



InET Consortium

Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS)

A credit accrual option for migrant farmworker students

Robert Lynch, National PASS Center Director, 1997 to 2012

Secondary school-aged migrant youth have many obstacles to obtaining the credits to complete high school graduation. The **Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS)** program is a semi-independent study curriculum to help overcome these obstacles. PASS courses are designed as a supplemental means to address the needs of this mobile population by incorporating a high level of content and instruction into units of manageable size. The courses are written at an accessible reading level and designed to be delivered with the assistance of a teacher/mentor.

The PASS program was established in 1978 to address the needs of California migrant farmworker students; since then, PASS has been an integral part of the Migrant Education Program (MEP). The nationwide growth of PASS has been a direct result of the scarcity of other viable options for migrant students to earn the credits needed for successfully completing high school. PASS courses are being used to assist migrant students in about 30 states.

The establishment of the National PASS Center (NPC) in 1997 provided a vehicle to bring the PASS curriculum into alignment with current academic standards, implement standard assessment tools, and incorporate more uniform procedures and protocols for the use of the curriculum. During the tenure of the NPC, over 40 semester courses have been developed and/or revised in all academic content areas.

While thousands of migrant students have been enrolled in a PASS course, the quality and flexibility of the courses have made them a viable option for other populations as well. There continues to be an expansion of the use of PASS courses to alternative schools, juvenile detention facilities, home-schoolers, and other community and school programs.

PASS is more than credit accrual – Beyond direct credit accrual through completing PASS courses, PASS helps students be successful in other ways. One way is to provide additional support for students struggling with a course taken in a traditional classroom setting. Another is as a skill-building tool for students achieving a passing grade in a course, yet still struggling below mastery level yet having to move on to more demanding subject material. By strengthening the fundamentals while learning more challenging concepts, the student can *hit the ground running* in the next semester and gain the needed confidence to move ahead successfully.



“Without PASS, I would not have been able to catch up and graduate with my class.”

Charles, from eastern Washington, only was interested in being old enough to drop out of school. His extended Yakima tribal family intervened to stabilize his home life and frequent moves, making it clear that education was his only hope for improving his life. Their love and support, along with a caring migrant counselor, helped him through PASS to overcome severe credit deficiencies and graduate with his class.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS) – **The existing PASS courses align well with the CCSS, having been aligned with the standards from 10 states (Arizona, California, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin). This alignment has resulted in courses that are comprehensive, rigorous, relevant to the real world, and embedded with current pedagogical strategies and models. All future course development and/or revisions will align with the CCSS, as well as with state-specific standards, as requested.**

What features do schools seek in selecting a credit recovery curriculum for migrant students? – In Fall 2012, Washington State collected data to guide future PASS curriculum development. An anonymous online survey was sent to 200 administrators and educators in more than 80 school districts in Washington State. Respondents were invited to identify from a list of attributes those that they seek and value in a credit recovery curriculum for migrant students. 80% of the respondents indicated that the *"Student can study around other school, work or home obligations,"* and it is *"Affordable."* 70% of the respondents valued *"Online enrollment,"* and 60% indicated the most valuable attribute for credit recovery as being:

- *"A nationally-recognized program with transferrable credit as students move"*
- *"Self-paced, semi-independent instruction with targeted local tutoring"*
- *"Personalized mentoring support by local staff"*
- *"Online tests and centralized grading"*
- *"Online reports and student progress tracking tools"*
- *"Study is not dependent on Internet access and/or a computer lab"*

Interestingly, only 40% valued *"online instruction"* in a credit recovery curriculum for migrant students. While the PASS curriculum offered through the NPC is primarily paper and pencil, discussion is underway on developing an online component to the existing national initiative.

Collaboration with other projects – The NPC has worked collaboratively with the two MEP Consortium Incentive Grants focused on math and on out-of school youth by developing products to supplement PASS offerings (e.g., a series of Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Exit Level Math Review Lessons, the Academic and Career Readiness Skills (ACReS) course designed develop or improve the critical thinking and life skills for migrant youth to be successful in a formal educational environment or advance in their careers). Lessons are written at a fourth grade reading level with consideration given to non-native English speakers.

Another product resulting from these collaborations is a series of health mini-lessons, *"For Your Health/Para tu salud"* for increasing the knowledge of migrant farmworkers through health education. Designed for teens, out-of-school youth, and adults, *"For Your Health/Para tu salud"* consists of bilingual instructional packets that include teaching plans, an introductory lesson, guided practice, targeted vocabulary, practice dialogues, and pre/post tests. The non-sequential mini-lesson format lends itself to the limited time and intermittent attendance of the students.

How do you obtain a PASS course? – The NPC is involved in the development of the courses, not their distribution. There are four Distribution Sites licensed to sell courses. Participating states also can access the course curriculum via a password protected website. Visit the PASS website at www.migrant.net/pass/

The development of high quality, standards-based curriculum remains a priority of the NPC in order to maintain and expand PASS as a viable credit accrual option. A revised/updated, two-semester World History course will be distributed shortly.
