Culminating Learning Project

1. Engage the workgroup

Briefly describe the composition of your program improvement workgroup.

Checklist	Response
1. __X__ I identified the number of staff on the workgroup. 2. _X___ I described the positions of the staff on the workgroup	Significant changes have occurred with the program since beginning this project. Four staff members from the original team have either resigned or reduced their level of participation in the day-to-day operations of the program. In addition, the program has expanded to add a site in a neighboring county, adding a total of six new staff members to the two continuing staff. The majority of the new staff were hired since August 15, 2013, and are not included in the work group at this time. It is my intention to invite any who wish to participate to join the group. That addition site is included in the project, so it is important the staff understand the reasoning behind our efforts. Two returning staff and one new staff have agreed to be members of the workgroup. All are instructors. Additionally, the state program manager and PDN staff will be involved providing guidance and professional development for the program staff, as the project moves forward.

2. Identify the program component to target for program improvement

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

1. _X___ I listed the needs identified by the self assessments.
 	
2. __X__ I listed the needs identified by the research review.
 	
3. _X___ I listed the needs identified by the data analysis.
 	
4. _X___ I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot.
	Needs identified in self-assessment:
	
	1. I use curricula and a variety of resources that blend content area instruction and real life application. (Standard 2)
	
	2. I use a variety of instructional methods and materials, including technology, to enhance student learning and address varied learning styles. (Standard 4)
	
	3. I incorporate the use of technology into instruction to enhance student learning and student-conducted research.
	
	Needs identified in research review:
	
	    1. Increasing Student Achievement for Basic Skills Students using Integrated Instruction.
	
	    2. A Contextualized Approach to Curriculum and Instruction.
	
	    3. Classroom Dynamics.
	
	Needs identified through data analysis:
	
	1. Level completion for levels 2 and 3 are difficult to meet.
	
	2. Level 2, 3 students attendance is inconsistent.
	
	3. More than 50 % students at level 2 stop out.
	
	Prioritized need or program component:
	
	During the past several years, program staff recognized the difficulty in meeting EFL targets. Initial efforts to meet those targets included specific attention to post-testing and personal contact with 'non-attending' students. These efforts helped, and

	the program continued to target level completion by revising curriculum, adding technology components to learning, adding hands on activities to lessons, and adding best practice teaching strategies including direct instruction to all lessons. These were all effective for the students who attended and participated on a regular basis. However, attendance continued to be inconsistent. With curriculum, learning activities, and instructional strategies in place to meet student needs, enhancing the likelihood for regular attendance seems to be the next step. The move to managed enrollment should help ensure consistent participation in specific classes. As the students at the lower levels make progress, they may find the enthusiasm to persevere to meet their academic goals.

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
1. _x__ I described the process the workgroup used to narrow the needs down to the one program component to be used in the pilot. I described how we examined the current program component to identify: 2. _x_ what we are doing now that we want to keep, and 3. _x_ what parts of the program component	The group had the opportunity to review program desk reviews for the last 3 years. Level completion data for 2013 was also reviewed, as well as attendance data. This was an exercise that reinforced the need for the past efforts. Working to improve the level completions has been a constant effort for the past few years. The work group listed all the action steps that had been tried in the past, discussed the effectiveness of each, and determined which to continue. The work group chose to continue to use the revised curriculum, hands on activities, direct instruction, and cooperative learning activities that have been developed. The work group also decided to continue telephone contact with absent students. The discussion evolved to the conclusion that inconsistent attendance is still a significant factor for students to make academic progress and to deliver post-tests. Classes with direct

that need new strategies.	instruction are offered on a regular basis; students who attend regularly make progress. The grant requirement to add some managed enrollment classes contributed to the decision to move to a managed enrollment model. Our challenge now is to determine the ideal number of weeks, days per week, and hours per day to offer specific direct instruction classes in order to meet student needs and facilitate level completions through increased attendance and quality instruction. The group was very concerned about making such a huge change while recognizing there may be an increase in student enrollment due to the changes in the GED test. During those discussions, the group realized this will be a year to explore, experiment, research, survey, and test the plan, in order to determine ideal session length, duration, and location. A plan has been put in place. It was decided to move one site to managed enrollment, offering direct instruction at multiple levels for both math and language. It was also decided to maintain an open classroom at a second site in the evenings to work with fast track students. When the Pickaway site was added, the decision was made to offer both morning and evening classes as managed enrollment following the same model and offer an open situation in the afternoons for specific transitions students. This was discussed with prospective instructors during the hiring process.

3. Set a vision and goals

Vision: **Pickaway and Ross Counties' ABLE programs' class schedules** will be working well when students complete EFL levels and reach academic goals by attending each scheduled session of quality instruction with classes designed to meet student needs regarding EFL, daily duration, frequency of meetings, and duration of class.

(Fill in the program component you are working on)

Checklist	Response
1. _X__ I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement. 2. X_ I included the final vision statement.	The group was asked to brainstorm ideas for a vision statement for the managed enrollment project. Using ideas generated during the brainstorm, individuals were asked to write a vision statement. Each statement was read, and common concepts were noted. The group then worked together to formulate a shared vision statement.

Goals: When we are finished, we will have achieved the following…

Checklist	Response
1. __X__ I described how I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements 2. __X__ I included that list	Each group member was asked to reflect and write a statement describing the problem to be solved. They were asked to list the evidence/ criteria that convinced them there was a problem. Finally, they listed the evidence/criteria they want to see. Will managed enrollment result in higher per cent of students completing levels? Will managed enrollment result in more students attending consistently? How many weeks should each class last? How many days per week are ideal for classes to meet? How long should each daily session last?

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
Instructor, aide, manager	Pre- and post-test data for each student enrolled in specific classes
Instructor, aide, manager	Individual student attendance data for specific classes
Instructor, aide, manager	Individual student attendance data for additional study sessions
Student	EFL completion data per class, attendance data per student per class
Instructor, aide, manager, student	Survey student opinion Beginning Day and Last Day of class, asking preference for session length, frequency, duration.
Checklist	

1. _X_ I identified each of the end users (e.g., teachers, tutors, aides, managers) who will be using the new strategies.

2. __X__ 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
3. X I identified all of the sources we explored to find models and strategies that address our program improvement component.	The program moved to a managed-enrollment class structure. The project plan was to consider a schedule for orientations, classes, time of day, days of weeks, hours per day. Students were surveyed both prior to the beginning of the project and during the project. The data gathered from the student's recommendations were used to develop an initial model schedule. During the course of the project, students and staff were asked to comment on various components. Information from the ABLE guiding grant documents and NRS assessment recommendations were also considered.

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. X I included a description of the new strategies selected to pilot test. 2. X I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and the rationale for those adaptations.	The program decided to move to a managed enrollment format for some site. The orientation schedule and procedures were revised. Orientation was scheduled to occur prior to the beginning of each twelve- week class session. The schedule of classes was also determined. Leveled classes for various subjects were offered 2 hours per day, 2 days per week, plus independent study hall time. One site used a Monday/Wednesday (math) and Tuesday/Thursday (language arts) schedule. Another site used Monday/Tuesday (math) and Wednesday/Thursday (language arts). Both subjects areas included leveled classes , designed to meet the needs of students in levels 2 -3 and levels 4 – 6. Students were required to attend when assigned classes were offered. Three absences resulted in dismissal from the class. Adaptations during the year were made to address the need for additional students at a new site. Orientation was held monthly in an effort to attract additional students. Adaptations were made during the second 'term' to address the weather-related closures of January and February. Orientation had to be rescheduled. The closures also impacted the class schedules. One site maintained the Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday schedule due to the availability of the instructor. Another site chose to offer math every day for half the time available, followed by language. This worked because the students chose to come every day and were a small cohesive group. The instructors adjusted the curriculum to meet any differentiation needed. Now in the third 'term', the original class schedule is in force and meeting our needs.

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
I included a description of: 4. X who was involved in selecting the pilots 5. X the criteria and rationale we used for selecting the pilots.	In addition to the program coordinator, all instructors from each site were involved in the discussions. It was decided to maintain one site following the traditional class model for those students who were considered 'fast track'. This was done to help with the demand prior to the expiration of the GED test in December. Two sites were selected to move to managed enrollment. These were the primary sites with daytime scheduling when most students attended. Additionally, special interest classes for WorkKeys Remediation were also designated to be managed enrollment.

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

Checklist	Response
I included a description of: 1. X the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed 2. X who delivered the training	The training required for this project was delivered by myself, as the coordinator and instructional leader. Assistance was provided by two instructors who attended the Fall Teacher Academy. The training was focused on program curriculum, teaching strategies and learning activities. The goal of the training was to familiarize new instructors with the curriculum that had been developed during the past year. A high priority was to use explicit instruction to deliver content that was contextualized to meet student interests and needs. Other research-based teaching strategies and learning activities were modeled: use of math manipulatives to explore concepts, use of graphic organizers, use of rubrics, incorporating technology and the interactive projector, etc.

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	Revise Orientation procedures and schedule	August 30, 2013	Karla Hanson
	Devise class daily and year schedule	August 30, 2013	Marie Barada
	Revise documentation forms	September 15, 2013	Laura Evans, Marie Barada
Implementing	Orientation delivery, initial assessments	Monthly	Karla Hanson, Peggy Chester, Brenda McMahon
	Deliver curriculum using lesson plans, explicit instruction, hands on activities and technology	On-going	Karla Hanson, Peggy Chester, Brenda McMahon, Cindy Daniels
	Closely track student attendance, maintain communication with absent students	On-going	Karla Hanson, Peggy Chester, Brenda McMahon, Cindy Daniels
Evaluating	Administer student surveys	12/12/2013 3/13/2014	Karla Hanson, Peggy Chester, Brenda McMahon, Cindy Daniels
	Closely track student attendance.	12/12/2013 3/13/2014	Marie Barada
	Pre and Post-test results	12/12/2013 3/13/2014	Marie Barada, Karla Hanson, Peggy Chester, Brenda McMahon, Cindy Daniels

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Instructor Salaries (**This is not an addition to the former enrollment/class structure.**)	$39,835.00
Materials for hands on activities	$135.00
Admission fee (field trip)	$ 20.00
Please note: Instructional materials, projector, and materials for hands on activities has been an on-going focus for the past few years as curriculum has been revised. Very little 'new' items were purchased during this implementation.	

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
I included a description of: 1. X _ initial meetings I had with pilot sites to explain their roles and responsibilities 2. X consultants or other staff used as a resource to support the pilot staff 3. X any incentives you provided to pilot staff to encourage and/or reward their participation 4. X how you made sure that pilot staff knew the evaluation criteria and data they would need to collect to determine impact.	The discussion of roles and responsibilities took place initially during the decision-making stage of the project. With such a small staff, the instructors implementing the project were the same people in the work group who worked on the planning details. It was very important to have open and frequent communication between the instructors at both sites. In addition to the regular monthly staff meetings attended by all staff, subject matter staff communicate with email and phone regarding lessons and activities which is a very helpful support system. There were no additional incentives offered to staff who participated in the project. It was considered a condition of employment. Staff were compensated for planning time use to prepare lesson plans and work on curriculum. Incentives (in the form of food) were provided to students who completed levels. All staff were aware of the goal with the project because they helped plan the project. The planning included the identification of the measures for success. Specific forms were created for attendance and distributed to instructors. All form templates (progress, attendance, surveys) are managed in a shared Dropbox folder so staff has access. Reminder emails were sent to administer surveys or post-tests. Reminders were not needed for the staff to share the success stories!

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
3. X I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot. 4. X I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.	The most obvious (but not really measurable) result to this project was the amazing cohesiveness of each class. Many students make comments during conversation about the positive atmosphere of the class environment. It is a treat to stand back and watch the students supporting each other. Another result, which we were hoping for, was the level growth experienced by students. 90% of the students who completed a session grew at least one level in one area. 35% of the students who completed grew at least one level in two areas. 31% grew two or more levels in one area. Of the students who entered at level 2, 50% completed a session and grew at least one level. Similar gains were found for students who entered at level 3. This confirms the hypothesis that if the level 2 students maintained regular and predictable attendance, there would be progress.

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

Checklist	Response
5. X I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.	Managed enrollment is implemented for the majority of the program classes. It will not be expanded any further at this time. Only one site used a non-managed enrollment process. There is still interest in maintaining that option for some situations. The challenge now is to fill our capacity while maintaining our success rate. Leveled classes have contributed to the success and maintaining sufficient needed levels will need consideration. During FY2015, the program will focus on recruitment, while maintaining the managed enrollment structure.

Final Reflection

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

Checklist	Response
3. X I included an overview of what I learned from this project.	The best thing about this project was not necessarily what I learned, but the fact that the staff and I were both focused on a goal, making a change in the way we do things. Even though the program had offered structured classes in the past, eliminating the 'study hall' option was key to the success of the project. Eliminating the study hall option changed the job description of some staff members and eventually led to the elimination of a staff position. It is difficult to make that kind of change when there is a person in the position who is uncomfortable with the changing task requirements. Key points from this project to keep in mind would include: • Make an annual focus a project driven and supported by data. • Keep the staff involved from the beginning. • Collect benchmark data periodically throughout the entire project to evaluate trends. • Keep the project small with a very specific focus. • Be sure the goals are specific and measurable. • Identify the measures in advance.