

Best Practices in ABLÉ-College Data Sharing

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In this report, Hanover provides an overview of promising practices in ABLÉ-college partnerships. Through primary and secondary research, we examine data sharing guidelines and strategies for aligning ABLÉ programming with developmental education curricula.

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INTRODUCTION AND KEY FINDINGS

Effective data sharing between ABLÉ programs and postsecondary partners is critical if the state of Ohio to achieve its goal “to integrate the ABLÉ network as a full partner in the University System of Ohio, [and thus make] it easier for students to seamlessly transition from basic and literacy education programs to a college program.”¹ According to a May 2012 Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) report entitled “Working Together for Student Success: Lessons from Ohio’s College-ABLE Partnership Project:”²

It is critical that both partners also be involved in reviewing program data and monitoring student progress of those referred. Doing so requires that both partners establish clear processes for how and when this sharing will occur.

In this report, Hanover Research provides an overview of promising practices in ABLÉ-college partnerships. Through primary and secondary research, we examine data sharing guidelines and strategies for aligning ABLÉ programming with developmental education curricula. The report concludes with paraphrased interviews Hanover conducted with four ABLÉ program coordinators and Jeffrey Gove, State ABLÉ Director for Ohio. The findings of our report are intended to provide guidance to administrators and ABLÉ staff as they seek strategies to increase student success through a more effective use of data. Section II, “Guidelines for Data Sharing,” should be particularly useful for extending partnerships through an effective use of information technology.

KEY FINDINGS

- ABLÉ-college partnerships should be **student-centered**, driven by student goals, and geared toward increasing academic success and retention of participants. Partners are advised to coordinate to identify and pursue grants from the government and private foundations, in order to facilitate the development of new capacities within the ABLÉ program and further student success.
- **Guiding principles and a data sharing MOU/agreement should be established as early as possible in an ABLÉ-college partnership.** Frequent informal communication should occur between stakeholders at the college and ABLÉ program staff; formal monthly or quarterly meetings should also be conducted. Correspondences should be answered promptly by both parties.
- Research suggests that **the college partner should make enrollment in ABLÉ programming mandatory for students whose placement tests are below a specified cut-off.** Further, ABLÉ curricula should be designed to align with, and prepare students

¹ “Fiscal Year 2009 Annual Performance Report for Ohio - Ohio Adult Basic Literacy Education.” University System of Ohio Board of Regents.

<http://www.ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/able/reference/accountability/FY%202009%20ABLE%20Report.pdf>

² “Working Together for Student Success: Lessons from Ohio’s College-ABLE Partnership Project.” May 2012. The Ohio Board of Regents, Ohio State University, Center on Education and Training for Employment.

for, developmental education coursework. This alignment necessitates ongoing collaboration between ABLE and developmental education staff.

- To facilitate academic success, **ABLE students should be encouraged to think of themselves as traditional post-secondary students.** In order to present ABLE as a legitimate division of the college, institutions are advised to use their own logos for marketing and publications; some colleges provide ABLE participants with a college student ID.
- **New ABLE program coordinators may benefit from developing contacts at an ABLE program with a well-established college partnership,** in order to gain wisdom and insight from experienced ABLE administrators. ABLE administrators and college partners may also refer to the following resources for additional information on promising practices:
 - *“Working Together for Student Success: Lessons from Ohio’s College-ABLE Partnership Project”* (OBR; attached as supplement to report)
 - *“Driving Innovation: How Six States are Organizing to Improve Outcomes in Developmental Education”* (Collins, M.)³
 - *“Ohio Stackable Certificates: Models for Success”* (Community Research Partners)⁴
 - *“Ohio Postsecondary/Transitions Initiatives”* (OBR; attached as supplement to report)
 - *“ABLE Administrators Manual”* (OBR)⁵
 - *Forthcoming extensive evaluation of “efforts to align ABLE, developmental education, and college level entrance standards”* (OBR, scheduled for 2012)

³ Collins, M. April, 2011. “Driving Innovation: How Six States are Organizing to Improve Outcomes in Developmental Education.” P. 24. http://www.jff.org/sites/default/files/DEI_DrivingInnovation_041211.pdf

⁴ “Ohio Stackable Certificates: Models for Success.” Community Research Partners. http://www.communityresearchpartners.org/uploads/publications/Ohio_Stackable_Certificates_Models_for_Success.pdf

⁵ “Ohio Adult and Basic Literacy Education Administrators’ Manual.” Ohio Board of Regents, June 2012. <https://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/able/reference/policies/Administrators%20Manual%20August%202013%20final.pdf>

SECTION I: DEVELOPING A SEAMLESS ALLIANCE

As ABLÉ-college partnerships are designed to transition students from zero-credit basic skills and literacy courses into college programs and job placement, we first focus on an application of the Ohio Transitions Framework to the ABLÉ program context. The OBR's recent document, "Ohio Transitions Framework – Adult Basic and Literacy Education," suggests the following steps for the development of partnerships focused on ABLÉ student success:⁶

Engage a team of **cross-agency partners** at the regional/local levels.

- ✓ Identify an **ABLÉ point person** to coordinate day-to-day collaboration.
- ✓ Examine and access **resources from partners**, such as public workforce development programs and/or private employers.
- ✓ **Identify costs** associated with the adult career pathway system and program development and operations.
- ✓ Establish a **shared vision**, mission, set of goals and an implementation plan.
- ✓ Address any **administrative barriers** to cross-agency collaboration at state/local levels; seek solutions.
- ✓ Link to partners that provide **support for education and training** (e.g., financial literacy, career exploration).

Create a formal agreement/**Memorandum of Understanding** including assessment, referral and placement processes, responsibilities, etc.

- ✓ **Define partners' roles/responsibilities** and working relationships.
- ✓ Determine and **secure funding** (cash and in-kind) as needed from public agencies, private foundations, and/or partner organizations.
- ✓ Continuously **review system procedures and revise** as needed.
- ✓ **Continue support with students** enrolled in postsecondary for one year.
- ✓ Include at least one **Bridge Program** with formal partnership.

Maintain partnerships to **address needs of ABLÉ students** (e.g., Rehabilitation Services Commission, child care facilities, one-stop centers, mental health facilities).

The importance of a seamless alliance was one key principle echoed by ABLÉ program coordinators during interviews conducted by Hanover's primary research team. According to our contacts, ABLÉ programs and their college partner should aim to develop a partnership in which the boundaries between the two entities are nearly indiscernible to staff and students alike. Linda Bumiller, Adult Education Coordinator at Miami Valley Career Technology Center (MVCTC), noted that a partnership agreement with guiding principles

⁶ "Ohio Transitions Framework – Adult Basic and Literacy Education." University System of Ohio Board of Regents. P. 4. <http://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/able/reference/transitions/TransitionsFramework%20-%20Final%207-30-12.pdf>

should be established early on “to avoid territoriality and work out the bugs.”⁷ Bumiller supplied Hanover with such a document, created through collaboration between Sinclair Community College (SCC) and MVCTC and outlining the partners’ shared vision and mission:

Figure 1.1: SCC and MVCTC Partnership – Guiding Principles

The SCC/MVCTC Partnership Principles are as follows:

Guiding Principles:

- Student-centered approach with necessary supports to diminish barriers to success
- Seamless
- Driven by goals set by students

Goals:

- Create collaboration between local ABLÉ providers and Sinclair to build capacity in serving under-prepared nontraditional students in the college setting
- Assist under-prepared nontraditional students in moving to post-secondary options
- Increase the academic success and retention of under-prepared nontraditional students in post-secondary options

A united front between ABLÉ and the college partner allows ABLÉ students to feel like post-secondary students, rather than basic skills students. Jill Souza, manager of the Owens Community College ABLÉ Program, notes that **students in her ABLÉ program “feel like college students, and they prefer the Owens ABLÉ program to other local off-campus ABLÉ programs for this reason.** Students want to feel associated with Owens Community College.”⁸ The program uses Owens Community College logos for marketing literature and publications, and – more importantly – the College has instituted strict enrollment requirements for students who place into the ABLÉ program. Because students who place into the ABLÉ program are not allowed to enroll in developmental education and/or college coursework, students are more likely to enroll in ABLÉ than they might be at colleges which merely *suggest* or *encourage* the program for low-skilled students. Souza advises that college partners should make enrollment in ABLÉ programming mandatory for students whose placement tests are below a specified cut-off. These students should not be allowed to enroll in developmental and college coursework without 1) completing the ABLÉ program, and/or 2) raising their placement exam scores. This parameter can increase the associated ABLÉ program’s legitimacy and enrollment numbers.⁹

Through the MVCTC-SCC partnership, students with Accuplacer placement test scores below a specific cut-off are referred one office down from the testing office, to where the ABLÉ

⁷ Bumiller, Linda. Telephone interview. September 5, 2012.

⁸ Souza, Jill. Telephone interview. August 30, 2012.

⁹ Ibid.

advisor is located. **Proximity allows the ABLÉ advisor to coordinate well with SCC academic advising.** The advisor plans his hours with the SCC academic advising director, and is trained by SCC to use the SCC database. The partnership is so seamless, according to Bumiller, that 99 percent of ABLÉ students would not understand that the ABLÉ courses in which they enroll are technically *not* SCC courses.¹⁰ ABLÉ students are given an SCC student ID, and are able to use WIGGID – an online academic planning platform which is similar to (and prepares students for) SCC’s Angel platform. Bumiller is currently working to find a way for ABLÉ students to be able to log into Angel, further streamlining the collaborative technology usage.

The alignment of ABLÉ and developmental education curricula is another component of a seamless ABLÉ-college partnership. A 2010 report titled “Plan to Integrate Workforce Development Financing” stated that “Ohio proposes that the **developmental education-ABLÉ alignment** area be its specialty focus for the [Developmental Education Initiative].”¹¹ The report called for models of the curricular collaboration and articulation agreements between partners:¹²

Community-college-ABLÉ partnership agreements for referring students to ABLÉ for remedial work and subsequently back to community colleges for placement in higher level of developmental education and/or credit bearing classes.

When MVCTC ABLÉ instructors initially met with developmental education instructors at SCC, they planned out the ABLÉ curriculum to ensure there would be no overlap. During our conversation with Bumiller, she emphasized the importance of conducting this collaborative ‘legwork’ up front, and following up with ongoing engagement. Now, well into this partnership, ABLÉ and developmental education stakeholders meet on a quarterly basis to formally ensure ongoing program alignment. They also meet informally on a more frequent basis to ensure continuous coordination and engagement.

Partners should never stop looking for new ways to enhance the synergy of their relationship. At Marion Technical College (MTC), a \$50,000 QuickStart grant enabled the creation of a QuickStart to College program. Through collaboration with the developmental education department, ABLÉ scheduled a QuickStart course to be held next door to a college Transitions course. Instructors then strongly encouraged QuickStart students to participate in the MTC Transitions class after their ABLÉ QuickStart class ended. Many students took advantage of this free opportunity to extend their skills and enroll in an MTC course.¹³

¹⁰ Bumiller, Op. cit.

¹¹ “Plan to Integrate Workforce Development Financing.” Ohio Board of Regents. Retrieved via GoogleDocs: https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:OChUk4kY7IJ:www.ohioacts.org/documents/Workforcerecommendationsfinal.docx+&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgJn_tOEz3BclAjmNEnUdlvQFJvkCarLwm8pTPfiaQxCCmRgb4OAw08hWgC-9WfIL31RRxJn639DL4k1a0PVw6zdd_bznHr78UmHerbcnMx3WbyEc-fylyrxc8L2jrB9CM3F9So&sig=AHIEtbT4DnH9TdOJG0WTOJM-KJEvi3Afwx

¹² Ibid., p. 11.

¹³ Hagerty, Cheryl. Phone Interview. September 6, 2012.

SECTION II: GUIDELINES FOR DATA SHARING

ABLELINK

The University System of Ohio’s “Overview and Guidance for the Adult Basic and Literacy Education Instructional Grant” provides general guidelines for **secure ABLElink student data entry and maintenance**.¹⁴ These guidelines, however, do not reference how information may or may not be *shared* with postsecondary education partners. Somewhat more helpful, the Ohio “ABLE Administrators Manual” introduces the Release of Information Form (RIF),¹⁵ provided by the State ABLE Program; students sign the RIF upon registration in a local ABLE program. This form notifies students that the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR) will “match student records to obtain the earned Secondary School Diploma or achieved GED Certificate.”¹⁶ The RIF is a mere formality for this transaction, apparently, as postsecondary education data match is allowed under FERPA *without* student authorization.

The ABLElink help site lists support documents which may be useful for sharing ABLE data with postsecondary partners, including an **attendance template** and a **learner record** summary (which provides details about students’ progress assessments).¹⁷ More details about this “state data match process” can be found in the ABLE Administrators Manual, though this large-scale data sharing system does not indicate methods for ABLE programs to share more specific student achievement and progress data with postsecondary partners.

In an interview with Cheryl Hagerty, ABLE Coordinator at Marion Technical College, we learned that her office **limits the number of ABLE staff members who are authorized to access ABLElink** to just three of the 10-15 staff members. These individuals must complete paperwork and receive confidentiality training to become authorized. While no other MTC staff can access the database, administrators may request reports highlighting relevant ABLElink data. ‘Trends in ABLE Student GED Completion’ is one example of a type of ABLElink-produced report Ms. Hagerty’s office might provide to the college partner.¹⁸

MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

In order to clarify exactly which data ABLE programs may legally share with college partners, Hanover first contacted Jeffrey Gove, ABLE Director for the State of Ohio. Gove explained

¹⁴ “Overview and Guidance for the Adult Basic and Literacy Education Instructional Grant – Fiscal Year 2012.” University System of Ohio Board of Regents.

<http://uso.edu/network/workforce/able/grants/documents/instructional/instructional-grant-overview.pdf>

¹⁵ “Release of Information Form.” University System of Ohio Board of Regents.

<http://www.ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/able/reference/forms/Release%20of%20Information%20Form%20%28RIF%29%20Final.pdf>

¹⁶ “Ohio Adult Basic and Literacy Education Administrators’ Manual.” June 2012. University System of Ohio Board of Regents.

<http://www.ohiohighered.org/sites/ohiohighered.org/files/uploads/able/reference/policies/Administrators%20Manual%20August%202013%20final.pdf>

¹⁷ “Documents.” ABLElink Help Site. <http://literacy.kent.edu/ablelink/documents.html>

¹⁸ Hagerty, Op. cit.

that there is currently no state-wide template for determining which data can and cannot be shared. Defining these terms is left up to the individual ABLÉ and college administrators. **Partners create their own guidelines for data sharing** through Memorandums of Understanding and Release of Information (RIF) documents, which are subsequently reviewed with the partners' legal teams for approval.

According to Gove, student confidentiality should not be seen as a barrier to sharing information between ABLÉ and college partners. As long as the types of information being shared are detailed explicitly in writing for students to approve, partners may share any data they consider to be useful. The initial RIF signed by students, then, should be valid for all specified partners throughout the multi-level system. As students transition between the ABLÉ program, the community college, and on to a university and/or job placement, this streamlined RIF eliminates the need to sign and process multiple corresponding waivers.

Student confidentiality should not be seen as a barrier to sharing information between ABLÉ and college partners.

STUDENT DATA COMMONLY SHARED BY PARTNERS

Having discussed *how* these partnerships share data, we now highlight the *types* of data they share. **Gove suggests that partners identify upfront which high-stakes outcomes data each partner is bound to collect.** Often these are the same, if not similar. At the national level, these are likely to include information related to (for instance) Title I/Title II and rehabilitation services; at the state level, these may include registration and exit forms. This initial discussion can reveal similarities and differences between partners' data collection practices, which will subsequently inform the decision of which data will be useful to share.

Providing a slightly different angle on the topic, the OBR notes that college partners should supply ABLÉ program staff with initial **college placement exam** (and all retest) scores for all referred students. Colleges should also provide ABLÉ programs with data on **student progress through the post-secondary system** for at least one to two years. The OBR also suggests that ABLÉ programs provide their college partners with student progress data, specifically in the form of aggregated reports by class, produced on a regular basis through ABLELink. These progress reports could then be discussed at ABLÉ-college periodical partnership meetings.

Hanover's interviews with four Ohio ABLÉ program coordinators suggest that these ABLÉ programs and their college partners tend to follow the OBR's best practices guidelines for student data sharing. We highlight the shared data our sources identified during Hanover's interviews in Figure 2.1, below. Types of student data generally seem to fall into three categories: 1) initial placement exam scores and progress scores for each re-take, 2) basic student information and ABLÉ enrollment status/progress, and 3) student progress and attainment tracked after the ABLÉ program, including GED completion, enrollment in a certificate/degree program, job placement, or relocation.

Figure 2.1: Student Data Shared by ABLÉ Programs and College Partners

Type of Data	ABLE Program and College Partner			
	Cougar Edge ABLÉ Program	Owens ABLÉ Program	Miami Valley Career Technology Center ABLÉ Program	Marion Technical College ABLÉ Program
	Columbus State Community College	Owens Community College	Sinclair Community College	Marion Technical College
Assessment	TABÉ test scores upon ABLÉ enrollment, and progress scores at the end of the semester	Initial COMPASS Prep placement test score (college to ABLÉ) and re-take scores (ABLÉ to college)	Accuplacer Assessment and re-take scores	COMPASS Prep placement test scores
Student Information & Enrollment Status	Who enrolls in the on-campus Cougar Edge ABLÉ Program and who is referred to an off-campus ABLÉ program	Enrollees in the Owens ABLÉ Program	Student registration information; course enrollment and progress	Prospective, current, and recent student information; student enrollment status, transcripts, trouble areas, non-enrollment
Progress and Transitions	Follow up steps (COMPASS retake scores, move out of town, etc.)	-	Transition data (university enrollment, job placement, etc.)	Transition data featured in campus data system; some reports created with ABLELink data

Source: Telephone interviews with ABLÉ program coordinators

DATA SHARING METHODS

According to the OBR, it is critical that both the ABLÉ program and college partner “be involved in reviewing program data and monitoring student progress of those referred. Doing so requires that both partners establish clear processes for how and when this sharing will occur.”¹⁹ Among the four partnerships listed above, in two instances **partners manually report agreed-upon data** to one another. In the other two cases, **partners use a shared data network**. For example, the Miami Valley Career Technology Center (MVCTC) ABLÉ program and Sinclair Community College (SCC), communicate student information through a shared database. By contrast, the ABLÉ coordinator at Marion Technical College (MTC) is an employee of MTC. She is therefore able to access the College’s “Power Campus” student database. MTC employees, however, are not permitted to access the private ABLELink data system. More detailed information on data sharing practices is provided in Section III, which discusses the results of our interviews with ABLÉ coordinators.

¹⁹ “Working Together for Student Success: Lessons from Ohio’s College-ABLE Partnership Project.” Op. cit., p. 4.

SECTION III – INTERVIEWS WITH ABLE COORDINATORS AND THE STATE ABLE DIRECTOR

JEFFREY GOVE, STATE ABLE DIRECTOR FOR OHIO

Below, we provide a summary of Hanover’s telephone interview with Jeffery Gove, State ABLE Director for the Ohio Board of Regents.²⁰ Mr. Gove’s responses are paraphrased.

1. Can you share any publications related to best practices in data sharing between ABLE programs and their community college partners?

Reference the May 2012 report called “Working Together for Student Success: Lessons from Ohio’s College-ABLE Partnership Project.” [*This document is attached as a supplement*]. See also “Ohio Postsecondary/Transitions Initiatives” for a list of programs and initiatives, governance, key partners and intended outcomes. [*Also attached as a supplement*].

When it comes to sharing information, I find that it is most useful to identify upfront which high-stakes outcomes each partners is bound to collect. Often these are the same, if not similar - Title I/Title II, rehabilitation services, etc., at the national level. Primary forms at the state level include registration form and exit form. Discussing this first shows similarities and differences between the two partners’ data collection, and they can then decide what to share.

Depending on the comfort level of each partner, the sharing of curricular and placement data may also be stated in a Memorandum of Understanding, as well as details on how partners will keep information safe and secure.

2. Which student data can be shared legally between ABLE and college partners? Are there clearly stated guidelines on this topic?

There is no state-wide template for determining what can and cannot be shared – this is left up to the individual ABLE and college administrators. Partners create their own guidelines about data sharing through Memorandums of Understanding and Release of Information documents which they then run past their legal teams for approval.

Leaders are often anxious about FERPA, but student confidentiality should not be seen as a barrier to sharing information between ABLE and college partners. Partners can share pretty much anything they want to share as long as it is stated explicitly in writing which types of data are being shared and why. Then students

²⁰ Gove, Op. cit.

sign off on it. In a multi-level system, students can just sign off on this once and it can be made applicable to all specified partners. They do not need to re-sign the RIF when they transition from ABLE to community college, etc.

3. Are there exemplary partnerships between ABLE and community colleges that you know of for us to profile?

Barbara Seib (partners with other local ABLE programs and Columbus State Community College – CougarEdge Program)

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BARBARA SEIB, ABLE COORDINATOR FOR COLUMBUS CITY SCHOOLS

The following is an email interview with Barbara Seib, the ABLE coordinator for Columbus City Schools. Ms. Seib is involved with the CougarEdge program, through which multiple local ABLE programs partner with Columbus State Community College.²¹ Jeffrey Gove, State ABLE Director for Ohio, identified the CougarEdge program as one of two exemplary ABLE-college partnerships in Ohio.

1. What types of student data are ABLE programs legally allowed to share with the Columbus State Community College, based on any MOU's or partnership agreement(s)?

Our MOU is not yet finalized. Currently we are reporting to Columbus State the following information:

- Who enrolls in Cougar Edge (our joint program)
- Who is referred to an ABLE program away from campus
- TABE test scores upon enrollment

²¹ "Cougar Edge." Columbus State Community College. <http://www.csc.edu/academics/cougaredge/>

- A progress TABE test at the end of the semester
 - Any follow up steps that the students take such as leaving the campus to enroll in an ABE class (and if they attend), being referred to retake the COMPASS, or any other results that we know of (such as moving out of town, etc.)
2. **Could you share a copy of any MOU's or partnership agreement(s) between Columbus State Community College and local ABE programs involved in the CougarEdge network? If not, could you describe what is expected from each partner (including, but not limited to, data that is shared by each).**

Columbus State is providing us with initial promotion, enrollment, and advising services. They are directing students to go to the testing center for TABE testing, the results of the initial TABE test, classroom space including computer access codes, information about their dev. Ed. classes (what to cover, what textbooks, etc.). They also have hosted all meetings and planning sessions during the last two years as we have built Cougar Edge. These meetings are chaired by Nancy Case from Columbus State. Many Columbus State employees from different departments have also attended these meetings including advising, developmental education instructors, financial aid, registration, testing, etc.

ABE partners provide the following: instructors, orientation sessions, progress testing, and exit conferencing with each student covering the post-TABE results and what the student's next steps can be. We also report the post-TABE results and next steps to our contact at Columbus State to track students.

3. **How is shared academic data used for placement decisions and to facilitate student success?**

Students who do not score at the cutoff for math *and* English on the COMPASS placement test must attend Cougar Edge non-credit classes without financial aid. Students enroll at the Workforce Development building for Cougar Edge. They are then directed to go to the testing center and take the TABE test.

Students who test below 6.0 grade level for the TABE are referred to a regular ABE class off campus. When students test below 6.0, we feel they are better served in a class that is more appropriately paced and has content to address their needs.

Students who test at 6.0 or above qualify for Cougar Edge on campus and we cover material that is similar to the lowest developmental education class in math and English. Orientation is held for this class and we follow the regular college calendar.

4. What role do the partnering ABLE programs play in the Columbus State Community College's developmental education programming?

We are teaching the lowest level math and the lowest level English classes in developmental education. We don't always follow the same syllabi but adjust our content and pace to help our students.

During the first pilot year, we found that many students coming to us scored below 6th grade in reading, math and language. It would not have been fair to these students to instruct them with content/pace that they were not able to handle.

This year, we are only accepting 6th grade and above skills in the Cougar Edge/campus classes so that we have a chance of moving these students into regular college classes in one or two semesters.

5. Could you describe aspects of the CougarEdge program that make it unique? What are the program's strengths, challenges, and/or areas for growth?

One thing that I am very impressed by is the commitment of Columbus State to this effort. They have devoted countless hours from many departments to get this program off the ground. They also have made certain things mandatory. During our first year, if you placed in the lowest developmental education math AND lowest dev. education English, it was mandatory to take Cougar Edge. The college lost enrollment and tuition dollars doing this, but believed it was best for the student in the long run.

During our current year, if you TABE test below 6.0, you are referred to an ABLE program off campus to prepare for college. Only students who test 6.0 or higher can attend Cougar Edge on campus. Again, Columbus State is losing enrollment and tuition with this policy but students are benefiting.

Another impressive factor is that *four* ABLE programs are cooperating to help serve students who come to Columbus State at all of their campuses. I don't know of any other situations like this in Ohio.

6. What are the determining factors, in your opinion, that facilitate valuable and sustainable partnerships between ABLE programs and colleges?

I think the most important thing in our partnership is making our program student centered. We provide access through the college but also, for those who are lower skilled, through off-campus ABLE programs. No one is turned away.

Another factor is the excellent communication between the college and the four ABLE programs. We meet almost every month and work through issues to make this

a better program. Emails and phone calls are always answered promptly on both sides.

- 7. Are there any resources you would suggest for an Ohio community college to review as they seek to improve and leverage their ABLÉ partnership to facilitate greater student success?**

I think we benefited from asking another ABLÉ program to come to one of our planning meetings and report on what they were already doing with their local college. This was Amy Leedy who worked with Sinclair Community College. It was good to ask for advice from someone who had already navigated some of the more difficult challenges we faced. I believe it saved us a lot of trial and error.

JILL SOUZA, MANAGER OF OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE ABLÉ PROGRAM

Below we provide a summary of Hanover's telephone interview with Jill Souza, Manager of Owens Community College ABLÉ Program.²² Ms. Souza's responses are paraphrased.

- 1. What types of student data does the Owens ABLÉ program share with Owens Community College, based on any MOU's or partnership agreement(s)?**

The ABLÉ program only notifies the college as to whether or not the student enrolls in the ABLÉ program, and whether or not they progress on the COMPASS Prep placement test. Ms. Souza does not know of any formal MOU. However, the grants department writes a new grant each year and collaborates with ABLÉ and other college personnel. Also, the ABLÉ program's fiscal agent is employed at the college.

- 2. How is shared academic data used for placement decisions and to facilitate student success?**

If students referred by Owens to the ABLÉ program progress on the COMPASS Prep placement test after their ABLÉ program, then they are allowed to enroll in developmental education and college courses. Initial placement test data provided to ABLÉ by the college offers baseline data on the student's abilities to ABLÉ educators.

- 3. What role do the partnering ABLÉ programs play in Owens Community College's developmental education programming?**

The college requires students who place into the ABLÉ program to complete the program and/or progress on the placement test before they are allowed to enroll in developmental education and/or college coursework. *[In that sense the Owens ABLÉ program functions as a critical step in the developmental education process.]*

²² Souza, Op. cit.

Because the college makes ABE enrollment mandatory for this population, students are more likely to enroll in ABE than they might be in partnerships through which the college *suggests/encourages* low-skilled students to enroll in ABE but does not make the program a *pre-requisite* for college enrollment. Students are much less likely to take *optional* courses which yield no college credit. Through this curricular structure, Owens Community College gives the ABE program legitimacy that it would not otherwise have.

4. Could you describe aspects of the Owens ABE program that make it unique?

The program receives a significant amount of support from Owens Community College. This includes classroom space, the use of Owens logos for marketing literature and publications, and most importantly, enrollment requirements for students who place into the ABE program. These features enable students to feel like college students, and they prefer the Owens ABE program to other local off-campus ABE programs for this reason. Students want to feel associated with Owens Community College.

5. What are the determining factors, in your opinion, that facilitate valuable and sustainable partnerships between ABE programs and colleges?

The college partner should make enrollment in ABE programming mandatory for students whose placement tests are below a specified cut-off. These students should not be allowed to enroll in developmental and college coursework without completing the ABE program. This will increase the associated ABE program's legitimacy and enrollment numbers.

LINDA BUMILLER, ADULT EDUCATION COORDINATOR AT MIAMI VALLEY CAREER TECHNOLOGY CENTER

Below we provide a summary of Hanover's telephone interview with Linda Bumiller, Adult Education Coordinator at Miami Valley Career Technology Center.²³ Ms. Bumiller's responses are paraphrased. Jeffrey Gove, State ABE Director for Ohio, identified this as one of two exemplary ABE-college partnerships in Ohio.

1. What types of student data is the MVCTC ABE program legally allowed to share with Sinclair Community College (SCC), based on any MOU's or partnership agreement(s)?

There is no MOU that Ms. Bumiller knows of, but there is a partnership agreement. Initial Accuplacer assessment scores and retakes are communicated through a shared database, as well as student registration information, course enrollment and

²³ Bumiller, Op. cit.

progress, transition data (i.e. enrollment in other college program, job placement, etc.).

2. What role does the ABLÉ program play in SCC developmental education programming?

ABLE instructors initially met with developmental education instructors to plan the ABLÉ curriculum so that it did not overlap. It is important to do this collaborative legwork up front. Now these partners meet on a quarterly basis to formally ensure program alignment. They also meet informally on a more frequent basis.

Students are not allowed to enroll in SCC courses if their scores are below a certain cut-off. They are only allowed to enroll in ABLÉ. (Or they can try to raise their scores another way before they retake the exam.) However, ABLÉ students think they are enrolling in free SCC developmental education courses (which in some sense they are). The partnership is so seamless that 99 percent of ABLÉ students would not understand that their ABLÉ course is technically not an SCC course.

3. What are the determining factors, in your opinion, that facilitate valuable and sustainable partnerships between ABLÉ programs and colleges?

It is the people, not the processes, who make a functional and valuable ABLÉ-college partnership possible. It is important for partners to establish guiding principles early on to avoid territoriality and work out the bugs. Students should always come first.

4. Could you describe aspects of this ABLÉ program/partnership that make it unique?

- The ABLÉ advisor has an office next door to the testing office, so students can be directly referred to walk next door and enroll in the ABLÉ programs if their Accuplacer scores necessitate it. Proximity allows the ABLÉ advisor to coordinate well with SCC academic advising. He plans his hours with the SCC Academic Advising Director, and is trained by SCC to use the SCC database.
- ABLÉ students feel like SCC students. They have an SCC ID, they use WIGGID – an online academic planning platform which is similar to (and serves to prepare students for) SCC’s main platform, Angel. [ABLE is currently working to find a way for ABLÉ students to be able to log into Angel, further streamlining the collaborative technology usage.]
- The Shifting Gears Grant and Innovation Grant significantly helped the team put things together, and the resulting partnerships and networks have been extremely useful.

5. Are there any resources you would suggest for an Ohio community college to review as they seek to improve and leverage their ABLÉ partnership to facilitate greater student success?

The SCC/MVCTC Partnership Principles are as follows:

Guiding Principles:

- Student-centered approach with necessary supports to diminish barriers to success
- Seamless
- Driven by goals set by students

Goals:

- Create collaboration between local ABLÉ providers and Sinclair to build capacity in serving under-prepared nontraditional students in the college setting;
- Assist under-prepared nontraditional students in moving to post-secondary options; and
- Increase the academic success and retention of under-prepared nontraditional students in post-secondary options.

CHERYL HAGERTY, ABLÉ COORDINATOR AT MARION TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Below we summarize our telephone interview with Linda Bumiller, Adult Education Coordinator at Miami Valley Career Technology Center.²⁴ Ms. Hagerty's responses are paraphrased.

1. What types of student data is the ABLÉ program legally allowed to share with Marion Technical College (MTC), based on any MOU's or partnership agreement(s)?

There is no formal agreement or MOU, because MTC is the fiscal agent. It would be like having an MOU with yourself. ABLÉ has been at the school for three years.

The ABLÉ Coordinator is an employee of MTC, and therefore has access to "Power Campus," which includes prospective, current, and recent student information. She is able to view student status, transcript, trouble areas, non-enrollment, personal information, address, etc.

On the other hand, MTC employees *cannot* view ABLELink – a totally separate database. MTC staff members can, however request reports using ABLELink data that ABLÉ staff can produce for them. For example: How many ABLÉ students have

²⁴ Hagerty, Op. cit.

earned a GED? Furthermore, only three (of 10-15) ABLÉ staff members are given access at any given time, and they must complete paperwork and training to use it.

2. What role do the partnering ABLÉ programs play in MTC's developmental education programming?

After taking the COMPASS placement test, students may enroll either in ABLÉ or developmental education courses. The ABLÉ program does not actively recruit students to join the program. Instead, the program focuses on retention.

Through a \$50,000 QuickStart grant, ABLÉ was able to create a QuickStart to College program. Through collaboration with the developmental education department, ABLÉ scheduled this course to be held next door to a Transitions course. Instructors then strongly encouraged students to participate in the MTC Transitions class after their ABLÉ QuickStart class ended. Many students took advantage of this free opportunity to extend their skills and get into an MTC course.

There is some overlap with developmental education. Ms. Hagerty's long-term goal, however, is for ABLÉ to replace developmental education programming at MTC.

3. What are the determining factors, in your opinion, that facilitate valuable and sustainable partnerships between ABLÉ programs and colleges?

Communication and compromise are key. Partners should learn what the other is doing, because they each have slightly different goals.

4. Could you describe aspects of the MTC ABLÉ program that make it unique?

ABLÉ uses MTC campus classroom space but also tries to maintain a center city location for students who have difficulty with transportation to MTC.

Distance education is also available through the MTC ABLÉ test preparation program (focusing on the COMPASS or GED). Online students are required to participate in a specialized face-to-face orientation which (in addition to the basic ABLÉ program orientation) focuses on topics such as technology, test-taking, writing competencies, and online resources. The orientation is comprised of four to five three-hour sessions, for a total of 12-15 hours.

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