

Overview of the National External Diploma Program



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NEDP – A National Program

- NEDP is currently being implemented at more than 80 sites in 11 states and Guam.
- NEDP is growing and we hope to begin programs in new states such as Pennsylvania, California, Louisiana, and others.
- NEDP has been a successful national program over its 33 year history.

National External Diploma Program Background

1972: A Ford Foundation grant to the Syracuse Research Corporation (SRC) launched a study to discover the reasons that the more “mature” adult population was not earning their diplomas through existing high school completion programs.

SRC found out that...

- Class schedules were often incompatible with the daily responsibilities of adults
- Content offered in other high school completion programs did not relate to real experiences and daily life
- Test formats: The demonstration of actual knowledge and skills through only multiple-choice, paper-and-pencil tests was too limiting

The NEDP Created

- 1975: A competency-based, performance assessment system now recognized as the National External Diploma Program made its debut in Syracuse, New York
- 1979: The Joint Dissemination Review Panel (JDRP) of the National Institute of Education and the U.S. Office of Education validated the External Diploma Program for national dissemination

A Varied History

- After New York, the American Council on Education assumed rights to NEDP around 1990
- MATC acquired rights to NEDP in 2000
- With minor attempts at revising the NEDP over the years, it is essentially the same as it was when first created

The NEDP Today ...

- The National External Diploma Program (NEDP) is a competency-based, applied performance assessment system that expects adults to demonstrate their ability in a series of simulations that parallel job and life situations.
- Participants are evaluated against a criterion of excellence instead of by comparison to others, take responsibility for acquiring instruction by using existing community resources, and achieve mastery of all the competencies required, plus an occupational, or specialized skill.

The Appeal of NEDP



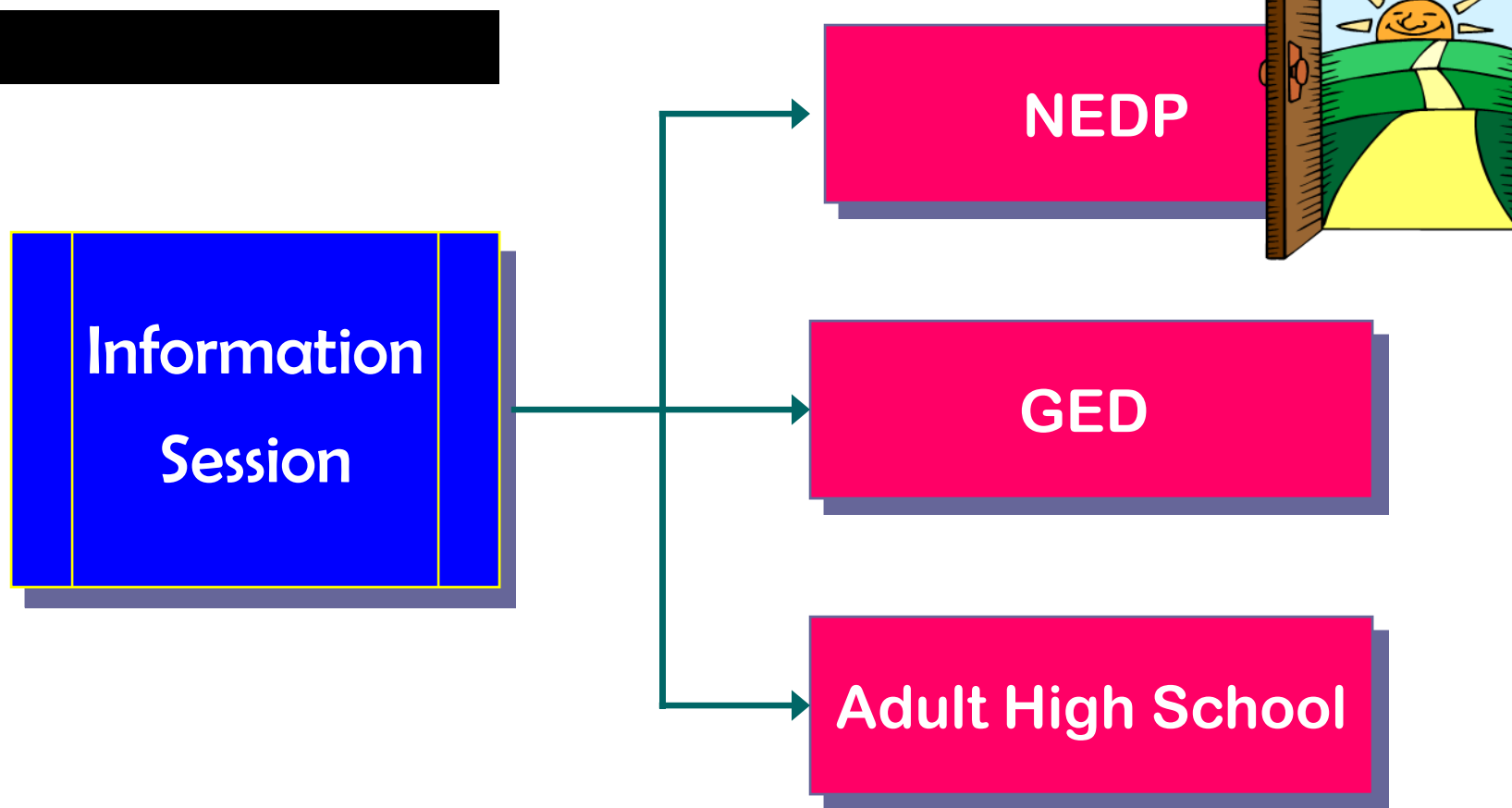
- Performance-based
- Life and work skills focus
- Self-paced, flexible, and not timed
- Can accommodate ELL and special needs learners
- Uses a competency-based approach
- Encourages self-sufficiency
- Has no formal classes
- Offers a locally or state-awarded traditional high school diploma

NEDP: Innovative, Non-Traditional Form of Testing

- NEDP includes items measuring:
 - Recall
 - Inference
 - Comprehension
 - Applied performance
 - Complex thinking such as cause and effect, logical progression, problem-solving



Choosing for Success



DIAGNOSTIC EVALUATION

OFFICE

- Reading
- Writing
- Math

HOME

- Self-Assessment
- Individual Skill Evaluation
- Occupational Interests

LEARNING RECOMMENDATION

LEARNING PERIOD

RE-EVALUATION OF SKILLS

ASSESSMENT

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graph TD; A[ASSESSMENT] --> B[65 GENERALIZED COMPETENCIES  
5 TASKS — LIFE SKILL THEMES  
Communications  
■ Computation  
■ Self Awareness  
■ Social Awareness  
■ Consumer Awareness  
■ Scientific Awareness  
■ Occupational Preparedness  
■ Technological Awareness  
■ 100% Accuracy]; A --> C[INDIVIDUALIZED COMPETENCY  
Choice of one ...  
■ Occupational Verification  
■ Special Skills Assessment  
■ Advanced Academic  
■ Certified Training]; B --> D[ ]; C --> D;
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65 GENERALIZED COMPETENCIES

5 TASKS — LIFE SKILL THEMES

Communications

- Computation
- Self Awareness
- Social Awareness
- Consumer Awareness
- Scientific Awareness
- Occupational Preparedness
- Technological Awareness
- 100% Accuracy

INDIVIDUALIZED COMPETENCY

Choice of one ...

- Occupational Verification
- Special Skills Assessment
- Advanced Academic
- Certified Training

Demonstration of 65 Competencies

- 5 Tasks (A –E)

- (A) Personal, Home, and Community Responsibility

- (B) Exploring the Broader Community, the State, and the World

- (C) Making Judgments and Influencing the Decisions Made by Others

- (D) Planning for Life Changes

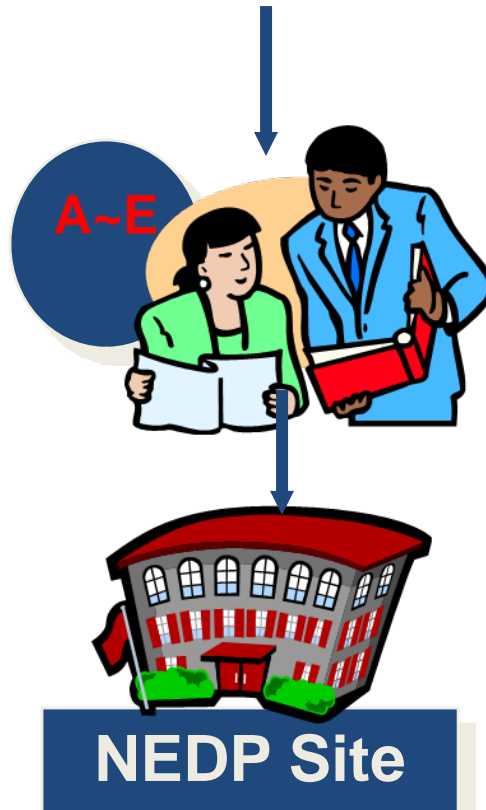
- (E) Exploring the Future Around Work

Steps in Assessment

Task Booklets



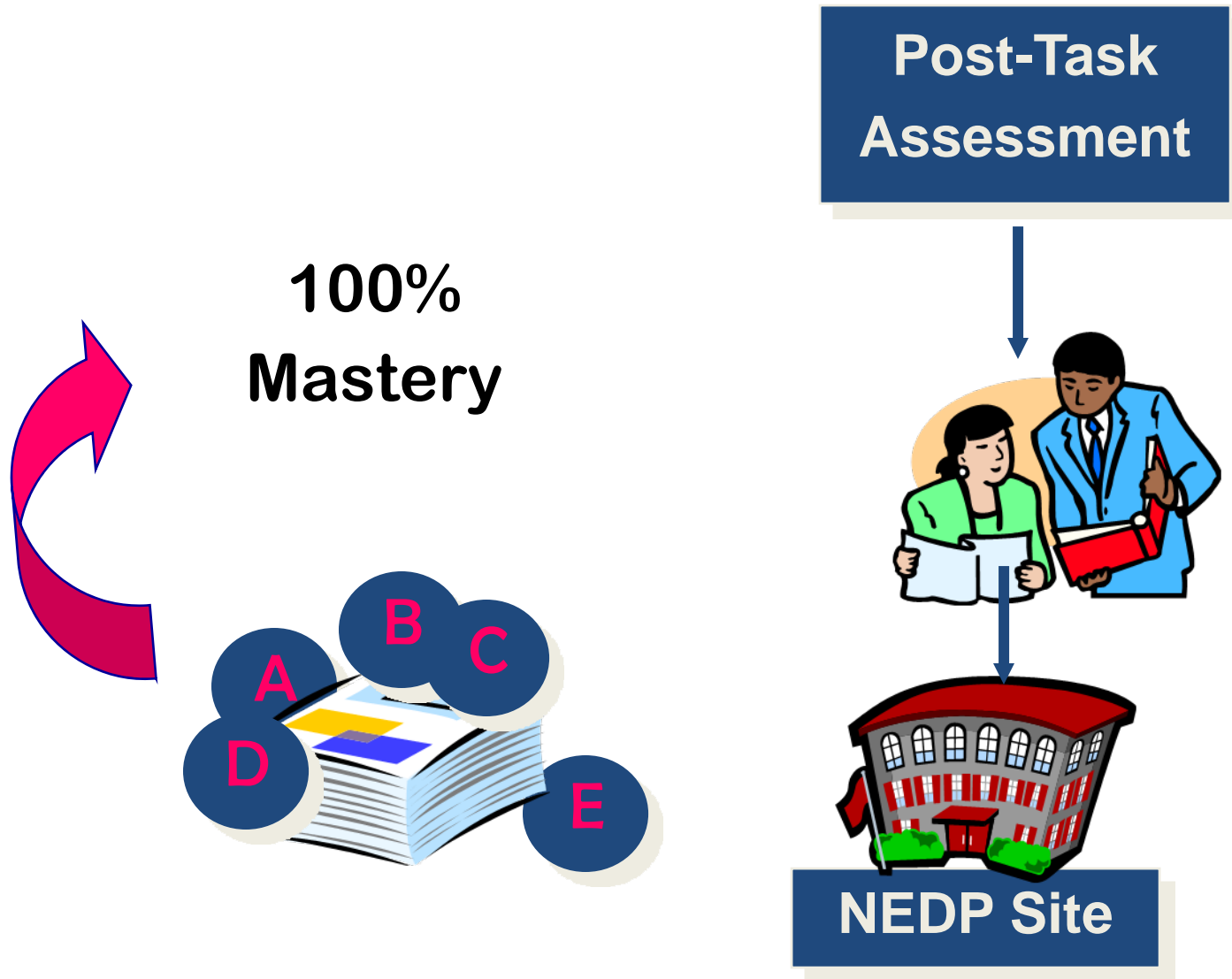
Spot Check Interviews



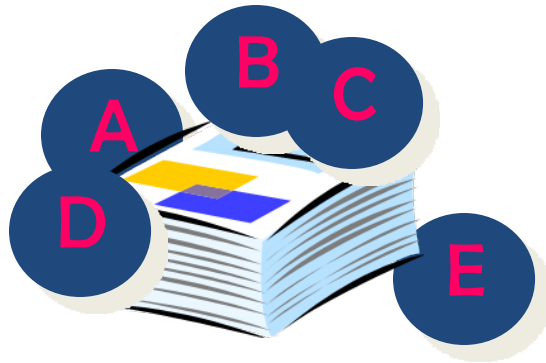
Candidate Progress Reports



Post-Task Assessment (PTAs)

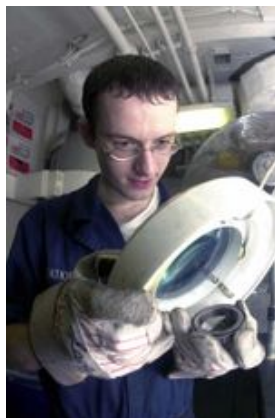


**100%
Mastery**



NEDP Site

Finishing NEDP Requirements



**Portfolio
Review**

**Individualized Competency
Demonstrated**



Graduation

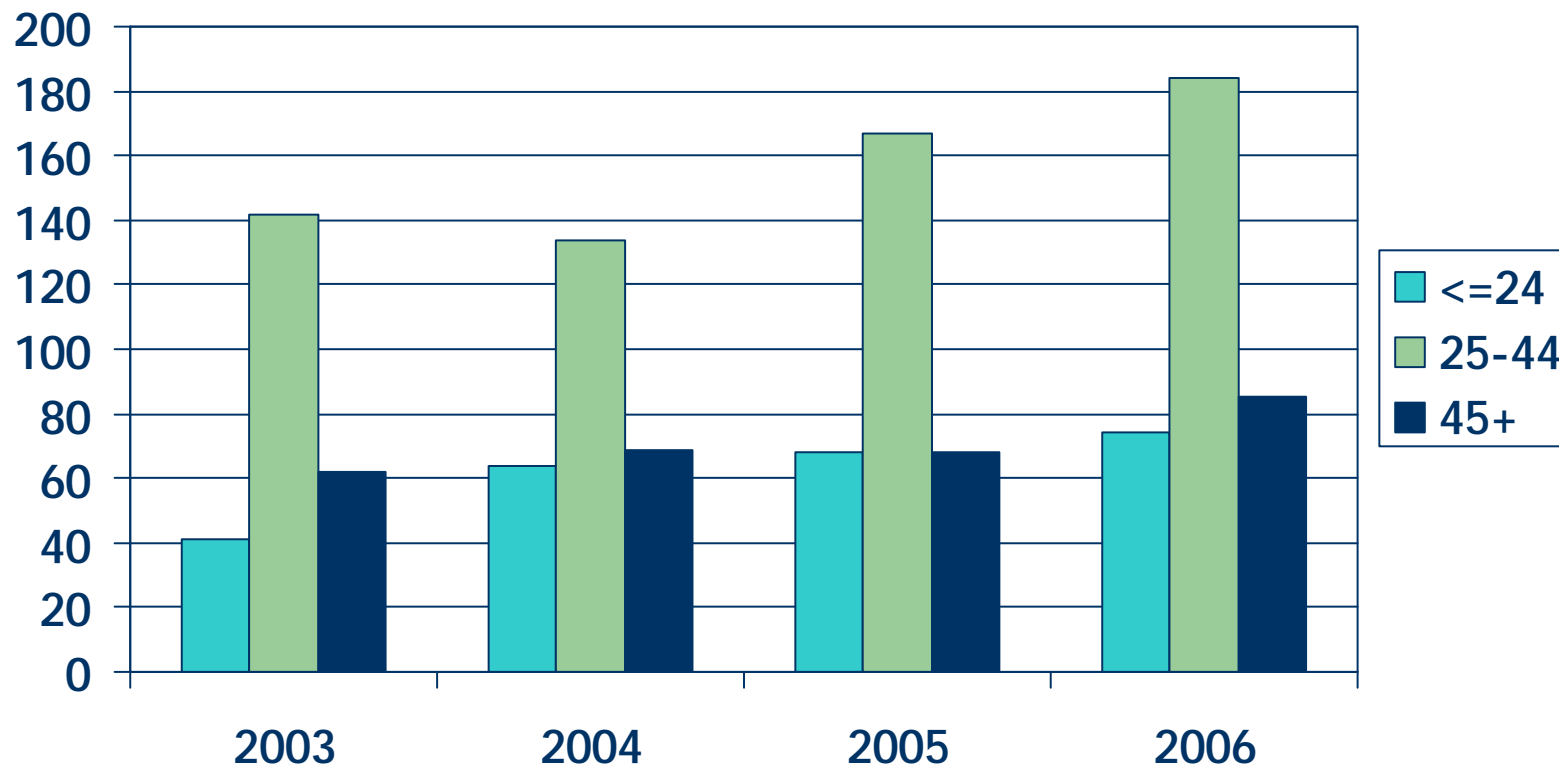


**AWARD OF
HIGH SCHOOL
DIPLOMA**

NEDP Learners

A Selected Profile

Learners by Age Group



NEDP Student Profile - Demographics

- 430 participants from Connecticut, New York, and Maryland
 - Gender: Female 62.3% Male 37.7%
 - Age: mean = 32.6; median = 29.5
 - Native language: English 92.7%
 - Years of education:
 - 7 and below: 2.1%
 - 8 years 6.9%
 - 9 years 18.2%
 - 10 years 31.5%
 - 11 years 35.1%
 - 12 + 6.2%

NEDP Student Profile - Reading

- 92.4% of students performing at an adult secondary reading level
- 48.7% indicate advanced adult secondary reading skills

CASAS Reading Scale Scores:

- n = 419; mean = 245.8; median = 245 (NRS level 6)
- 92.4% achieved a scale score of 236+ (NRS Level 5)
- 48.7% scored 246+ (NRS Level 6)

NEDP Student Profile - Math

- 92% of students have advanced basic skills in math
- 49% of student have adult secondary math skills

CASAS Math Scale Scores

- $n = 421$; mean = 234.5; median = 234 (Almost NRS Level 5)
- 92.6% achieved a scale score of 225+ (NRS Level 4)
- 49% scored 236+ (NRS Level 5)
- 3.6% scored 246+ (NRS Level 6)

July 2006 — CASAS Acquired Rights to NEDP

- For several years a variety of NEDP “stakeholders” requested that CASAS consider assuming the rights to the program
- CASAS conducted an extensive feasibility study
- Consensus that NEDP needs upgrading to reflect new graduation requirements and ever-evolving competencies
- Extensive funding necessary

CASAS NEDP Rights (Cont'd)

- Connecticut, Maryland, and New York (all major users of NEDP) approached CASAS with funding support to acquire the NEDP from Madison Area Technical College (MATC)
- Connecticut, Maryland, and New York are also major players in helping CASAS upgrade the NEDP over the next three years

Assistance from Three States

- Significant Investment Required
 - Estimates consistently concur that approximately \$1,000,000 needs to be invested in revamping the NEDP
- Connecticut, Maryland, and New York are major players in helping CASAS upgrade the NEDP over the next three years

Some Proposed Changes

- Revamp curriculum to reflect more rigorous high school graduation requirements, including the incorporation of an enhanced technology component
- Align NEDP with states' secondary level content standards, with national workforce skills standards, and postsecondary entry-level requirements

Some Proposed Changes... *continued*

- Revalidate the 65 NEDP Competencies (currently underway)
 - Representatives from all states with NEDP sites
 - New competency areas under consideration
- Revise assessments to meet current testing standards from American Psychological Association/National Council on Measurement in Education

Proposed Changes ... *continued*

- Use two standing committees and ad hoc committees as needed:
 - Policy Advisory Committee
 - Assessment Technical Workgroup
 - Ad Hoc Committees (e.g., competency revalidation)
- Recertify state and national trainers

Proposed Changes ... *continued*

- Develop an electronic portfolio system
- Develop a marketing plan for a variety of constituencies
- Convert all materials into an electronic format, where feasible

Selected Accomplishments (Past Year)

- After conducting a pilot study, replaced NEDP reading with a CASAS Level D reading test, math with a CASAS Level C test and currently piloting with over 60 sites
- Began initial development of NEDP eTest versions of CASAS reading and math
- Developed the NEDP Portfolio soon to be beta tested
- Developed comprehensive assessment accommodations policy
- Revamped training modules and program manuals
- Redesigned NEDP Web site
(www.nedp.org)

Current Undertakings

- Develop a “Blueprint” for Task Development; mapping competencies to Tasks
- Began initial development of NEDP eTest versions of CASAS reading and math
- Pilot test new CASAS writing instruments to replace current writing diagnostic instruments
- Complete development of CASAS eTests (CAT/CBT) for use in NEDP Diagnostics
- Began initial task development
- Pilot O*NET career assessments

Current Undertakings (cont'd)

- Develop plans for a workforce skills certification
- Develop plans for replacing vocational skills checklists using O*NET
- Develop data profile of NEDP programs
- Develop marketing brochure
- Develop a more “academic” transcript
- Provide Personalized Logos

Revalidation Goal

- To compile a master list of competencies along with a listing of the rigorous academic skills needed to demonstrate mastery of those competencies.
- Competencies need to reflect the most comprehensive thinking about essential skills needed for success in the world of further education, work, family, and community

NEDP Competency Revalidation

- Ideally, competencies should be revalidated approximately every five years
- NEDP Competencies have not been revalidated in some time
- Originally there were 64 competencies
- Some went, others added, to total 65
- Revalidating competencies should be the first step in revising the NEDP

The Revalidation Process Overview

- This process included:
 - Reviewing the existing 65 NEDP Competencies
 - Reviewing state standards where there are significant NEDP programs
 - Examining the CASAS National Consortium content standards
 - Reviewing 21st Century Skills standards
 - Reviewing Manufacturing Skills Standards Council's work as well as the Department of Labor's standards

The Revalidation Process (cont.)

- Reviewing the academic standards of councils such as National Council of Teachers of Math and the National Council of Teachers of English
- Reviewing existing technology standards
- CASAS has already conducted a meta-analysis of skills standards across business and industry sectors

New List of NEDP Competencies

The revised list includes 70 competencies in ten categories:

- Communication and Media Literacy
- Applied Math/Numeracy
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Cultural Literacy - Interpreting the Arts: fine arts, music, drama and film
- Health literacy
- Civic literacy and Community Participation
- Geography and History
- Consumer Awareness and Financial Literacy
- Scientific Inquiry
- 21st Century Workplace

Assessment Task Development

- Now that the NEDP Competencies have been finalized, the task development process has just begun
- Task redesign could not begin until the competencies to be assessed were agreed upon by stakeholders

NEDP Will Benefit Your Community

- An NEDP program in your community provides a much needed alternative pathway for adults to earn their high school diploma.
- Successful NEDP graduates make a difference in your community.

Successful NEDP Graduates

- Become more active participants in their children's education
- Enter postsecondary education institutions
- Achieve job promotions and pay increases
- Gain personal satisfaction and become more involved



How to Become an NEDP Provider

- Participate in 3 ½ day training session
- Train at least 3 staff as advisors/assessors (college degree required)
- Provide evidence of diploma granting authority
- Submit letter from the state BOE or other appropriate state agency authorizing an NEDP adoption
- Pay an annual site fee
- Agree to award traditional high school diploma to successful candidates
- Ensure facilities provide for client confidentiality

Join NEDP!

- Join the 80+ sites in 11 states around the country
- If you are interested in learning more about becoming an NEDP site, please contact us.

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