

**2013-14 Program Review**  
**Best Practices Form**

**Instructions:** *Submit this form as a separate attachment with your completed Program Review.* Programs often do something particularly well; usually they have learned through assessment—sometimes trial and error—what solves a problem or makes their programs work so well. These are often called **Best Practices** and can help others. Please share the practices your program has found to be effective. The contact information lets others know whom to contact for more information. This part of Program Review is linked to the Student Success Strategic Goal: “Become an exemplary model of student success by developing and implementing best practices.” For examples of Best Practices visit the [Program Review Committee’s website](#).

Program/Department: **Automotive Technology/Engineering and Industrial Technology department**

Name of Chair/Director/Manager: Sean Caras Email Address: scaras@bakersfieldcollege.edu Phone: 395-4393

**Best Practice(s):**

From Vic Posey:

The focus of the Automotive Department as a whole is to equip students with the necessary knowledge and technical skills to successfully enter the workforce in the automotive industry or related fields. In which case, students will be capable of obtaining employment so that they can provide for themselves and/or their family. To that end, instructors go above and beyond to ensure that the curriculum is practical and current with the automotive industry standards. This continuous benchmark is achieved through the department advisory committee and through instructor training. The Automotive Department advisory committee is thriving with participants and has grown to be one of the largest on campus. Through the active participation of the advisory committee the Automotive Department remains connected to the industry it serves which in turn provides the opportunity for job placement for the students we serve. In addition to that the automotive instructors improve their own knowledge base through continuous education. By participating in industry technical training courses the automotive instructors are able to keep their finger on the pulse of changes in the automotive industry. By investing this extra time outside of the classroom instructors can then incorporate the knowledge gained from that training in their classroom which ultimately benefits the students. Input from the automotive advisory committee members coupled with instructors pursuing their own continuous education has proven to be effective in ensuring that the technical skills training in the automotive department remains practical and relevant for our students.

From George Canaday:

Best Practices in an automotive electrical class encompass a wide variety of teaching methods and tools. However, the learning process is a partner process which must involve both teacher and student equally. By that I mean that it must be an open process whereby the student and teacher are constantly exchanging ideas and information. If either partner is not relying on the other, then the whole process suffers. As a teacher my first goal is to keep this partnership alive and functional at all times by stepping back often to evaluate and assess myself and my students. Some of the things that have worked well in my classes follow:

- From the first day of class I try to clearly show my students that I have high expectations and set high standard for both of us. From my many years of experience in this field I try to create an atmosphere in the classroom and lab which they will encounter in the real world of automotive repair.
- My students are assigned real world jobs in the lab setting such as service manager, shop forman , safety officer, etc. In doing these jobs the students begin to assume responsibility and get a glimpse of what they will encounter when employed. They start to work as a team with the goal in mind of completing each task as a real job in which the must satisfy their customers.
- Their work, whether in the classroom or lab is constantly monitored and critiqued by myself and their fellow students. This helps them develop a pattern of completing their work knowing that it will be evaluated by others and that their performance will be important to their future.
- The curriculum in my class is broad based meaning that it comes from not only textbooks, but from sources such as NATEF tasks, ASE testing standards, Advisory Committee recommended curriculum suggestions and from many other sources I have found which work well from other automotive educational institutions and teachers.
- During classroom and lab activities I try to lead by example by instilling a strong sense of time management whether it be by completing classroom assignments or competently completing lab activities. By working together with students I try to engage them in finding faster methods to accomplish their tasks.
- Some of the method I have found to be of great help in accomplishing the above items are:
  1. Using computer based simulation problem solving programs during which I partner an accomplished student with one who is struggling. Here, both students seem to always gain much more since they again are assuming more responsibility by helping each other and striving to accomplish the task. I've found that this method keeps them much more engaged than a teacher who is only sharing information on a one-way path.
  2. During lab activities on real vehicles, the same partnering of students accomplishes the above goals with the added benefit of a competitive spirit between teams.
  3. Automotive electricity has traditionally been a difficult subject for most students and working technicians alike. I've found that by presenting materials in at least three ways; classroom presentation with lecture and power point, video presentation of the subject matter, classroom and lab assignments which reinforce with hands-on activities, that the students retention of the material is much greater.
  4. I place professional development as a top priority for myself in order to continually keep up with not only a quickly changing field, but in continually finding new ways to make my students more successful. I have attended as many training classes, seminars and conferences as possible. These provide me with not only the latest changes in the field, but more importantly with the opportunity to observe other instructor's method of presenting materials. I leave some classes and seminars amazed at the information presented, but even when they are not so good I have found and even look for something I can use. This may only be a presentation tool or method not seen before or a bit of new information, but I've found that I can almost always gain something by attending. It also gives me the chance to visit other colleges and training institutions to observe their labs and equipment and to meet and discuss common problems with other instructors. I have been fortunate in meeting and being on a first name basis with the authors of all of my textbooks who are very willing to share ideas and processes they have found useful in student success.
  5. Of course all of this comes at a cost of time, money or both. Through VTEA funding I have been able to maintain and improve a very well equipped classroom and lab with the latest in training aids and materials. This funding has also allowed me to attend the above mentioned conferences throughout the United States and Canada. ***The loss of this funding source will greatly reduce our ability to keep up with both professional development and the latest training aids and equipment.***