

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE



ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT
2009-10



ABE Student Orientation

Under the CNMI Constitution, Amendment No. 38, Section 2: “The mission of Northern Marianas College shall be to provide the best quality and meaningful postsecondary and adult education opportunities for the purpose of improving the quality of life for the individual and for the Commonwealth as a whole. The College shall be responsible for providing education in the areas of adult and continuing education, postsecondary and adult vocational education and professional development for the people of the Commonwealth.”

The mission of the Adult Basic Education Program is to assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a job or improve in their present jobs, to assist parents to be more involved with the educational development of their children, and to provide the opportunity for educational disadvantaged adults to complete a secondary education or credential.

Northern Marianas College Adult Basic Education Program receives an annual grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The statutory authority for this program is the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy also referred to as P.L 10-220. The Northern Marianas Colleges Adult Basic Education administers these funds in accordance with its State Plan for each Federal Fiscal Year to qualified adult learners of the CNMI. P.L 10-220 is currently being reauthorized. Until such time, the NMC ABE Program plans on full implementation of the CNMI five-year State Plan for Adult Education and Family Literacy to provide the following types of instruction:

Adult Basic Education (ABE) provides adults instruction in basic skills for adults with low literacy skills. Adult Secondary Education (ASE) provides adults instruction whose literacy skills equate to a high school level and their goal is to obtain a high school equivalency diploma by either passing the General Educational Development (GED) tests or obtaining an adult high school credential. English as a Second Language (ESL) provides adults who lack proficiency in English and who seek to improve their literacy and competence in English.

In serving its students, the NMC ABE program believes that adult learners learn best when:

1. They are in a comfortable with the learning environment and they attempt task that allow them to succeed within the contexts of their limited time and demanding lives;
2. They provide input into the planning of their learning goals and processes;
3. They have opportunities to engage in social learning, enabling them to learn from their peers and their instructors;
4. They have a variety of options appropriate to their learning styles and have opportunities to analyze and expand their modes of learning;
5. They are able to associate new learning with previous experiences and to use those experiences while learning;
6. They have an opportunity to apply theory/information to practical situations in their own life; and
7. When the instructors deal with learning difficulties and disabilities tactfully and patiently.

The CNMI Adult Basic Education Program has been designed for:

- Non-native speakers of English to improve their conversational, reading, and writing skills in English;
- Adult students (16 years old and older) who did not complete their high school education, but plan to complete the GED examinations or adult school program;

- Returning adult speakers who did not complete their high school education to prepare to take the GED examination;
- Adult literacy students to improve their basic reading, writing, and/or mathematics skill(s);
- Adults to be prepared for entry level jobs or career training; and
- Adults who are parents preparing to become effective first teachers of their children.

The performance measures for ABE programs are outlined in the Workforce Investment Act, Title II, Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy. These measures include adult learners who show measurable gains in the following:

1. Completing an educational functioning level
2. Passing the GED test
3. Completing the Adult School Program
4. Getting a job or advancing in a job
5. Entering higher education or vocational training

The above performance measures are achieved by the following:

1. Attending regular classes held at NMC As Terlaje campus and outreach sites;
2. Using the Open Computer Lab for student-paced, independent study, assisted by tutors;
3. Using textbooks designed for self-study on an “open entry – open exit” schedule; and
4. Using Learning 100 English instructional reading software program.

LOCATION OF THE ABE PROGRAM FOR SY 2009-10

A. ADMINISTRATIVE SITES

The NMC ABE Program is administratively located at the Northern Marianas College campus in As Terlaje, Saipan. Two classrooms have been permanently assigned to hold Pre-GED and GED classes. English as a Second Language (ESL) and Basic Integrated and Adult School (AS) classes have also been conducted on NMC’s As Tinian and NMC Rota Instructional Sites.

B. OUTREACH PROGRAMS

In its efforts to respond to community needs and provide equitable access to all eligible providers, the program had initiated a Request for Proposal (RFP) Process this reporting year. Its main intention is to solicit competitive sealed proposals for the delivery of instructions based on the 12 consideration set forth under Title II of the Workforce Investment Act in one of the following program areas: Adult Secondary Education, Adult Basic Education, Family Literacy Services, English Literacy, or Workplace Literacy Services. The program received two respondents in Adult Secondary Education and one respondent in English Literacy. However, respondent for English Literacy withdrew their proposal. For that matter, only AS courses were extended to Northern Marianas Trade Institute and the San Antonio Manhoben Center for this reporting year.

INSTRUCTION FOR INSTITUTIONALIZED INDIVIDUALS:

Department of Corrections has recently relocated to a new facility. Latest Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is dated back in 1991. We have communicated with DOC officials to discuss and update the deliverables for the Memorandum of Understanding. The program anticipates providing services to qualified institutionalized individuals starting Spring 2011.

No services or funds have been procured for this reporting year to individuals from the Kagman Juvenile Detention Center on Saipan. However, the application and assessment process has been completed. In the meantime, individuals who were released are referred or redirected to continue their education at NMC ABE until a Memorandum of Understanding has been completed.

EVALUATION OF THE NMC ADULT BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM PER INDICATORS

Indicator #1: Educational gains:

The ABE Program has continuously offered educationally disadvantaged adults the opportunity to earn their high school credentials. In the Commonwealth, as it is on the U. S. mainland, the GED diploma represents a second chance at education and an opening of new opportunities. Those in the general public who have not had the opportunity to complete their high school education are the primary target of the program. To open the doors of opportunity wider, the program has enthusiastically sought to find potential students in private businesses, churches, and government agencies, such as the Ayuda Network Board, the CNMI Head Start Community Partnership Committee, the Department of Public Works, the Mayor's Office, the CNMI Public School System, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Program, and other entities. Media (radio, newspaper, cable television, church bulletins, etc.) coverage, training seminars, personal contacts, and other recruitment means were utilized to broadcast the educational opportunities through the Adult Basic Education Program.

In SY 2009-10, thirteen (13) students received their GED diplomas, while seventy (70) students received their Adult School diplomas. The program surmises the slight increase of graduates is due to Adult Development Institute which had closed its doors to the CNMI due to lack of funding and duplication of NMC's Adult High School Program. Student Educational Records and students were transferred over to the CNMI ABE State Office. ABE had to offer more courses to accommodate those students who were slated to graduate. In addition, NMC Tinian and Rota Instructional sites which offered a cohort based instruction that enabled the cohort to progress from one course to another thus explains the increase graduates. Also, submission of bi-weekly student attendance to the State Office had been consistent which allowed counseling support and intervention to be followed through respectively.

Indicator #2: Curriculum and Instruction:

The CNMI ABE Program Manual describes the following ABE curricular offerings: Basic Integrated Course, Adult School, English as a Second Language, Pre-GED and GED courses. Both Pre-GED and GED courses focused on the five (5) core subjects: writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and literature and arts. The program has added a course on computer literacy.

The Pre-GED and GED curricula have been patterned after the Steck-Vaughn books' contents and sequencing. Since Steck-Vaughn's content coverage is comprehensive and develops test-taking skills, instructors have been advised to adhere closely to the books while also using supplementary materials.

The Basic Integrated Course focuses on reading with content materials from science, mathematics, and social studies. Because the course is offered for literacy, the instructor is encouraged to use materials suited to the literacy levels of the students.

The Adult School curriculum has two (2) phases. The first consists of five (5) learning modules:

1.) Occupational Knowledge, 2.) Community Resources, 3.) Consumer Economics, 4.) Health, 5.) Government and Law. A cyclical schedule has been developed so that the first two modules are offered in the spring semester, the third in the summer, and the last two in the fall. While

completing the first phase, the student can be pursuing the second phase simultaneously. The second phase is a fulfillment of one of the following:

- Proof of gainful employment (at least six months to one year on the job);
- Proof of marketable skills;
- Enrolled in a job training program for at least 30 hours;
- Volunteered for an agency or completing a program (e.g., Motherread/Fatheread Program) for at least 30 hours;
- Completion and passing of one vocational class (e.g., computer, plumbing, carpentry, masonry, electricity, entrepreneurship, etc.) for at least 30 hours; and
- Completion and passing of a college course.

Books and materials for the NMC Adult School are adopted from the Hawaii Adult High School Program and were made relevant to the CNMI setting by various contracted instructors.

Currently, the ESL Program is based on the Real Life English series of Steck-Vaughn plus other materials instructors have developed through the years of teaching. For advanced students, the program also incorporates Stand Out series from Heinle and Thomson. The instructors chose to use this series because it is competency based and is designed to facilitate active learning.

Textbooks, computers, TV/VCR/DVDs, overhead projectors, tutorial, and library services are available to students. An “Open Entry – Open Exit” arrangement has been made available to students who cannot attend scheduled classes because of family and work demands. Kentucky Network (KET) instructional videos and computer software are also available to ABE students at the NMC Educational Enrichment Center (EEC). Students familiar with the use of computers can access Internet materials in the NMC Computer Laboratory or Open Lab. To further facilitate learning, student tutors are made available to assist ABE students in the Open Lab. An English instructional software program, Learning 100, is available to the students.

Intake, interviews and various assessments assist the program in assigning students to the appropriate instructional levels. Students are required to take the CASAS appraisals and pretests before registering for classes and a posttest after 45 hours of documented instruction. In addition to paper-and-pencil test assessment, instructors are encouraged to use portfolios to monitor student progress throughout the semester. As part of ABE’s End of Semester Checklist, Instructors are required to submit two assignments per student to reflect their progress from the beginning and end of the semester.

The ABE Program has always sought quality instruction for adult learners. ABE instructors (though adjunct faculty) are outstanding educators from the Commonwealth’s private schools, NMC, and Public School System. Retention of instructors is based on student evaluation at the end of each semester and on formal observation, conducted by the ABE Program administration. All ABE instructors undergo a certification process from the ABE office and appropriate departments in NMC to ensure that the instructor has met all of the qualifications in order to be an ABE, GED, Adult School (AS) and/or English as a Second Language (ESL) instructor.

Indicator #3: Instructional Tailoring:

Due to diverse educational levels, cultures, expectations, and motivations, instruction is tailored to student needs, especially in the basic and ESL levels. To meet the program’s specific needs in the CNMI, student workbooks are revised to tailor the instruction to the needs of the CNMI.

Accommodation in instruction and assessment has always been extended to all students who declared a disability(s) through NMC's Counseling Office support and guidance. In addition, the program continuously collaborates with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the CNMI Developmental Disabilities Council's Assistive Technology Program.

To facilitate better learning, multi-level instruction is assigned to instructors who have intensive and extensive experience in special education, as well as in language teaching. Students may be moved from one level to the other depending on their readiness and demonstrated skills. For the first time in the ABE history, a student with a declared disability was able to obtain a high school equivalent credential.

Pre-GED and GED students have been encouraged to focus on academic preparation through the development of reading and test taking skills needed to pass the five (5) GED tests in writing, mathematics, science, social studies, and literature and arts.

Scheduling of classes is adjusted to student demand. Many working ESL students have Sunday as their only day off. Therefore, Sunday classes have proven most popular.

Indicator #4: Program Planning and Evaluation:

After more than twenty years of existence, the CNMI ABE Program is well-positioned to serve the islands' educationally disadvantaged adult learners. Program evaluation has been conducted to further improve the Program. Program Review is done annually. Student Learning Outcomes (SLO's) were developed in line with the program review process with which the effectiveness of the ABE Program is continuously measured. Student Satisfactory Surveys are conducted every semester to gauge progress within the program. Collaboration with other insular areas has been ongoing by sharing staff development resources and expertise.

Indicator #5: Participatory Planning Group (PPG):

A participatory planning group is envisioned as the CNMI ABE Program's partner for progress. Currently, the participatory planning group is being reestablished and will include representatives from the following entities:

1. Public School System (PSS)
2. Workforce Investment Agency (WIA)
3. Karidat (Catholic Social Services)
4. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
5. Department of Corrections
6. Division of Youth Services
7. Department of Community and Cultural Affairs
8. Ayuda Network, Inc.
9. Head Start Community Partnership Committee
10. MIHA (Section 8 Housing)

Representatives from various church groups have also been reached by ABE to elicit help in planning and implementing the Program.

The Participatory Planning Group (PPG) takes the following program roles:

1. To assist the ABE program in identifying:
 - a. Community needs to be addressed by the program, and

- b. Community resources that can be tapped for the program's use;
2. To assist the program in developing its state plan, this is required for grant application, and to amend the same to conform to changing expectations and goals;
 3. To assist the program in identifying and articulating indicators of program quality and in conducting performance evaluation in order to measure the extent of achieving program goals;
 4. To act as a public information vehicle to inform the community about the ABE Program and its services;
 5. To act as recruiters by encouraging educationally disadvantaged adults to participate in the program; and
 6. To act as advocates of the program with the community and various government and private agencies.

Indicator #6: Program Planning – Computerized Program:

The ABE Program has become a part of the computerized network linking it with the rest of the programs of the Northern Marianas College. An ABE homepage is listed within the Northern Marianas College Website under COMPASS (Community Programs and Services-the unit where ABE is designated under).

Indicator #7: Staff Development:

The entire staff of the ABE Program has continually engaged themselves in professional development. The opening of each semester is marked by a staff/adjunct meeting before student orientation. This staff meeting is a venue to introduce the program to new instructors and recalibrate the goals of the program for incumbent instructors. The exchange of ideas, questions/answers, sharing of successes and concerns, and sharing of expertise in instructional strategies and technology, make the staff meetings effective and contribute to strong staff development.

Indicator #8: Program Recruitment:

The ABE program has been continually aggressive in its recruiting effort in the past year despite many challenges. The last garment manufacturer was officially closed in 2009. In addition, the islands of Saipan, Tinian and Rota had experienced an exodus of residents leaving to the U.S. for better opportunities. Foreign garment workers who were not able to obtain contractual employment had left back to their respective homeland. The program surmises that this explains the drastic decrease of enrollment starting from the year 2000 most especially since most of the adult learners served under the program are enrolled in its ESL Program. The CNMI is now challenged with the possible loss of its foreign workers with the recent federal control of the CNMI's immigration. The funding for the ABE Program heavily depends on the amount of population reported thus a decrease in population means a decrease in funding. The 2010 Census Report is slated to be completed by 2012, and decrease in funding is possible due to such drastic decrease in the CNMI population. In any case, recommendations as well as oppositions are still being debated at this time with the U.S. Office of Interior on possible naturalization of the CNMI's foreign workers. Until such time, the CNMI needs to skill and educate its remaining population to survive and thrive on opening other economic avenues as well as stability in the CNMI workforce.

Indicator #9: Student Retention:

Student retention in SY 2009-10 has increased slightly from the previous year. Although student enrollment numbers have increased, the program continues to see stop-outs. The program has identified common factors that cause students to leave. Some of the factors are as follows:

- a. transportation problems
- b. child care difficulty
- c. change of job/ job shift
- d. family problems
- e. loss of job
- f. pregnancy
- g. moving to another island/country
- h. death in the family
- i. poor health

Indicator #10 Program Support Services:

The ABE Program has continuously been supported by the Northern Marianas College through students' use of NMC facilities such as classrooms, college library, the Educational Enrichment Center, tutorial services from TRIO Program's Educational Talent Search and Career Center, Computer laboratories, Admissions and Financial Aid Office, the Bookstore, and College Finance Office.

A blended instruction to include web based open source system such as Moodle is envisioned as one possible mean to decrease the number of stop-outs. Students who are having short term difficulties mainly with transportation may access moodle to keep on track with their peers in the classroom. The ABE Program anticipates exploring this program support avenue further with the NMC Institution. The ABE Staff and Adjunct Faculty had received an overview training in Moodle this reporting year.

The Workforce Investment Agency (WIA), Nutrition and Assistance Program, and Northern Marianas Housing Incorporation, have been sending their clients to ABE classes as requirements to continue receiving privileges from those agencies. In addition, the Ayuda Network, a corporation established by local social and human service agencies, also refers students to the program and provides information materials that tell students where to seek help in times of need. Karidat, another social service agency, also refers students from the women's shelter and protection program. The Office of Vocational and Rehabilitation continuous to refer their clients to the program to complete their education and provide recommendations when needed. Another strong organization is the Head Start Community Partnership Committee. Through this organization ABE is able to network with many federal and local governmental agencies.