

California Adult Education

Student Progress and Goal Attainment Report

Adult School Programs in California



Program Year 2005

July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005

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California Department of Education, Adult Education Office

Contents

California Adult School Programs - Overview	1
Program Enrollment and Demographic Information	1
Figure 1 Adult School Enrollment over Five-Year Period (2000-2005).....	1
Figure 2 Adult School Enrollment in Instructional Levels for ABE, ASE/GED, and ESL upon Entry	2
Figure 3 Adult School Learners' Demographics at a Glance.....	3
Figure 4 Gender Distribution of Adult School Learners by Instructional Program	3
Figure 5 Ethnic Distribution of Adult School Learners by Instructional Program	4
Figure 6 Ethnic Distribution of Adult School Learners over Five-Year Period	5
Figure 7 Age Distributions of Adult School Learners by Instructional Program	5
Figure 8 Highest Degree Earned by Adult School Learner Prior to Enrollment in Instructional Program	6
Figure 9 Average Years of Schooling (+/- Standard Deviation) of Adult School Learners by Program	6
Primary Reasons for Enrollment	7
Figure 10 Main Primary Reasons for Enrollment of Adult School Learners upon Entry.....	7
Figure 11 Adult School Learners with Goal of H.S. Diploma/GED vs. Reading Pretest Scores.....	8
Figure 12 Personal Status and Special Programs Endorsement by Adult School Learners at Program Entry	9
Figure 13 Adult School Learners' Average Hours of Instruction by Instructional Program	9
Learner Goal Attainment	10
Figure 14 Enrollment Status of Adult School Learners at Time of Student Update ..	10
Figure 15 Instructional Program Enrollment Status of Adult School Learners Ordered by Persistence, Contrasted with Non-Persistence (No Shows and Left Before Completing a Level).....	11
Figure 16 Positive Learner Outcomes of Adult School Learners Ordered by Total Percent Completing.....	11
Figure 17 Educational, Employment, Community and Personal/Family Outcome Results of Adult School Learners	12
Figure 18 Employment Outcome Results of Adult School Learners Entering Program with Employment-Related Goal	13
Figure 19 Educational Outcomes of Adult School Learners Entering Program with Improving Skills, Gain a Diploma, or Preparation for Postsecondary Education and Work-Related Goals	13

Exit Reasons	14
Figure 20 Exit Reasons of Adult School Learners by Age Group.....	14
Figure 21 Exit Reasons of Adult School Learners by Gender	14
Test Scores and Learner Gains	15
Pre- and Post-Test Guidelines	15
Reading Tests	15
Figure 22 Adult School Learners' Reading Pretest Score Distributions of CASAS/NRS Levels for Instructional Programs - ABE, ESL, and ASE/GED	16
Figure 23 CASAS/NRS Mean Reading Scale Score Gains of Adult School Learners Across ESL and Citizenship, ABE and ASE/GED Programs	17
Figure 24 CASAS/NRS Skill Levels for Adult School Learners in ESL Program by Years of Schooling	17
Math Tests	18
Figure 25 Math and Reading Scale Score Gains of Adult School Learners in ABE and ASE/GED Programs.....	18
Listening Tests	19
Figure 26 Reading and Listening Mean Scale Score Gains of Adult School Learners in ESL and Citizenship Programs by Pretests on Each CASAS/NRS Level.....	19
Appendix	20
Table 1 Adult School Enrollment by Instructional Program over Five-Year Period.....	20
Table 2 Adult School Enrollment in Instructional Levels Across Instructional Program	20

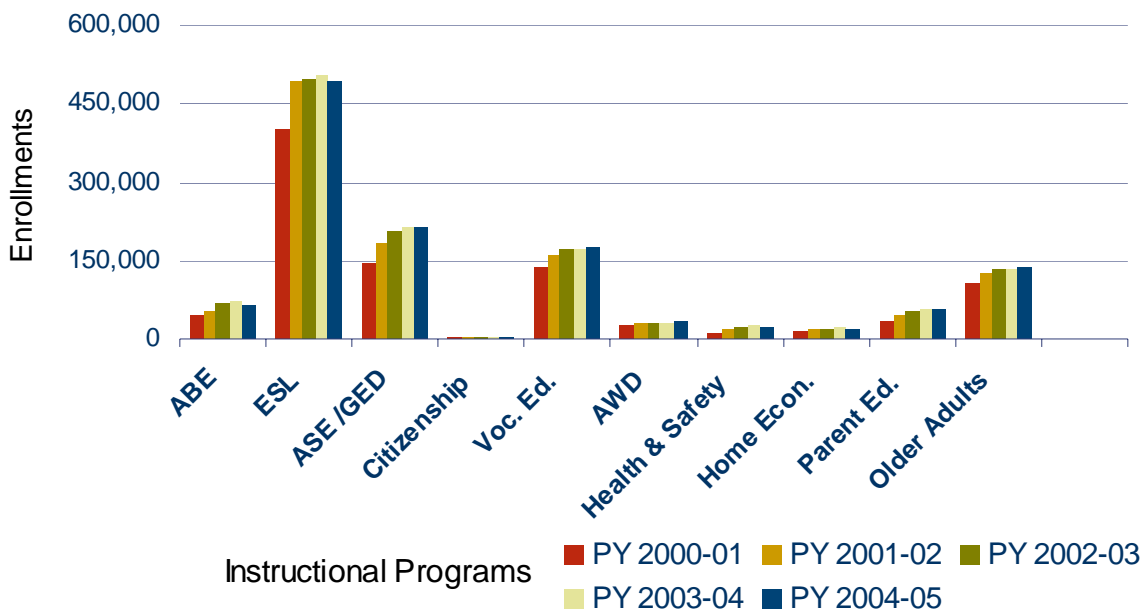
California Adult School Programs — Overview

The 287 adult schools in California enrolled 1,224,261 adult learners supported through state apportionment funds in program year 2004-05. The report presents the results of data collected by Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) from all learners enrolled in California adult schools. The report analysis was prepared by CASAS under contract with the California Department of Education (CDE). The number of agencies approved to offer adult school programs in the State of California is 364. In addition to the 287 agencies, 40 agencies did not provide information on their adult school learners, and 37 additional agencies are inactive. The 40 non-reporting agencies and 37 inactive agencies are among the smallest agencies in terms of adult school enrollment, representing less than 2 percent of the state adult school enrollment.

School districts and county offices of education along with adult schools serve adult education learners in ten funded program areas to provide diverse educational opportunities designed to meet adult learner needs. The ten program areas are Adult Basic Education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), High School Diploma or Adult Secondary Education including General Education Development certification programs (ASE/GED), Citizenship, Vocational Education (Voc. Ed.), Adults with Disabilities (AWD), Health and Safety, Parent Education (Parent Ed.), Home Economics (Home Econ.), and Older Adults. The abbreviations identified on the previous page are used throughout this report.

Program Enrollment and Demographic Information

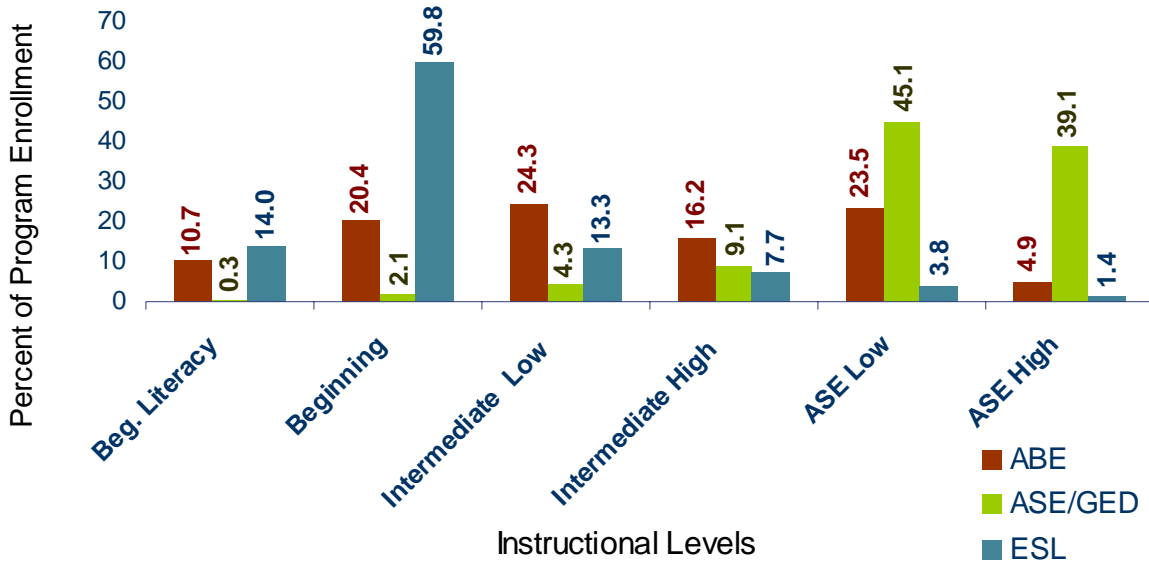
Figure 1 Adult School Enrollment over Five-Year Period (2000-2005)



Student enrollment patterns over the past four years have not varied greatly. There is a small upward trend in the total enrollments in ASE/GED, Voc.Ed., and Older Adults,

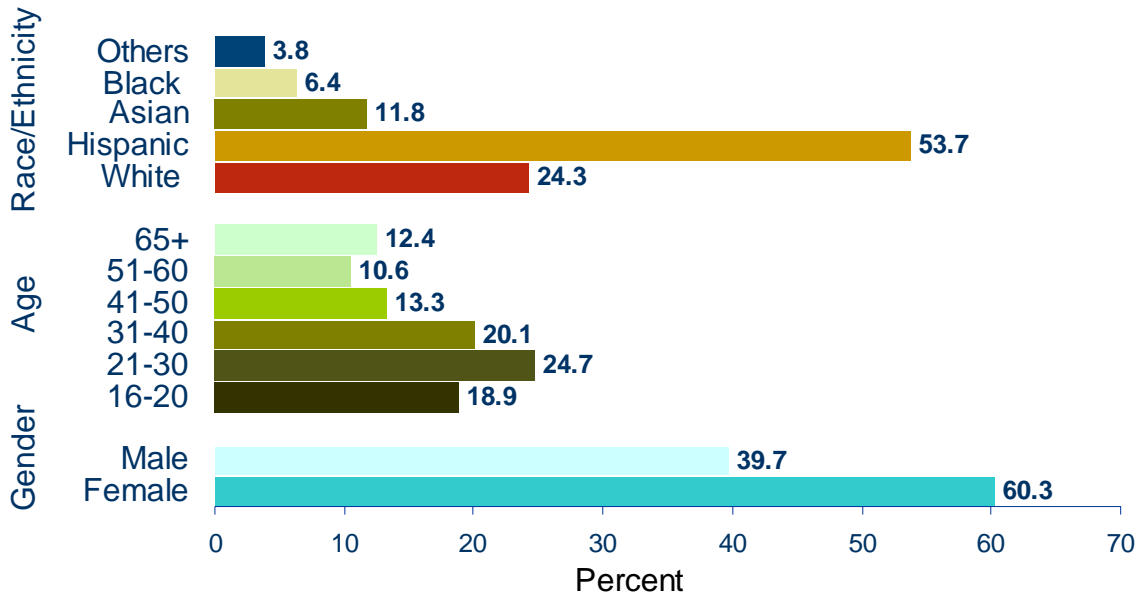
also highlighted in Table 1 (see appendix). ESL and ABE enrollment decreased, as a percentage and proportion of total enrollments during the last program year in comparison to previous program years.

Figure 2 Adult School Enrollment in Instructional Levels for ABE, ASE/GED, and ESL upon Entry



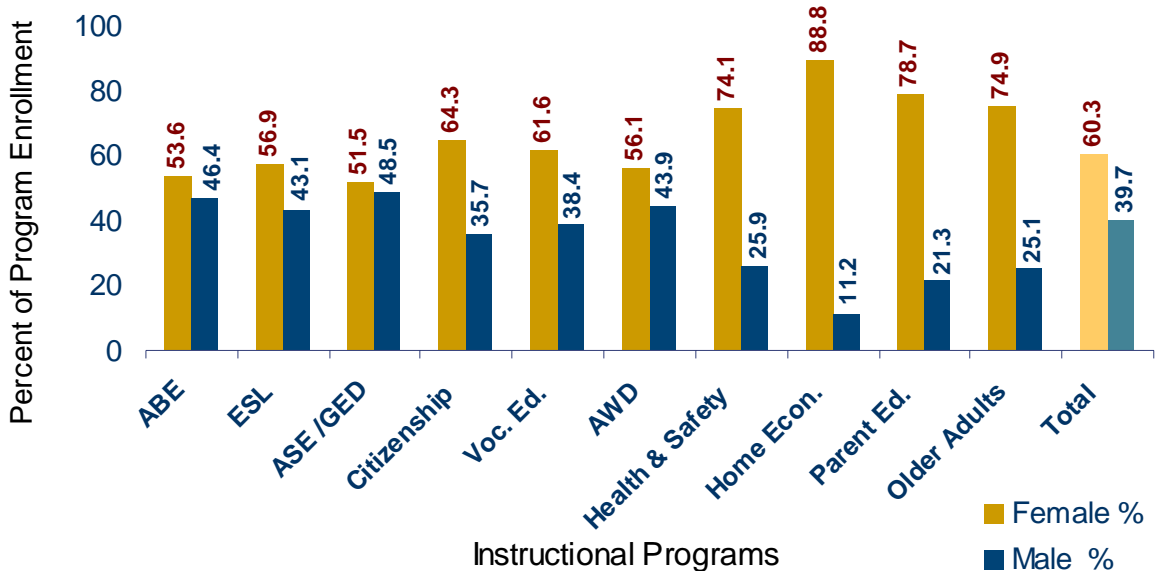
Student Entry Records obtained from agencies identify the literacy functioning level, at the beginning of instruction, as determined by the instructor or placement tests or both. Three program areas — ABE, ASE/GED, and ESL — have multiple instructional levels and comprise the majority (63.2 percent) of adult school enrollments. Agencies serving these learners were eligible for federal supplementary funding through Title II of the Workforce Investment Act.

Figure 3 Adult School Learners' Demographics at a Glance



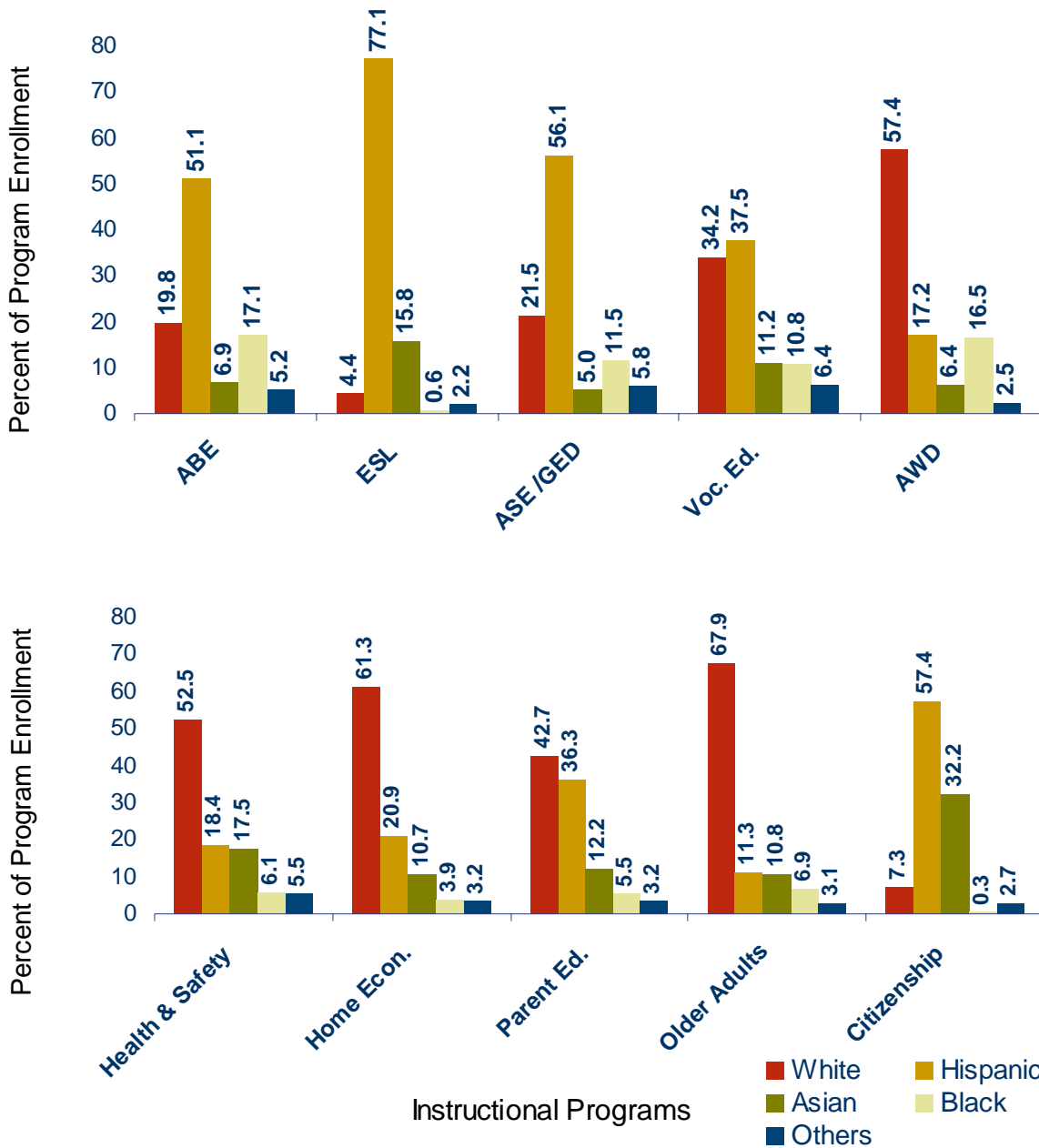
Adult learners in California reflect the diversity of the state. The largest ethnic groups of adult learners enrolled in adult education programs in California are Hispanic (53.7 percent) and White (24.3 percent). Adult learners are more likely to be female (60.4 percent) than male. The largest group of adult school learners (44.8 percent) is between the ages 21 to 40.

Figure 4 Gender Distribution of Adult School Learners by Instructional Program



The gender ratio favors females in every program area. The ratio is closest to being even in the basic skills areas of ABE, ASE, and ASE/GED and is most disparate in the areas of Home Econ., Parent Ed., Health & Safety, and Older Adults.

Figure 5 Ethnic Distribution of Adult School Learners by Instructional Program



Whites continue to constitute the majority enrollment in AWD, Health and Safety, Home Econ., and Older Adults, while basic skills (ESL, ABE, and ASE/GED) have a Hispanic majority enrollment. For the past four years the percentage and number of Hispanic and Black (Non-Hispanic) learners have increased.

Figure 6 Ethnic Distribution of Adult School Learners over Five-Year Period

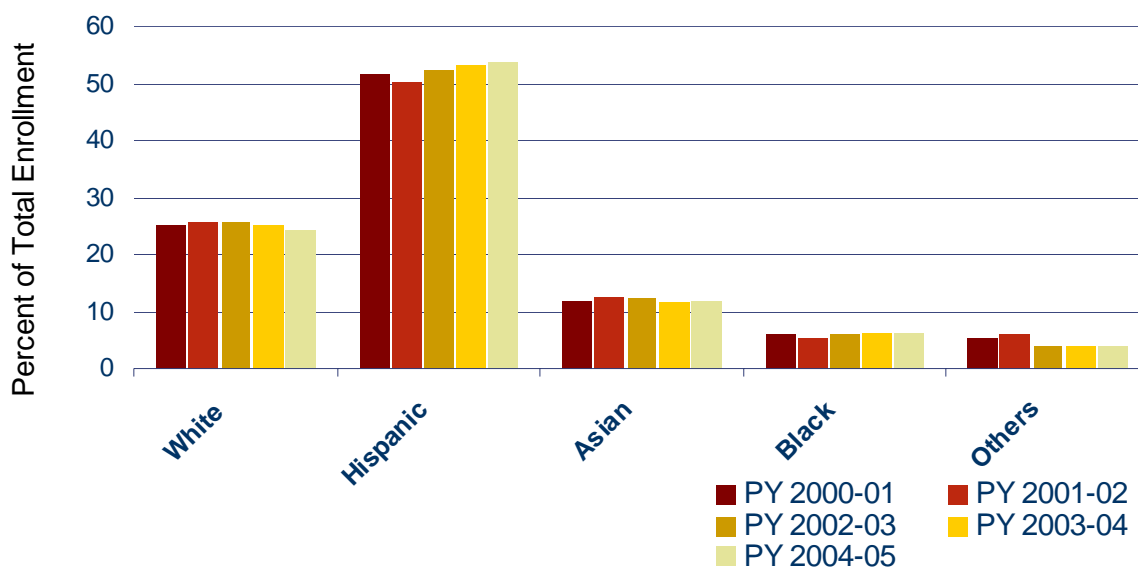
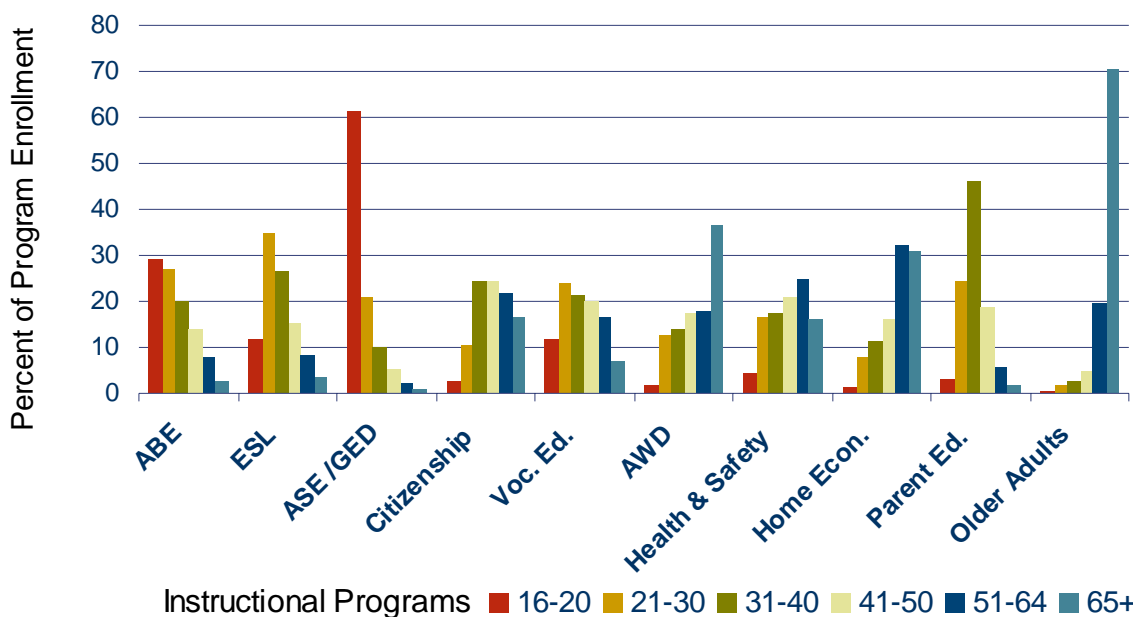
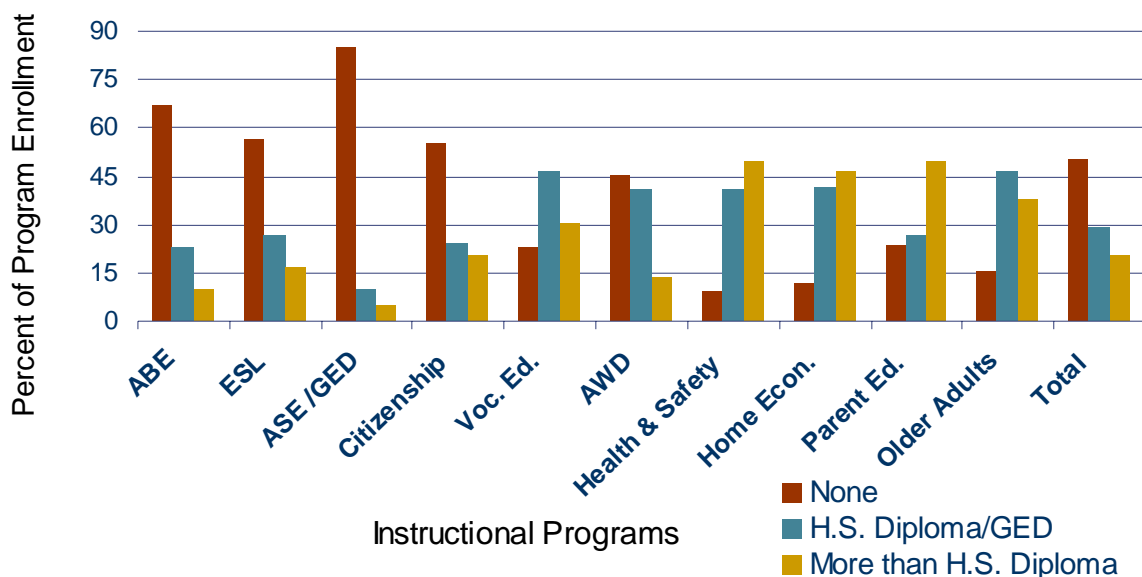


Figure 7 Age Distributions of Adult School Learners by Instructional Program



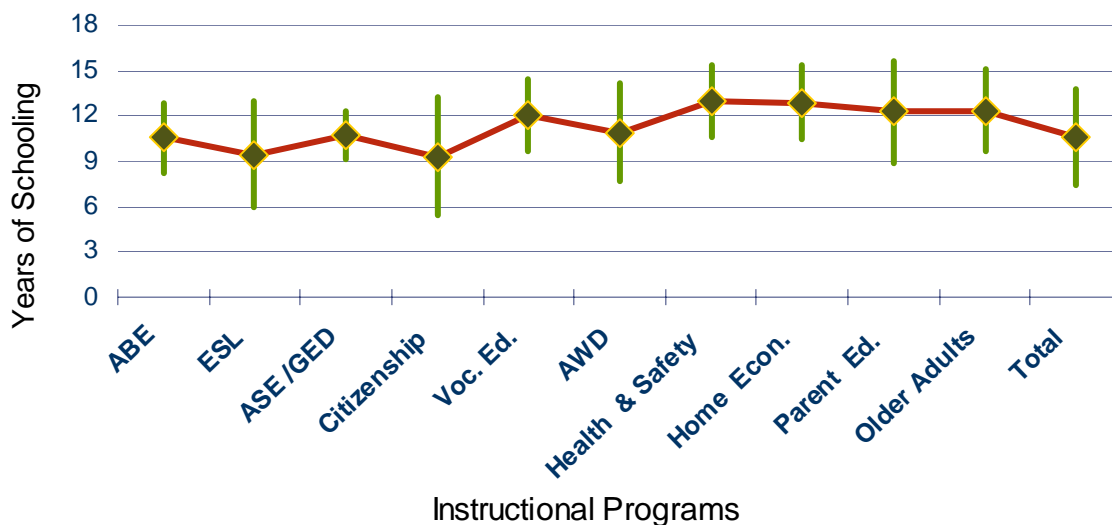
ASE followed by ABE continues to have the youngest learner cohort. AWD and Older Adults continue to have the oldest cohort. Learners between 31 and 40 years of age represent the most common age range for those enrolled in Parent Ed. classes. ASE/GED programs served the highest percentage (61.2 percent) of learners under the age of 21. Adult education programs are successfully attracting youth who exited the regular K-12 program before completing the requirements of a high school diploma. These programs assist these students in completing the requirements for a high school diploma, preparing them to pass the GED, and also helping K-12 learners complete program requirements for graduation.

Figure 8 Highest Degree Earned by Adult School Learner Prior to Enrollment in Instructional Program



The adult education program in California is congruent with its primary goals of serving the least educated and most in need. Adult school programs in California served a majority of learners who entered without a basic secondary education. More than half (50.3 percent) of all adult school learners neither possessed a high school diploma nor a GED certificate at the time they entered their programs. Specifically, a majority of the learners enrolling in ABE (66.9 percent), ESL (56.2 percent), ASE/GED (84.8 percent), and Citizenship (55.2 percent) indicated they had neither a diploma, GED certificate, technical training, nor degree. See Figure 8.

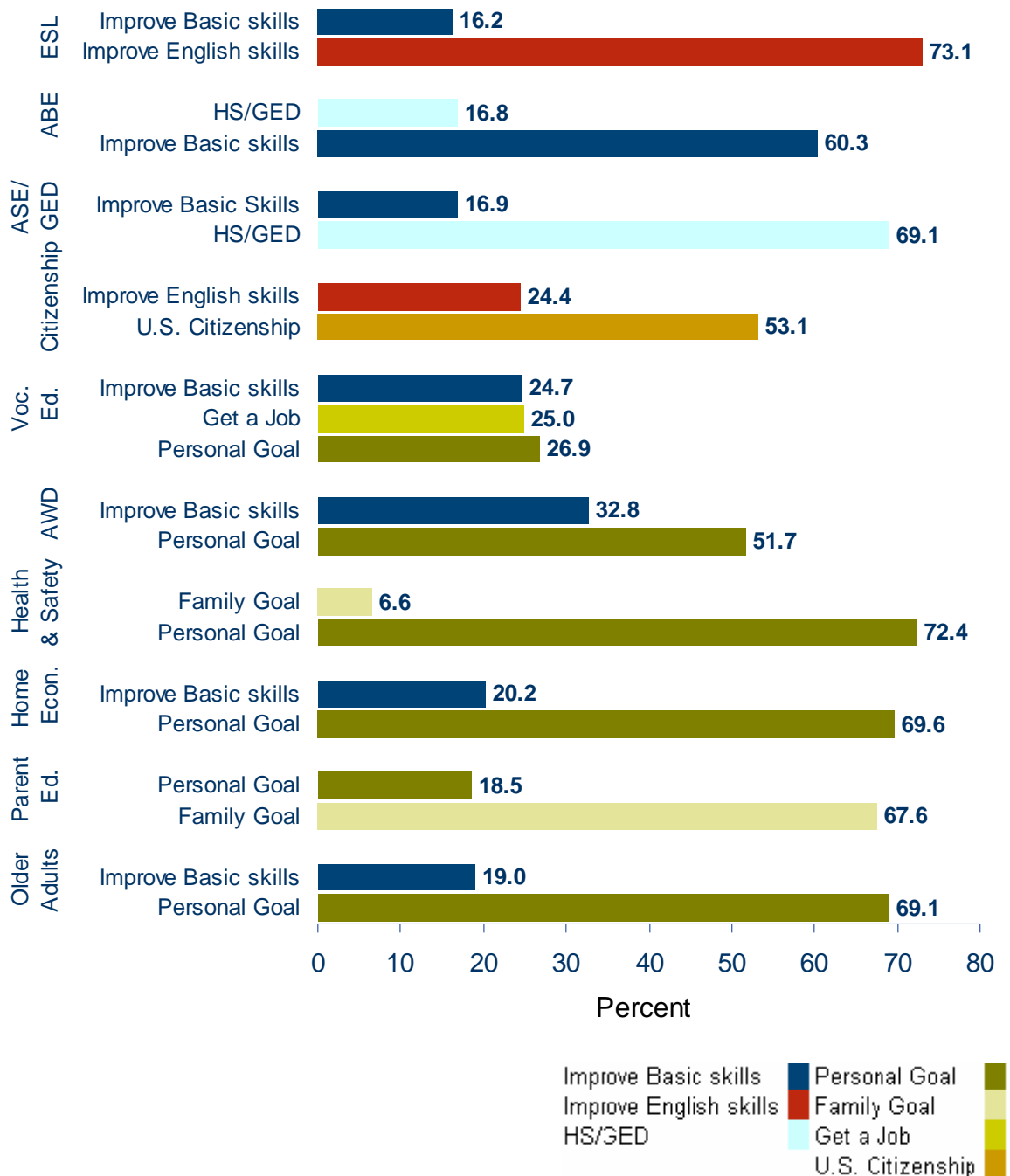
Figure 9 Average Years of Schooling (+/- Standard Deviation) of Adult School Learners by Program



ASE/GED programs have the smallest range of average years of schooling. ABE, ESL, ASE/GED, Citizenship, and AWD programs enrolled a majority of learners who have fewer than 12 years of schooling. The remaining program areas have, on the average, learners with 12 or more years of schooling.

Primary Reasons for Enrollment

Figure 10 Main Primary Reasons for Enrollment of Adult School Learners upon Entry



Earning a high school diploma or GED certificate in one term or within the school year may not be a realistic goal for many learners enrolled in ASE. A substantial percentage of these new entrants have low skill levels. Among ESL learners, 67 percent of those who indicated obtaining a high school diploma or GED within one year as their goal scored at 220 or below on a CASAS pretest. A scale score at or below 220 indicates a low probability of achieving a sufficient proficiency level to secure a high school diploma or GED within a program year. As shown in Figure 11, only 7 percent of those enrolled in ASE/GED classes were at or below a CASAS 220. However, the 3,468 learners comprising this 7 percent would have been better served by placing them in a level of ABE that would meet their more immediate needs for English and basic skills improvement. This would also be true for many of the learners in ASE/GED scoring between 221 and 235 on a CASAS reading pretest (44.4 percent). Of the 44.4 percent, those scoring at the higher end of the range would have a better chance of attaining their certification goal than those scoring at the lower end.

Figure 11 Adult School Learners with Goal of H.S. Diploma/GED vs. Reading Pretest Scores

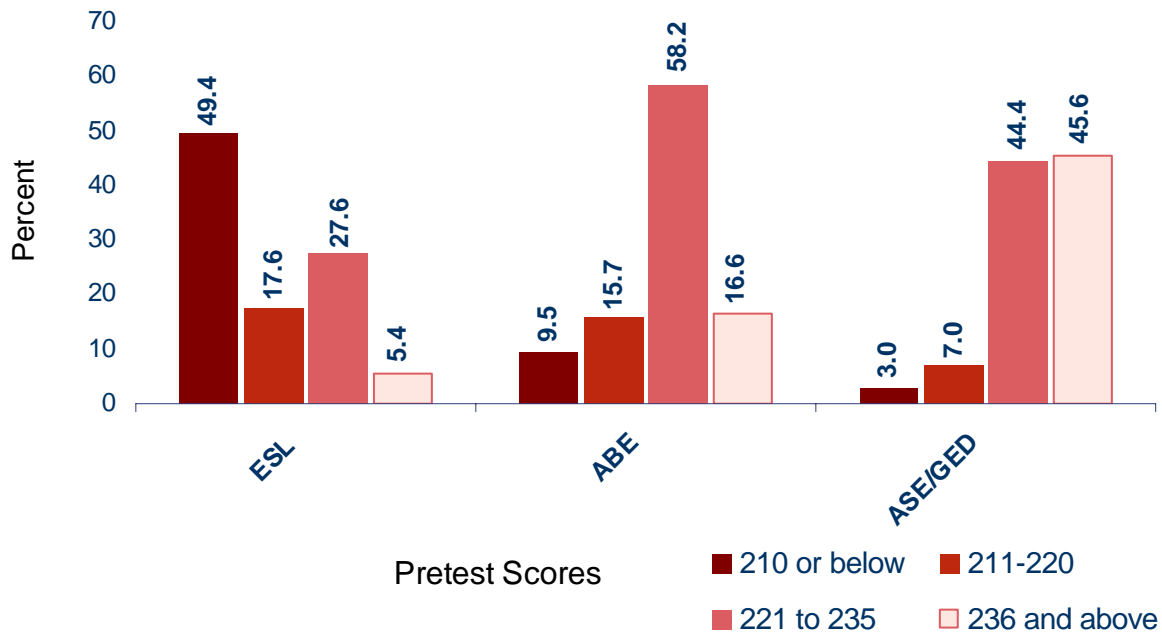


Figure 12 Personal Status and Special Programs Endorsement by Adult School Learners at Program Entry

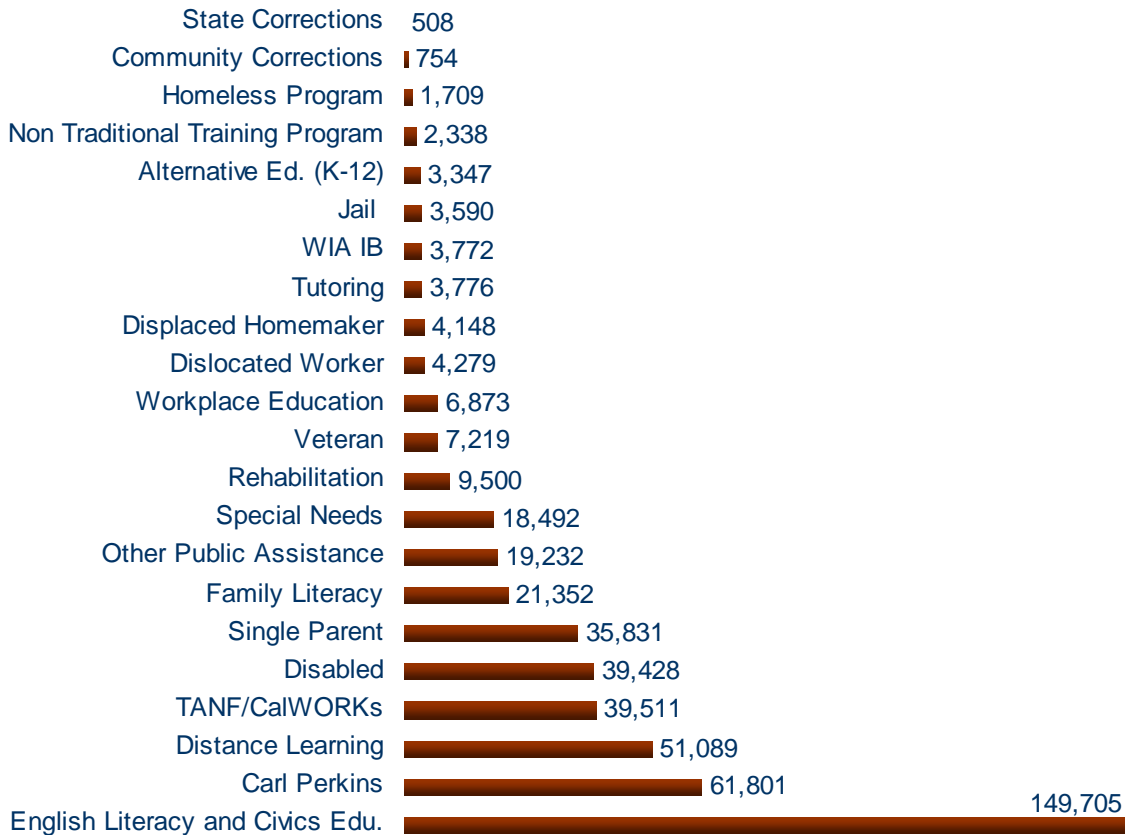
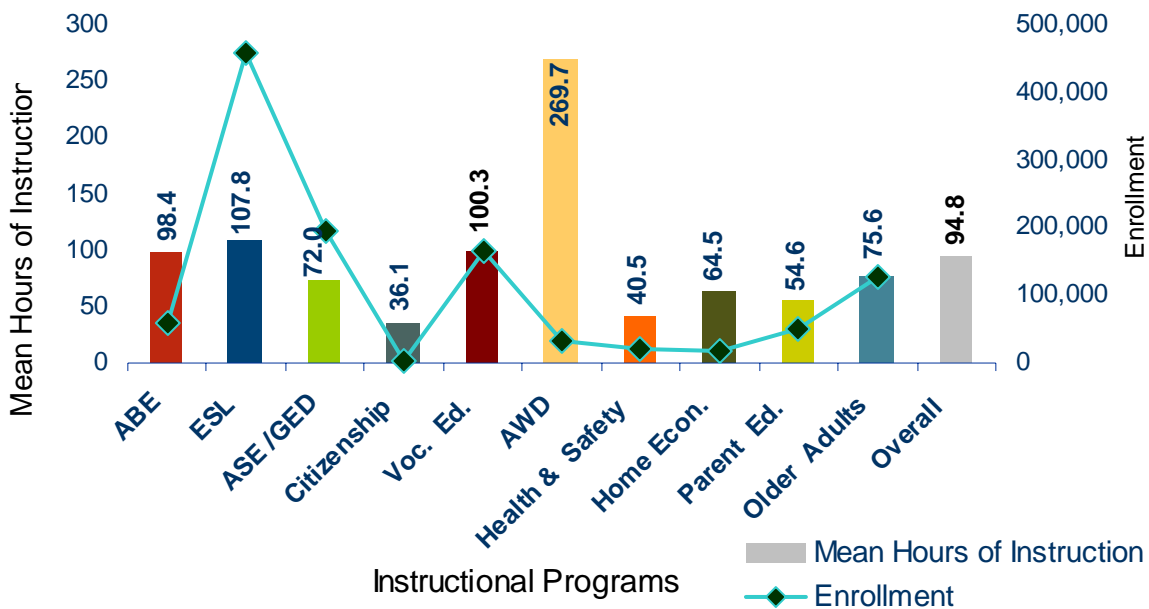


Figure 13 Adult School Learners' Average Hours of Instruction by Instructional Program



Learner Goal Attainment

The Student Update Record collected data for all learners who completed an Entry Record at the end of the instructional period prior to June 30, 2005. Goal attainment includes learners' enrollment status, progress and results, as well as their known reasons for leaving early. Of the 1,034,463 learners enrolled in adult school programs who specified their status on the Student Update Record, 61.9 percent had completed or continued in their educational program. Learner progress is analyzed for 640,149 (61.9 percent) learners who remained in an instructional program or made a positive termination — that is, they completed a goal or level before leaving the program. Of these, 18.4 percent completed and left their adult education instructional program, 20.7 percent completed a level and moved up, and 60.9 percent continued progressing in their education at the same level.

Figure 14 Enrollment Status of Adult School Learners at Time of Student Update

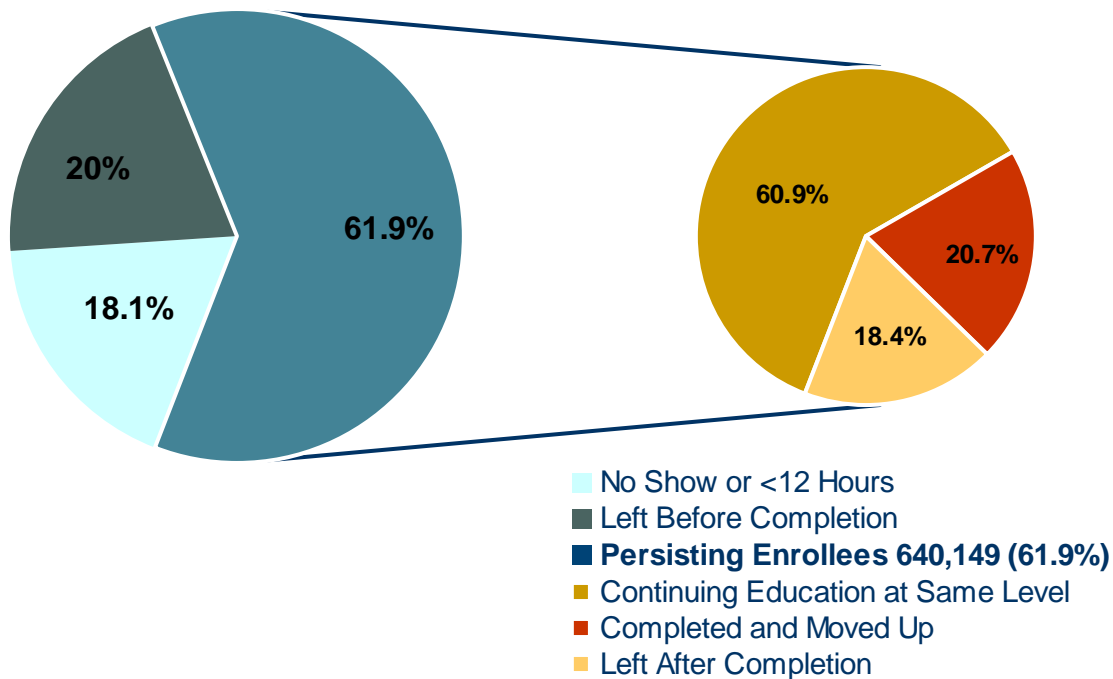


Figure 15 shows the proportion of learners who persisted by remaining in the program or leaving after they completed an instructional level. Conversely, it also shows the proportion of non-persisting learners who either did not show up for class or left the program before they completed an instructional level.

Figure 15 Instructional Program Enrollment Status of Adult School Learners Ordered by Persistence, Contrasted with Non-Persistence (No Shows and Left Before Completing a Level)

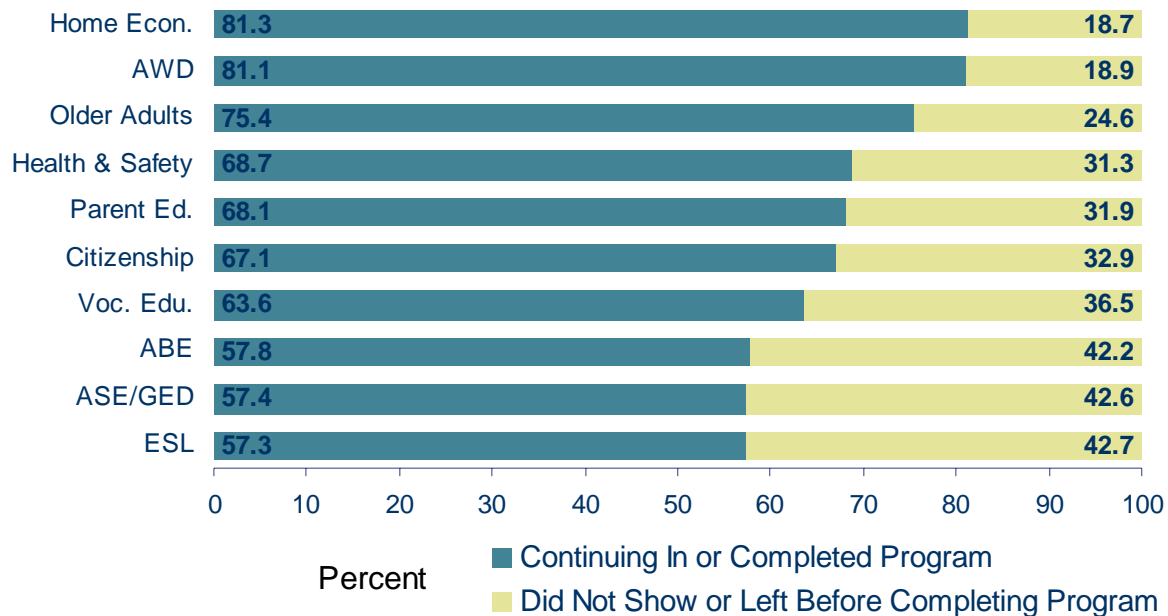


Figure 16 Positive Learner Outcomes of Adult School Learners Ordered by Total Percent Completing

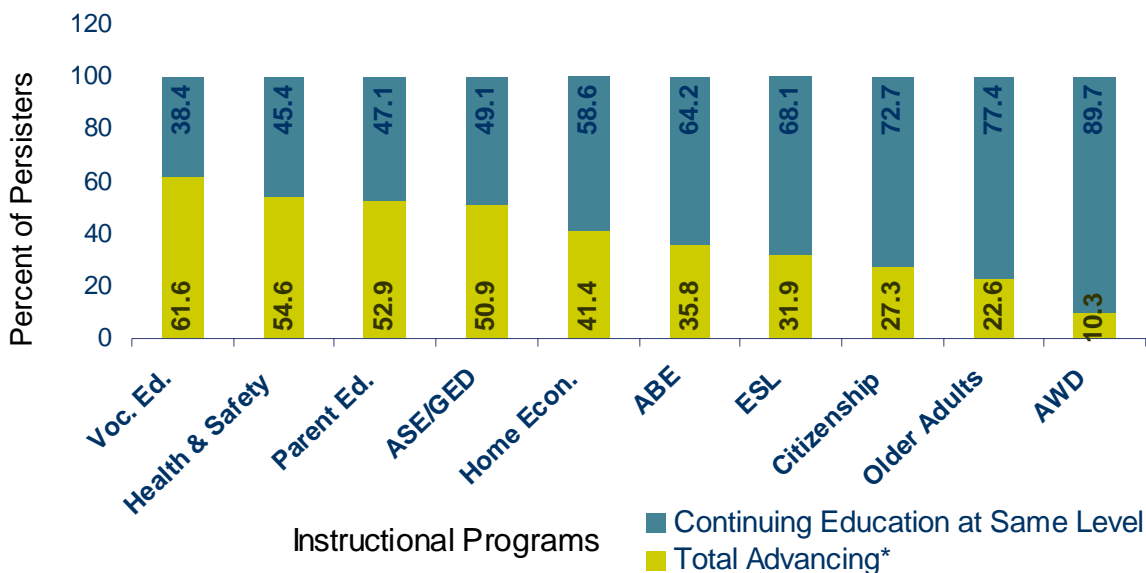


Figure 16 displays positive learner outcomes and lists in descending order the instructional programs that exhibit the highest percentage of learners completing a level (completed and moved up or left after completion). Because these results reflect learners who completed an instructional level, learners continuing in an instructional level would be the complement of these positive learner outcomes.

Agencies use the Student Update Record to collect data about learner results for the purpose of documenting positive changes that occurred during the instructional period. Learner results are the outcomes achieved by 640,149 learners (61.9 percent) who remained in an instructional program until its conclusion, during or at the end of the period of instruction.

Figure 17 Educational, Employment, Community and Personal/Family Outcome Results of Adult School Learners

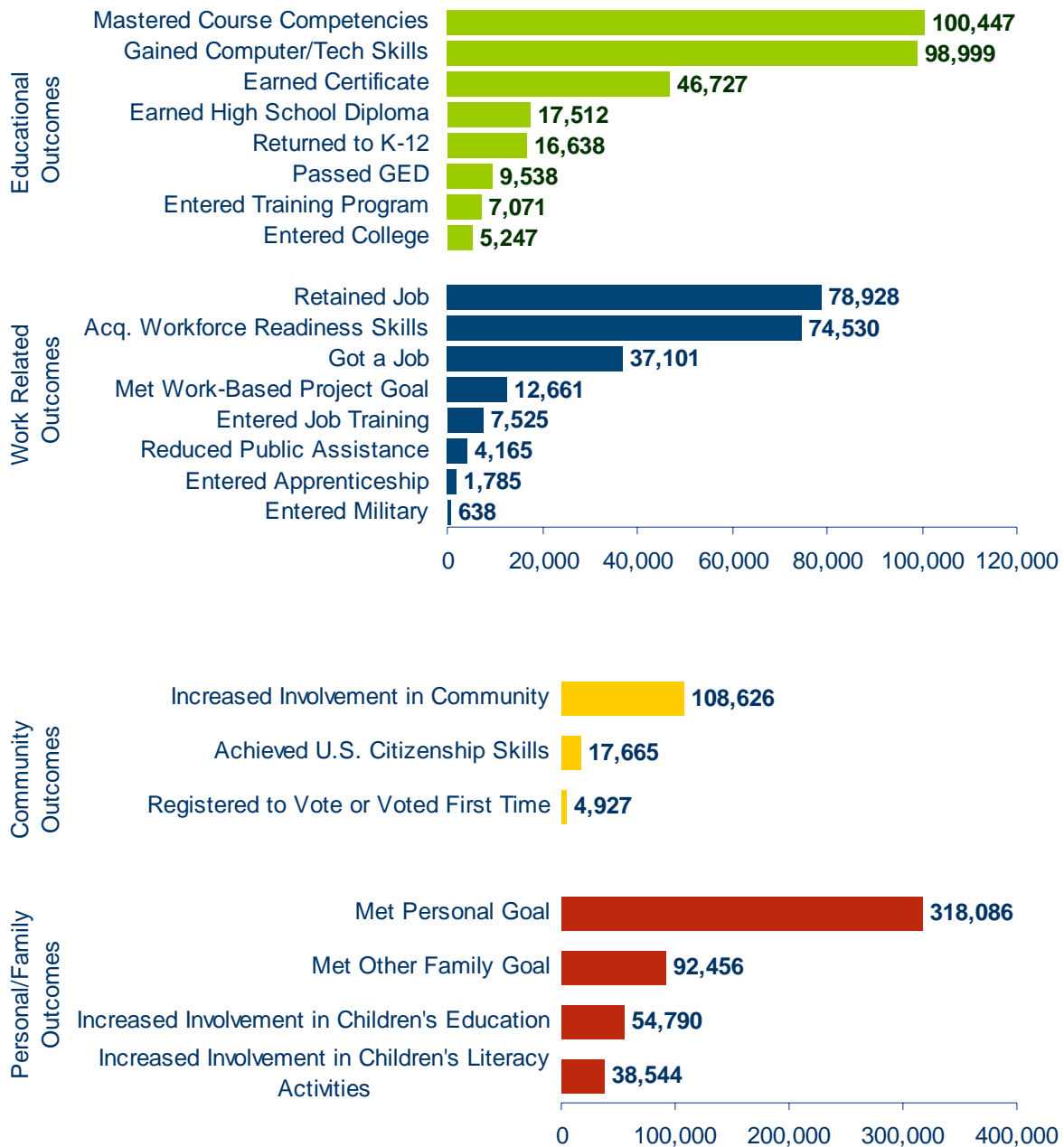


Figure 18 Employment Outcome Results of Adult School Learners Entering Program with Employment-Related Goal

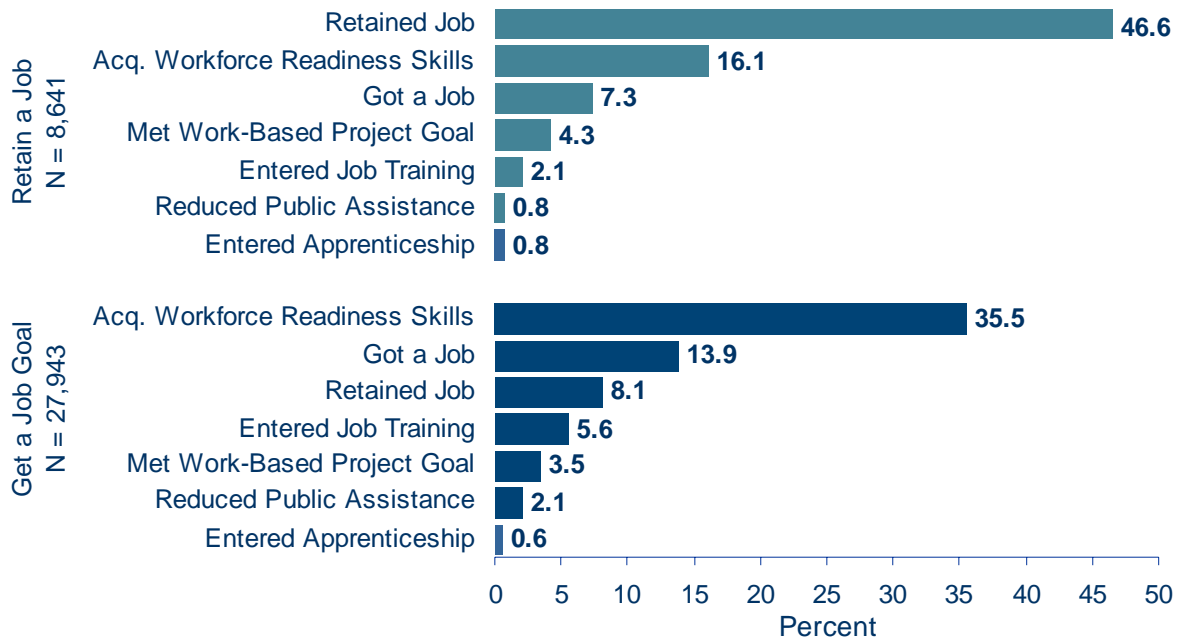
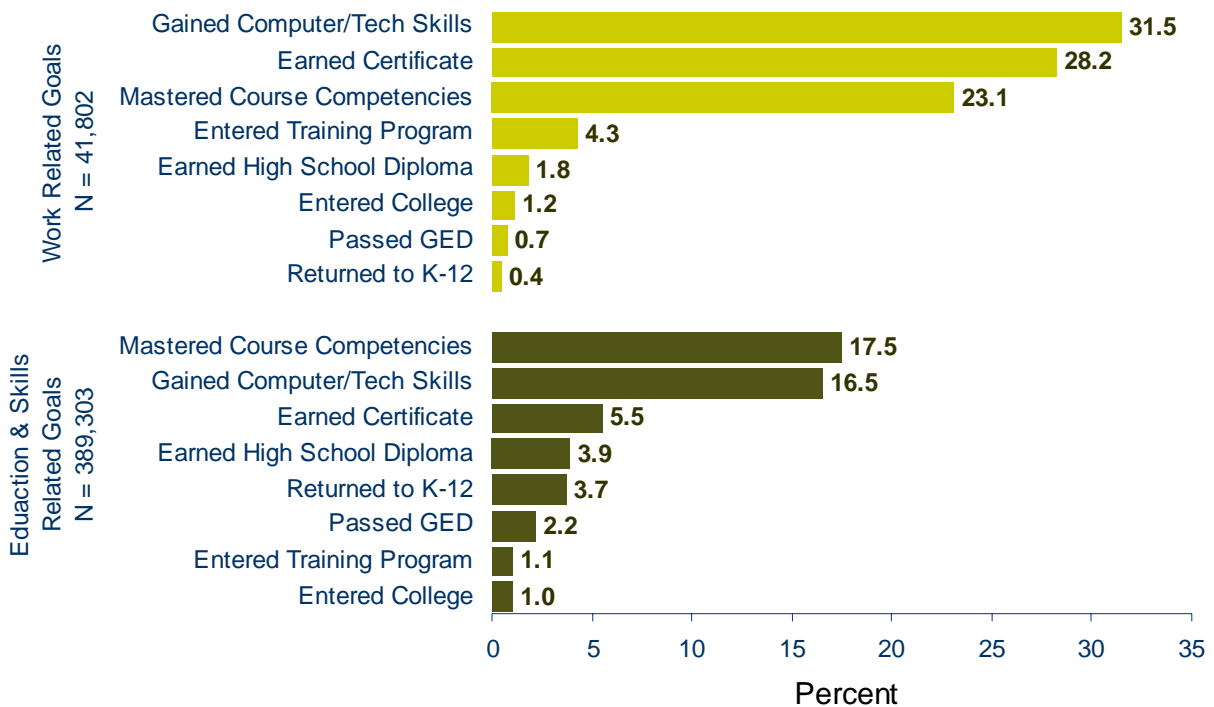


Figure 19 Educational Outcomes of Adult School Learners Entering Program with Improving Skills, Gain a Diploma, or Preparation for Postsecondary Education and Work-Related Goals



Exit Reasons

Figure 20 Exit Reasons of Adult School Learners by Age Group

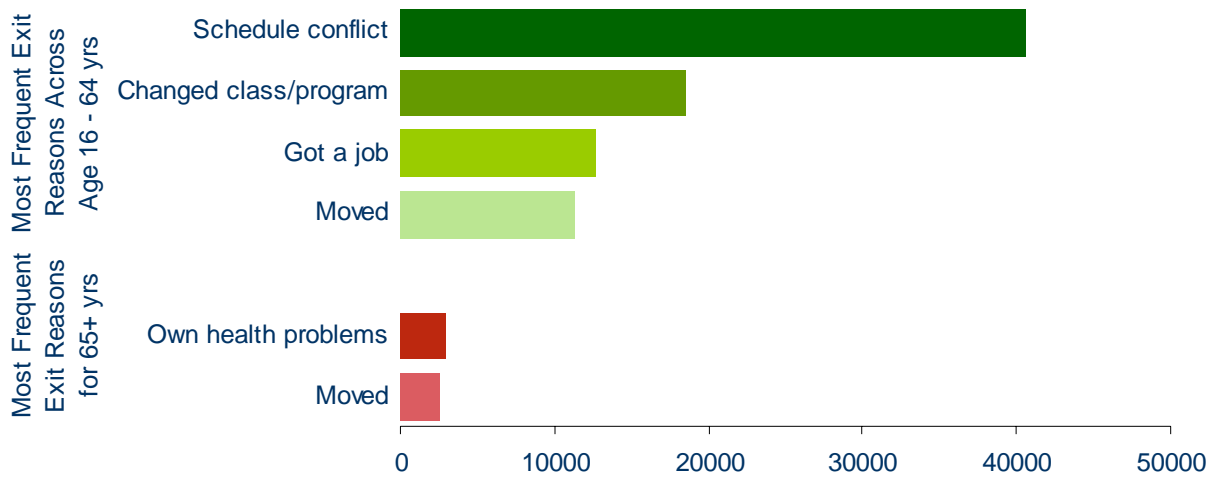
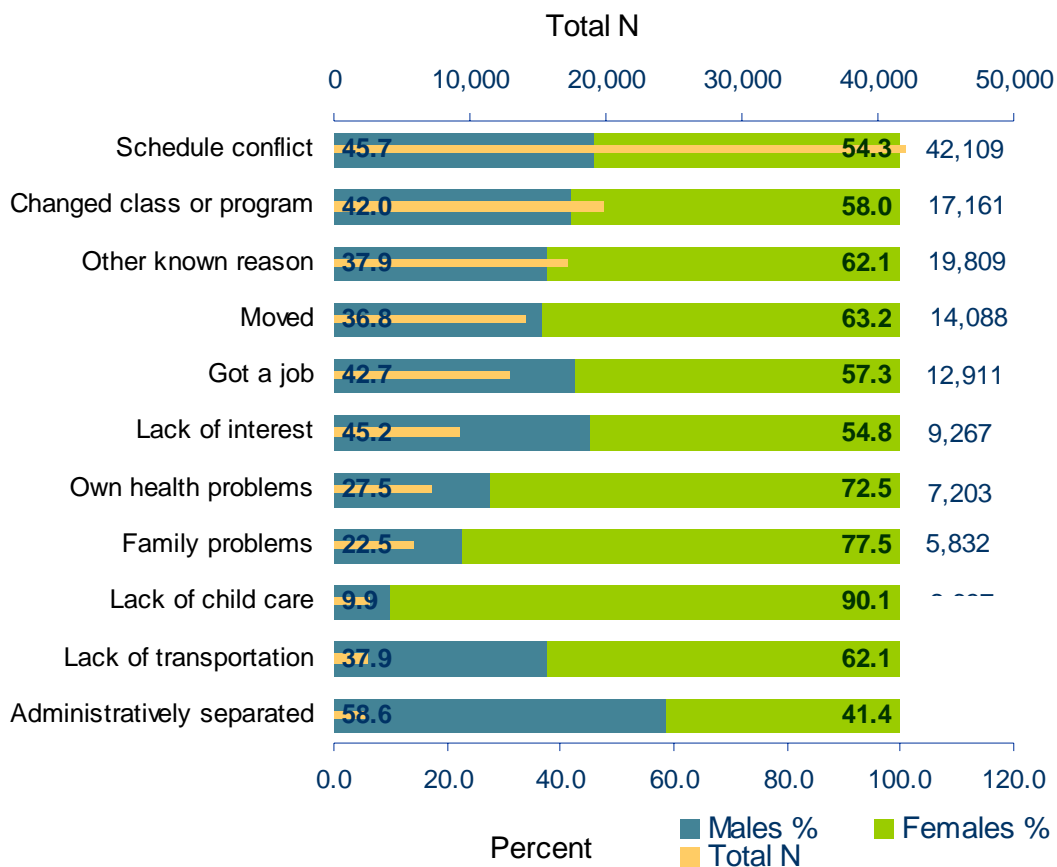


Figure 21 Exit Reasons of Adult School Learners by Gender



Test Scores and Learner Gains

As part of the process of monitoring learning gains in federally funded adult education programs in California, the federal WIA Title II legislation mandates that all learners in federally funded programs take pre- and post-tests during the course of the program year. However the state has no such mandate for adult education programs receiving state apportionment funds. Because of the federal mandate for testing, the program areas of ABE, ASE/GED, and ESL contributed the vast majority of data for this section of the report.

Pre- and Post-Test Guidelines

Learner testing occurred primarily in reading, but ABE and ASE/GED programs did have the option to administer reading tests, math tests, or both, consistent with the instructional focus. Statewide guidelines required all ESL learners to take a reading test, a listening test, or both. Some testing did occur outside these guidelines (for example, a math pretest administered to ESL students). Learning gains are the difference between a learner's score on the first accurate pretest and the score on the highest accurate post-test. The administration of both tests must be within the program year, in this case July 1, 2004, to June 30, 2005, and must be within the same of one of the three valid modalities, namely reading, math, and listening. Matched paired test data must also follow additional rules that include not taking the same test form consecutively, not using a post-test form from a lower CASAS level than the pretest level, and ensuring that both tests are within the accurate range.

In total there were 410,444 reading pretests with 23,688 in ABE, 44,879 in ASE/GED, 340,267 in ESL including Citizenship, 1,140 in Vocational Ed., 232 in AWD, and 238 in Parent Ed. Additionally, ABE and ASE/GED learners took 32,635 math pretests, and ESL and Citizenship learners took 19,677 listening pretests.

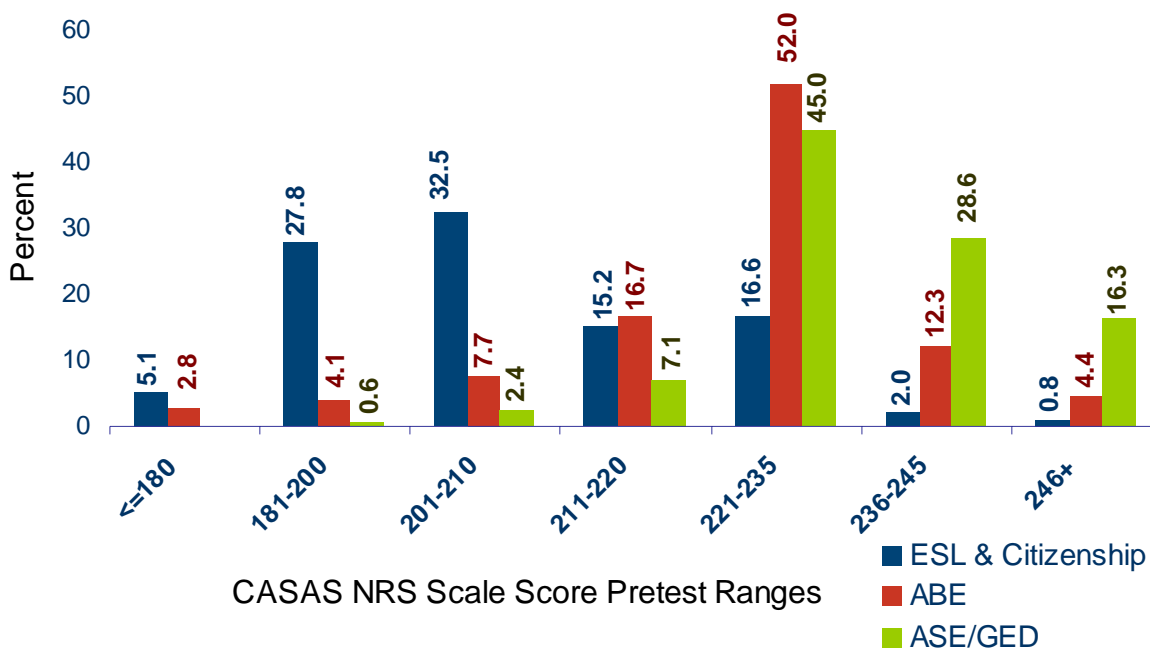
Reading Tests

The mean reading pretest score for ABE learners (223.7) suggests that they typically would be able to handle most routine reading, writing, and computational tasks related to life roles, be able to read and interpret simplified and authentic materials on familiar topics, and write a simple accident or incident report. The mean reading pretest score for ASE/GED learners was 234.2, which indicates that these learners were ready to begin GED preparation. The mean reading pretest score for ESL and Citizenship learners (206.5) suggests that these individuals would, on average, be able to satisfy basic survival needs and very routine social demands, understand simple learned phrases easily, and read and interpret simple material on familiar topics. Learners at this level may experience difficulty interpreting more complex job-related material, communicating on the telephone, or completing an application.

Figure 22 presents the reading pretest score distributions by National Reporting System (NRS) level for ABE, ESL and Citizenship, and ASE/GED. The data show two distinct distributions of pretest scores for the three instructional programs. The center of the distribution of ESL and Citizenship pretest scores is lower than the other two program areas, but covers the expanse of NRS score ranges. ABE, like ESL covers the complete range of NRS, and although its distribution of pretest reading scores is similar to the ASE/GED distribution, the ABE distribution has a higher proportion of learners functioning at the lower NRS levels than is evidenced in ASE/GED. The majority of the ASE/GED pretest reading scores appropriately cover the higher levels of NRS, reflecting the ability of those learners to benefit from instruction at the adult secondary level of education.

The data appear to show some inappropriate placement of ABE learners into ASE/GED programs. There were 20,095 ASE/GED learners who should have been placed in ABE, while 13,630 ABE learners who should have been placed in ASE/GED upon program entry (see Table 2 in appendix). Reading pretest results also show that some learners placed in ASE/GED programs would have been better placed at the ABE beginning or ABE intermediate levels of instruction.

Figure 22 Adult School Learners’ Reading Pretest Score Distributions of CASAS/NRS Levels for Instructional Programs — ABE, ESL, and ASE/GED



Among the 408,834 learners in ABE, ASE/GED, and ESL programs who took a reading pretest, 206,033 (50.4 percent) provided valid post-test data and were eligible for the analyses that follow. The data in Figure 23 show that learning gains relate inversely to the level at which a learner begins instruction. The ESL program, with the highest

percentage of learners at the lower instructional levels, had the highest average learning gains.

Figure 23 CASAS/NRS Mean Reading Scale Score Gains of Adult School Learners Across ESL and Citizenship, ABE and ASE/GED Programs

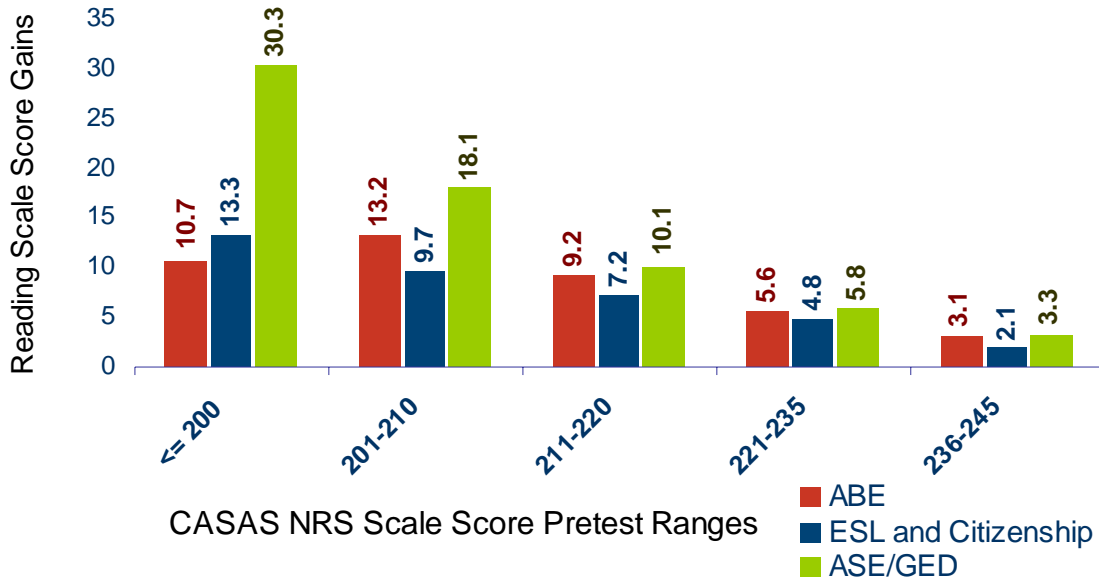


Figure 24 CASAS/NRS Skill Levels for Adult School Learners in ESL Program by Years of Schooling

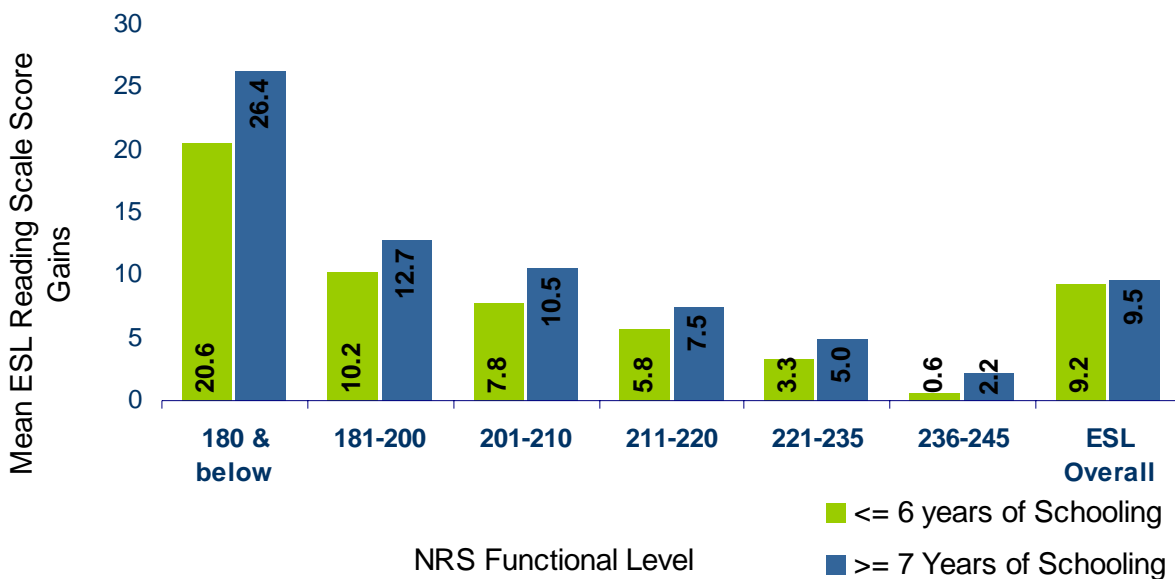


Figure 24 show the distribution of reading scale score gains for ESL and Citizenship. The distribution is across CASAS/NRS instructional program skill levels for learners with six or fewer years of schooling and for those with seven or more years of schooling. At every pretest score range learners with seven or more years of education showed

higher mean learning gains than those with six or fewer years of education. Although the overall average gains do not appear to be different, the differences found between the CASAS/NRS skills levels at the lower levels are dramatic and statistically significant. Learners at the ESL beginning literacy level with seven or more years of prior education outperformed similar learners with six or fewer years of education by one to two standard deviations.

Math Tests

Adult school programs submitted math pretest scores for 9,977 ABE learners and 22,658 ASE/GED learners. ABE learners who took the math assessment scored an average of 218.5, while ASE/GED learners scored an average of 223.4. The difference between the two programs is best illustrated at the lower and higher functioning levels. Compared to ASE, the ABE program has a higher proportion of learners at the lowest instructional levels (210 or below) and a lower percentage at the highest instructional levels (236 and above).

Figure 25 Math and Reading Scale Score Gains of Adult School Learners in ABE and ASE/GED Programs

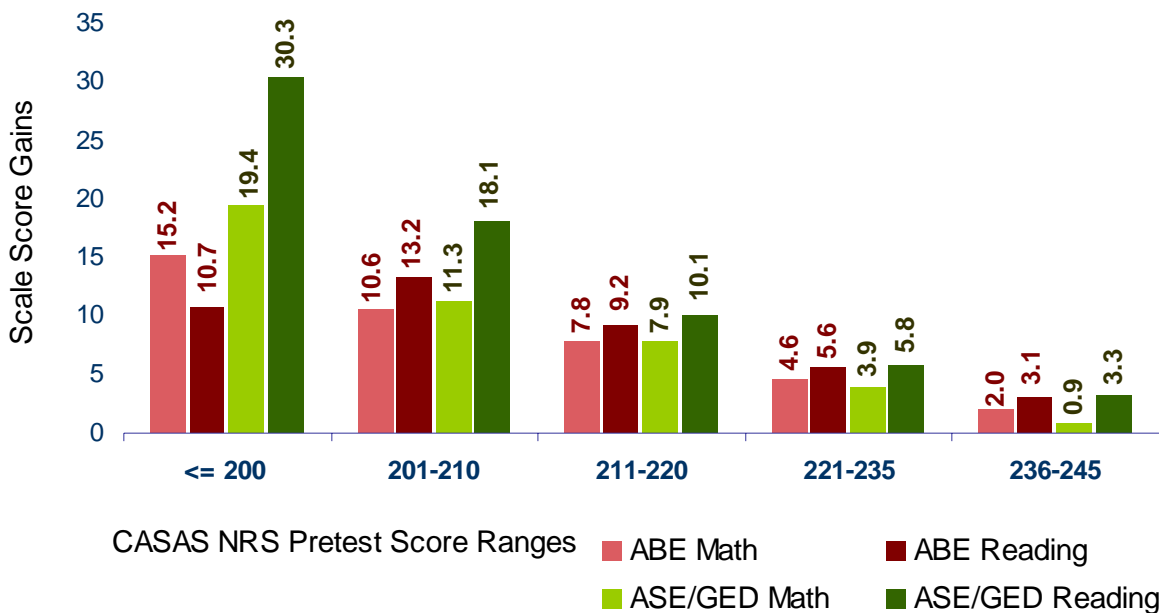
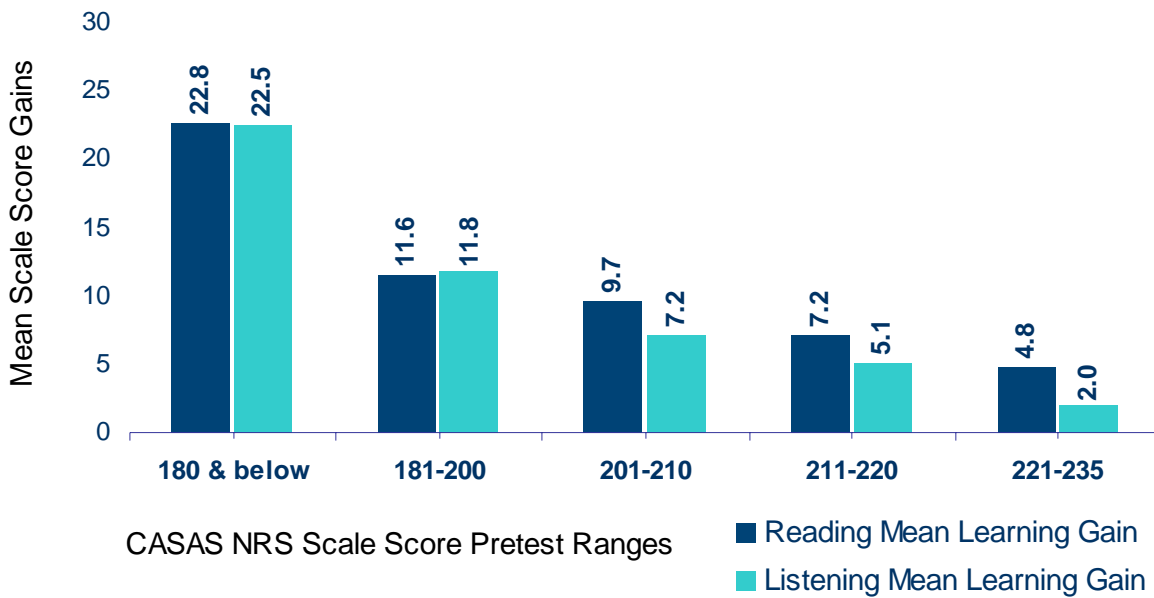


Figure 25 compares math scale score gains to reading scale score gains in ABE and ASE/GED programs. There is greater differentiation in learning gains at the first two CASAS/NRS levels than in the latter three levels. Also noted is that reading gain scores are higher than comparable math scores for both ABE and ASE/GED, except at the lowest CASAS/NRS level for ABE. There were 2,954 ABE learners and 9,199 ASE/GED learners who took a valid math post-test.

Listening Tests

Programs submitted ESL listening pretest data for 19,677 learners. The overall average listening pretest score for ESL and Citizenship learners was 209.1, which was slightly higher when compared to the mean score among learners in 2003-04 (207.6). There were 9,539 ESL learners who took a valid listening post-test.

Figure 26 Reading and Listening Mean Scale Score Gains of Adult School Learners in ESL and Citizenship Programs by Pretests on Each CASAS/NRS Level



Although the pretest means for reading and listening are quite comparable at every CASAS/NRS level, there are some differences in the amount of learning gains at intermediate and advanced levels (see Figure 26). The differences shown in the first two CASAS/NRS levels appear to be minute, but they are more accentuated in the CASAS/NRS intermediate and advanced levels.

Appendix

Table 1 Adult School Enrollment by Instructional Program over Five-Year Period

Program	PY 2000-2001		PY 2001-02		PY 2002-03		PY 2003-04		PY 2004-05	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
ABE	46,912	5.1	55,334	4.9	67,493	5.6	73,137	5.9	64,965	5.3
ESL	401,502	43.3	492,709	43.3	496,345	41.1	503,616	40.8	492,914	40.3
ASE/GED	143,989	15.5	181,933	16.0	207,668	17.2	214,724	17.3	215,703	17.6
Citizenship	3,711	0.4	4,561	0.4	5,178	0.4	3,638	0.3	3300	0.3
Voc. Ed.	138,804	14.9	160,765	14.1	171,102	14.2	172,658	13.9	177,195	14.5
AWD	27,112	2.9	32,428	2.9	31,990	2.6	32,198	2.6	33,613	2.7
Health & Safety	11,289	1.2	20,757	1.8	23,759	2.0	26,557	2.1	24700	2.0
Home Econ.	14,257	1.5	17,903	1.6	20,782	1.7	21,059	1.7	19570	1.6
Parent Ed.	35,321	3.8	45,017	4.0	52,234	4.3	57,496	4.6	56193	4.6
Older Adults	105,680	11.4	125,189	11.0	131,929	10.9	133,355	10.8	136108	11.1
Total	928,577	100.0	1,136,596	100.0	1,208,480	100.0	1,238,438	100.0	1,224,261	100.0

The highlighted rows denote programs that had continual increases in enrollment; however, only ASE/GED and Parent Ed. proportionately increased their share of annual enrollment.

Table 2 Adult School Enrollment in Instructional Levels Across Instructional Program

Instructional Level	ABE		ASE/GED		ESL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Beg. Literacy	5,136	10.7	420	0.3	60,386	14.0
Beginning	9,773	20.4	2,675	2.1	258,387	59.8
Intermediate Low	11,680	24.3	5,461	4.3	57,586	13.3
Intermediate High	7,785	16.2	11,539	9.1	33,204	7.7
ASE Low	11,273	23.5	57,539	45.1	16,512	3.8
ASE High	2,357	4.9	49,927	39.1	5,979	1.4
Total	48,004	100.0	127,561	100.0	432,054	100.0

The highlighted rows denote (under the column heading ABE) the number and percentage of ABE learners who would be more appropriately placed in ASE/GED. Similarly the highlighted rows (under the column heading ASE/GED) denote the number and percentage of learners who would be more appropriately placed in ABE.