

# Culminating Learning Project

## 1. Engage the workgroup

Briefly describe the composition of your program improvement workgroup.

Checklist	Response
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	Three staff members are involved in this program improvement project including the director/full-time instructor, a part-time instructor, and an educational assistant.

## 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. <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. 4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I listed ONE of those needs for us to use in the pilot.	Needs identified in self-assessment: (Student Focus Group) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retention – helping students overcome barriers to participation</li> <li>• Mentoring</li> <li>• Referrals to community agencies- mental health, food, shelter, domestic violence counseling</li> </ul> Needs identified in research review:

- Student Achievement
- Managed Enrollment
- ABE to College Transitions

Needs identified through data analysis:

- Student Achievement
- Retention

Prioritized need or program component:

Managed Enrollment

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>In discussing the needs identified above, we felt that trying a managed enrollment class might increase retention as well as raise student achievement. Furthermore, we have colleagues who recently implemented a similar project, and therefore we have access to a sample syllabus, resources, and guidance as to how to set up the class.</p> <p>Up to this point, all our classes have been “open enrollment,” with orientation taking place once per month. The morning and evening classes are the busiest; the afternoon class has always had low attendance. We structure the classes to begin with individual work, and then do a group lesson during the second half of class. With the group of students always growing and changing, teaching priorities and lesson plans are developed on a week-by-week (or even day-by-day) basis. This gives teachers the ability to adapt, but also sometimes feels like there is no beginning and no end to the class. Most students have said they like the unstructured, open enrollment type of class, but there are a few who have expressed interest in a more structured program.</p> <p>After considering the benefits and disadvantages of the current system, we decided to keep two of the classes “as is” and then modify the other into a managed enrollment class This would ensure that we are teaching relevant subject matter sequentially and thoroughly – something that is difficult to do when new students are continuously entering the program.</p>

**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. <u>  X  </u> I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.</p> <p>2. <u>  X  </u> I included the final vision statement.</p>	<p>The three staff members involved in the project decided on the following requirements:</p> <p>Student attendance must be at least 75%</p> <p>Teachers must carefully develop a syllabus and curriculum in advance</p> <p>Students must be post-tested and show improvement</p> <p>Vision Statement:</p> <p>The Managed Enrollment Project will be working well when students are showing measureable improvement and meeting attendance requirements, and teachers are following a set syllabus and curriculum.</p>

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

Checklist	Response
<p>1. <u>  X  </u> I described how I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements</p> <p>2. <u>  X  </u> I included that list</p>	<p>The work group decided that the project’s success will depend on the following outcomes:</p> <p>Students will sign an attendance agreement and meet the requirement of attending 75% of classes (3 out of 4 days per week). Students must make up any extra days missed by attending class at another time (morning or evening)</p> <p>Teachers will move through the syllabus as planned and cover all subject matter over the 12-week session</p> <p>Students will improve by at least one NRS level on the TABE test</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.

<b>End User</b>	<b>Evidence to Collect</b>
Students	Regular attendance leads to better retention of information – sign-in sheets will be used to track attendance
Students	Regular attendance leads to faster improvement – progress testing (TABE) will be used to show improvement
Teachers	Having one enrollment date and a regular group of students will reduce frustration over the “open enrollment dilemma” of not knowing who will be in class from day to day – students will not be allowed to join the class late, and teachers will follow a set plan for 12 weeks
Funders	By diversifying our class offerings, we are better meeting the needs of our clients/students

**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.	Managed enrollment classes have been piloted at other Parma ABLÉ sites. The instructors provided direction, insight, and resources that were helpful in developing a curriculum and structure.

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.	The workgroup selected managed enrollment as a way to boost student achievement and retention. The choice was based on staff surveys as well as program data.
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 decided to make the class an “accelerated GED class” that covered the most important test topics over a three month period. We did this because many of our students had requested a fast track program that would allow them to get a GED as quickly as possible. After one cycle of the curriculum, we realized we needed to extend the class for at least another month because the students needed more time for intensive test practice at the end. We also had to “troubleshoot” the syllabus and reduce time spent on certain topics while increasing the amount of time spent on others.

### 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. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> who was involved in selecting the pilots 5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the criteria and rationale we used for selecting the pilots.	The part-time teacher and I worked together to select the pilot class. The afternoon class was selected as the best one for managed enrollment because it has always struggled with low enrollment and low retention. We did not want to try something new with the busier morning class for fear that it would not work out.

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

Checklist	Response
I included a description of: 6. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> who delivered the training	The manager of Parma ABLE provided direction in planning a curriculum and timeline for the managed enrollment class. Managed enrollment instructors from other sites provided syllabi, sample lesson plans, and suggestions for textbooks.

## 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	Meet with Parma ABE director and managed enrollment instructors	March 2015	Jessica
	Determine a timeframe for the class	March 2015	Jessica
	Decide on a pilot class	March 2015	Jessica, Mary Grace
	Develop a syllabus, lesson plans, and materials	March-June 2015	Jessica
Implementing	Recruit participants for the class	May-June 2015	Jessica, Mary Grace
	Teach first curriculum cycle	July-Sept. 2015	Jessica
	Troubleshoot curriculum and modify syllabus	Aug-Sept 2015	Jessica
	Teach second curriculum cycle	Sept.-Dec. 2015	Jessica
Evaluating	Look at EFL gains and number of GED test passers – students are close but need more time for intensive test practice	Dec. 2015	Jessica
	Meet with students to gather info and decide on next steps – decision to extend class for one more month	Jan. 2016	Jessica
	100% of students have EFL gains; 3 out of 7 (42%) have passed all sections of the GED test.	March 2016	Jessica

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Kaplan GED books	\$120
Steck-Vaughn GED Science books	\$150



## 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"> <li>1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> initial meetings I had with pilot sites to explain their roles and responsibilities</li> <li>2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> consultants or other staff used as a resource to support the pilot staff</li> <li>3. <input type="checkbox"/> any incentives you provided to pilot staff to encourage and/or reward their participation</li> <li>4. <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.</li> </ol>	<p>All our classes take place in one location, so we only had to decide which time of day would be best for a pilot. We chose the afternoon class because it had lower enrollment and retention, so such a drastic change would most likely not cause a lot of upset within the student population. In other words, it was perceived as a safe place to try something new.</p> <p>Once the afternoon class was chosen for the pilot, we needed to draft a syllabus and decide on which resources to use. I met with other managed enrollment teachers from Parma ABE and found that they were more than willing to share their materials. I looked at their syllabi and used them for guidance in creating my own. I also noted that they used a variety of GED study books, including the Kaplan GED book, McGraw-Hill's Common Core Basics, and Steck-Vaughn's adult education series.</p> <p>We decided that the class would be 10 hours per week and that there would be an attendance policy of 75%. Anyone who missed more than 1 class per week would be required to make up the hours at a different time or move to a different class time altogether. Compliance with the attendance policy would be one piece of the data we would track, as well as TABE post-test scores and GED pass rates. These criteria were decided on by the two teachers (me and the part-time instructor) who would be teaching the class.</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. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot.</p> <p>4. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>The pilot increased both enrollment and retention in the afternoon class. However, these outcomes were not seen right away.</p> <p>Initially, only 5 students signed up for the class and only 2 of those met the attendance policy. These two students (a level 2 and a level 3) did not show improvement on a post-test in the first curriculum cycle. This was perceived to be because the curriculum was moving too fast for them. Both students repeated the class in the fall and showed significant EFL gains on a subsequent post-test.</p> <p>During the second cycle, 11 students enrolled (including the two from the previous class) and 7 met the attendance policy for 6-8 weeks. Four of these students eventually dropped the class, and the rest met the policy for the entire cycle. All 7 students were post-tested and showed at least grade-level improvement over their pre-test scores. In addition, four higher level students transferred in from the morning class to take advantage of the fast-paced curriculum.</p> <p>As mentioned above, we realized we needed to extend the class when the three month period came to an end and the students still did not feel ready to take the test. We spent another month on intensive test practice, and then the group went to take the test all together. As of March 2016, a total five have obtained their GED's and two others have passed portions of the test. For the students who have not yet passed, the graduates are leading a study group to get them over the last hurdle.</p> <p>The qualitative outcomes have been equally positive. The development of a supportive community has resulted in mentoring activities, study groups, and class celebrations. Students have built positive relationships that will most likely last far into the future. A few of the class events included a holiday potluck, a class photo, and even a baby shower. The students have been extremely generous, bringing food and sharing rides to and from class and even helping each other out with test fees.</p>

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

Checklist	Response
<p>5. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.</p>	<p>To implement managed enrollment program-wide, we would need to do fewer orientations (as of now we do intake once per month). We would also need to think about extending the length of the classes from 12 weeks to at least 16-20 weeks. The fear in doing this is that fewer orientations will lead to lower overall enrollment numbers throughout the year; we can only accommodate about 20 people per orientation session and there is no guarantee that we will get that many.</p> <p>Staggering the classes would be an option, where we start a class every 10 weeks and host orientation just prior to the start date of each.</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>One interesting piece of data we gathered was the total number of hours our GED graduates had spent in class. While one had as many as 424 and another had only 87, the average was 190 (with a median of 184). This number will be used in the future to determine the ideal length of GED prep classes. For our class that was 10 hours per week, we would have to extend it by at least seven weeks to provide adequate time for test preparation. We realized that many of the students who obtained a GED had taken a class prior to entering the managed enrollment class or had attended additional classes (morning or night) for tutoring.</p> <p>As a professional, the project helped me to gain more confidence in trying new strategies that might lead to overall gains for the program and students.</p>