

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>There are 5 staff members in the workgroup including me.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Program director (me): make final decisions about project execution, secure funding, create and administer survey tools, collect and analyze data, evaluate outcomes. 2. Program Supervisor/Instructor: contribute to project development and make final decisions about project execution, track and analyze ABLElink and other quantitative data, evaluate outcomes 3. Program Social Worker: participate in forming and modifying project during its course, meet with students to evaluate progress and barriers/barrier reduction, instruct 4. Language Arts teacher: participate in forming and modifying project during its course, meet with students to evaluate progress and barriers/barrier reduction, instruct 5. Program Administrative Coordinator: Support to project execution and evaluation.

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
<p>1. <u>X</u> I listed the needs identified by the self assessments.</p> <p>2. <u>X</u> I listed the needs identified by the research review.</p> <p>3. <u>X</u> I listed the needs identified by the data analysis.</p> <p>4. <u>X</u> I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot.</p>	<p>Needs identified in self-assessment:</p> <p>The three identified in self-assessment were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improving goal setting, 2) Increasing student ownership of learning, and 3) Increasing connections to our social work services. <p>Needs identified in research review:</p> <p>Top three interests from the online survey for research review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Increasing Student Achievement for Basic Skills Students-- Integrated Instruction--85.71% had "very interested" 2) A Contextualized Approach to Curriculum and Instruction- - 57.14 % very interested 3) The Impact of a GED to College Transitions Program on Student Motivation study. 57.14 % very interested <p>Needs identified through data analysis:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Retention: We have not met retention for the past 3 years of desk reviews. 2) ABE Levels 3 and 4: we did not meet these MPL levels in FY14. <p>Prioritized need or program component:</p> <p>Student Persistence(with a focus on Levels 3 and 4 ABE student retention)</p>

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. <u>X</u> 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. <u>X</u> what we are doing now that we want to keep, and</p> <p>3. <u>X</u> what parts of the program component that need new strategies.</p>	<p>On April 9, 2015, the workgroup met to set a priority for our pilot project. We determined that retention was the number one concern for us. In analyzing our data, we found that our biggest issue with retention was getting at-risk students to successfully complete their first academic session with us. The main reasons that students were dropping from the program were due to barriers such as finances, transportation, and mental health/emotional resilience. We brainstormed ideas for how we could increase supports for students during their first session with us.</p> <p>We attended the OAACE conference and there, we learned about 2 important things that Summit County is doing well—a Getting Ahead course based on Bridges out of Poverty Curriculum and Retention. We decided to incorporate the Getting Ahead curriculum into a Language Arts course offering for first session students to create a cohort experience with the following primary goals: 1) increasing a sense of community with fellow learners (thus increasing social capital), 2) increasing access to the program social worker, and 3) increasing students' critical thinking and problem solving skills (self-efficacy and confidence to handle personal barriers).</p> <p>We felt that something we did well was our intake/orientation experience. Our 16 hour intake process at our 6th Ave location includes classes such as team-building and learner persistence. Students positively evaluated this experience in program surveys. However, our sense was that once the intake process concluded, students were separated into academic classes and the sense of community was diminished. The abrupt transition with only a brief introduction to community and persistence was not enough to effectively help students reach a 6 week program goal.</p>

	<p>Another asset we have is a fulltime program social worker to help students with barrier reduction. However, we discovered during surveys that not many students were utilizing this program service.</p> <p>So, we needed a new strategy that essentially extends community building and education on persistence into the first session of classes and a new strategy to increase student access to our program social worker.</p> <p>On June 23 – 24, 2015, we spent a 2 day retreat as a team to determine how we would best address this issue and decided on a pilot project: Language Arts Success class for our 6th Ave morning students that incorporates the Bridges Out of Poverty curriculum and is co-taught by a Language Arts instructor and the Program Social Worker.</p>
--	---

3. Set a vision and goals

Vision: Student persistence will be working well when students reach their short-term program goal, are able to identify and address barriers to program participation, and feel connected to a community of learning at Godman Guild.

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.	This vision statement was developed by the program work group at our 2 day retreat June 2015 after we identified our primary target areas for program improvement in the area of student persistence (as measured by program retention).
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included the final vision statement.	

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE ACADEMIES

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 2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included that list	<p>At our April 9, 2015 meeting and our June 2015 staff retreat, we identified what we wanted our pilot project achievements to be. We discussed how we want to move the needle on the areas we saw as issues in our evaluation of FY14 and FY15 data. Fellow LEA participant David Smith and I will be collaborating on this project. He will focus data analysis and project evaluation on quantitative measures. For qualitative measures, my work group determined the following achievements for our pilot group of 6th Ave Morning students in NRS Levels 3 and 4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Students will report an increase in their sense of connectedness to each other and the community of learning at Godman Guild. 2) Students will report an increase in their critical thinking and problem solving skills. 3) Students will report an increase in their self-confidence to persist to reaching their goals. 4) Students will be able to identify their personal barriers and resources and feel able to create plans to address barriers using their resources.

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
Course Instructors	Student Evaluations/ Course Surveys, Student barrier assessments and social work case notes, Student Goal sheets and portfolio reviews, Student TABE test scores and attendance records
Students	Summary of prior student Evaluations/ Course Surveys (past participant testimonials), Student Goal sheets and portfolio reviews, Student TABE test scores and attendance records

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. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I identified all of the sources we explored to find models and strategies that address our program improvement component.	The OAACE state conference in April 2015 was the first opportunity my workgroup had to think about the models and strategies that would best address our targeted component. We wanted to focus on student retention using the Bridges out of Poverty model (“Getting Ahead” curriculum) after learning about a literacy program in Summit County that was using it. We then attended a Bridges out of Poverty trainings. We also read and discussed the Student Persistence study circle material from NCSALL to inform our planning.

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. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of the new strategies selected to pilot test.	We decided to target increasing student retention by focusing on community building and the curriculum “Getting Ahead” that is designed to increase personal efficacy and skills in managing positive and negative forces.
4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and the rationale for those adaptations.	We modeled our pilot after the Getting Ahead course at Project Learn Summit County, however, we could not mirror their program exactly. 1) For us the goal was to increase retention by building community so we wanted to use the course as a first session Language Arts course that all new students in the pilot were assigned to. Project Learn as their course as an optional class that students elect to take and can take at any time. 2) Our classes currently run on a 6 week academic schedule. We had to adapt the curriculum into this time frame so that it was 36 hours (2xs per week, 3 hrs per class). Project Learn does their course over 8 weeks for 48 total hours of class. 3) Project Learn’s Getting Ahead class is privately funded and thought the students enrolled were ABLE students taking a math class

	through ABLE in addition to Getting Ahead, the program was able to do additional things like offer incentives like gift cards for completing the program/class. We did not have the ability to offer this.
--	--

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>My entire ABE/ASE staff was involved in selecting the pilot, and it was something that we finalized at our June 2015 staff retreat. This included: director, coordinator, 4 fulltime teachers, administrative coordinator, and program social worker.</p> <p>We felt that something we did well was our intake/orientation experience at our 6th Ave location. This 16 hour process received positive reviews from students. However, students seemed to struggle in the transition from the orientation experience to the classroom. We attributed this to the loss of community (they were divvied into separate classes) as well as the general situational and dispositional barriers from Quigley’s research.</p> <p>We decided on a pilot project: Language Arts Success class for our 6th Ave morning students that incorporates the Bridges Out of Poverty curriculum and is co-taught by a Language Arts instructor and the Program Social Worker. We decided this because it was the site we were experiencing this issue with as it is the location with the most intensive orientation experience. It is also the location with the easiest access for the program social worker and we wanted to structure utilizing that resource in the course.</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>6. <u> X </u> the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed</p> <p>7. <u> X </u> who delivered the training</p>	<p>The training needed was primarily related to the Bridges out of Poverty curriculum. At our June 2015, the instructor of the Project Learn Getting Ahead class came did a 3 hour training/orientation to the Bridges out of Poverty curriculum. Staff then attended a full day Bridges training (led by a certified Bridges trainer) in October 2015.</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	Develop pilot course syllabus, lesson plans, and activities	Aug 2015	Program Social Worker, Language Arts instructor
	Complete training in Bridges out of Poverty	Oct 2015	Director, Coordinator, Admin, Program Social Worker, Language Arts instructor
	Create student evaluation survey	Sept 2015	Director
Implementing	Assign incoming 6 th Ave morning students who test at least Level 3 in TABE reading to Student Success Language Arts course after orientation process is complete	August, October, January, March	Admin coordinator
	1:1 student meetings with program social within first 3 weeks of program enrollment	August, October, January, March	Program social worker
	Run 6 week pilot course.	August, October, January	Program Social Worker, Language Arts instructor
Evaluating	TABE pre & post scores reviewed	September, December, March	Director
	Student evaluation surveys administered	September, December, March	Director, Language Arts, Instructor
	Attendance data reviewed	September, December, March	Director
	Monthly meetings to check in on project progress	Each month	Director, Program Social Worker, Language Arts instructor

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Getting Ahead textbooks (class set) and facilitator guide	\$450
Honorarium for Project Learn trainer	\$200
All other costs were already covered under our ABLE grant and UW funding.	

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>As mentioned, the initial meeting was our June 2015 retreat. Because all staff involved with the pilot were involved with determination of the project and the design, I did not need to meet with staff to explain their roles. They determined their roles with the project.</p> <p>We brought in a consultant to do an initial training on our project idea.</p> <p>I did not need to provide incentives for staff to participate.</p> <p>During monthly meetings, the workgroup reviewed the pilot progress and we discussed student survey results in addition to attendance and TABE outcomes. Adjustments were made to the syllabus each session based on staff and student feedback.</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>In terms of our program outcomes, we wanted to see: Meeting MPLs for the students enrolled in the class, and Students meeting at least 40 hours of attendance.</p>
<p>4. <u>X</u> I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>For students, we wanted to see:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will report an increase in their sense of connectedness to each other and the community of learning at Godman Guild. 2. Students will report an increase in their critical thinking and problem solving skills. 3. Students will report an increase in their self-confidence to persist to reaching their goals. 4. Students will be able to identify their personal barriers and resources and feel able to create plans to address barriers using their resources. <p>For program outcomes: 42 students participated in 3 pilot classes during the duration of this project. Of the 42, 20 (48%) have had an EFL gain so far this year. This does not meet our target goal of reaching MPLs. While 42 students started the class, only 30 actually completed the course. So, of the 30 who completed, 20 (67%) had an EFL gain. Some of the 10 who did not advance are still engaged in classes and may meet that goal by the end of this program year.</p> <p>While we did not meet the MPL gain, of those who completed the class, we are seeing an average attendance of 89 hours of attendance over the course of at least 2 sessions of enrollment which far exceeds program norm and state ABE averages. Those who are able to persist and who completed the persistence oriented curriculum have much higher attendance.</p> <p>For students surveyed at the conclusion of the course: Sense of Community: 18/21 or 86% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I feel more connected to my classmates and my learning community after taking this class.</p>

	<p>Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving: 16/21 or 76% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I have improved my critical thinking skills.</p> <p>Self-confidence: 19/21 or 90% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I feel more confident to be a successful student than I did when I began this class.</p> <p>Identifying barriers and creating plans to address them: 20/21 or 95% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I recognize what are potential barriers to my success in getting ahead. Of these 20, 17 or 85% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: I feel empowered to create and put into action a plan to use my resources to address my barriers and challenges.</p> <p>In terms of student outcomes, we met the indicators we determined for success. Some student comments on the overall course experience included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These past 6 weeks has been great. I can honestly say that I always leave learning something new. • I would like to say that in all my years of learning I have never had such great language arts teachers. • This class is very good and I'm glad to take it.
--	---

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

Checklist	Response
5. <u>X</u> I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.	<p>We did not meet the primary program goal we had which was reaching the MPLs for level increases for Level 3 and 4 learners. However, we did have success in terms of student experience and the increase in attendance hours for students who have completed the course. The challenge is that we still saw student drop off after the first 2 weeks of class so this course did not meet that need for those students to be able to stay in class and overcome the situational or dispositional barriers they faced.</p> <p>One solution we are discussing trying is to integrate the course more immediately at program entry rather than waiting until students complete the 16 hour orientation. Instead, have students do a 6 hour orientation and start right away in this Success Language Arts course.</p> <p>In terms of program wide, we are limited by staffing and space capacity at some of our satellite sites. However, the instructors of this course will be reporting our to fellow team members at our June 2016 retreat and will share some of the best lessons and assignments from the course so fellow instructors can consider using them.</p>

Final Reflection

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

Checklist	Response
<p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included an overview of what I learned from this project.</p>	<p>While the pilot project did not meet all of its intended objectives, we still experienced several successes from the project. The first thing I learned is that there is a lot of learning in success, but there is even more learning when things don't turn out the way I anticipate. I had to dig into the data to find out what was really happening once we started running this great course that was a successful experience for some students and not others.</p> <p>I also learned how to set up pilots in manageable ways. We can always make adjustments to improve our program, but it probably going to be more successful if we do it in small, manageable ways first and then examine the outcomes before trying to overhaul our whole operation.</p> <p>Finally, I learned that I have an immensely dedicated and committed staff who are willing to try new things, change course when it's needed, and persist in the face of challenges. I am a really fortunate program manager in this regard.</p>