Building Bridges to Success: Strengthening Postsecondary Transition for Students in Adult Education
Little statewide research has been published about best practices related to local adult education programs in Texas. This study sought to address those gaps.
To identify and describe local adult education program best practices for facilitating the successful transition of adult basic education (ABE), English as a Second Language (ESL), and adult secondary education (ASE) students into postsecondary education programs.
The following three questions guided the study:

1. **What services are adult education programs providing?**
2. **What current services and activities are working?**
3. **What evidence is being collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the service or activity?**
Data Collection Methods

- Summit (Face-to-face)
- Survey (Electronic)
- Site Visits
Summit Results
(a) **Current transition efforts include:**

- Intensive courses
- Goal setting
- Providing general financial aid information and/or advice to students

(b) **Program components identified by the participants included:**

- Intensive curriculum in core-content—reading, writing and math
- Creating a general culture of caring

(b) **Participants identified the following evidence of effectiveness:**

- Pre and posttest on the ASSET, TCOM and ACCUPLACER
- Qualitative feedback from students
Survey results were classified into three sections

- Organizational support
- Individual readiness
- Program elements
THECB Transitions Project
Survey Results

(1) Organizational Support

- Staff provide support services to students
- The organizations offer *a culture for learning* as a primary organizational/institutional support
- Student orientation
- Encouragement and empowerment
Organizational Support

(1) Creating partnerships with community colleges

(2) Advising and
(3) Counseling

Programs provide organizational support to students by

(4) Providing bridge programs

(5) Providing financial support and scholarships
Programs address organizational support by:

1. Giving orientation to college classes
2. Remediation classes
3. College preparation academy
4. Learning labs
5. Tutoring centers
Participants issue student ID badges with proof of current month enrollment. The passes are honored by Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) for free bus rides anywhere anytime.
Program Elements

(3) Program elements for developing individual student readiness included the use of

- textbooks
- independent teacher resources
- Intensive Summer Programs (ISPs)
- bridge programs
- counseling and guidance services.
Site Visit Results
Participants for the site visits included staff from:

(1) Del Mar College, Corpus Christi, TX

(2) Austin Community College, Austin, TX
Del Mar College (DMC)

Graphic Representation of Del Mar College Transition Model

Figure 1: Del Mar College Transition Model

Transition Liaison (T. L.)

12 Hour Orientation

Adult Education

ESL → ABE → ASE/GED → Post Secondary

Any students who drop out are followed up by the case manager

Case Manager
Del Mar College's adult education program is committed to transitions by promoting a college going culture for all students beginning at the program's new student orientations and continuing throughout their enrollment in the program.

Director of DMC

Current transition practices at DMC include:
- on site transition liaison
- mandatory 12-hour orientation (Success 101)
- PLATO integrated GED curriculum.
Findings

Figure 2: Austin Community College Transition Model

- ACC Summer College Bridge Program: 5-6 weeks H.S. Remediation / GED Math & Writing Only
- Adult Ed: 3 Advisors dedicated to AE
- Adult Education
- Enrollment
- ABE
- SST-Cord
- GED
- ESL
- ESL to ABE Transition
- CI DOR ISP Bridge at Cypress
- GED Academy
- Retention Specialists 2.5 (Case Management)
- Career fair College for a day Student Mentoring Orientation College Connection
- Workforce Vocational ESL (CNA) Vocational G.E.D (VGED)
- 42% GED to College Transition Rate
- Student success
- 3 Advisors dedicated to AE
- Associate Vice President
- RVS (Student Services)
- SRO (Student Services)

CAPITAL IDEA (CI): Must have completed High School diploma and or GED before enrollment; goal is to complete College credit
“ACC Adult Education pursues a comprehensive, coordinated approach to transitioning students across the spectrum, from low literacy to college. The effort involves instructors, staff, and a range of specialized curriculum and programs.”

ACC Adult Education Program Director

- Current transition practices at ACC include
  - numerous bridge programs
  - drop out recovery programs
  - Intensive Summer Programs
  - dual enrollment
  - remediation classes
  - strong partnership with Capital IDEA
Conclusions
Conclusions

- Most ABE programs are making efforts to introduce their students to the culture of college by talking with them about the array of possible postsecondary programs available in their geographic area. Prominent in the findings are such practices as college visits and college-for-a-day services which are intended to introduce ABE students to the culture of college.

- Most programs also offer assistance with logistical operations of applying to and entering college. Services such as assisting students in filling out application and financial aid forms, advising students about registration in general and about degree plans specifically are in evidence to some degree across the state.

- Data collection in ABE transition programs is not systematized or well integrated into the routine data collection of general ABE programs. The prevalent mandatory data collection practices include test scores (TABE, BEST Plus, GED) and numbers of students served.
Conclusions

- A gap exists between the levels of skills and knowledge recommended in the Texas Adult Education Content Standards and Benchmarks for ABE/ASE and ESL Learners and the skills and knowledge levels recommended by the Texas College Readiness Standards. Because the college readiness standards are significantly higher than the ABE/ASE/ESL exit standards, there is the potential for students to leave adult education programs at a substantial academic risk of failure in postsecondary programs.

- A gap exists statewide in availability of high quality, sustained professional development focusing on transitioning ABE students into postsecondary education.
Recommendations
Generally, Texas should promote promising transition models that are supported in the literature and in successful implementation in local programs. This may be achieved by appropriately matching models with various program types as represented in (a) community colleges, (b) education service centers, (c) independent school districts, and (d) community based organizations, where adult education providers are currently integrating transition activities for ABE, ESL and ASE students into postsecondary programs.

There is need to promote collaborations between local ABE transition providers and postsecondary admissions, counseling, advising, financial aid offices as well as collaborations between ABE transition providers and faculty in postsecondary developmental education programs.
Promote academic knowledge and skills components that address the content standards for English language arts and mathematics as recommended in the Texas College Readiness Standards. Additionally, ABE students who make the successful transition to college should be allowed access to instruction that will bring them up to the science and social science content and skills levels that are recommended in the Texas College Readiness Standards.

Encourage local programs and Regional GREAT Centers to offer high quality, sustained professional development for adult educators who work in ABE-to-postsecondary transition programs. The literature suggests that cross training of ABE and developmental educators is an optimal plan. Ultimately, educators who work with this population would benefit from access to the Texas Adult Education Credential currently available to ABE, ASE and ESL teachers in Texas.
Phase II of Research Study

TX State will continue to work on researching ABE transitions in Texas identifying and documenting best practices.

TX State will conduct a pilot study of promising practices in Texas.
Focus Group Activity

- In regard to transitions, what does the PD look like in your region? (College Readiness)

- What challenges /barriers exist to implementing college readiness programs?

- What have you heard today that relates to the work you are doing as ABE/GED providers?
Transitions Project

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB)

&

Texas State University – San Marcos

The Education Institute (TEI)

Mary Helen Martinez, Project Director

mm42@txstate.edu