

Culminating Learning Project

1. TASKS 1 and 2: Engaging the workgroup and identifying the program component to target for program improvement

a. Briefly describe the composition of your program improvement workgroup.

Checklist:	Response:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I identified the number of staff on the workgroup.	The work group included six participants, two program coordinators, and four instructors. The 4 instructors included reading, writing, and math instructors. They teach in two different types of transition programs at two different locations. One location's program has all subjects taught by one instructor. The second location has subjects taught by three different instructors.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described the positions of the staff on the workgroup.	

b. List the program components that need attention that you identified from self-assessments, research review, and data analysis. Indicate the ONE program component that the workgroup selected to target in your pilot project.

Checklist:	Response:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed the needs identified by the self assessments.	Needs identified in self-assessment: The stakeholder assessment evaluation revealed the three top needs for our program. The areas that need to be addressed are Community Interaction and Recruitment, Retention and Support Services, and Program Operations and Administration.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed the needs identified by the research review.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed the needs identified by the data analysis.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot.	Needs identified in research review:



	<p>Needs identified in research review were Increasing Student Achievement for Basic Skills Students-Integrated Instruction and GED Credential to College: Patterns of Participation in Postsecondary Programs.</p> <p>Building Pathways to success for Low skill Adult Students</p> <p>Needs identified through data analysis:</p> <p>Data Analysis revealed we needed to increase retention and post testing of our Level 5 & 6 students. The program has failed to reach required EFL 6 completion for 2 years in a row. In addition, data revealed that we are not reaching our enrollment goals and that identifies that we need to work on recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Prioritized need or program component:</p> <p>Building Pathways to success for Low skill Adult Students</p>
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- c. Briefly describe the process used to select the targeted component, as well as the process used to identify the parts of the targeted program component that you want to keep and the parts that need new strategies.

Checklist:	Response:
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described the process the workgroup used to narrow the needs down to the one program component to be used in the pilot.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how we examined the current program component to identify:</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> what we are doing now that we want to keep, and</p>	<p>All program components that were identified through research, data, and self assessment as needs were reviewed with the group at the beginning of the session. Discussion was introduced by one of the teachers regarding the importance of students receiving the same successful basic instruction at all transition sites to ensure quality, continuity and success. Program coordinators commented that this was becoming an important discussion topic with our transition partners. Once the discussion was complete regarding this topic the group looked back over the needs identified by the program and found that one area of need identified was Building Pathways to success for Low skill Adult Students. Everyone in the group agreed we needed to strengthen the path for students</p>

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> what parts of the program component that need new strategies.</p>	<p>to move forward on their educational journey successfully. Once this was identified as the targeted component to strengthen we took a look at the basic structure of the two transition classes. Teachers explained their class structure, requirements, and procedures. Coordinators and teachers agreed the requirements needed to remain the same as they were established with the existing post secondary education partner. Students had to take and pass the Compass test to be eligible for credit bearing classes. Students need to meet the agreed required TABE test scores, ABE attendance and distance education requirements in order to receive teacher recommendation to retake the Compass test.</p> <p>The component of the program that needs to be restructured is class syllabi. The creation of a common syllabus is needed to assure all program participants are covering the same material during a transition class session no matter what site is attended. Up to this point all teachers created their own syllabus covering material they determined was needed to aid students in passing the Compass test.</p>
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2. **TASK 3: Setting a vision and goals**

Complete the following items:

- a. Vision of your program improvement project:

Program transition class retention will be working well when....

80% of enrolled students complete the course and pass the compass test.

Checklist:	Response:
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included the final vision statement.</p>	<p>Program transition class completion will be improved when 80% of enrolled students complete the course and retake the compass test.</p> <p>Group participants individually brainstormed what it means to be successful in the ABE transition class. Then individuals shared their responses with the group. Ideas such as good completion scores, student enthusiasm, participation in class, and</p>



	<p>attendance. Overall, the common response was consistency in attendance. Everyone felt academic improvement happened when the student attended regularly and completed the class. Looking over past data, this has been an ongoing problem as 30% to 40% of students tend to fade from attending as the class session moves toward the end. Two members gave the suggestion that improvement would be seen if 80% of the enrolled students would complete the class. Every member of the group agreed. One coordinator wrote a vision statement, discussion took place regarding changes, the changes were made and the group had a complete vision statement.</p>
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b. Goals (When we are finished, we will have achieved the following...)

Checklist:	Response:
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included that list</p>	<p>When we are finished, we will have achieved the following...</p> <p>80% of students enrolled in the ABLE transition class will complete all the transition class requirements and post test.</p> <p>80% of the students who complete the class will retake the Compass test.</p> <p>80% of students taking the Compass will pass the test and move on to post secondary training or education.</p> <p>Group members all agreed the 50 to 60 percent completion rate was not what we wanted from our transition class participants. We discussed setting the goal for 100% completion but decided that 100% was what we wanted but did not match the data the state had provided for overall transition completion. We did not want to set ourselves up for failure and as result looked at more realistic percentages for our overall achievements. The teachers felt 75% of students should complete and the coordinators felt 80%to 85% should complete. After discussing the numbers we agreed on 80% representing successful achievement of completion. This was understood to mean that 80% of students who enrolled in our transition class would meet all the class requirements and retake the compass test. In addition, it was understood that 80% of students who completed would enroll in some type of post secondary education or</p>

	training program. We believe that if students follow the common syllabus and complete the transition class they will be prepared to attend entry level courses in a post secondary program.
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- c. Evaluation criteria – what evidence will you collect to determine if you meet your goals? Identify each of the end user groups and the evidence each end user group identified as evidence they would need to convince them to use the new strategy.

End User	Evidence to Collect
Teachers	Course enrollment and completion data. Post secondary enrollment data.
Coordinators	Student data and follow up survey or data showing completion and enrollment in post secondary education.
Post Secondary institution Partner	Institution Compass Retake data.

Checklist:

- I identified each of the end users (e.g., teachers, tutors, aides, managers) who will be using the new strategies.
- I solicited from each group the evidence they would need to convince them the new strategy worked, and I included each piece of evidence identified.

4. Gather and select promising practices

Briefly describe where you looked for models or strategies that would address your targeted component.

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I identified all of the sources we explored to find models and strategies that address our program improvement component.	Building Pathways for adult students is a hot topic currently in ABLÉ programs. I contacted Warren county ABLÉ, Butler Tech ABLÉ to research the models they used in their transitions classrooms. In addition, I met with partners at Ohio Means Jobs Butler County and Miami University to look at what strategies they used to aid adults in transitioning into training or post-secondary education. Research documents were found at the National Career Pathway Network and the National College Transition Network. Readings that were very helpful were Using Syllabi in Transitional Classes and More Curriculum Structure, A Response to Turbulence. All the sources presented great examples that were currently in use in adult programs. Choosing a model and modifying it to fit our needs became evident after looking at all the strategies.

Briefly describe the strategy, procedure, or practice that the workgroup selected to pilot. Include a description of any adaptations that were made to make the strategy “fit” your program.

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of the new strategies selected to Xpilot test.	The work group took a look at the summaries of all the models and strategies that were researched. We chose to use the model looked at through the National College Transition Network and modify it to suit our needs. We thought it had the basic structure of what we were trying to accomplish in our transition class. The model included a syllabus that provided greater clarity of student expectations and class content to be covered. Our intention was to develop a tool that would be helpful to the student and the instructor. Class requirements, content to be covered, homework and attendance policies, and distance learning requirements were all to be included in the pilot to see if learner completion percentages could be improved. The course content needed to be adapted as our requirements were unique to each subject that was being taught. Another adaption was made regarding student responsibilities. We strengthened this area of the syllabus as our program goal was to increase transition percentages and many requirements are in place prior to transitioning. We had to build in learner expectations for distance learning that is required for all of our transition learners for increase student hour requirements. The majority of adaptations that were made were surrounding program specifics. The overall concept, purpose and outline were kept intact.
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and the rationale for those adaptations.	

5. Develop a pilot testing plan

Describe the process that was used to select the pilot sites - what characteristics did you consider in the selection process?

Checklist	Response
<p>I included a description of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u> X </u> who was involved in selecting the pilots 2. <u> X </u> the criteria and rationale we used for selecting the pilots. 	<p>As the coordinator of our program and lead of our workgroup, I was the one who chose the pilot site that would be used for the new transition syllabi model to be implemented. The site that was used had students working at the same level in the classes. The levels were identified by COMPASS test scores and TABE scores. The instructors at the site were all seasoned staff members with 5-7 years of teaching experience in adult education in a transition classroom. Two thirds of the staff also had background knowledge in developmental educational courses at the college as they teach for both the college and our ABE program. Finally, the instructors had some flexible time to work on the project and could be compensated for their time with pay. I felt all of these strengths would provide the strongest site for the pilot to be implemented and have the possibility for success.</p>

What type of training was necessary for the pilot sites? Describe how this was provided.

Checklist	Response
<p>I included a description of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u> X </u> the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed 2. <u> X </u> who delivered the training 	<p>I met with the site teachers to discuss the pilot details and provide the training to prepare the pilot site. As a team we decided that we needed to look at the content that needed to be covered in order for students to transition, determine materials to be used and become familiar with the materials, needs such as technology, develop a pilot syllabus, determine a lead person as contact, and schedule check in dates to look at progress. Timelines were set for draft material to be looked at and changes made and point people were determined to contact regarding progress. The trainings to get the pilots ready were done in 3 sessions with me as the trainer. Instructors provided information regarding what skills were needed in order to complete the class successfully. We looked at materials and chose what was going to be used to cover content needs. Sample syllabi were looked at and pieces to include in our new syllabus were determined. A teacher volunteered to draft a syllabus to share with the group. After three sessions the staff felt we had a strong syllabus that could be used to assure success in the transition class.</p>

Complete the chart outlining your interim benchmarks, activities, timeline, and responsible parties for planning, implementing, and evaluating your pilot project.

Interim Benchmarks	Activities	Completion Date	Lead Person Responsible for the Activity
Planning	Establishing workgroup	9/13	coordinator
	Identify component needs and prioritizing	9/13	coordinator
	Gathering model and strategies	11/13	Coordinator/ lead teacher
	Choosing a pilot site and developing model to use	12/13	coordinator
Implementing	Training and support established	1/14	Coordinator/ lead teacher
	Pilot begins	1/14	Lead teacher
	Progress check in	2/14	coordinator
	Midterm testing evaluation of student progress and pilot goals	2/14	Lead teacher
	Final student testing and referrals for Compass Testing made	3/14	Lead teacher
Evaluating	Class enrollment/ Class completion data	3/14	coordinator
	Gather COMPASS retest data	3/14	coordinator
	Meet with work group to discuss results and restructuring of model	3/14	coordinator
	Plan for changes and look at implementation timeline beyond the pilot	4/14	coordinator

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Teacher salary for meetings and planning	\$975
Materials (text books, printing costs,	\$800

6. Select and prepare the pilot sites

Briefly describe the process you used to prepare the pilot sites to implement the new strategy or procedure.

Checklist	Response
<p>I included a description of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial meetings I had with pilot sites to explain their roles and responsibilities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> consultants or other staff used as a resource to support the pilot staff <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> any incentives you provided to pilot staff to encourage and/or reward their participation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> how you made sure that pilot staff knew the evaluation criteria and data they would need to collect to determine impact. 	<p>I met with the pilot group in December for the first time to establish goals and processes of implementing a common syllabus. We discussed what role they would each have in the pilot process. The lead instructor at the site would be the lead for the pilot at the site. The other instructors would report information and progress to her for record keeping. One instructor was willing to be the person to develop a draft syllabi after our group discussion surrounding the pieces we need to have included. The staff Technology Point Person was used as a resource to support technology issues or development for the pilot site and staff. Miami University Developmental Educational professors served as a source for providing syllabi for courses that would follow our ABLE transition classes at the university. Miami mentors were used to follow up with students who encountered barriers during the pilot. As the lead for this pilot, I was a both a resource and support for all members involved in the pilot.</p> <p>Incentives came in the form of monetary compensation for time spent on developing and implementing the pilot. In addition, teachers were recognized at our monthly staff meetings and will be given a small token of appreciation at our recognition program this spring. Names of all instructors and workgroup members accompanied by a brief summary of the pilot was shared with our local board of education so their dedication to improving our ABLE program could be recognized.</p> <p>The data that was determined would help us determine success was information staff currently provided for required record keeping. We reviewed in our pilot meeting what data would be needed and the timeline that would be in place for the collection of this data each time we met. Everyone involved was present at these meetings and shared in gathering the information needed. I sent our reminder emails to the pilot staff when the time grew near to submit needed data. Our progress check-in meetings also served as a time to remind staff what we were using as evaluation data to determine success.</p>

7. Conduct the pilot, measure the impact, and develop/fine tune PD and resources

Briefly describe the results of your pilot project based on your evaluation criteria for each end user group.

Checklist	Response
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="203 600 544 699">1. <u> X </u> I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot. <li data-bbox="203 726 544 825">2. <u> X </u> I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria. 	<p data-bbox="581 600 1412 999">The pilot success was set to be considered a success when 80% of enrolled students completed the class, retook the Compass test, and enrolled in some type of post-secondary education. The teachers tracked attendance throughout the pilot. At the beginning of the pilot 28 students enrolled in the class. At our first check-in meeting the enrollment had dropped by 4 students giving us an 85% retention. At our midterm check-in the enrollment had dropped to 22 students attending giving us a retention rate of 78%. Students that had left were contacted by staff, mentors, and college faculty to help students overcome barriers and to encourage them to return. At the end of the pilot, we had 18 students who had met the requirements for completing the test. This data came from our program attendance records and our state reporting program that tracks student attendance.</p> <p data-bbox="581 1003 1406 1213">Out of those 18 students who completed the class all were referred to retake the COMPASS test in order to enroll in post- secondary classes. At our last meeting the teachers had recorded from contacting the university testing office only 10 of those 18 had taken the COMPASS and 2 more had scheduled their test. The 6 that had not scheduled or tested were contacted by our staff and the university staff to encourage them to retest.</p> <p data-bbox="581 1218 1406 1465">Our post-secondary partners keep a spreadsheet of all students that take the COMPASS and shared that documented information with our ABLE program to help us determine how many students had retaken the COMPASS at the end of our pilot. Our final count was 16 out of the original 28 students that started. That was only 57% of our original group. We did not meet our goal of 80% of students to retake the COMPASS. The 16 that id retake the test passed and enrolled in college classes for the next semester.</p> <p data-bbox="581 1497 1386 1619">Our final findings were 68% completed the course, 57% retook the COMPASS test and 57% enrolled in post-secondary classes. We were a little disappointed that we did not reach our 80% goal but still felt the data showed improvement over previous data class completion data.</p>

What changes, if any, would you make before you implement the new strategy program-wide?

Checklist	Response
3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.	A reflection meeting was held to look over the process and results that took place with this pilot. Everyone was a little disappointed we did not meet our initial goal of 80% success. However, we still felt it was a success and needed to be reworked and tried again prior to implementing program wide. Some changes we identified were a simplified syllabus. Many students said it was too much information all at once for them to remember and understand. We are considering breaking the syllabus up into two parts and only covering one part at the beginning of the session and then covering the second part after midterm. We thought we could add some type of reward to strengthen the attendance and homework completion. In addition, we believe adding a mentor name and their contact information might help students in overcoming the barriers they encounter that keeps them from success. The content area was strong and will remain unchanged.

Final Reflection

Briefly describe what you learned from this program improvement project that will help you in future work.

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included an overview of what I learned from this project.	The most important thing I learned from this project is the importance of change being a process instead of just being a decision. The process of piloting a change provided minimal risks to the program. It provided information before implementing program wide changes. It helped make the decision if the changes were appropriate and of value. Resources were determined and tested and cost projections were helpful in determining future costs of program implementation. The practice of looking at data to determine success and restructuring program components gave support to decisions that have to be made. The project involved many of the staff and it became a program decision to change instead of just my decision. The staff were interested and wanted to follow the progress. Overall, I guess the Trident proves true to be a valuable process in implementing change and the process we can use to effectively involve the program in the change process.