

Culminating Learning Project

1. Engage the workgroup

Briefly describe the composition of your program improvement workgroup.

Checklist	Response
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I identified the number of staff on the workgroup. 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described the positions of the staff on the workgroup 	<p>Our program's workgroup includes our three ABLÉ staff members: the coordinator/ABLE Link technician, our lead instructor, and our transitions instructor. Our agency's Ohio Means Jobs – Coshocton County (One Stop) Workforce Administrator is also being consulted in the process.</p>

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
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed the needs identified by the self assessments. 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed the needs identified by the research review. 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed the needs identified by the data analysis. 	<p>Needs identified in self-assessment:</p> <p>Improved Professional Development Flexibility – Part-Time Staff</p> <p>Curriculum Instruction/ Alignment – Especially in Prep for GED 2014</p> <p>Wider Reaching/Variety in Recruitment Efforts</p> <p>Needs identified in research review:</p> <p>Lack of Student Funding to Pay for GED Test</p>

<p>4. <u> X </u> I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot.</p>	<p>Benefits of Growing a Long Distance Learning Component</p> <p>Needs identified through data analysis:</p> <p>Implementation of Student Follow-Up Survey and Data After Exiting</p> <p>Initial Student Retention Is Not Bad, Could Be Better Though</p> <p>Prioritized need or program component:</p> <p>Improved Professional Development Flexibility – Part-Time Staff</p>
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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>1. <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>I described how we examined the current program component to identify:</p> <p>2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> what we are doing now that we want to keep, and</p> <p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> what parts of the program component that need new strategies.</p>	<p>The workgroup narrowed down its component decision to “Improved Professional Development Flexibility– Part-Time Staff” for two main reasons: 1.) Its overall impact on the program’s future growth and student success, and 2.) At least some inroads of planning and/or progress have already been or can fairly easily be made in addressing concerns in respect to the other components.</p> <p>What is happening now is that our Regional Resource Center is already offering a great range of excellent PD opportunities (face-to-face, study circles, webinars, etc.) We like the options that are available and how accessible they are via online PD registration and tracking. *September Update* - This topic certainly became more fluid – and, ultimately, more simplistic – with the timing of the major statewide PD overhaul that began implementation during the start of ABLE Fiscal Year 2014.</p> <p>What needs to happen for our program is that our part-time staff members – our program’s only two instructors – can capitalize on at least some of these PD opportunities (or newly-created ones) in a manner that does not negate from their time/financial constraints nor takes away from daily student learning (coverage issues).</p>

3. Set a vision and goals

Vision: Improved Professional Development Flexibility – Part-Time Staff will be achieved when our program’s approach to professional development prioritizes student success above all else.

September Supplement – In response to the new structuring of state PD offerings, our workgroup established a goal of our lead instructor attending both the fall and spring Teacher Academy two-day conferences (Fiscal Year 2013-14), and our transitions instructor participating in the spring event. The program coordinator will attend both academies plus the Administrative Summit in November 2013. As a group, the staff completed the entire GED 2014: Mission Possible online series together and will be open to additional above-and-beyond future PD offerings beneficial to our program, staff and students.

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.	Staff agreement was reached on the focus and wording of the vision statement. See above.
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included the final vision statement.	

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

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements	Anticipated achievements discussed and agreed upon amongst the workgroup (staff) include: 1.) As a program/team, making a committed effort to improving PD pursuits and implementations thereof for all staff members
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included that list	

	<p>2.) Making this pursuit successful through improved staff communication and shared accountability</p> <p>3.) Making this pursuit more successful through proactive approaches and a clearly-designed expectation of participation</p>
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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
Part-Time Program Staff (2)	PD Completion, Progress and Tracking – Online and Documented
	Follow-Up Meetings with Coordinator for Feedback/Reflection and Shared Accountability

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
<p>3. <u>X</u> I identified all of the sources we explored to find models and strategies that address our program improvement component.</p>	<p>Retention is such a broad topic to tackle improving, so our first big step forward with the pilot project was narrowing it down to transitions-only. Since we are the only ABLÉ program in Ohio with Job & Family Services as our fiscal agent (some others do use JFS as a site location), we really didn't have the need to do significant outside research for modeling and strategies. Our key to success was unlocking the potential we had "in house" as a collaborating workforce unit.</p> <p>The breakthrough we had was combining the strengths and resources of two separate OhioMeansJobs (yes, we have been instructed by the state to type that title without a space) Coshocton County entities: The agency's "Ready, Set, Go!" (RSG) program for TANF clients and our ABLÉ program.</p>

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
<p>1. <u>X</u> I included a description of the new strategies selected to pilot test.</p> <p>2. <u>X</u> I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and the rationale for those adaptations.</p>	<p>Prior to the pilot (which started October 2013), RSG clients/students only enrolled in ABLÉ (which is right down the hall from where RSG meets) if they needed to work on their GED. If so, students were scheduled to attend six hours per week of ABLÉ class time as a component of their 30-day RSG requirements.</p> <p>The big change we made was to begin to enroll all RSG students into ABLÉ, with the non-GED students going into our newly-created transitional class track (a separate track from our established college bridge partnership). The non-GED RSG students complete the ABLÉ enrollment packet and take the Locator, TABE, and post-TABE assessments. Between the initial and post-TABE, students are given transitional and distance learning attendance hours for weekly independent skill practice via KeyTrain in RSG.</p> <p>Since RSG students are referred by case workers on a scattered, individual basis, one of the big adaptations we had to make along the way was both programs being flexible in finding time for packet, Locator, and TABE completion. For example, I often set up TABE assessments for RSG students during my Friday office/administrative hours opposed to the typical Tuesday time we have on our ABLÉ schedule. Since a student is only in RSG for a month, each week is very important. Sometimes we lose a student part way through their 30 days due to gained employment, but that obviously is a success for all involved in its own right.</p>

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> <p>4. <u> X </u> who was involved in selecting the pilots</p> <p>5. <u> X </u> the criteria and rationale we used for selecting the pilots.</p>	<p>I was joined on our planning team by the county’s employment coordinator and the county’s workforce administrator. Following initial brainstorming, the RSG coordinator/instructor was soon brought into the fold and became a crucial member of the group. ABLE staff was also briefed about the pilot and was reached out to for feedback throughout.</p> <p>The site choice/rationale was explained somewhat on the previous page, but to go into more detail, we focused on transitions retention because our numbers had really staggered and then dropped the prior 18 months. While we also have prioritized strengthening referrals and building back up our college bridge partnership, that offering remains voluntary, which is something that is not going to change anytime soon on the college’s end. So, we “connected the dots” to better utilize another avenue of potential that would shore up more students in both retention and enrollment, while simultaneously giving our transitions component a needed “shot in the arm”.</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> <p>1. <u> X </u> the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed</p> <p>2. <u> X </u> who delivered the training</p>	<p>I provided informal training at the beginning of the pilot with the RSG coordinator so she felt comfortable leading the students in filling out the ABLE enrollment packet and getting the students started without my inclusion. We also met and joined forces in helping each other be more comfortable with the schedules and expectations of each respective program. Our offices our two doors apart, which certainly helps as well with spur-of-the-moment questions and follow-ups on a daily basis.</p> <p>On April 4, 2014, our entire OhioMeansJobs Coshocton County unit (formerly known frequently as the One-Stop) participated in a four hour cross-training session, which included presentations from both ABLE and RSG and highlighted the transitional track partnership established over the past six months.</p>

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE ACADEMIES

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	Brainstorming, Logistics, Timeline, Weighing of Pros and Cons, Expectations	September 2013	ABLE Coordinator & RSG Coordinator
			(With helpful input from Workforce Admin. and Employment Coordinator)
Implementing	Enrolling students into the new RSG transitions track (non-GED)	October 2013 - On	ABLE Coordinator & RSG Coordinator
	Tracking new track/students in ABLE Link	October 2013 - On	ABLE Coordinator
Evaluating	End-of-Year (calendar) employee evaluation with Workforce Admin.	December 2013	ABLE Coordinator & Workforce Admin.
	Cross-Training Day for workforce staff of OhioMeansJobs Coshocton County	April 2014	ABLE Coordinator & RSG Coordinator
	Final Leadership Excellence Academy face-to-face and Culminating Learning Project	April 2014	ABLE Coordinator

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
*We had no ABLE costs with our pilot, as instead it was a partnered pooling of already-existing resources between two agency programs	\$0



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"> 1. <u> X </u> initial meetings I had with pilot sites to explain their roles and responsibilities 2. <u> X </u> consultants or other staff used as a resource to support the pilot staff 3. <u> X </u> any incentives you provided to pilot staff to encourage and/or reward their participation 4. <u> X </u> how you made sure that pilot staff knew the evaluation criteria and data they would need to collect to determine impact. 	<p>I can't bypass this portion completely with a giant "N/A" notation, but we are a modest-but-successful ABL program that enrolls about 175 students per year. We have one main site and our college partnership, yet we do not feel sorry for ourselves (although throughout the LEA experience I often felt like a fish out of water rubbing shoulders with program managers that spoke of a dozen sites, a score of staff members, and thousands of students).</p> <p>We do what we can to help serve the adult education population in our county, and I am grateful we have such a strongly-established tradition and accessibility of partnering with all "silos" of the workforce staff. Incentives were a non-factor in our pilot, and being a small site, evaluation and reflection come with the territory daily in simple yet productive places like the lunch room and/or an office hallway.</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>3. <u> X </u> I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot.</p> <p>4. <u> X </u> I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>With six months of pilot data to go by (October-March), I am pleased to report the addition and implementation of our RSG transitions track tripled our overall transitions enrollment over that time. The track outpaced our established college partnership offering by a 2:1 ratio – and at no cost to ABLE beyond some extra enrollment packets, folders, and online TABE uses! RSG also more than doubled the average hours of attendance per student vs. our college offering, which I would credit to a combination of required participation and distance learning for RSG.</p> <p>As mentioned earlier, the college partnership offering is voluntary participation, whereas RSG is much more cut-and-dry (basically, participate accordingly or don't receive TANF cash assistance). We did have some students drop out at some point during their month and therefore missed out on getting post-TABEd, but that is par-for-the-course in ABLE and something we deal with the best we can on an individual basis. Some of those students/clients gained employment as a reason for leaving, while others were for not-so-positive reasons and resulted in being sanctioned by his/her case manager.</p> <p>With a down year of enrollment between an intimidating, new GED test and a rougher-than-usual (even for Ohio) winter, this jolt in our transition retention and enrollment is on pace to help us “break even” with last year’s overall enrollment numbers while also giving us a needed boost in average hours per student.</p>

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

Checklist	Response
<p>5. <u> X </u> I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.</p>	<p>The next phase forward I would like to pursue program-wide would be to better involve our transitions instructor from our college partnership and find ways to pool together the positive aspects of both transition tracks for the betterment of the whole. Since she is limited to seven instructional hours per week, she has her hands full enough in that limited time with leading our transition to college students. I would love to have the resources (and maybe we will with the competitive grant) to have her be involved in both tracks in some capacity moving ahead. Beyond that, the pilot has led to a program component we are going to continue with and are excited about growing even further in the future.</p>

Final Reflection

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

Checklist	Response
<p>3. <u> X </u> I included an overview of what I learned from this project.</p>	<p>I would say I better learned that having limited resources (money, staff, even students) can either be a dead-end excuse or a temporary obstacle for potential growth. In our pilot, we powered past using it as an excuse and turned it into obstacles we overcame by more creatively and wisely pooling our resources together for the betterment of our students. We didn't try to overhaul our program during a time in which change is even more prevalent in adult education than usual, but rather set out to strengthen an area of need, and to that end we succeeded. Thank you.</p>