

## 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	I had a total of six members in the workgroup. This included myself-coordinator, our director, one teacher, one aide, an educational outreach coordinator from our local university, and an adult diploma coordinator from our local career and technical center.

### 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.	(1) Needs identified in self-assessment: 1) The staff wanted regular staff meetings. 2) and better communication among staff and other agencies  (2) Needs identified in research review: 1) Student achievement levels 2) ABE-college transitions 3) Student retention  (3) Needs identified through data analysis: According to the desk review, we have a three-year trend not meeting the obtained employment outcome. It was suggested by our program manager that we focus FY18 on devising strategies for getting adults job increases.  (4) Prioritized need or program component: The one component the workgroup selected to target our pilot project is student retention. Even though all the other identified needs are important, student persistence is the foundation of the program. If we can improve student persistence, we can help

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	students improve their achievement levels, help them transition to post-secondary and/or help them transition to the workforce.
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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>(1) My workgroup examined all the needs that were identified in the self-assessment, the research review, and the data analysis. Each member identified the need they believed to be the most important to the least important out of these three areas. After arranging this data as to what the group identified as the most important, we concluded that student retention was the most relevant. We noted that without our students, we would not have a program. We also talked about possible strategies we can initiate to retain our students long enough to help them achieve academic gains and/or obtain a credential. To further support our initial thought, we analyzed the data I collected from the FY17 orientation schedule. We noticed that the majority of students who called did not attend and we wondered why. Secondly, of those who did attend, how long did they stay in the program, did they make progress, and did they stay long enough to obtain a credential. We concluded that we need to make adjustments to our orientation process. This is the foundation of our program. We believe by doing this, we will be able to meet the other needs that were identified in the self-assessment, the research review, and the data analysis.</p> <p>(2) The elements of orientation that we are doing now and plan to keep are: help students connect with staff and other students, provide program overview, set clear and realistic expectations, help students build self-efficacy, and we provide several options for student instruction; i.e., day classes, evening classes, distance education, managed enrollment, and blended learning.</p> <p>(3) The elements of orientation that need new strategies are: call to remind students of scheduled orientation, students acknowledgement of previous negative educational barriers, identify and address potential barriers and supports, acknowledge and address learning strengths and weakness, set specific short and long term goals and learning plan by creating an Individual Academic and Career Plan document (the students 'blueprint' toward their success).</p>

### 3. Set a vision and goals

Vision: Student persistence \_\_ will be working well when...  
 (Fill in the program component you are working on)

Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I described how I engaged the staff in completing the vision statement.  2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included the final vision statement.	(1) The staff and I discussed two areas of concerns. First, many students schedule an appointment for orientation but do not attend. Secondly, many of our students come to us without a clear plan of what they want to do with their life. They know they should finish their education, but rarely do not have a sense of direction, what their interests are, what career choices they could possibly be good at doing, or identifying a good support system to keep them on the course. We discussed how we should conduct a follow up reminder of students' date and time of their scheduled orientation and how students need to be provided with a 'blueprint' to their success.  (2) Student persistence will be working well when students receive a reminder of their orientation appointment and when each student can identify, create and achieve their individual academic and career plan. If students can see their pathway written in a clear and logical order and be able to identify those things that can hinder their success, they should be more apt to finding strategies and/or support to help them over-come life's hurdles and ultimately, reach their desired goal(s).

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	I engaged the staff in anticipating achievements by creating my own blueprint of our objectives. By using this backward design method, staff can use this blueprint model to assist students in achieving their goal(s)  (1) When we are finished, we will have achieved the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. students will be presented with information during orientation from the Education Outreach Coordinator about the different educational options in our community and assistance with transition (academic advising, financial aid, class registration, etc.)</li> <li>b. students will be presented with information during orientation about the Adult Diploma Program from the Career Technical Center ADP coordinator</li> <li>c. Lastly, students will be provided with the Individual Academic and Career Plan document during orientation, but will</li> </ul>

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	be managed between the student and the instructor throughout students' enrollment. This document will contain the students educational experiences, barriers/supports, short/long term goals, career profile (Ohio Means Jobs), and their academic and/or career plan.
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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
EOC Coordinator	How many students called or emailed him to use his service
ADP Coordinator	How many students transitioned to the adult diploma program
Instructors/aides	-Time involved in completing the Individual Academic and Career Plan -increase in student hours of attendance - increase in the number of EFL gains -increase number of GED completers -increase number of ADP students -increase in number of those who transitioned to post-secondary
Students	-Brief questionnaire asking the effectiveness of: -EOC and ADP coordinators presentation of the different pathways during orientation -Time involved in completing the Individual Academic and Career Plan -IACP easy to understand, did it help guide them on their academic and career pathway -Did this blueprint help them reach their ultimate goal
Director	-Time involved in completing the Individual Academic and Career Plan -increase in student hours of attendance -increase in the number of EFL gains -increase number of GED completers -increase number of ADP students -increase in number of those who transitioned to post-secondary
Checklist	Response
1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I identified each of the end users (e.g., teachers, tutors, aides, managers) who will be using the new strategies.	The end users who will be using the new strategies will be both coordinators, instructors/aides, students, and the director. The evidence that will be collected to support that the new strategies will be effective are: 1) Student attendance hours will increase 2) More students will show increase in EFL gains 3) More students will earn the high school equivalency
2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I solicited from each	

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<p>group the evidence they would need to convince them the new strategy worked, and I included each piece of evidence identified.</p>	<p>4) More students will choose the ADP pathway and earn two credentials 5) More students will transition to post-secondary education</p> <p>This data will be collected, and presented to the coordinators, instructors/aides, and the director. Students will know these new strategies are effective because they will have their blueprint to check off each goal they obtained. In addition, students will be provided a questionnaire as to how effective the orientation and IACP helped them reach their desired goal(s).</p>
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### 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>Based on the research of Quigley, “The First Three Weeks: A critical Time for Motivation” and Comings, “Persistence: Helping Adult Education Students Reach Their Goals”, we decided to modify our intake process in order to improve our student persistence and retention. In addition, we explored the intake/orientation best practices of other Aspire programs.</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
3. <u>  </u> <del>x</del> <u>  </u> I included a description of the new strategies selected to pilot test.	We decided to target student persistence/retention by re-structuring our intake process by utilizing several strategies from the Quigley and Comings studies.
4. <u>  </u> <del>x</del> <u>  </u> I included a description of the adaptations we made to the new strategy and the rationale for those adaptations.	<p>1) We expanded our one-day orientation into two days. We felt that one-day was not enough time to sufficiently conduct the orientation process.</p> <p>2) We partnered with an Education Outreach Coordinator, who is a licensed social worker, to speak to the students about transitions and we also partnered with the Adult Diploma Coordinator from Scioto County Career Technical Center to speak about the trades.</p> <p>3) We redesigned our goal setting form that includes short/long term goals, barriers/supports, and the grit assessment.</p> <p>4) We included a career profile assessment utilizing Ohio Means Jobs to get students thinking beyond the GED/ADP.</p> <p>5) We incorporated the Remind app so students can feel connected when they are not in the class</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
I included a description of:	The Scioto County Aspire Coordinator, instructional aide and the Education Outreach Coordinator were involved in the final phase of this project.
1. <u>  </u> <del>x</del> <u>  </u> who was involved in selecting the pilots	
2. <u>  </u> <del>x</del> <u>  </u> the criteria and rationale we used for selecting the pilots.	All incoming Scioto County students attend one central location for orientation. Currently, if a student cannot attend the central location, he/she can have one-on-one orientation with his/her instructor. The instructors will be trained in the revised orientation process.

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

Checklist	Response
I included a description of:	No training was necessary for the pilot. In collaboration with the Educational Outreach Coordinator, instructional aide and I, we

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3. <u>  </u> x <u>  </u> the training that was necessary to get the pilot sites up to speed	discussed how we were going to conduct orientation and the overall flow of it. After orientation, we discussed what worked well and what needed to be improved and made adjustments where necessary.
4. <u>  </u> x <u>  </u> who delivered the training	

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	Compile data and research to present to the workgroup.	11/2018	Paula Baumgardner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workgroup meeting to discuss new goal setting form</li> <li>Decide how we wanted to conduct the two-day orientation process               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ice-breaker activity</li> <li>Guest speakers</li> <li>Paperwork</li> <li>Grit assessment</li> <li>Career profile (OMJ)</li> <li>TABE assessment</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	12/2018	Paula Baumgardner Education Outreach Coordinator Instructional Aide
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Created short-cuts on computer for grit assessment and Ohio Means Jobs</li> <li>Update the revised goal setting form and other required documents</li> <li>Created the Individual Academic and Career Plan</li> </ul>	1/2018  Ongoing	EO Coordinator & Instructional Aide  Paula Baumgardner  Paula Baumgardner
Implementing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-day orientation</li> <li>Guest speakers: ADP Coordinator/Education Outreach Coordinator</li> <li>Ice breaker, paperwork, grit, OMJ, &amp; TABE</li> </ul>	Feb. 13, 2018 (ongoing)	Paula Baumgardner Education Outreach Coordinator, ADP Coordinator Instructional Aide
Evaluating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate data to determine student persistence               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABLELink                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance</li> <li>Measurable Skills Gain</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>	April 2018 (ongoing)	Paula Baumgardner

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	<p>B. Grit assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compared orientation data from FY17 to FY18</li> <li>• Follow-up calls</li> </ul>		<p>Paula Baumgardner EO Coordinator</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student evaluation               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Face-to-face</li> <li>2. Follow-up calls</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<p>April 2018 (ongoing)</p>	<p>Paula Baumgardner Education Outreach Coordinator Instructional Aide</p>

What were your primary financial expenditures for the pilot project?

Expenditure Category	Cost
Staff meeting/research/data collection payroll	\$650

### 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 checked="" 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>The initial meeting was conducted in December prior to our Christmas break. Since the pilot site was already conducting orientation, it wasn't necessary to explain the roles and responsibilities. It was just a matter of discussing how we were to implement the revised orientation. Our plan was to begin the first of January; however, weather delayed our plans until February.</p> <p>No other consultants or staff was used as a resource to support the pilot staff.</p> <p>There were no incentives provided to pilot staff. Each staff and non-staff member was all on board to help our students become successful.</p> <p>Most of the evaluation criteria and data were collected by me. I collected the majority of the data via ABLELink. In addition, we use Google Drive (Google sheets) to register and document all students for orientation every fiscal year. I was able to analyze and compare the data for each month and fiscal years. The grit assessment and follow-up calls were performed and documented by the Educational Outreach Coordinator because that data is used for the success of our students and his program.</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>1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included an overall narrative of the results of the pilot.</p> <p>2. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included results based on the end users' evaluation criteria.</p>	<p>I did not implement the pilot as I had originally planned because of weather and illness. We had hoped to start the pilot in January. However, by conducting orientations twice a month, we were still able to have sufficient time to implement the change in the orientation process, collect, and analyze the data.</p> <p>Fifty-four percent of those who registered for orientation attended. Of those, 75% enrolled into the program. Seventy-nine percent are currently persisting. Compared to the data collected from FY17, our enrollment went up 23% and persistence went up 26%.</p> <p>The data collected from the grit assessment was interesting (Grit: Perseverance and Passion for Long Term Goals 2007). Sixty-three percent who scored high on the persistence assessment are persisting; 31% who scored high are not persisting. However, 6% of those who scored low are enrolled and persisting. According to the research, this assessment is good for self-reflection. However, as educators, we need to be cautious because “the score not only reflects how gritty you are but also the standards to which you hold yourself”. The researcher continues to say, “the question is not whether we should concern ourselves with grit or structural barriers to achievement. In the most profound sense, both are important, and more than that, they are intertwined.” This would be interesting to continue analyzing the effectiveness of grit and see how we can use this to help our students with persistence.</p> <p>Of all students who attended orientation, 100% created Ohio Means Jobs accounts and completed the career profile assessment.</p> <p>Student feedback of the two-day orientation was very positive. Students are extremely nervous the first day because of many factors. By having the first day of orientation as an informational meeting and doing a few activities, they leave feeling more confident and more apt to return the second day because all of their questions had been answered; they know what to expect when they return the next day for testing. The follow-up calls were not as successful as we had hoped. The EOC called all the students</p>

	<p>who attended orientation after a few weeks to see how things were going for them. Many students did not answer or their phones were disconnected. However, the few that he managed to talk with had very positive things to say about the orientation process and classes.</p>
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What changes, if any, would you make before you implement the new strategy program-wide?

Checklist	Response
<p>3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I included a description of specific changes I needed to make before implementing program-wide.</p>	<p>I few things I would modify and incorporate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement the Individual Academic and Career Plan; this is vital for students and instructors to see student progression toward goals.</li> <li>• Conduct reminder phone calls prior to orientation. Approximately 50% of those who called for orientation actually attended. I would like to see that increase.</li> <li>• Continue with the follow-up phone calls.</li> <li>• During orientation, have those students with cell phones become a member of my “class” via Remind app. This will be used to encourage students to continue their education.</li> </ul>

### 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>This program improvement project has taught me many lessons. First and foremost is that I have to <b>plan</b> for change. It is vital to strategically make plans before implementation in order to be successful. It is also necessary to analyze the data to see what needs to be improved and not to make changes just because someone wants change. Secondly, I needed to be rational about the improvements I wanted to do. I had a big vision of making several changes in our orientation process. However, it was impossible to incorporate it all during the short time that was allotted. I will continue to further this project by implementing the changes I wanted to do and analyze its effectiveness. Lastly, I learned that there <b>IS</b> <i>Wisdom of Crowds</i>. My staff has been instrumental in the success of this project. I couldn't have done it without them, the OLEA staff, and my OLEA cohort!</p>