

Culminating Learning Project

1. Engage the workgroup

Briefly describe the composition of your program improvement workgroup.

Checklist	Response
<p>1. ___ I identified the number of staff on the workgroup.</p> <p>2. ___ I described the positions of the staff on the workgroup</p>	<p>When selecting the number of staff for my workgroup, I chose our lead teachers. We have a core group of 4 lead teachers. I also asked Joyce Tracy, the program coordinator, to be involved in our discussions.</p> <p>Jessica Hoehn, who has been an ABLÉ instructor for 9 years, has a bachelor's degree in Education with a focus in reading. Jessica is an instructor at the Delphos Public Library and the Vantage Career Center in our AM ABLÉ/GED® classroom. She is also our assistant coordinator over the Vantage Career Center and Paulding Job Center sites. Previously, Jessica was an ESOL and Transitions instructor for our ABLÉ program.</p> <p>Ruth Huffman, who has been on our staff for 4 years, has a bachelor's degree in Education (1-8 license). Ruth is an instructor at Apollo Career Center in the PM ABLÉ/GED® classroom and also teaches a study table. Her Study Table is geared to help students improve their academic and soft skills. Ruth is eager to help her students reach their next goal, whether that be earning their GED®, entering into Post-Secondary schooling, or getting a job she guides them through one on one in Study Tables.</p> <p>Janelle Walters, who has been an ABLÉ instructor for Apollo Career Center for 13 years, has a bachelor's degree in Education (K-8 license). She teaches Monday-Friday in an ABLÉ/GED® classroom. Her class is held at a satellite location in the Ohio</p>

Means Jobs of Allen County-One Stop building. Janelle is very comfortable teaching any subject area and at any Educational Functioning Level (EFL). She has also completed an extended course on retrofitting our current curriculum.

Deb Workman, who has been an ABLÉ instructor for Apollo Career Center for 17 years, has a bachelor's degree in Education with a focus in Learning Disabilities and Behavior Disorders. She teaches Tuesday-Thursday in an ABLÉ/GED® classroom. Her class is held at a satellite location- Forest Park United Methodist Church. Deb is confident teaching any subject area and at any Educational Functioning Level (EFL). She is willing to tackle any task given in the classroom even if it is something she isn't very familiar with. For example, with the ever changing world of technology she has begun infusing more and more technology into her the classroom.

Joyce Tracy, who has been the Apollo Coordinator and an ABLÉ/GED® instructor for 30+ years, has a bachelor's degree in Education (1-8 license). Joyce coordinates all of our ABLÉ/GED®/ESOL/Study Table classes. She has written many grants and does all of the program billing. She oversees the staff, arranges all staff meetings, and schedules professional development sessions and much more.

I feel the staff who have chosen to participate in this workgroup have a wide range of experience in the ABLÉ/GED®/ESOL/Study Table classroom. They are able to share a variety of expertise coming from different locations and different types of classrooms. Having instructors from Apollo Career Center, Delphos Public Library, Forest Park United Methodist Church and Ohio Means Jobs of Allen County -One Stop is beneficial because they are able to share the different experiences they encounter from their student population.

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. ___ I listed the needs identified by the self assessments. 2. ___ I listed the needs identified by the research review. 3. ___ I listed the needs identified by the data analysis. 4. ___ I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot. 	<p>Needs identified in self-assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From looking at the results, the first need we identified was the students’ desire to have their classes more leveled. We discussed that our classes that have more than one instructor will put more emphasis on having low (EFL 1-3) and high (EFL 4-6) level classes for all subjects. 2. The second identified need we addressed was that the students stated that they enjoy both group and independent work styles. As a workgroup, we looked at our classes and examined some of our instructors. We found that some instructors do not give enough independent work time in class. Our program is planning to reevaluate those classes and make more of an effort to add more independent work time in each class. 3. The third identified student need we found is that we feel our program needs to add more of a mentoring piece throughout the ABLE/GED®/ESOL/Study Tables process. The workgroup feels this will be beneficial in guiding the students through their ABLE/GED®/ESOL/Study Tables program pathway. We feel it may help the students in their success but also our program’s success. If the students have more of a plan in place for reaching their goal(s) with us, it will keep them accountable and empower them, ultimately leading to more student and program success.

Needs identified in research and data analysis review:

1. First, we as a program are looking at our instruction and what best suits our student's needs. As an ABLE/GED®/ESOL program, our mission is to help our students achieve their goal(s). Therefore, I am not surprised that 100% of our staff was very to somewhat interested in increasing student achievement for our basic skill students.
2. Second, our program is thinking beyond GED® and wanting to help mentor our students in their long term goals. This directly correlates with the both survey results. 88.24% of our staff is interested in finding out more information on the Impact of a GED® to a College Transitions Program. We desire to add a mentoring piece to help guide our students in a more one on one basis, in turn; this will lead to an increase in our programs' student persistence.
3. Thirdly, our staff desires to learn more about how to address the strengths and needs of our students in their reading skills-82.36%. Our student survey did not directly target our students' reading skills however; there is still a direct connection to improving our classroom instruction and student improvement. Again, I cannot state it enough; our program is designed around helping our students achieve their goal(s).

Prioritized need or program component:

The need we have decided to add to our pilot program is the mentoring piece. The classrooms will complete the mentoring session as the student's finish orientation and are entering into the regular ABLE/ GED®/ESOL classroom.

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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. ___ 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. ___ what we are doing now that we want to keep, and</p> <p>3. ___ what parts of the program component that need new strategies.</p>	<p>As a group, we discussed the different findings and as a whole decided that we felt some of our students didn't transition well into the ABLE/ GED®/ESOL classroom after orientation. Since our ABLE/GED classes are not leveled it can be overwhelming to students causing them to feel frustrated and stop coming. In our workgroup discussions, we felt that there were aspects of our program that are broken. We are hoping the addition of this mentoring piece will allow the students to feel a sense of ownership in setting their own goals. This will also give them a sense of accountability to our program.</p> <p>One aspect of the program we are planning to keep an orientation for all new students. This will assist students with filling out the needed paperwork, set program goals, complete testing and allow them receive all program information.</p> <p>Another aspect of the program we are planning to keep is continuing to have multi-leveled classes. We feel this is beneficial to our students because our veteran students are able to help guide and encourage those who are new. We have found that the students do gain a sense of comradery with others and this helps them feel more supported in our ABLE/ GED® classroom.</p> <p>One part of the program we are changing is adding the mentoring piece to the last day of orientation. We hope to help students bridge the gap from orientation to entering the ABLE/ GED®/ESOL classroom. Some students tend to feel they have been thrown in a class. We hope to guide them and explain how the classroom is managed to help them set attainable monthly goals that we can check on a regular basis.</p>

	<p>Another part of the program we are somewhat changing is the classroom layout. Our students will now be directed in their mentoring session on the process of coming in each class and getting their appropriate leveled book out to work on independently. The structure of the class will be the first 45 minutes-1 hour; the students will work at their level independently with an instructor available to answer any questions that may arise. The teacher's will then go into small and large group class lessons utilizing the explicit instruction method. This will give the students time to focus on their own personal needs and still receive classroom instruction, both of which were desired by our students.</p>
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3. Set a vision and goals

Vision: will be working well when...

(Fill in the program component you are working on)

Checklist	Response
<p>1. ___ I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.</p> <p>2. ___ I included the final vision statement.</p>	<p>At a staff meeting all staff studied our student numbers, our ABLE/ GED®/ESOL minimum performance level percentages, and their individual sites data. We discussed how vital it is to bring improvement to our program and the importance of all students having an individual learning plan that they are working toward and continuously checking and resetting goals as needed. Together, as a staff, we looked at our program's annual performance report and discussed the ways we felt we could reach more student persistence and progress.</p> <p>The mentoring piece will be working well when we are gaining more student persistence and progress within our program.</p>

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

Checklist	Response
<p>1. ___ I described how I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements</p> <p>2. ___ I included that list</p>	<p>I discussed with the staff the importance of directing our students and being persistent when setting their individual students goals. Monthly these goals will be checked and reset if needed. This is vital in guiding our students in the pathway they are selecting. This will, in turn, lead to more program achievements and successes.</p> <p>We presented the staff with new Individual Learning Plans for Language, Math and Reading. These plans have a focus using the McGraw-Hill TABE Success series. All students will set personal transition goals which will include the option to increase their typing, mouse, and/or calculator skills, set up an email account, create or update a resume, complete career and/or post-secondary exploration, and increase their basic computer skills with Microsoft Word, Excel, or PowerPoint. All staff members were given a ABLÉ program pathway to share with each of their student to allow them to see the journey we plan to travel together.</p>

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	Individual Language, Math, and/or Reading goals set-check and reset monthly. Marked improvement on TABE Assessment
Teachers	Individual Transition Plans set and utilized in class
Students	Pre and Posttests in TABE Success series-showing improvement on TABE Success posttest and TABE assessment
Students	Transitional Successes

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ESOL Teachers	Individualized Learning Goals set according to their Best Literacy Assessment. Marked improvement on BEST Literacy Assessment
ESOL Students	Marked improvement in their individualized areas
All Staff	Study monthly student attendance and progress reports sent out and complete the proper follow up need with these students (Call, Send a missing you flyer, post testing) This will keep us as a program more aware of our programs live data.

Checklist

1. ___ I identified each of the end users (e.g., teachers, tutors, aides, managers) who will be using the new strategies.
2. ___ 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. ___ I identified all of the sources we explored to find models and strategies that address our program improvement component.	I looked at the following models or strategies when addressing my targeted component: Going to Scale-A Guide for Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Local Program Improvement Initiatives, The Classroom Dynamic Study, ABE to College Transition Study, and Here Today...Gone Tomorrow Strategies for Motivating and Retaining Adult Learners.

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
3. ___ I included a description of the new strategies selected to pilot test.	Our program desired to add more of a teacher/student mentoring piece throughout the student’s ABLE/GED® journey. This would begin with goal setting the last day of orientation as a stepping stone into the classroom. These goals were set to be their main focus during independent class time and rechecked monthly. The workgroup felt this would be beneficial in guiding the students through their ABLE/GED® student success pathway. We felt this may help the students in their success while also improving our
4. ___ I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and	

<p>the rationale for those adaptations.</p>	<p>program’s success. If the students have more of a plan in place for reaching their goal(s) with us, it will keep them accountable and empower them, ultimately leading to more student and program success.</p> <p>The piloted classroom also hung a student success bulletin board. It displayed our ABLE Student Success Wheel and highlighted our classroom’s successes. For instance, two of our ESOL students voted for the first time in the primary election, and an ESOL student attained her driver’s license. We had students add their names and a sticker to the bulletin board as they showed progress on their TABE tests or passed parts of their GED test. Our goal was to allow the students to celebrate their successes together. As student’s gained successes they were given a certificate stating their success and a progress treat bag that had a pencil, two pencil topper erasers, a sticky pad, sweet and salty trail mix and a McDonald’s free dessert coupon.</p> <p>After implementing the mentoring program, I also felt it would be beneficial to the piloted classroom to adapt their current open attendance class into a managed enrollment class. We set up sessions to run for seven weeks having a required attendance policy in place. The piloted students were allowed 3 unexcused absences within the seven weeks. If a student missed 2 classes we attempted to call them, and if they were not reached we sent them a missing you letter. The letter reviewed the attendance policy and stated they needed to contact us or return to class. If a student missed more than three classes they were given the options of attending our Wednesday lab, attending another location that had open enrollment, or completing distance education until the next session began.</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> <p>4. ___ who was involved in selecting the pilots</p> <p>5. ___ the criteria and rationale we used for selecting the pilots.</p>	<p>Joyce Tracy and I were involved in the selection process. We felt it was most beneficial to implement the mentoring piece to a veteran teacher’s classroom. We chose our Forest Park Church location for a couple reasons. Deb Workman, the lead instructor, has been with our ABLE program for 18 years and was up for the challenge. As a coordinator, I have observed Deb in action for many years and knew she would be a good candidate to pilot this piece</p>

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	<p>because she does a phenomenal job with her students at creating a community feel within her classroom. Because of this, students are more comfortable building relationships with her and with the other students. Another reason we chose this location was because my office is housed there. I would be there to lead at first and then help assist throughout this process. We were able to work together daily and had open lines of communication. That was very beneficial for making adjustments or implementing different adaptations.</p>
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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>6. ___ the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed</p> <p>7. ___ who delivered the training</p>	<p>As I was designing the mentoring piece, I teamed up with the workgroup that I had established last year. I designed aspects of this and would then go to them for their opinions. At times things were okayed and at other times suggestions were made. After meeting together, I would make the needed changes and/or adaptations. After this process was complete, Deb and I sat down and looked at how we would implement this new process into her classroom. We went through the ABLE student success wheel and brainstormed some student goals and actions steps to assist students while setting their individual goals. This helped us to wrap our minds around different suggestions we could offer the students. We addressed academic and non-academic goals. After we began mentoring with the students, we felt some of the goal sheets were repetitive and so I adapted them.</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	Designed workgroup	10/2014	Jodi Wireman
	Design and approval of survey to students	10/2014	Jodi Wireman and Workgroup
	Distribution of survey to students	11/2014	All Staff
	Review results of student survey and Identified program needs	11/2014	Jodi Wireman and Workgroup
	Designed mentoring process and worksheets	2/2015	Jodi Wireman
	Workgroup evaluated mentoring Worksheets Goal Setting TABE Success Pre and Post Test sheets	3/2015	Jodi Wireman and Workgroup

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	ABLE Success Wheel		
Implementing	Addition of the Mentoring process to the classroom	8/2015	Jodi Wireman and Deb Workman
	Addition of Student Success Bulletin Board	10/2016	All staff
	Addition of managed enrollment	1/2016	Jodi Wireman and Deb Workman
Evaluating	Recheck and resetting of initial goals	2/2016	Jodi Wireman and Deb Workman
	ABLElink Data Reports- Increases in classroom persistence/progress	Began 7/2016 Done Monthly	Jodi Wireman
	Review of monthly attendance	Done Monthly	Jodi Wireman and Deb Workman
	Follow-Up and Student Questionnaires	4/2016	Jodi Wireman and Deb Workman

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Purchase of Achieving TABE Success Series Math- Levels E,M,D,A	\$220.68
Purchase of Achieving TABE Success Series Reading- Levels E,M,D,A	\$183.90
Purchase of Achieving TABE Success Series Language- Levels E,M,D,A	\$220.68
Progress Treat Bags- (Did not use ABLE dollars)	\$20.00
Additional Meetings held to design the pilot project	\$575.00

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"> ___ initial meetings I had with pilot sites to explain their roles and responsibilities ___ consultants or other staff used as a resource to support the pilot staff ___ any incentives you provided to pilot staff to 	<p>We began the process as a workgroup. We had several lead teacher meetings to design and review the student surveys, identify our top three program needs, and then revise the ABLE Student Success Wheel, mentoring process, and mentoring worksheets.</p> <p>I met individually with Deb Workman the main instructor at the piloted site. She had already been a part of the initial lead teacher meetings, therefore, I didn't have much to explain to Deb about her roles and responsibilities. She was aware of the process, however, we did brainstorm possible academic and non-academic action steps we could suggest to our students.</p>

<p>encourage and/or reward their participation</p> <p>4. ___ how you made sure that pilot staff knew the evaluation criteria and data they would need to collect to determine impact.</p>	<p>I made the initial change by adding the mentoring piece in at the end of orientation. We discussed TABE test results, viewing the ABE Success Wheel, set an initial goal and a transitional goal if desired. We looked at any barriers the students' may face. This allowed the student to feel more of an understanding what their responsibilities were to the program and gave them a direction entering the classroom. After two orientations, we reevaluated the mentoring piece, at that time we decided it would also be beneficial to pilot the class with managed enrollment.</p> <p>Deb and I were in daily contact about the impact this was having on our class. We saw improvement in both persistence and progress. I sent monthly reports to all our staff which informed them of our programs current enrollment and persistence broken down individually by site. These reports were very informative to our program. They allowed us to see that the changes we made to our piloted site were bringing improvement to our program.</p>
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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. ___ I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot.</p> <p>4. ___ I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>Overall I would say our pilot project was very successful. We saw an increase in student persistence (total hours) from December 2015 to April of 2016. In December of 2015 our piloted site's student persistence was at 40.8 hrs. and it has steadily increased and has consistently remained around 67.5 hrs. That is a percent increase of 65%.</p> <p>Managed enrollment along with mentoring and celebrating our students' successes has changed the lives of our students. They have made friends, they have grown together, and they have built confidence in themselves. It has been a wonderful experience to be a part of. It has built this site into a community. Our final week of our second session we added a field trip to a local community college. The students were elated to get the opportunity to tour a college campus. Not all our students are at a point of passing the GED test, however, it was a wonderful life experience for them. It brought motivation and encouragement and gave them a goal to strive for. They were very grateful for that exciting life changing experience. We also presented all of our students with a TABE Success certificate and progress treat bags. (Not purchased with</p>

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ABLE dollars) All of our student's in the managed session have shown progress on their TABE test and we had to celebrate it.



We are just beginning our third session and I'm excited to see the outcomes it produces. We have 6 new students who have committed to attending this third session. Having a phenomenal instructor and adding these pieces to our piloted site has increased our students' and program's success.

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

Checklist	Response
<p>5. ___ I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.</p>	<p>We've already made changes to the mentoring sheets. Our lead teacher's felt aspects of them were repetitive. I redesigned the main cover sheet to be more of a snapshot of all the student's work, and the goal sheet to address more than one goal. I then met individually with a few of our lead teacher's, which were in my workgroup, and we went over the new design. I brought a couple different styles of sheets to the meeting so we could discuss what they felt would be the most practical for the classroom.</p> <p>Next year, we will be implementing the mentoring process to all of our sites. We felt this was beneficial for the student's transition from orientation to the ABLE/GED classroom. The student's appeared more confident and comfortable when entering the ABLE/GED classroom. Next year, we also plan to redesign the style of possibly three of our other sites from an open door policy to managed enrollment.</p>

Final Reflection

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

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Checklist	Response
<p>3. ___ I included an overview of what I learned from this project.</p>	<p>I have learned the importance of intentionally creating an initial connection with student's individually in a one-on-one mentoring session. This has given the student and mentor time to openly reflect on their goals and desires inside and outside our program. The mentoring session has allowed us to discuss their educational goals and any outside barriers that the student may be facing. During the goal setting, we have been able to direct them on path to address their individual program goals and any outside barriers at hand. This process has given the students more confidence and comfort as they enter the ABLÉ/GED classroom.</p> <p>I have also learned that when given an attendance policy students will embrace and enjoy managed enrollment. We had students who were in and out of our program prior to the mentoring and managed enrollment changes, but once a sense of comfort and connection began to grow they desired to be there and to succeed. We have had great success within our piloted program. Our students have formed a tight family bond. They have learned together and built a connection amongst themselves and with Deb and myself. We all have all grown through this experience.</p> <p>We have observed changes to our monthly data reports. There have been obvious improvement with our student's overall persistence and progress. These positive changes will affect the future direction of our program.</p>