learners served under AFLA, Hispanics and Asians were "over-represented" by +4.0 and +4.4 percent respectively and White (Non-Hispanic) and Black (Non-Hispanic) were "under-represented" respectively at -3.2 and -4.4 percent.

	ABE		ESL		ASE		Total	
Ethnicity	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
White (Non-Hispanic)	52	11.1	655	5.5	292	21.2	999	7.3
Hispanic	283	605.0	8,491	71.4	742	53.9	9,516	69.2
Black (Non-Hispanic)	44	9.4	88	0.7	143	10.4	275	2.0
Asian	35	7.5	2,445	20.6	81	5.9	2,561	18.6
Pacific Islander	6	1.3	4	0.0	21	1.5	31	0.2
Filipino	36	7.7	41	0.3	38	2.8	115	0.8
Native American	12	2.6	170	1.4	56	4.1	238	1.7
Native Alaskan		0.0	3	0.0	4	0.3	7	0.1
Total	468	100.0	11,897	100.0	1,377	100.0	13,742	100.0

Table 5: Percent Ethnicity Distribution of the Innovation Program Enrollments in ABE, ESL and ASE—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Innovation Program Participants' Primary Language

The wide variety of primary languages spoken by Innovation Program learners is another indicator of participant diversity as shown in Table 6. Over two-thirds (68.3 percent) of the participants reported speaking Spanish as their primary language. Three other language groups accounted for 18.4 percent of enrollment which were in descending order: English 7.9 percent; Chinese 5.7 percent; and Korean 4.8 percent. Eight plus other language groups comprised The remaining 12.4 percent of the enrollment in the 2011-12 Innovation Program reported more than eight other languages as their primary language.

Primary Language	ABE		ESL		ASE		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English	189	40.4	40	0.3	840	61.2	1,069	7.9
Spanish	204	43.6	8,623	73.4	449	32.7	9,276	68.3
Vietnamese	3	0.6	178	1.5	6	0.4	187	1.4
Chinese	7	1.5	756	6.4	13	0.9	776	5.7
Hmong		0.0	8	0.1	1	0.1	9	0.1
Cambodian	4	0.9	34	0.3	5	0.4	43	0.3
Tagalog	26	5.6	41	0.3	24	1.7	91	0.7
Korean	5	1.1	646	5.5	3	0.2	654	4.8
Lao	1	0.2	8	0.1	1	0.1	10	0.1
Russian	2	0.4	136	1.2	2	0.1	140	1.0
Farsi	7	1.5	179	1.5	3	0.2	189	1.4
Other	20	4.1	1,100	9.4	26	1.9	1,146	8.4
Total	**468**	**100.0**	**11,749**	**100.0**	**1,373**	**100.0**	**13,590**	**100.0**

Table 6: The Percent Distribution of Primary Language Spoken by Innovation Program Learners in ABE, ESL, and ASE—2011-21. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Years of Schooling

Table 7 shows that, as in prior years, 38.5 percent of the learners having nine or less years of schooling at the time of enrollment. The vast majority of enrollees, (80.3 percent) had seven or more years of schooling and of that percentage, 44.3 percent had twelve or more years of schooling. In the judgment of local program managers, lower-level learners can be effectively

Years of Schooling	ABE		ESL		ASE		Row Subtotals		Total
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	%
<=3Years	9	1.1	778	96.5	19	2.4	806	100.0	6.0%
4-6 Years	19	1.0	1,793	98.0	18	1.0	1,830	100.0	13.7%
7-9 Years	71	2.8	2,277	90.6	164	6.5	2,512	99.9	18.8%
10-11 Years	180	7.8	1,117	48.1	1,024	44.1	2,321	100.0	17.3%
12 Years	146	4.9	2,725	91.4	109	3.7	2,980	100.0	22.3%
13+ Years	42	1.4	2,868	97.5	33	1.1	2,943	100.0	22.0%
N Totals	467		11,558		1,367		13,392	100.0	100.0%

Table 7: The Years of Schooling Percent Distribution of Innovation Program Participants for Three Instructional Program Areas—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

served by instructional interventions such as those used in the Innovation Program. Of the ESL enrollment, over half (51.6 percent), reported having less than twelve years of education and 42.9 percent reported nine or fewer years of schooling.
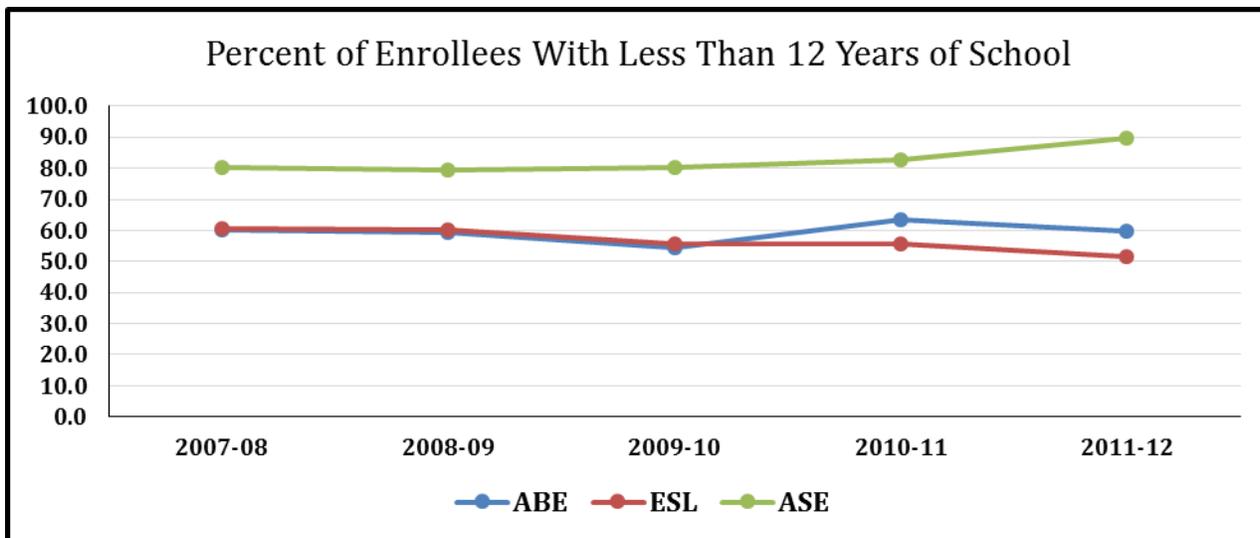
Chart 10: Percent Distribution of Years of Schooling for ABE, ESL, and from 2007 to 2012. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Chart 10 graphically shows that the Innovation Program served the appropriate participants as indicated by their years of schooling. The majority of Innovation Program learners enrolled in ABE, (59.7 percent) or ESL (48.4 percent) had fewer than twelve years of schooling, whereas, the vast majority of participants enrolled in ASE (high school and GED Preparation) had fewer than 12 years of schooling, (89.6 percent); 74.9 percent had 10 or more years of schooling, as would be expected since most of these are concurrent high school students needing to complete one or more units in order to graduate or needing extra help in order to pass the CAHSEE or the GED.

Highest Degree by Instructional Program

As shown in Table 8, almost half 47.1 percent) of the learners in the Innovation Program reported having no earned degrees or certificates at the time of enrollment. A quarter of the participants (24.4 percent) reported possessing a high school diploma or GED Certificate, while

DEGREE	ABE	ESL	ASE	Row Totals	
None	54.0	42.6	82.8	6,262	47.1
GED	1.7	1.5	1.2	197	1.5
HS Diploma	22.2	25.2	4.5	3,050	22.9
Technical	3.5	3.8	2.9	489	3.7
AA Degree	3.7	3.6	0.4	432	3.2
4 Yr College	1.9	12.1	1.0	1,411	10.6
Graduate Study	1.7	4.1	0.3	485	3.6
Other	11.2	7.2	7.0	969	7.3
Percent Totals	100.0	100.0	100.0	13,295	100.0

Table 8: Percent Distribution of Highest Degree for Learners in the Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, ASE, and Total Enrollment—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

seven percent (6.9 percent) said they had a technical or associate of arts (AA) degrees. Fourteen percent (14.2 percent) of the learners reported having a college degree or some graduate study.

Chart 11 shows a summary of the tabular data contained in Table 8 (percent distribution of highest degree earned for learners in the Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, and ASE
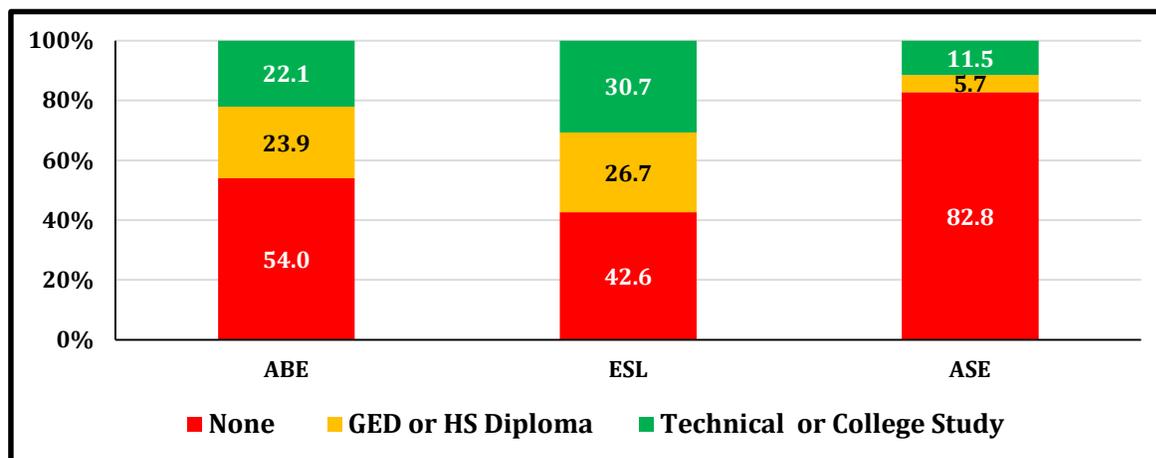
Chart 11: Percent Distribution of Highest Degree Earned for Learners in the Innovation Program for ABE, ESL and ASE.—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

--2011-12). Learners in all three of the instructional programs had as the most common level of educational attainment "none" or no diploma or degree. The highest proportion of learners having no degree, certificate, nor diplomas were enrolled in ASE (High School Subjects and/or GED Preparation) at 82.8 percent.

ABE/ASE Instructional Level on Program Entry

Upon entry into ABE and ASE programs, the totals, as shown in Table 9, indicate that 6.7 percent of the ABE and ASE learners were tested and scored at the beginning levels of adult basic education. Over half (55.2 percent) of the learners scored at the intermediate levels of

Level Upon Entry	Score Range	ABE		ASE		Total	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Beg. Literacy	200 & below	4	0.9	2	0.2	6	4.0
Beginning	201-210	15	3.5	27	2.4	42	2.7
Intermediate Low	211-220	63	14.8	122	11.1	185	12.1
Intermediate High	221-235	242	56.9	417	37.8	659	43.1
ASE Low	236-245	69	16.2	339	30.7	408	26.7
ASE High	246+	32	7.5	197	17.8	229	15.0
Total		**425**	**100.0**	**1104**	**100.0**	**1529**	**100.0**

*Table 9: Adult Basic Education Instructional Level at Time of Entry into the Innovation Program of ABE and ASE– 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)) **NB:** ABE and ASE instructional level upon entry is based on pre-test mean results.*

instruction while 41.7 percent scored at the ASE--high school subjects, GED, or pre-GED levels. When viewing ABE and ASE separately, 23.7 percent of the ABE placements had the skill

levels to enroll in ASE level courses, whereas 13.7 percent of the ASE learners scored below 221 and should have been placed more appropriately in ABE courses—a score of 236 or better is the NRS prerequisite for enrollment at the ASE level and 48.5 percent of the ASE learners scored over 235 and were appropriately placed in ASE. The 76.1 percent of ABE learners scoring below 236 were appropriately place in ABE rather than ASE programs.

ESL, ESL–Citizenship, and EL Civics Levels on Program Entry

For readability in this report, the results from and descriptions of ESL-Citizenship and English Language Civics (EL Civics) learners are subsumed under ESL. As indicated in Table 10, the instructional continuum of ESL learning goes from beginning ESL literacy through advanced

Level Upon Entry	Score Range	ESL	
		N	**%**
Beg. Literacy	180 & below	203	1.9
Beginning Low	181-190	409	3.8
Beginning High	191-200	1,333	12.5
Intermediate Low	201-210	2,701	25.4
Intermediate High	211-220	2,679	25.2
Adv. Low	221-235	2,983	28.0
Adv. High	236-245	330	3.1
Total		**10,638**	**100.0**

Table 10: ESL, ESL-Citizenship, and EL Civics Learners' Instructional Level at Time of Program Entry into the Innovation Program—2010-11. (Source: CASAS 2011)

ESL low and high with a pathway leading to ASE low and high. Beginning literacy has been very difficult to be provided in a DL format because learners need a certain foundation level of literacy in order to access the curriculum and program components. For that reason, the use of DL has been discouraged in the past. However in 2010-11, there appeared to have been some breakthroughs in successfully serving these lower literacy functioning ESL learners. That there was an indication of participation in the lower level programs (beginning-low ESL and above) serves as another indicator that the DL programs are reaching out to the hard to serve and/or the most in need of adult basic education services.

As shown in Table 10, beginning literacy and beginning ESL learners represented 18.2 percent of the learners receiving English language instruction while intermediate-low learners represented 50.6 percent. These data reflect the statewide need to continue a focus in providing lower level ESL instruction and continues to suggest, as do other measures, that DL can be used to reach and effectively serve learners once they demonstrate very basic 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 are often a part of the beginning-low instruction. These drill and practice activities often lend themselves well to at-home practice and repetition.

Learners in intermediate low, intermediate high, and advanced low represent 78.6 percent of the ESL DL learners while beginning high students represent 12.5 percent. Teachers report that learners in the Intermediate low and above levels seem to benefit the most from blended classroom and distance learning (DL Blended) alternatives because of the focus on and improving quality and access to appropriate adult learning materials, and the opportunity to incorporate life skills and higher-order thinking skills with the language acquisition instruction.

Primary Reasons for Enrollment

As shown in Table 11, improving basic skills and English skills account for over 79.2 percent of the primary reasons learners reported for enrollment. Although minuscule in comparison to those enrolling to improve their basic and English skills, the percent of those enrolling for direct work-related reasons (get a job and retain a job) increased over 3.5 times the 1.6 percent rate in 2009-10 to 5.8 percent in 2011-12. However, improving skills probably has implications for work preparedness and therefore also could be linked to these prior two reasons for enrollment.

The improvements of basic skills (at 62.3 percent) together with English language improvement (10.0 percent) were most important for ABE learners (72.3 percent overall). Improving English skills (at 77.3 percent) was the single most important reason for enrollment of ESL learners. Learners in high school subjects and GED preparation indicated their reasons for enrollment were: High School Diploma or GED Certificate (55.2 percent); and improve basic skills (33.1 percent).

Primary Reason	ABE		ESL		ASE		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Improve Basic Skills	292	62.3	868	7.2	457	33.1	1,617	11.7
Improve English Skills	47	10.0	9,263	77.3	21	1.5	9,331	67.5
HS Diploma or GED	59	12.6	118	1.0	761	55.2	938	6.8
Get Job	11	2.3	348	2.9	16	1.2	375	2.7
Retain Job	6	1.3	397	3.3	26	1.9	429	3.1
Enter College or Training	10	2.1	62	0.5	14	1.0	86	0.6
Work-Based Project		0.0	4	0.0		0.0	4	0.0
Family Goal	6	1.3	102	0.9	8	0.6	116	0.1
U.S. Citizenship		0.0	341	2.8		0.0	341	2.5
Military		0.0		0.0	1	0.1	1	0.0
Personal Goal	22	4.7	307	2.6	51	3.7	380	2.7
None/ Not Identified	14	3.0	162	1.4	8	0.6	184	1.3
Other	2	0.4	5	0.0	16	1.2	23	0.2
Totals	469	100.0	11,977	100.0	1,379	100.0	13,825	100.0

Table11: The Percent of Innovation Program Learner Primary Reasons for Enrolling in Each of the Three Main Instruction Programs—2011-12 (Source: CASAS 2012).

Learner Progress or Status by Program

Learners are monitored on their progress throughout the time they are enrolled. Chart 12 displays the enrollment and course completion status in ABE, ESL, and ASE for learners

participating in the Innovation Program for 2011-12. The highest percentage of learners retained at the same level in 2011-12 were enrolled in ESL (50.1 percent), followed by ABE (41.5 percent), and ASE (45.8 percent). The highest percentage of learners not showing up for class or attending less than twelve hours enrolled in ASE (14.1 percent) which also had the highest rate of learners leaving before completing an NRS Functional Instructional Level (20.5 percent).

Chart 12: Innovation Program Learner Status by Instructional Program – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Chart 13 displays the stacked positive results of learners in the Innovations Program ABE, ESL, and ASE for 2011-12. The ABE Program had the highest proportion of enrollees completing an NRS Instructional Level—31.9 percent completed a level and either moved up or left the program after level completion. Participants in ESL showed the highest positive impact status of the three programs with 27.0 percent completing an instructional level and either moved up or left the program after level completion and 50.1 percent remained in program and continued progressing at the same instructional level for a total positive impact of 77.1 percent.

The ASE programs participating in the Innovation Programs had the lowest overall positive status impact at 65.5 percent— a quarter of ASE learners either completed an instructional level and moved up (5.7 percent), or left program after completing a level (19.4 percent), and 40.4 percent remained at the same level working toward a diploma or certificate. Most ASE learners garnering either a high school diploma or GED certificate would exit the program which account for practically all of the 19.4 percent exiting after level completion.

ASE	5.7	19.4	40.4
ESL	21.9	5.1	50.1
ABE	23.5	8.4	41.5

0.0   10.0   20.0   30.0   40.0   50.0   60.0   70.0   80.0   90.0

■ Completed & Moved Up   ■ Left After Completion   ■ Retained at Same Level

Chart 13: Percent of Innovation Program Learner Positive Status ABE, ESL, and ASE—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Learner progress is a key indicator of the impact and effectiveness of instructional service delivery. Results of learners participating in the DL Innovation Program for ABE, ESL, and ASE are graphically displayed in Chart 13.The ESL positive impact percentages were consistently in the mid to high 70's over the last five years—77.1 percent for 2011-12. ASE learner performance fluctuated from the low to high 60 percent's—65.5 percent for 2011-12. ABE learners have been the lowest positive impact performers at low 60's to low 50's over the first four years in Chart 14, however their 73.4 percent in 2011-12 showed the performance of ABE learners escalating to 20 percentage points over their 2010-11 positive impact percentage and outperforming the ASE learners for the first time. This growth was largely due to the large increase in the percentage of ABE learners completing a level and moving up in the ABE program—8.1 percent in 2010-11 and 23.5 percent in the current year. Although the data are not readily available for a more comprehensive analyses at this time, it would be important to discern where and how these ABE results were attained.
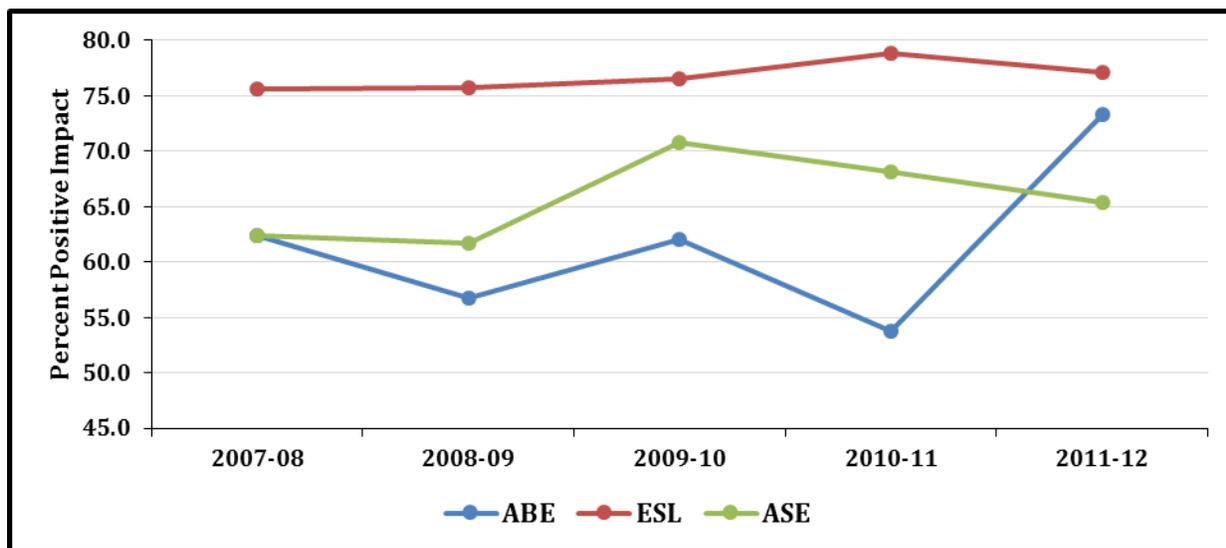
Chart 14: Percent Total Positive Impact the Innovation Program Had Over Past Five Years in ABE, ESL, and ASE--2006–12. (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012)

Learner Outcomes

Work Related Outcomes
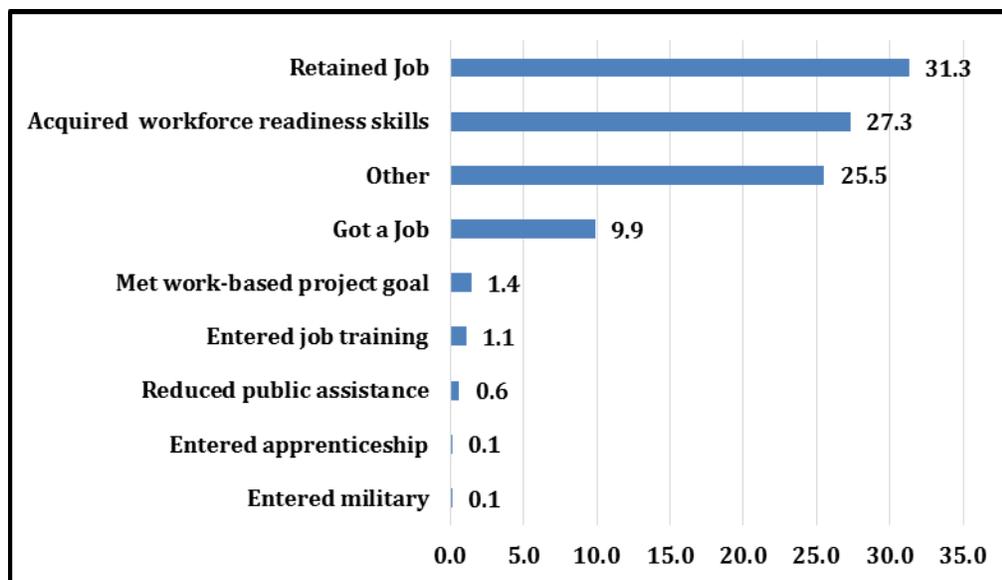
Chart 15: Percent of Innovation Program Learner Work Related Outcomes—2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Among the learners identifying work related outcomes in Chart 15, 41.2 5 percent reported that they obtained or retained a job and 27.3 percent said they acquired workforce readiness skills. The profile of work related outcomes similar to results in previous years.

Personal Outcomes

This year 72.0 percent of the learners identified meeting a personal goal or goals—see Table 12. A similar increase was seen with learners identifying an increase in their involvement in their children's education at 21.4 percent this represents an increase of 4.4 percent over last year while other Personal/Family Outcomes were similar to results reported last year.

Personal/Family Outcomes	N	%
Met personal goal	7,021	72.0
Met other family goal	3,140	32.2
Other	2,530	25.9
Increased involvement in children's education	2,091	21.4
Increased involvement in children's literacy activities	1,425	14.6
Positive Status Total N	9,758	

Table 12: Reported Innovation Program Learner Personal Outcomes – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Community Outcomes

In Table 13, a third (33.9 percent) of the learners reported community outcomes as other; 30.3 percent identified a community outcome as increased community involvement. A greater proportion of this year's learners identified achieving U.S. Citizenship skills as a community outcome at 17.8 percent versus 10.9 percent in 2010-11. About the same percent of learners this year identified registering to vote or voted first time at 1.4 percent versus 1.1 percent last year. All areas of community outcomes were higher than the reported results from last year.

Community Outcomes	N	%
Other	3,309	33.9
Increased involvement in community	2,956	30.3
Achieved U.S. citizenship skills	1,741	17.8
Registered to vote or voted first time	132	1.4
Positive Status Total N	9,758	

Table 13: Reported Innovation Program Learner Community Outcomes – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Educational Outcomes

More than a quarter (26.4 percent), of the learners reporting educational outcomes in Table 14 reported the mastery of course competencies and over a third (34.4 percent) gained computer/tech skills. Down slightly from 2009-10 (18.3 percent) and 2010-11 (16.6 percent), 15.4 percent of the 2011-12 learners reported earning a GED certificate, other certificate, high school diploma, entering college, or a training program as their educational goal.

Educational Outcomes	N	%
Gained computer/tech skills	3,361	34.4
Other	3,316	34.0
Mastered course competencies/Education Plan	2,574	26.4
Earned Certificate	947	9.7
Passed GED	218	2.2
Entered college	111	1.1
Entered training program	112	1.1
Earned High School diploma	82	0.8
Returned to K-12	51	0.5
Positive Status Total N	**9,758**	

Table 14: Reported Innovation Program Learner Educational Outcomes – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Reading Pre-test Scores

The following tables and charts are taken from CASAS reading (Chart 16) and listening test data (Chart 20). 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 GED preparation.
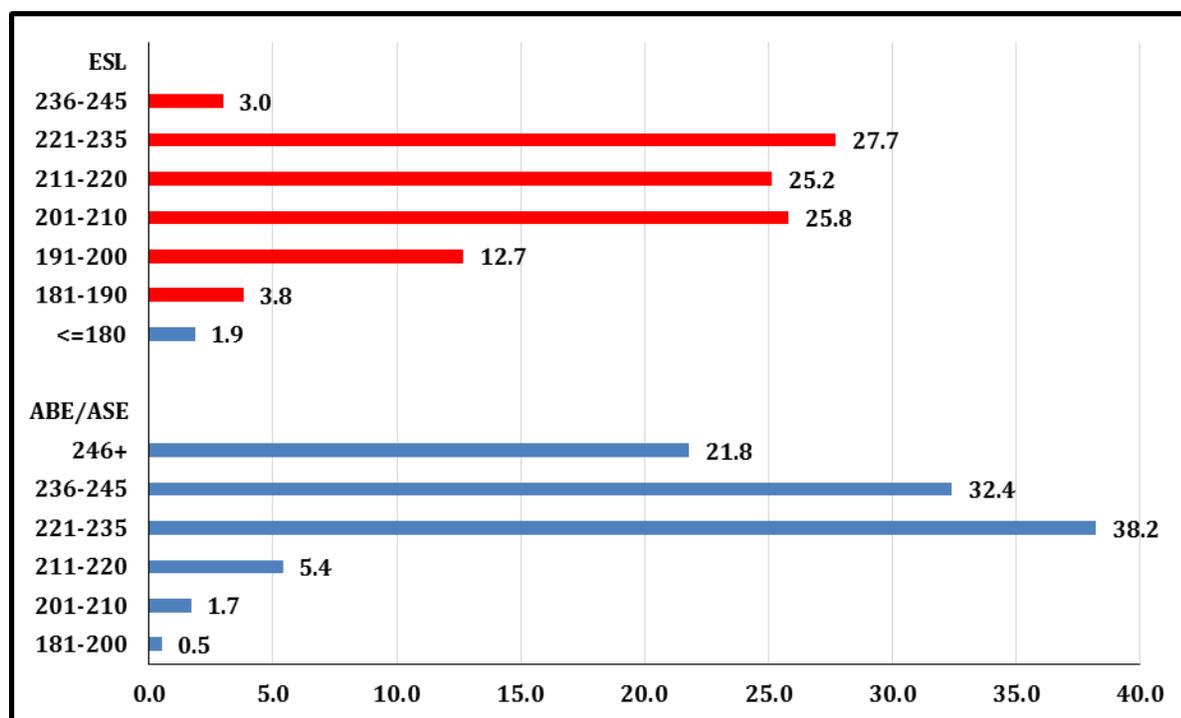
Chart 16: Percent Distribution by Scale Score Range of Innovation Program Learner Reading Pre-test Mean Scores For ESL and ABE/ASE – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

The small number of learners involved in the ABE/ASE reading pre-test at the 181-200 and 201-210 scale score levels do not provide useful information other than to identify the reading level

distribution of the Innovation Program ABE/ASE learners. The largest percentage (38.2 percent) was tested in the pre-GED/advanced basic skills level.

Because of their large numbers, the data for the ESL/EL civics learners are more useful. A reading score level at or below 180 identify beginning literacy and pre-beginning ESL learners: this year there were 3.0 percent at this level. The 181-200 reading score level identifies the low and high-beginning ESL CASAS instructional level and there were 16.5 percent at this level. Levels 201-210 and 211-220 identify the low and high intermediate ESL learners at 51.0 percent for this year and 27.7 percent were at level 221-235 which is the advanced ESL reading group. ESL learners with reading pretest scores of 236-245, 3.0 percent were at this level, are ready for adult secondary education. However, it is not unusual for these higher functioning learning to not feel comfortable with their language skills and wish to receive more language training.

As in prior years, the ESL learners reading at the intermediate and advanced levels in 2011-12 form the majority of the Innovation Program learners (78.7 percent). This seems appropriate because learning resources are often the most robust for ESL at these levels.

Listening Mean Scores

The ESL listening scores in Chart 17fall into the same categories as the reading scores — (at or below 180 and 181-200) 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.
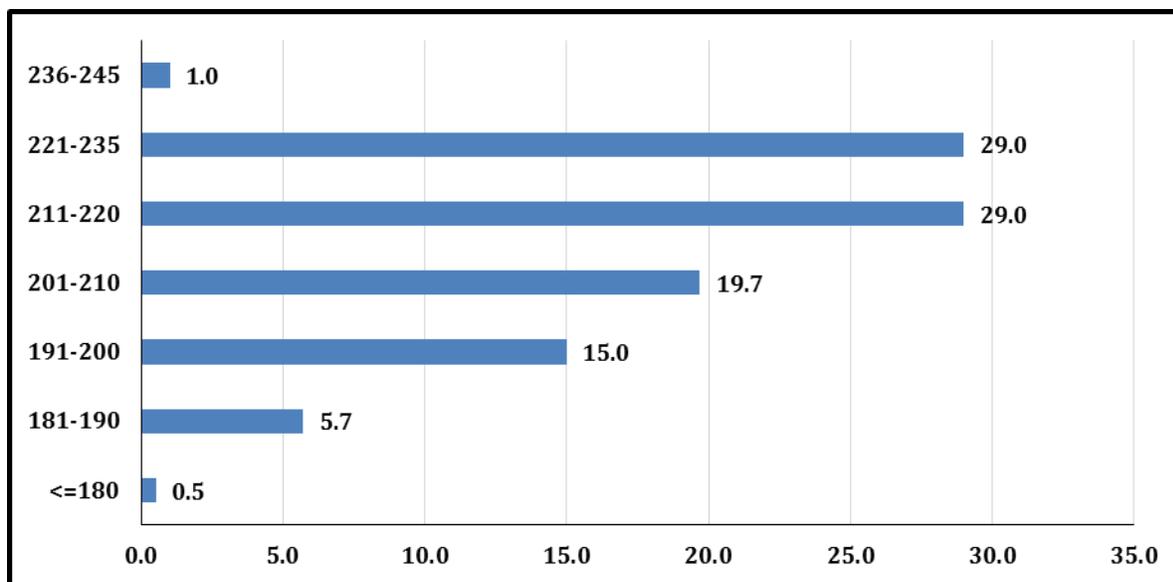
Chart 17: Percent Distribution by Scale Score Range of Innovation Programs' Participant Listening Pre-test Mean Scores – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

For all Innovation Programs the overall mean listening pre-test score for ESL learners was slightly higher than the overall from 2010-11 (209.8) at 211.6--the high end of the ESL beginning ESL intermediate score range. The ESL learners scored in listening at the intermediate and advanced levels and form the majority of the Innovation Programs participants (75.5 percent).

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 will, on average, show greater than a seven point gain 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. The mean scores for each of the score ranges for both ABE/ASE and ESL were above the expected level as identified above when comparing the Innovation Program results with longitudinal CASAS data.

Table 15 identifies the ABE/ASE and ESL/ESL reading score gains over six years from 2006-07 to 2011-12. The ABE/ASE 211-220 scores will show substantial gains, as do the ESL scores in the <180, 181-190, and 191-200 ranges. These results have held up over all six years reported below. Only chance variations were observed in the individual mean reading scores across the six years for any given reading score range with the ABE/ASE score range of 211-220 having the most variability, (at 5.4 scale score points), of any of the other score ranges for either ABE/ASE or ESL.

ABE/ASE	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
< 200	--	--	--	--	--	
201-210	--	--	--	14.9	--	
211-220	8.5	10.0	11.4	8.1	6.9	12.3
221-235	6.0	7.0	6.3	6.7	5.9	7.3
236-245	4.6	3.8	4.6	5.2	4.7	4.4
ABE/ASE Overall	**5.9**	**6.3**	**6.2**	**6.7**	**5.6**	**6.6**

ESL/ESL-Cit	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
< 180	28.3	26.7	26.0	26.2	25.0	26.5
181-190	16.9	17.5	17.6	17.1	16.8	18.6
191-200	12.0	11.3	11.4	12.4	12.3	12.1
201-210	9.4	9.0	8.5	9.2	9.5	8.8
211-220	7.0	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.8
221-235	4.6	4.7	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.4
236-245	2.9	4.2	3.2	3.6	4.5	4.8
ESL/ESL-Cit Overall	**9.3**	**9.2**	**8.9**	**8.8**	**8.8**	**8.4**

Table 15: Six Year Distribution of CASAS Mean Reading Scale Score Gains by Reading Score Range for ABE/ASE and ESL Learners in the Innovation Program 2006 to 2012. (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012)

Charts 18 and 19 below graphically display the results over six years that are reported in Table 16 for both ABE/ASE and ESL. Chart 18 displays the results for ABE/ASE and
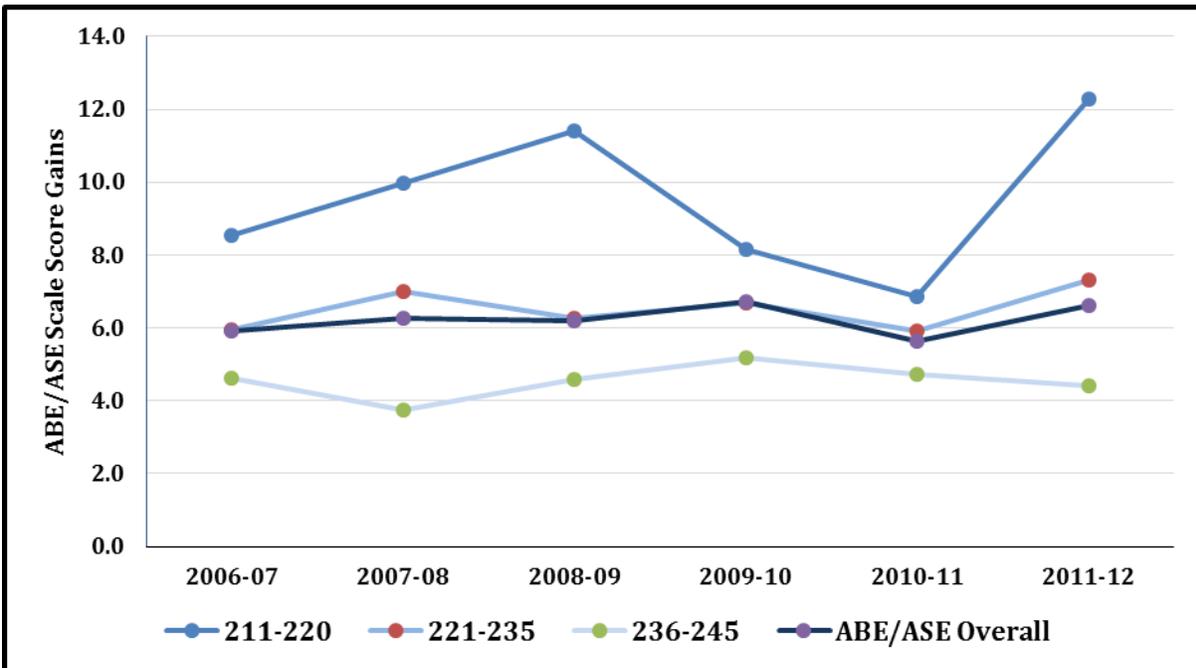
Chart 18: Reading Gains Over Six Years (2006-07 to 2011-12) by CASAS Pre-Test Scale Score Levels for ABE and ASE in Innovation Programs. (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012).

Chart 19 displays the results for ESL. Except for the ABE/ASE Scale Score range 211-220 that went up 5.4 scale points from 2010-11 to 2011-12, the scale score gains constantly had only random variations across the six years.
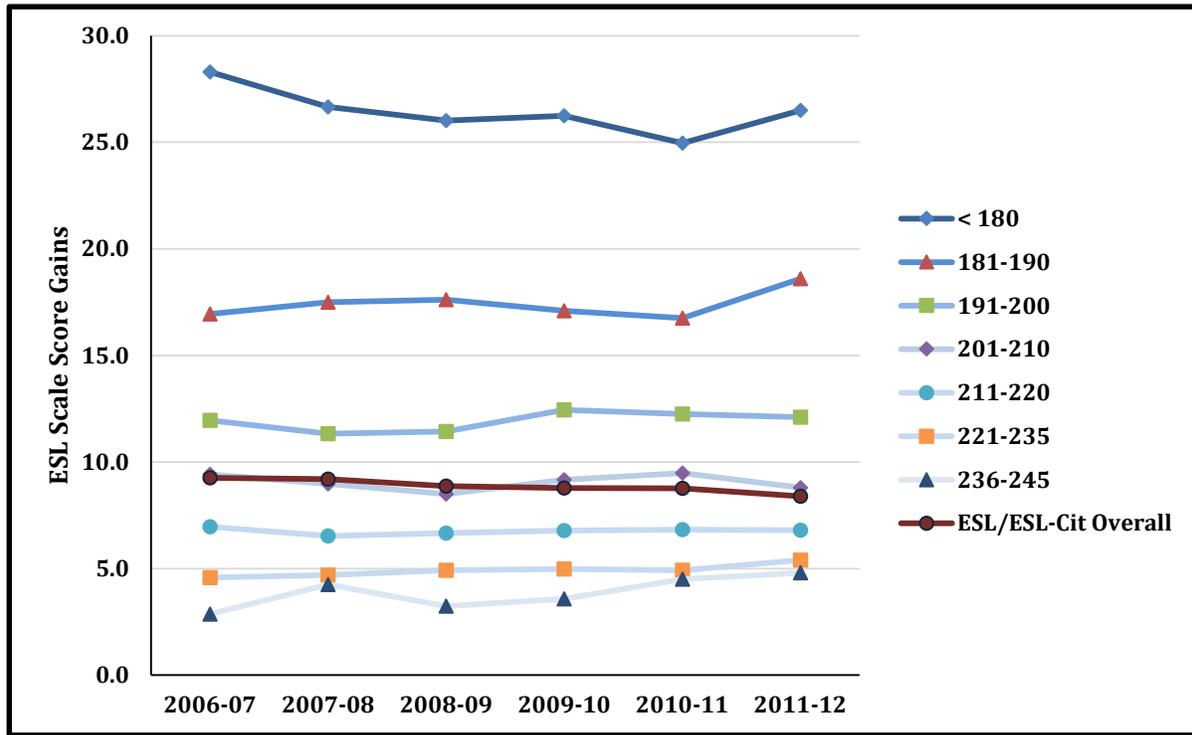
Chart 19: Reading Gains Over Six Years (2006 to 2012) by CASAS Pre-Test Scale Score Levels for in the Innovation Program. (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012

Listening Gains

The same research history of CASAS reading score gains shows that learners testing 210 or below on the CASAS listening assessments show, on average, five point gains after 80-100 hours of instruction. Learners testing 211 or above on average show three point reading gains with 80-100 hours of instruction.
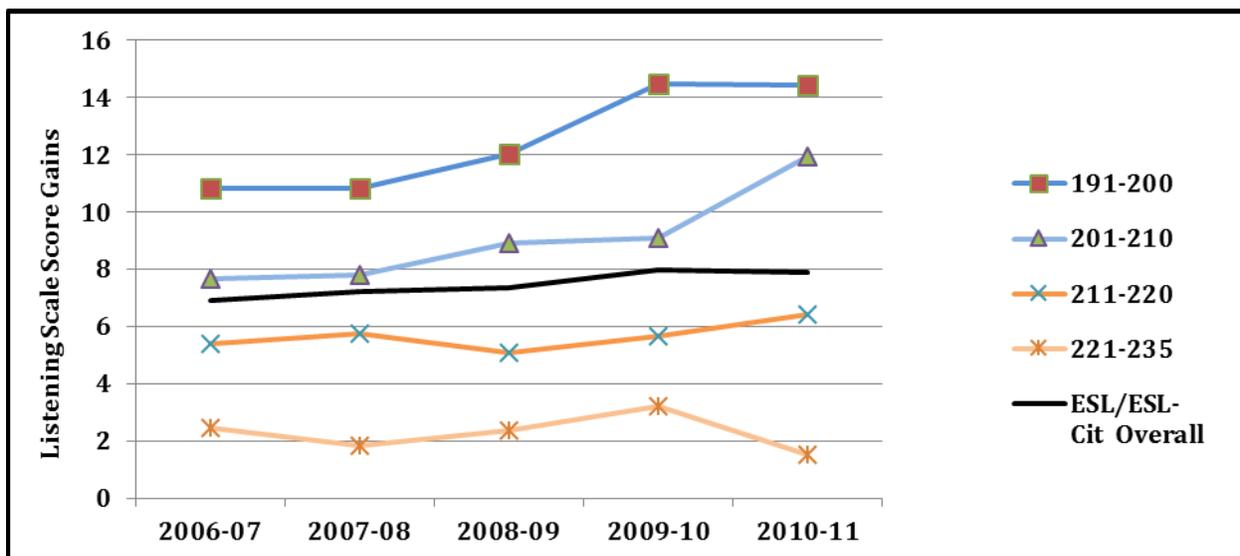
Chart 20: Five Years (2006-07 to 2010-11) of the Innovation Program ESL Learner Mean Listening Score Gains by CASAS Pre-Test Scale Scores. (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2011)

Because there was insufficient data (N less than 50) for this current year, only data from prior years are reported. Listening gains were highest with the lower level ESL learner. (See Chart 20) All groups performed above average with the exception of the higher groups. Participants scoring in the 211-220 range matched the historical average whereas those scoring 221-235 performed slightly below average. Unlike the reading results which were relatively static across all score ranges for the five years, the results for listening were more dynamic at the lower score ranges of 181-191 and 191-200 which escalated over the last three to four years.

Program Effectiveness and Student Persistence

In 2007, learner persistence became a strategic focus in California to facilitate adult education program improvement. In adult education, learner persistence is often defined as the length of time that learners spend 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 learning skills — usually in the 80-100 hour range. CASAS defines persistence as completing a 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 of ESL learner gains in California over a four year period (Stiles 2004) showed that the 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.

In 1999, research by Comings, Parella, and Scoicone defined 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 consistent participation in learning difficult 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 DL. DL may also provide a "bridge or link" so that learners stay involved and keep learning during times when they are not able to attend traditional classroom programs.

There are some semantic and contextual difficulties with the way 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 learners 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 learner strategies.

DL is a viable instructional strategy to address both goals. From the analyst's perspective, the easiest way to increase learner persistence data is to post-test more adult learners. Unfortunately, the foci in the persistence discussions address retention strategies to reduce learner 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.

DL and interventions like hybrid and DL Blended learning offer ways to make learning more convenient and accessible to many adult learners. These vehicles allow the learner to continue learning when classroom or site-based attendance is difficult for multiple reasons and are beginning to receive substantially more prominence as a significant intervention strategy.

From the DL 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 DL Only and DL Blended learning can be quite effective in this regard as this report indicates.

Outcomes are usually measured in terms of instructional units completed successfully in DL and other non-traditional instruction. This approach coincides with the recommendations of the National Education Technology Plan[xi], which notes that the concept of seat time as a measure of educational attainment was "created in the late 1800s and early 1900s to smooth transitions from K-12 into higher education by translating high school work to college admissions offices,"[xii] and suggests that in order to take advantage of all that technology offers, we need to move away from seat time, or Average Daily Attendance, as a measure of achievement.

The Distance-Learning-Blended Model (DL Blended)

In California adult education, the DL Blended model has had a very specific description—adult schools participating in the Innovation Program that offer simultaneous classroom and DL courses in which students can dual enroll. [xiii] The key considerations are that each course must have its own approved course outline, course number, assigned instructor, separate learner 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 DL portion of DL Blended learning and DL 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 DL Blended model is a 'ground up' design based on learner requests for additional material to study on their own. This is especially the case for learners in classes that meet less often. They desire to learn more rapidly than traditional classroom instruction allows.

The DL 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 policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District Adult and Career Education (LAUSD) that a learner can only earn course 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 learner completes both courses—they only receive credit once, no exceptions.

This means that a learner, whether DL Blended or DL Only, can only be awarded hours of attendance one time per completed unit of a DL course. Once all of the units of a DL course have been completed, the learner cannot retake those units and have hours claimed by a school. In a traditional ESL class, a learner can retake the same class multiple times and hours can be claimed for each re-taking of the class without limit—assuming the learner is appropriately placed in the course multiple times.

With the advent of flex funding, the distinction between DL and classroom has become less defined. More face-to-face classes are adding an online component included in the same course number and with the same curriculum. However, it has been difficult to gather data on new DL Blended models since the reporting requirements in the education code are currently suspended and reporting data is voluntary.

The following charts (Charts 21 – 30) are based on data that California reports to the NRS – WIA Title II. The data reflects a total of 11,224 DL learners qualifying for the NRS Federal Tables—6,493 DL Only learners and 4,731 DL Blended learners except where indicated. The data clearly demonstrates the utility of, and in particular, the role of DL Blended learning in producing effective instructional level completion, as well as reading and listening gains in general. One adult school reported in their annual narrative evaluation "…because of increased student retention, increased staff productivity, and student learning gains, we are considering the addition of hybrid classes for next year."

Chart 21 shows the six-year growth of DL enrollment reported in state programs, as well as distance learners qualifying for the NRS Federal Tables. The Chart also shows the dramatic drop in enrollments with the implementation of legislatively mandated flex funding.
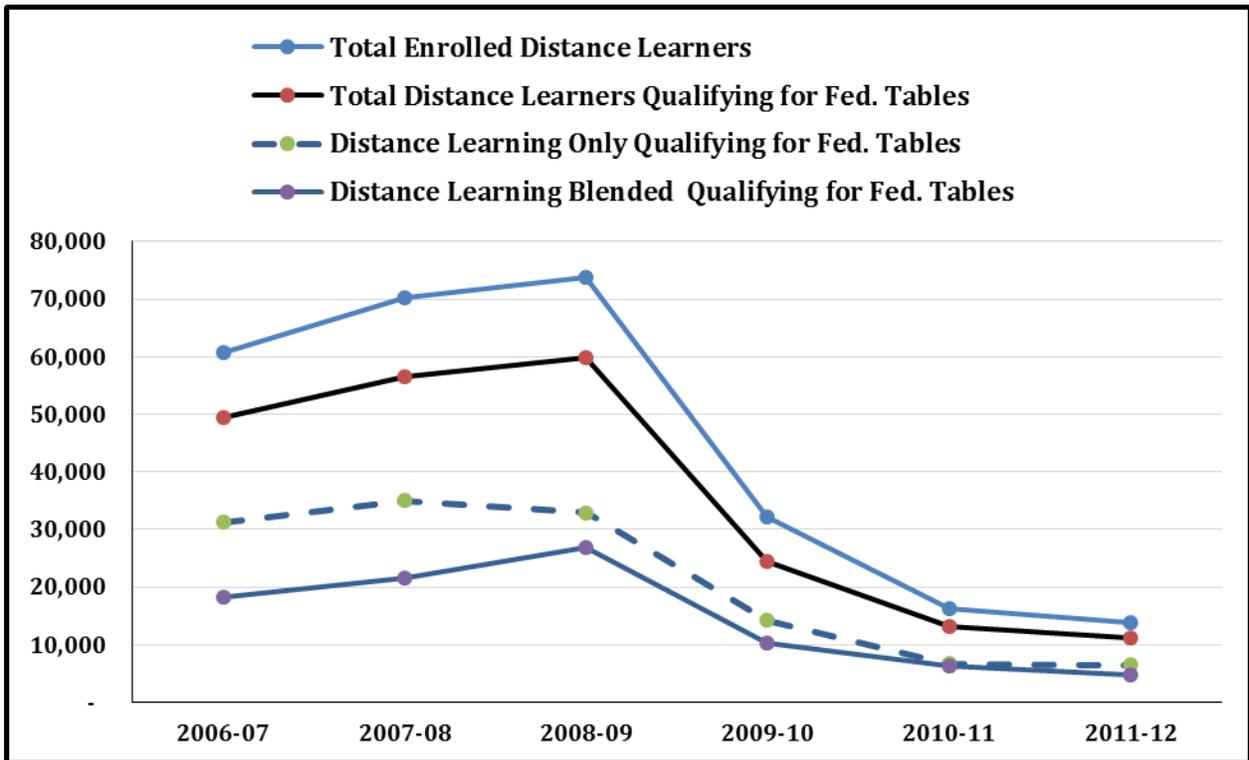
Chart 21: Six Years of Adult School AEFLA DL Enrollments Participating in the Innovation Program 2006-07 to 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2006-2012)

Chart 22 shows the rates over six years of learners qualifying for inclusion in the AEFLA Federal Tables from DL contrasted with classroom learning. The Innovation Program had a greater percentage of complete and accurate data sets compared to classroom learning; however these differences appear to be converging with the implementation flex funding in 2009-10, but DL rebounded up to previously attained rates in 2010-11 and 2011-12, albeit classroom learning continued on its gradual increase in rates of qualifying for the federal tables also.
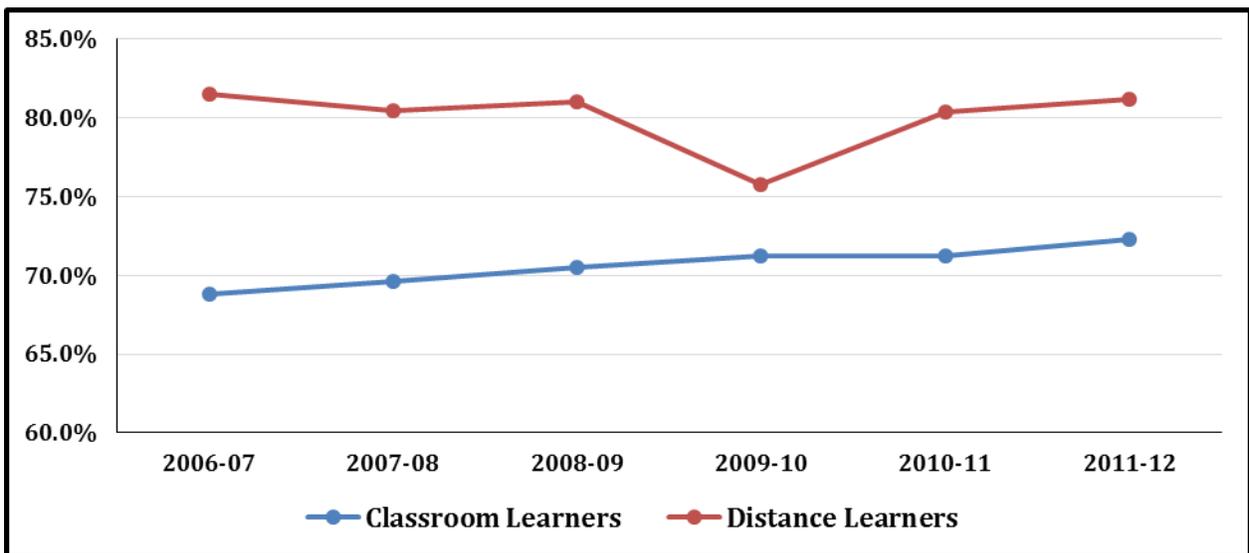
Chart 22: Rates of Learners Qualifying for Federal AEFLA Tables 2006-12 for Distance Learners in the Innovation Program Contrasted with Classroom Learners (Source: CASAS 2006-2012).

ABE/ASE. Chart 23 shows that ABE, ESL, and ASE all had lower persistence rates in the current year than in 2010-11. The first three years of learner persistence comparisons indicate DL Blended performing better than classroom learning. However, in 2009-10 the differences between DL Blended and classroom learning disappeared only to reappear in 2010-11 with DL Blended classes accelerating to new persistence rate highs at 73.4 percent only to return to a slightly lower rate (57.5 percent) than classroom learning at 59.2 percent. DL Only learners had the lowest persistence rates from 2006-07 to 2008-09, but in 2009-10 they more than doubled
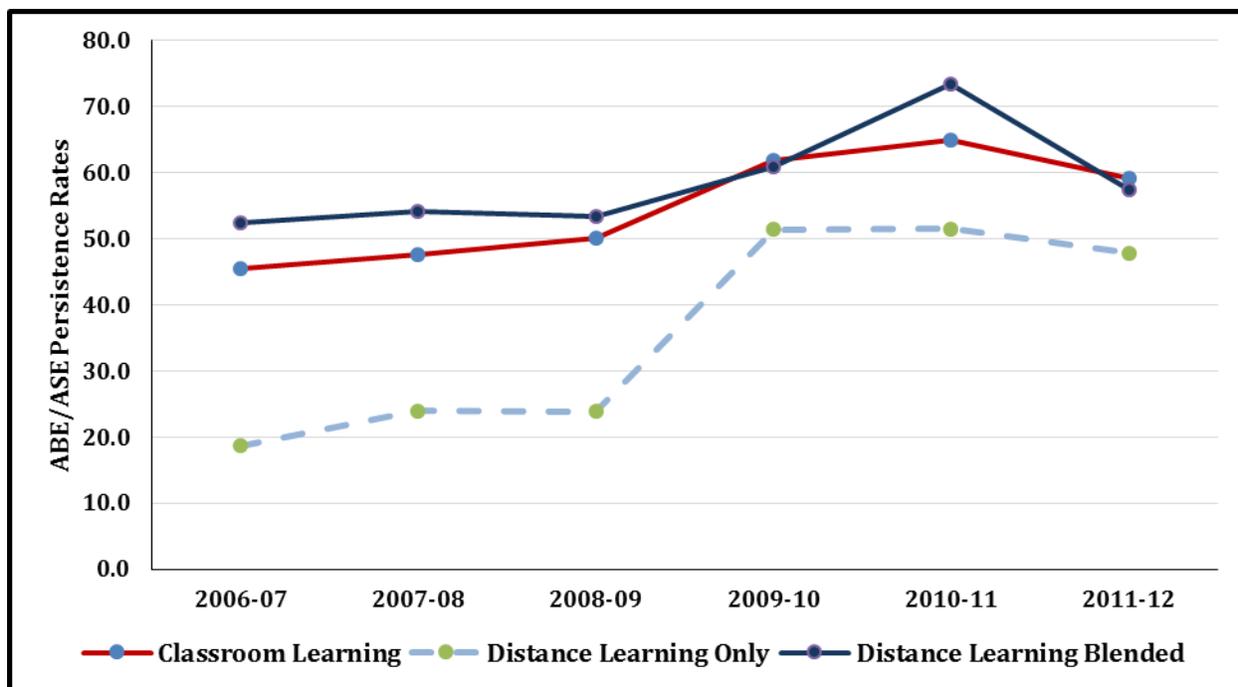
Chart 23: Persistence Percent Rates of California AEFLA ABE/ASE Distance Learners 2006–12 Participating in the Innovation Program versus Classroom ABE/ASE Learners (Source: CASAS 2006-2011).

their rate recorded in 2008-09 to 51.5 percent. They continued to maintain a 51.5 percent rate for 2010-11 and dipped slightly to 47.9 in 2011-12. This could be an artifact of the non-reporting option given in flex funding or diligence on the part of DL Only instructors in pairing pre- and post-tests in a timelier manner than in the first three years (2006-1009).

As previously defined, persistence means that a student has completed a pre- and post- test, which usually equates to 70 hours or more of instruction

Chart 24 displays the NRS Functional Instructional Level completion rates of ABE/ASE over six years for both DL instructional modalities and classroom learning. DL Blended and classroom learning had the highest level completion rates. They continued this rate on a somewhat parallel course with increasing rates of level completion while DL Only almost doubled its completion rates at the inception of flex funding in 2009-10. All three learning interventions showed increases in NRS Instructional Level completion rates to the present time.
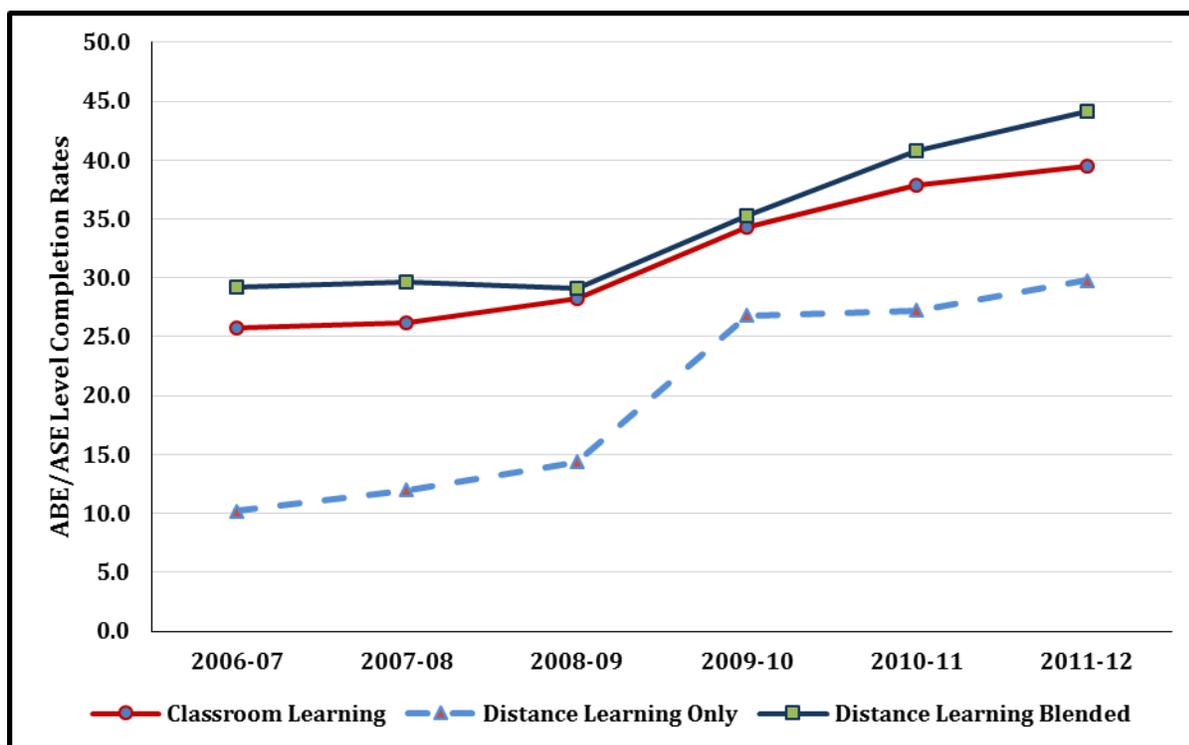
Chart 24: Federal Table 4 NRS Level Completion Percent Rates of ABE/ASE Distant Learners Participating in the Innovation Program 2006-12 versus Classroom CA AEFLA ABE/ASE Learners (Source: CASAS 2006-2012).

In Chart 25 from 2006-07 to 2011-12, the persistence rate in DL Blended classes for ESL students was 15 to 10 percentage points greater than either DL Only or classroom learning persistence rates. All three instructional interventions for ESL had continual increases in their persistence rates each year over the six-year period. In 2009-10, the persistence rates for DL Only converged with the classroom learning rate during the first year of flex funding in 2010-11 and continued on the same slightly increasing persistence rate line to the current year, 2011-12.

The increases in persistence rates of ESL classes over the six year period, as shown in Chart 25, were accompanied by similar increases in growth patterns for NRS Instructional Level completions for ESL by all three modalities as displayed in Chart 26.
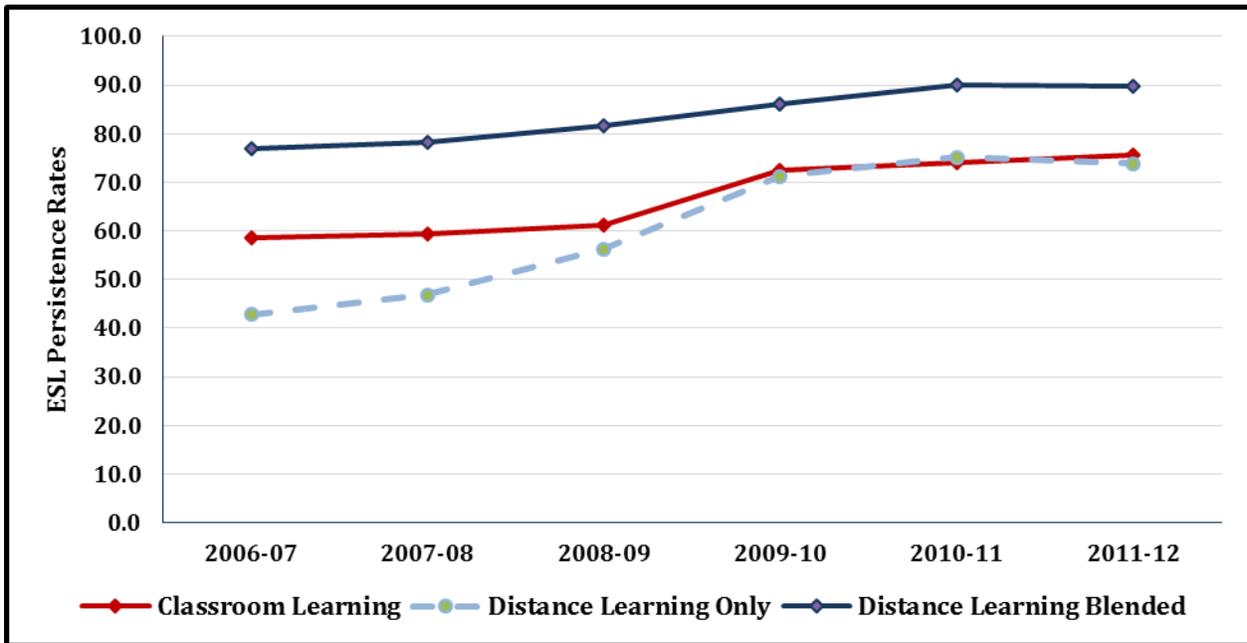
Chart 25: Persistence Rates of CA AEFLA ESL Learners Participating in the Innovation Program versus Classroom Learners 2006–12 (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012)

The NRS Level completion rates for DL Blended learners were consistently superior to either classroom learning or DL Only rates over the six-year period. Although classroom learning was superior to DL Only in NRS Instructional Level completion rates over the six-year period, DL Only consistently closed the level completion rate between it and classroom learning from 11.4 percent in 2006-07 to 1.5 percent in 2009-10, 2010-11 (1.4 percent), and the current reporting year 2011-12 (3.1 percent).
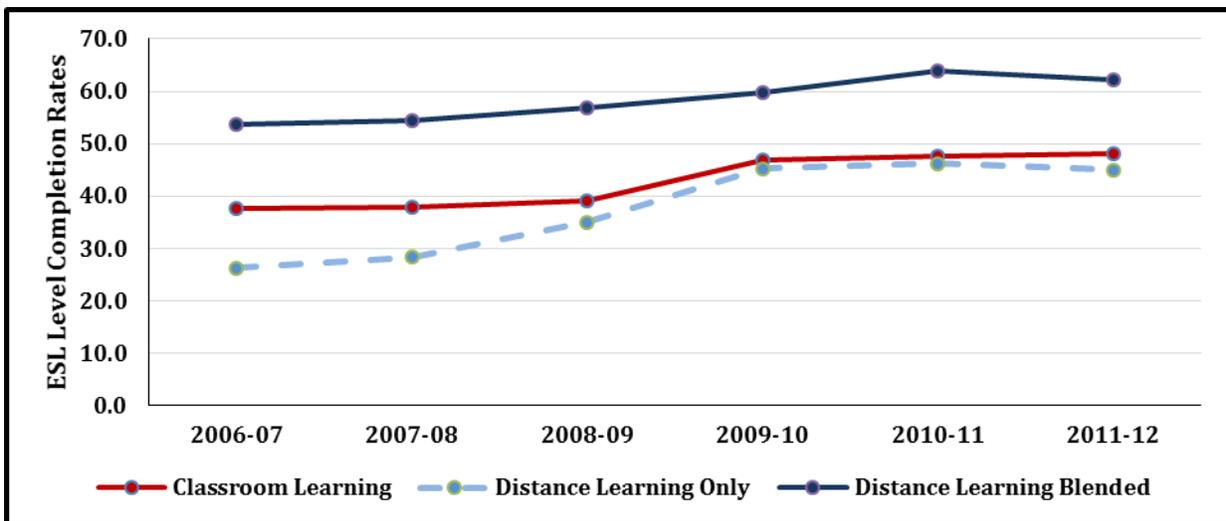
Chart 26: Federal Table 4 NRS Level Completion Percent Rates for 2006–12 of ESL DL Participants in the Innovation Program versus CA AEFLA ESL Classroom Learners (Source: CASAS 2006 to 2012).

As shown in Chart 27, the persistence rates for DL Blended were slightly higher and parallel with both classroom and DL Only. The highest persistence rates attained by all three of these instructional modalities were the two lowest levels of ESL (ESL beginning
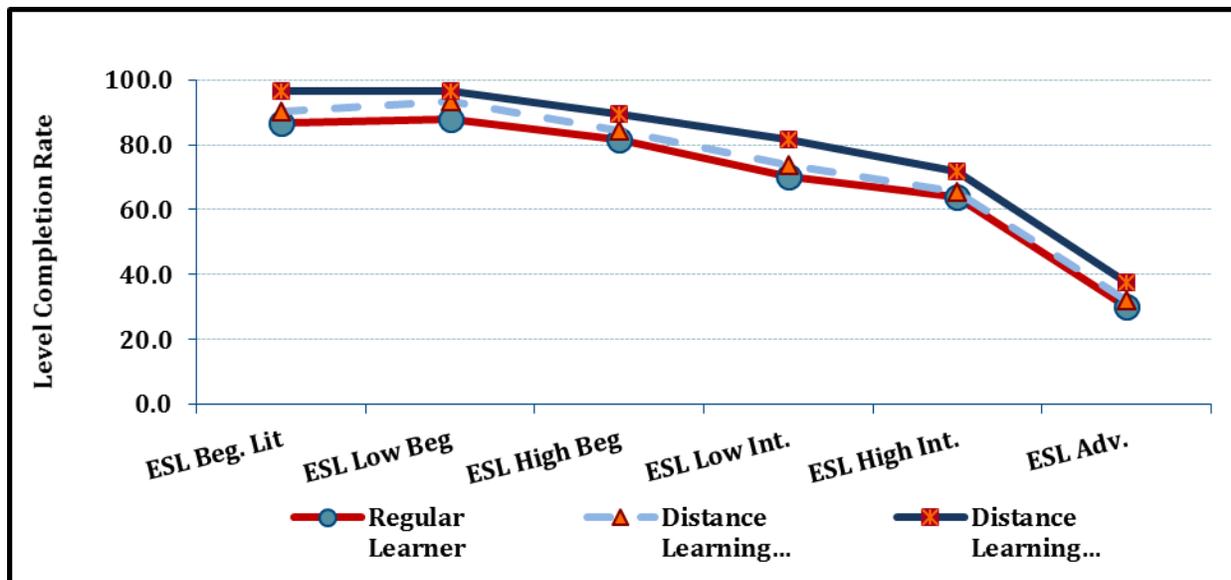
Chart 27. Persistence Percent Rates of ESL Distance Learners (Only and Blended) Participating in Innovation Programs Contrasted with Classroom Learners by Instructional Level 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

literacy and ESL low beginning); their rates were higher than those attained at those two levels of ESL in 2010-11 by more than four percent for DL Blended, 15.1 to 17.3 percent by DL Only, and 16.5 to 15.8 percent by classroom learning. At the more advanced levels of ESL, (ESL high intermediate and ESL advanced), the rate standings were reversed and more dramatic with the learners in 2010-11 attaining greater persistence rates (40.6 to 53.4 percent) than learners in 2011-12 (18.5 to 25.3 percent) at the ESL advanced level.

As shown in Chart 28, DL Blended shows higher parallel and somewhat converging level completion rates with both classroom and DL Only across all six instructional levels of ESL. The results in 2011-12 were similar to those found in prior years which typically showed a downward curved line, from beginning levels of ESL, (where the gains are the greatest) down to the advanced level. However this year the level completion rates for both classroom learning and DL Only were convergent and virtually identical across all six instructional levels.

Chart 28: NRS Instructional Level Completion Rates by Instructional Level in NRS Table 4 of ESL Distance Learners Participating in the Innovation Program Contrasted with Classroom Learners – FY 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

Chart 29 shows a comparison of the CASAS Reading Scale Score gains for AEFLA learners in 2011-12 for the two DL instructional delivery modalities with classroom instruction. Data in the chart indicates that, except for the ESL low beginning level where DL Only outscored DL Blended by 0.1 percent, DL Blended performed consistently better than either classroom
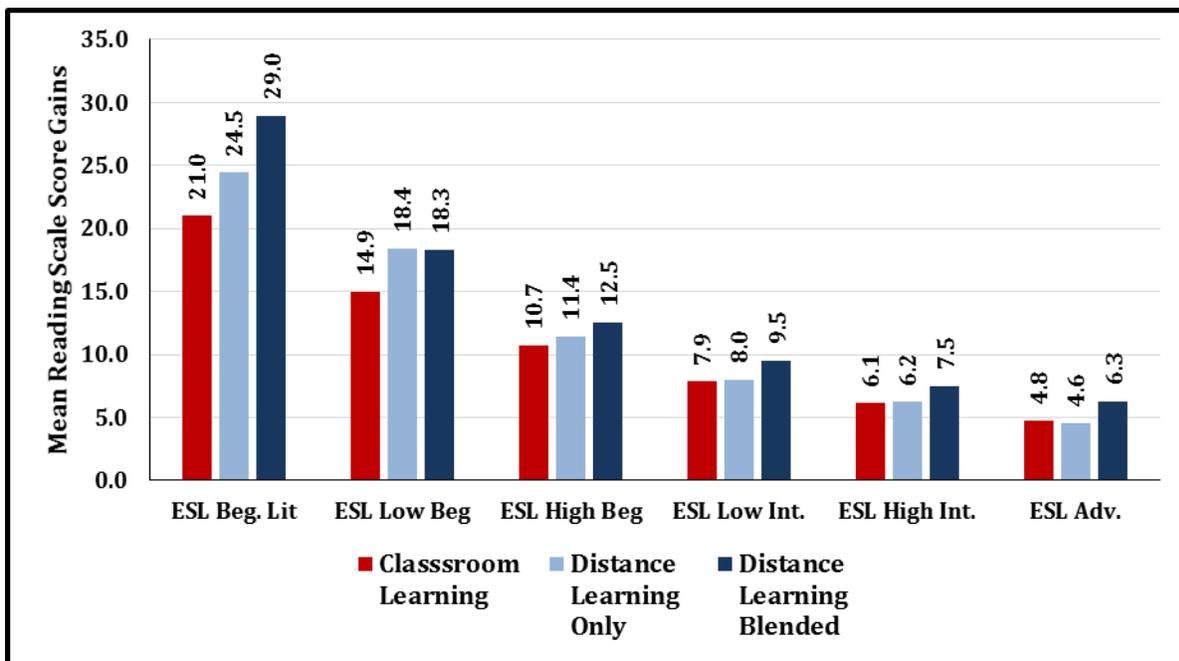
Chart 29: ESL Comparative Reading Gain Scores by NRS ESL Functional Instructional Levels for Classroom and DL (Only and Blended) 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

learning or DL Only across the other five NRS Instructional Levels. DL only appeared to be better than classroom learning in the first five levels of ESL and lower by 0.2 percent but comparable to classroom learning in level completion rates. The results for 2011-12 were similar to those attained in 2010-11 except the results at the two lowest ESL instructional levels (ESL Beginning literacy and ESL low beginning) were slightly higher this year than last for both DL instructional modalities.

Chart 30 poses new data that previously has not been disclosed in this series of annual reports on the Innovation Program. Although the historical data of reporting scale score gains in relation to hours of instruction by modality as found in Chart 34 has been informative and useful in the past, data in the new chart dramatically shows the power and value that hours of instruction have on NRS Instructional Level completion gains in accountability. Regardless of instructional modality, hours of instruction plays a major role in significantly enhancing gains in NRS instructional level completion rates. The NRS Function Instructional Level Completion rate is literally is the index or report card to Congress and the public on how well the adult education providers and States are performing with the federal funds provided them through WIA Title II.
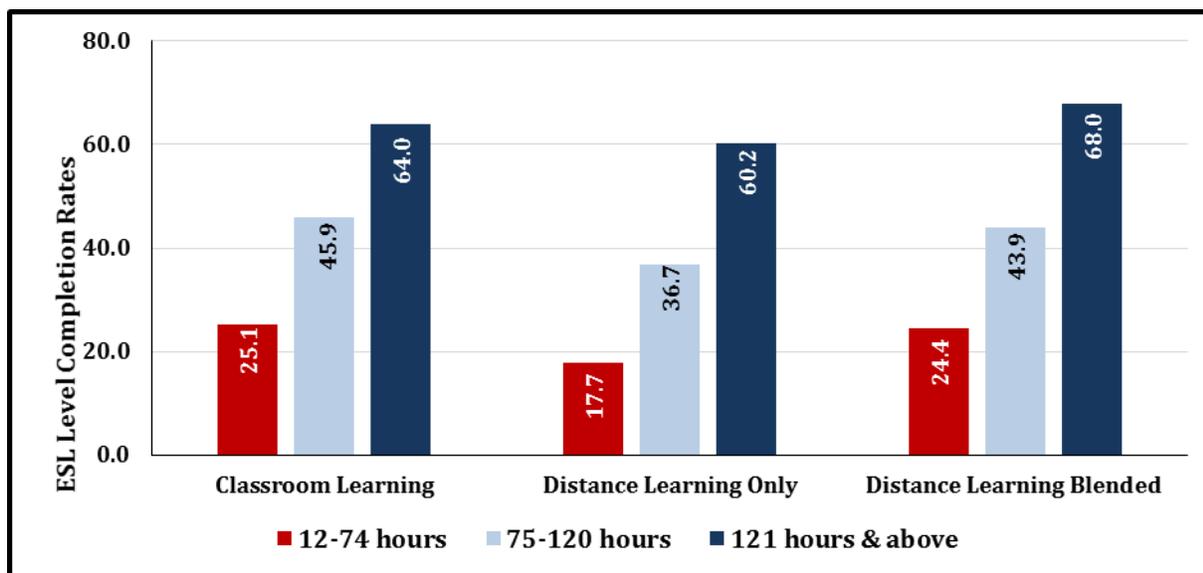
Chart 30: ESL NRS Instructional Level Completion Rates by Hours of Instruction: ESL DL Learners contrasted with ESL Classroom Learners 2011-12. (Source: CASAS 2012)

The data in Chart 31 from 2010-11 show the typical CASAS Scale Score gains in reading for ESL participants in each of the three instructional modalities in three different amounts of instruction that were made by ESL learners for the last several years. For each of the modalities, the more time participants received instruction the greater the gains they made. Having more instructional time (greater than 74 hours) seemed to have a greater positive impact on the two DL modalities than on those in the classroom learning modality. DL Blended learners seemed to have benefited more from increased hours of instruction than did the other two instructional modalities.
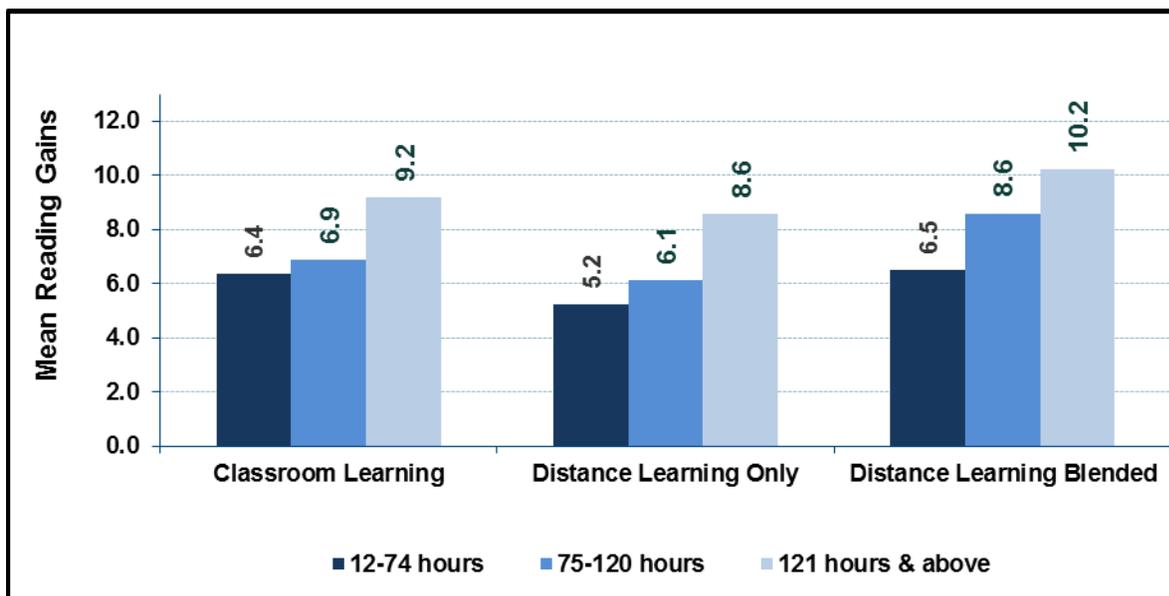
Chart 31: ESL CASAS Scale Score Reading Gains by Hours of Instruction: ESL Distance Learners contrasted with ESL Classroom Learners 2010-11. (Source: CASAS 2011)

Conclusions

Over the last 17 years, the California Innovation Program and DL have become well accepted and vital parts of adult basic education. The data reported here indicates that the original goal of increasing access to learning opportunities continues to be a concern. Up to the implementation of flex funding, the program had 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. Local adult schools reported implementing fees, limiting access, extending DL Blended learning options to regular classrooms and implementing online instruction as some of the means to maintain DL as a viable instructional modality option. The data shows as learners have more access to instructional resources to increase their time on learning activities the completion rates for instructional levels increase significantly.

The role of DL Blended as an effective method to serve the adult basic education learner, especially the ESL learner, is firmly documented. The researcher's ability to examine and compare key outcome data provides a better view of how DL Only instruction performs in comparison to the classroom only and DL Blended learning modes. Common sense tells us that the DL Blended learning instruction, where two curricula are provided, and the resultant interventions are more substantive, would produce the best results. Data clearly indicate that it does.

Of special note, the DL Only modality holds up very well compared with the other two modes of instruction when considering that "no instruction" would likely reveal a "zero" gain in reading and listening; whereas learners in DL Only continue to make gains independent of face-to-face instructional intervention and sometimes comparable to the results attained through regular face-to-face classroom instruction. This finding has important statewide and national implications.

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

- 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 there is no space in traditional classes
- Learn more effectively from video, audio, and Web-based media when moving at their own pace
- Cannot access traditional classroom programs on a regular basis

When comparing classroom completion and persistence data within the Innovation Program, it is clear that the DL programs, especially DL Blended learning, are particularly successful in providing ESL learning opportunities. Local research data on learner persistence and retention has supported these findings. The availability of engaging life skills instructional materials is, in all likelihood, a key factor.

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

Effectiveness — CASAS pre- and post-test data indicate that ESL learners in the Innovation Program, on average, show substantial learning increases in reading and listening. Much of this is attributed to the results of the DL Blended learning model. The ABE/ASE learners show learning gains consistent with historical data.

Efficiency — Participant and program cost data indicate that the Innovation Program was cost effective. Major adult schools continued to participate in the Innovation Program even though State apportionment funding was not directly in support of these DL programs. Even with the use of flex funding limiting direct stable access to fiscal resources needed to maintain programs, many local adult schools reported implementing fees, extending DL Blended learning options to regular classrooms and implementing online instruction to current enrollees as well as adults on lists waiting for classes to open up for enrollment.

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 included as participants in the Innovation Program.

This is the twelfth year that similar research conclusions have been reached. However, they are now supported by a closer look at comparative classroom, DL Blended learning, and DL Only data. The Innovation Program has followed the same accountability requirements as class-based apportionment programs supported by Federal AEFLA Funds. Over the past twelve years the Innovation Program has been successful in standardizing their reporting procedures, while still maintaining alternative instructional delivery methods. In this current year (2011-12) with flex funding, all Innovation Program learners are encouraged rather than expected to be tracked in

the TOPSpro system, and all programs are encouraged rather than required to use a standardized format for both program applications and annual evaluation. The prior mandated format made gathering of data and program monitoring more substantive and meaningful; whereas adult school reactions to flex funding and reporting data has possibly compromised this process.

CASAS pre- and post- reading and listening testing are not required for state programs, unless those adult schools participate in the AEFLA program. However, state-funded programs have been strongly encouraged to implement standardized testing. Pre- and post-testing are more difficult in DL Only environments than traditional classroom settings. In the past, the Innovation Program coordinators have noted that they collect more program documentation and learner progress information than do the classroom programs. However, this rich data provides the most detailed comparative examination of adult basic education learning interventions that are available in the United States. It results from a statewide data system, standardized testing and assessment, and the foresight of California legislators to permit school districts to use DL as an instructional intervention.

List of Figures

Upon entry into ABE and ASE programs, the totals, as shown in Table 10, show that 4.3 percent of the adult basic education and adult secondary education learners were tested and scored at the beginning literacy or beginning levels adult basic education. Over half (60.4 percent) of the

Endnotes

[i] The research papers can be found on the OTAN Web site at
http://www.otan.us/browse/index.cfm?fuseaction=view_ft&catid=31483&recno=4478

[ii] In the fall of 2008 Assembly Bill 1163 was passed authorizing school districts to claim and expend up to five percent of their adult block entitlement for those innovation programs and more than five percent but no more than 15 percent of its adult block entitlement if the program is approved by the Superintendent under the bill. The bill requires a school district to maintain specified accountability mechanisms for those programs, including maintaining documentation of the hours of student attendance required for apportionment purposes.

The legislation amended Education Code Section 52522. It includes a specific definition of distance learning as follows:

'"Distance learning" means instruction in which the pupil and instructor are in different locations and interact through the use of computer and communications technology. Distance learning may include video or audio instruction in which the primary mode of communication between pupil and instructor is instructional television, video, telecourses, or any other instruction that relies on computer or communications technology."

The authorization began in January 2009, but there is little indication that it changed the nature of program participation for the 2008–09 fiscal year.

[iii] The research and data collection for this paper are funded by Federal P.L., 105-220, Section 223, from the Adult Education Office, Coordinated Student Support and Adult Education 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.

[iv] 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." See http://www.casas.org/.

[v] The research papers can be found on the OTAN Web site at
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viii 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." See http://www.casas.org/.

ix This is due to the asynchronous nature of most instruction. Each learner interacts with the learning materials and the instructor on an individualized basis.

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 The National Education Technology Plan, titled *Transforming American Education: Learning Powered by Technology*, was posted at http://www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010 in 2010 by the U.S. Department of Education.

xii *Ibid., Executive Summary p. 12.*

xiii 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 even after they are admitted to a face-to-face class.