







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:
 I identified the number of staff on the workgroup.	<p>The workgroup used to identify the program component to target for improvement was smaller than I would have liked due to a change this year in Ohio’s Professional Development system.</p>
 I described the positions of the staff on the workgroup.	<p>This is the first year Ohio is implementing the Program Improvement Consultation Plan (PIC-P) statewide. LEA participants were encouraged to combine the activity identified in the PIC-P with the Culminating project for LEA.</p> <p>As a result, the group of people involved in the formal selection of our PIC-P/LEA topic was smaller than I would have liked. Four staff members actively participated in the component selection.</p> <p>Donna Albanese: State Program Manager</p> <p>Connie Shriver: Mid-East ABE Coordinator</p> <p>Mary Colley: Data Manager</p> <p>April Amspaugh: Instructional Aid</p>

- 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:
 I listed the needs identified by the self-assessments.	Needs identified in self-assessment:
 I listed the needs identified by the research review.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruiting students 2. Retaining Students 3. Providing access to technology in all classrooms
 I listed the needs identified by the data analysis.	Needs identified in research review:
 I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing Student Achievement for Basic Skills Students-Integrated Instruction 2. The Classroom Dynamics Study 3. A Contextualized Approach to Curriculum and Instruction
	Needs identified through data analysis:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have a high percentage of students who attend orientation but do not stay 12 hours to become enrolled. 2. We need to continue to work on attaining level gains for all students. 3. We need to work harder to achieve the enrollment target set for our program.

	<p>Prioritized need or program component:</p> <p>To increase student recruitment and retention by redesigning the program’s intake (orientation) process.</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> 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> I described how we examined the current program component to identify:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> what we are doing now that we want to keep, and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"> what parts of the program component that need new strategies.</p>	<p>My program was in the process of reviewing our orientation procedure when the previous coordinator unexpectedly left. This component was previously identified as an area of improvement. Additionally, orientation re-design was again identified as an area needing improvement during several informal conversations with staff over the past year, including during the previous workgroup activities conducted through the LEA process.</p> <p>The number of students who are attending orientation but not continuing on to receive 12 hours is increasing over time. 19% did not become enrolled in FY 11, 21% did not enroll in FY12, and the number rises to 30% for FY 13.</p> <p>Again, I worked with my workgroup to identify orientation as the component to be used in the pilot because it was what we decided to use in the PIC-P process with input from my program manager.</p>

	<p>I created a survey to send out to all staff in order to get feedback on things that were working well with orientation and things that we need revamp.</p> <p>Staff indicated that there are some things we do well in orientation and should keep, including: Ensuring all students have an initial TABE test, getting to know students and make them feel welcome, and informing students about the ABLE program and how it works, including what we expect from them.</p> <p>There is of course, also room for improvement. Our orientation needs to include more interaction between and among students themselves. We need to update our presentation of the paperwork required, and consider not even filling out all paperwork until they show up for class to reduce the amount of time they spend and the amount of time our program spends processing paperwork for people who never return. We also need to include information on student success: active learning, time management, being prepared for class, planning for homework, etc. in addition to the things we already do to help with their learning, like Learning Styles Inventory and Powerpath.</p>
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2. TASK 3: Setting a vision and goals

Complete the following items:

- a. Vision of your program improvement project:



_____Orientation_____ will be working well when....

(Fill in the program component you are working on)



Checklist:

Response:



<p> I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.</p>	<p>The overwhelming answer to this question in the survey distributed to all staff confirmed what my thinking was:</p>
<p> I included the final vision statement.</p>	<p>Orientation will be working well when students attend a class with the motivation and confidence to attain their academic goal.</p>

b. Goals (When we are finished, we will have achieved the following...)

Checklist:	Response:
<p> I described how I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements</p>	<p>This question was addressed in the survey to all staff. Answers include:</p>
<p> I included that list</p>	<p>Higher enrollment</p> <p>Higher student retention</p> <p>Higher student success rates</p> <p>Students will be more-goal oriented</p> <p>Students will have positive attitudes and a good understanding of the program.</p> <p>We will have a stronger program and a better program review.</p> <p>We will have a well-designed orientation that all staff are comfortable implementing.</p>

- 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
Students	Students will have a positive attitude to staying with ABLE until their academic goals are met. The more successful are current students are; the more convinced our future students will be in our procedure.
Staff	Staff will be convinced to use the new strategy when they can see it is resulting in higher enrollment and longer student persistence. Information on the orientation process used by other programs, as well as the results they have observed from implementing changes will also help. If staff is involved in creating the new strategy, they will feel ownership and be excited to implement it.
Local and State Administrators	The percentage of students who do not persist for 12 hours begins to decrease and continues to decrease.

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. <u>X</u> I identified all of the sources we explored to find models and strategies that address our program improvement component.	Many sources were used when gathering best practices, models and strategies to use in re-designing our orientation process. I began compiling a list of everything I would ideally like to have included in the process. Many of these ideas came from conversations with colleagues during breaks at various state meetings or in the course of discussing the project. The Fall Administrator’s Summit provided a compilation of much of the research surrounding orientation best practices. Other information was gathered from the Powerpath Delivery Re-design presentation. Research provided through Leadership Excellence Academy was also included as a list began to take shape of what we wanted our new process to look like.

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. <u>X</u> I included a description of the new strategies selected to pilot test.	In the end, we ended up with an orientation agenda that had a little bit of information from everywhere, and by the time I was done it was impossible to identify what came from where. We can categorize the changes made in to two areas: content and delivery.
2. <u>X</u> I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and the rationale for those adaptations.	With the orientation content, I knew there were some things that I absolutely wanted included. I wanted to incorporate a group activity as an ice breaker to get students talking with each other and to also provide a springboard for planned discussions. This activity allows the instructor to cover the topics of student persistence, class attendance policies and how to get started again if you miss too many classes within an 8-week session. Transitions are also discussed here by explaining that if students use ABE to increase basic skills, they will be better prepared for placement tests and college-level work when entering post-secondary. We knew we wanted to provide a syllabus as a tool so that students and instructors can gauge what has been learned, and we would assign homework due on the second day of orientation to set the expectation that work will be required outside of class. I wanted to include a career assessment and a better explanation to facilitate the understanding of learning styles. I also wanted to build in time to review the portfolio process and conduct individual meetings with students to review initial assessment results. Regarding the delivery of our orientation, I struggled with reconciling all of the things best practices indicated we should do with the state policy

	<p>that seemed to prevent me from incorporating those best practices. My research indicated students get off to a better start when the orientation is held at the same time, on the same day, and in the same classroom they will eventually attend. Research says the class instructor should conduct the orientation in order to begin rapport building from day one. Research also indicates involving students who are continuing in class can serve as peer mentors for new students and make the process less intimidating to them. State policy said that orientation had to be “at a separate time” from instruction, and the initial response from my state program manager to including continuing students was unfavorable.</p> <p>When I reviewed all of this research with my state program manager as a part of the PIC-P check in, she told me to proceed with my plan and not worry about what the policy says for now.</p> <p>As we proceeded in thinking through the process, it became evident that the best way to make this plan work was to move to managed enrollment. So in addition to re-designing our intake process, we are also shifting to managed enrollment. I hadn’t planned on tackling both, but that’s just how it worked out. We have split our year into six 8 week sessions, with new students entering only during the first week of a session. And the orientation is held during regular class time as suggested by best-practices.</p>
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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>Choosing the pilot sites was easy. All of this information was presented to staff at a full staff meeting on 11/25. I was nervous because I understood that what I was proposing to my staff was a complete change in the way we deliver our program. Most of my staff have been in ABLE longer than I have, but I soon found when I explained the reasons why I wanted to make the shifts, most staff were very receptive to the changes. After discussing the new process, I had several staff members eager to implement the changes. I really didn’t use any other rationale other than who was willing to try it. Because my service area is geographically large, it is impossible to compare apples to apples at any of them.</p> <p>The orientation process was implemented by Scott Meredith at the Zane State Cambridge location, Stacey Jones at Belmont College and also in Woodsfield, and Julie Stoffel in Marietta.</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>While we were drastically changing the way we all thought about orientation, the truth is there wasn't a drastic change to the tasks we did to complete the process. Registration paperwork, release forms, TABE testing, many of the forms stayed the same.</p> <p>The 11/25 staff meeting was used to provide training on the new pieces. I modeled the Icebreaker Activity by slightly revising the questions from the student version. As staff entered, they all received a worksheet, and they were asked to pair up with someone they did not typically work with. They were asked to interview each other by asking the questions on the worksheet. It was perfect! They all started out by simply asking the questions, but in a very short time animated conversations were springing up everywhere about program policy, GED 2014, and other topics of interest. It certainly validated my thinking that I was on the right track.</p> <p>I brought the group back together, and asked for volunteers to share thoughts on each of the questions. The whole thing was designed to help me present additional information. As we went through, I explained to staff this would be the same process they would use with students. I modeled a specific example of asking a question, getting an answer, and then guiding the discussion into the topic I wanted to discuss.</p> <p>I reviewed some other resources and I asked staff if they thought it would work. Many were eager to try it out, and these were the instructors who piloted the process.</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	Compile Evidence gathered to present to all staff to create an outline of revised orientation content and process.	11/22/13	Connie Shriver with staff workgroup from Administrator Summit.
Implementing	Present draft outline of new orientation content and process to all staff.	11/25/13	Connie Shriver
	Pilot new orientation content and process.	January thru April	Scott Meredith, Stacey Jones, Julie Stoffel
	Shift all sites to the new intake content and process.	July 2014	All Staff
Evaluating	Revise and edit outline of orientation content and processes discussed in the 11/25 staff meeting.	1/17/14	Connie Shriver
	Evaluate data to gauge student persistence levels.	Ongoing	Connie Shriver with all staff
	Evaluate student feedback of the process.	Ongoing	Connie Shriver with all staff

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Staff Meeting Payroll	\$1,053.82
Mileage	\$407.59

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>The initial meeting with the pilot sites was conducted at the general staff meeting on 11/25. Because this is a change I am committed to implementing program-wide, I wanted to include everyone in the conversation, though I knew not all instructors would be willing to conduct the pilot.</p> <p>Since the pilot sites were already conducting orientation, it wasn't necessary to explain their roles and responsibilities: they hadn't changed. Only one of the pilot instructors had participation in PDN activities, so she did have the benefit of the information presented there to support the reasons for the shift. No other consultants were used as a resource to support staff at this time. We will definitely need to provide continued support as we go to scale with the project.</p> <p>There was no formal incentive, though the staff members who adopted this model inherently understood the benefit to their students, which is why they were eager to adjust their delivery.</p> <p>The overall measure of improvement was to increase the number of students who attended for at least 12 hours. 19% of students did not become enrolled in FY 11, 21% did not enroll in FY12, and the number rises to 30% for FY 13. Staff knew the goal was to increase persistence. There was no additional reporting necessary for staff to do, as this data could be extracted from the normal ABLELink data reported.</p> <p>All staff who piloted the procedure were also interested in anecdotal data from students, and they made a point to gather informal data along the way. This information reinforced the value of the shift to the pilot staff members.</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
<p>1. <u>X</u> I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot.</p> <p>2. <u>X</u> I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>It's too early to see a real shift in the numbers of students staying for more than 12 hours. We didn't really implement the new procedure until January 2014, and it is now only April. Staff has had two intake sessions with the revised orientation. We are watching the numbers, but it is difficult to see major improvements at this time.</p> <p>Student feedback, however, has been extremely positive. Students like the new process, they feel more involved, and staff is realizing that having continuing students working with new students is actually taking some of the weight off their own shoulders in acclimating students to the class.</p> <p>Moreover, pilot staff are also seeing increased cohesiveness in classrooms rather than the old independent study model. It is obvious to them that creating learning communities is important for the student and provides an additional support to helping the student achieve their goals.</p>

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

Checklist	Response
<p>3. <u>X</u> I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.</p>	<p>I don't feel we need to do much to change the process that we implemented. Staff did a great job of adapting the research-based concepts to our locations and our delivery model. But it is a major change for staff, and it will take a little time before all are comfortable with the level of interaction and transparency needed to communicate with students.</p> <p>It has only been recently that my staff have been given detailed data about their own performance to guide their instruction. They are now getting a better sense of how their individual classroom data impacts our overall program. The more they become familiar with that, the more they will be comfortable in sharing the appropriate information with students in order to motivate everyone to succeed.</p> <p>Before implementing program wide, it will be necessary to bring the staff together again with the intention of devoting specific time to the discussion of implementing this new process in conjunction with a managed enrollment model. Pilot staff and I will answer questions and provide direction for instructors just beginning the new process. Continued follow up will be provided until the process becomes as natural as the "old Way" of doing orientation.</p>

Final Reflection

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

Checklist	Response
<p>1. <u>X</u> I included an overview of what I learned from this project.</p>	<p>This program improvement project has been incredibly helpful. We have been provided a step-by-step road map to follow to improve each and every aspect of an ABE program. My intention is to follow this process every year to make continuous improvement.</p> <p>I have learned that if you find out what stakeholders are thinking, you can get a real sense of what's working well and what isn't. Of course we are very data driven in ABE, and together with the state's PIC-P process, the data will likely drive the priority of upcoming projects.</p> <p>But by sharing relevant program data and best practices on topics staff already know we need to address, we create an end result that staff buy into because they have been a part of the process. They do not argue (as much) with what they help to create.</p> <p>As we plan for next year, it is my intention to establish due dates for following the steps of the trident. While we have flexibility in meeting our self-imposed deadlines, the dates will also serve as a reminder to keep on task with continuous program improvement.</p> <p>I feel a lot smarter about this process now. When I learn a new concept, I have to see the process through to the end once in order to really see how the pieces and parts fit together to form the big picture. The past two years I have been focusing on the pieces and parts of this process to ensure I completed assignments and met deadlines.</p> <p>Now that I have completed the process, I have a better appreciation for each of the steps along the way. I have a tendency to make things harder than they really are, and as I reflect back on the entire process I can identify areas in which I did that.</p> <p>I want to do a better job of following the LEA process and truly utilizing all the resources at my disposal. The many resources we have received truly walk us through it all step by step, breaking large tasks into small tasks. Going forward, I know to take the time to utilize these resources to the fullest to make the process easier in the long run.</p>