



DATE: September 8, 2003

TO: ABE Coordinators, State Staff Development Cadre, CASAS Writing Skills Committee, Stage 1, 2, and 3 Iowa Readers, Other Interested Personnel

FROM: Division of Community Colleges and Workforce Preparation

SUBJECT: Iowa Writing Certification Guidelines

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide the background, context and action steps for the implementation of the *Iowa Writing Certification Guidelines*. Iowa is only one of three (3) states which has implemented a high stakes basic literacy skills certification program and is the only state with a competency based/CASAS based basic literacy skills certification program. Iowa's basic literacy skills certification program is one of the most visible and easily understood benchmarks for Iowa's community college based adult literacy program. Therefore, it is critical that ABE coordinators, State staff development Cadre, Stage 1, 2 and 3 Iowa Readers, instructors and other interested personnel possess a clear understanding of the importance of fully implementing the three components (reading, mathematics and writing) of the program.

Since the inception of Iowa's Writing Skills Certification Program in Program Year 1998, the emphasis was on the implementation of the reading and mathematics components while the writing component was being developed, pilot tested and finalized. The writing component was implemented on a pilot test basis in Program Year 2002. The final phase in the state wide implementation process was the development of the *Iowa Writing Certifying Guidelines* and accompanying flowchart. The guidelines were developed by Iowa's Stage 3 Readers in conjunction with the CASAS Writing Committee and reviewed by Sally Schroeder. The guidelines and accompanying flowchart are designed to provide all relevant personnel with the process and procedure for adult learners to earn a writing skills certificate at CASAS Levels A, B, C, and D.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The following steps are designed to implement the *Iowa Writing Certification Guidelines*:

- The electronic version is being disseminated to: (1) ABE Coordinators, (2) State Staff Development Cadre, (3) CASAS Writing Skills Committee, and (4) Stage 1, 2 and 3 Iowa Readers;
- The guidelines will be posted on the Iowa Literacy Resource Center (ILRC) at <http://www.readiowa.org>;

- Iowa's Stage 1 and 2 readers will be provided an orientation to the guidelines by Iowa's Stage 3 Readers;
- The guidelines will be reviewed at the Fall 2003 National Reporting System (NRS) tri-fold meetings. The ABE coordinators will be supplied with hard copies of the guidelines for all writing skills instructors and other relevant personnel.
- The ABE Coordinators will disseminate the guidelines to writing skill instructors and other relevant personnel.

Summary

One of the major program goals for Iowa's adult literacy program during Program Year 2004 (July 1, 2003-June 30, 2004) is the full implementation of the Iowa Writing Skills Certification program. The guidelines represent the final "piece of the puzzle" needed to achieve this goal. If there are questions, please contact Sally Schroeder or me.

Sincerely,

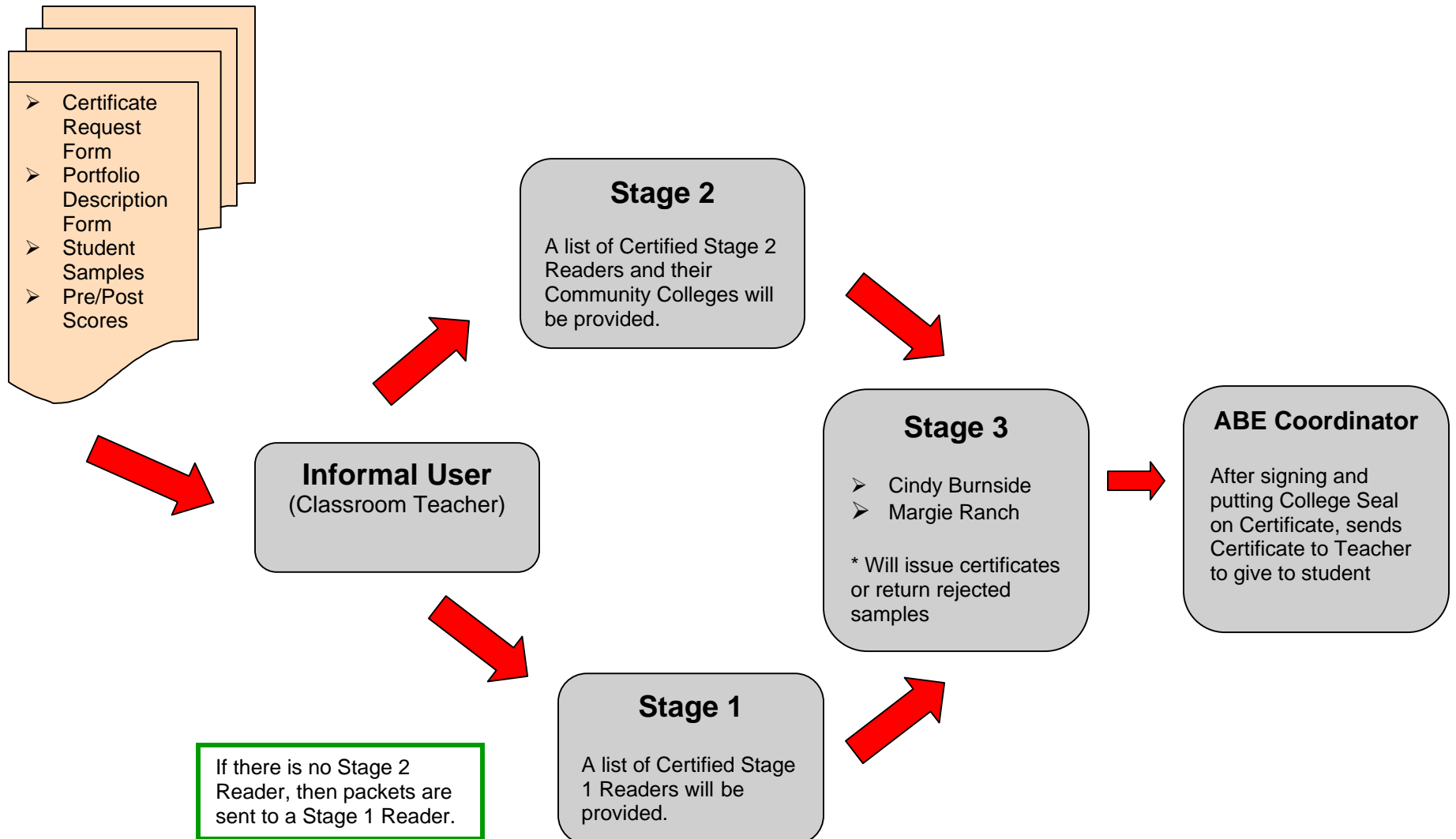
John Hartwig
Iowa State Director of Adult Education

/sj

Enclosure

Flowchart of Procedures Required for Iowa Writing Skills Student Certification

(For use by ABE Coordinators and Instructors)



Iowa Writing Certification Guidelines

- Due to the nature of the assessment and certification process, it is advised that instructors involve participants who may benefit from the writing skills certificate and able to complete the certification process.
- Pretest soon after entry into a Basic Skills Program.
- Posttest only students who demonstrate improved writing skills.
- For Level A, Students need a "1" in Note, "1" in Inventory, "1" in Form and complete a Portfolio.
- The Picture Task may be used in Level A as a pretest or as a posttest. If Picture is used, students must score a "1" on Picture and a "1" on Form to earn a Level A Certificate.
- For levels B, C, D, students need to do the Form Task, Picture Task and complete a Portfolio. Upon completion of the pretest, the instructor must use the placement and Certification Guidelines Chart. Student placement is based on the lower score achieved on the Picture Task and the Form Task.
- Posttests must be given on both tasks. Certificates can only be given if a student scores in the certificate range in 2 tasks for that level.
- Students that advance within a level may earn certificates that reflect their level of performance. Careful attention to student portfolios will help to verify student progress as well as advancement within the numerical score.
- The numeric score and the level score need to be on the Certification Request Form
- A sample scored by a Stage 2 examiner may be single scored.
- A sample scored by any other examiner must be double scored.
- Certified Stage 2 and Stage 3 examiners will be 2nd readers.
- All writing examiners will:
 - Score samples monthly
 - Meet regularly by conference call or training
 - Complete an annual recalibration packet and training

Iowa Specific

| CASAS Functional Writing Assessment Training and Certification Guidelines for the Picture and Form Tasks | | |
|---|--|--|
| Level | If You: | You Can: |
| Pre-Stage 1 Informal User Classroom Teacher | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Follow test administration directions and scoring guidelines in the manual ➤ Minimum 3 hours training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the test only in individual classrooms ➤ Report non-standardized results |
| Stage 1 Certified Local Examiner and Trainer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Attend 9-hour Local Examiner training. Part A is 6 hours; Part B is 3 hours ➤ Complete take-home scoring assignment between Parts A and B ➤ Pass Certification scoring packet ➤ Pass yearly re-certification packet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Use the test in local program only ➤ Report standardized results ➤ Conduct training in local program |
| Stage 2 Certified State Examiner and District Trainer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Complete scoring reliability requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conduct periodic scoring sessions to check reliability ○ Maintain own certification ➤ Document experience using and scoring the CASAS FWA with learners ➤ Observe Stage 1 training (in person or on video) to become certified to train others ➤ Submit completed Observation Form ➤ Pass yearly re-certification packet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Report standardized results ➤ Conduct training in local program and in other districts |
| Stage 3 Certified State/National Trainer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Co-train with a CASAS certified State/National Trainer ➤ Attend advanced trainer workshops ➤ Pass yearly re-certification packet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Train at State/National level ➤ Train other trainers |

Iowa Writing Assessment Placement and Certification Guidelines

Note:

- Placement is based on the lowest score
- The Form Task is required at all levels
- For Certification a student must do a portfolio
- Students must advance numerically on the Posttest
- Before certificates can be issued, Stage 3 Trainers need the following:
 - The Certification Request Form
 - The Portfolio Description Form
 - Copies of the Pretests and Posttests accompanied by Stage 2 scores

| Level | Task | Placement Score | Certification Score |
|-----------|---------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| A | Form | 0,1 | 1 |
| | Picture | 0 | 1 |
| | Portfolio | | |
| | OR | | |
| | Form Note Inventory | 0,1 0 0 | 1 1 1 |
| Portfolio | | | |
| B | Form | 1 | 2 |
| | Picture | 1 | 2 |
| | Portfolio | | |
| C | Form | 2 | 3 |
| | Picture | 2 | 3 |
| | Portfolio | | |
| D | Form | 3 | 4 |
| | Picture | 3 | 4 |
| | Portfolio | | |