

## **2013 WIA II California Consortium Meeting**

**CASAS Summer Institute: Wednesday, June 12, 2013, 3:30-5:00pm**

### **Focus Group Discussion Summary**

- I. **Focus Group Discussions:** *Participants sat at tables based on the number of WIA II learners in their program (small, medium, large, parolee/jail programs). Approximately 130 people participated in Focus Group Discussions.*
  - Discussions were based upon two “Ignite” presentations from Kathleen Porter (Poway Adult School) and Liza Becker (Mt. San Antonio CCD). The presenters shared short presentations about their effective transition programs. Each presenter was asked to time her presentation so that it would not exceed 3 minutes. This challenge forced them to focus on the most important aspects of each program, with hopes that their presentation would “ignite” other agencies to replicate their practices.
    - o Kathleen Porter, Poway Adult School: ESL to ASE Transition Program
      - Addition of ESL lab once a week
      - New transitions class focused on helping students go from ESL to ASE. The class has an emphasis on contextualized learning, and students enter the course with the goal of transitioning into ASE.
      - Transition program increased learning gains
    - o Liza Becker, Mt. San Antonio CCD: Non-credit to Credit Transition Program
      - Articulation with Community College credit program
      - Two semesters of transition program provide a bridge to credit courses
      - Model transition courses match the credit courses as much as possible
      - Work in transition classes is portfolio-based
  - Using ideas gleaned from the “ignite” presentations, each Focus Group discussed how they could implement transitions programs at their agencies.
  - Report Back: Some of the Focus Groups shared strategies with the entire assemblage. All groups submitted notes from their discussions. Below are the suggestions that came from the Focus Groups.
- II. **California Consortium Focus Groups: Strategies for Successful Transition Programs:**

Regardless of program size or location, it was agreed upon that all instruction should be conducted within the framework of transition to postsecondary education or the workforce. The following strategies and ideas are divided up based on common themes among the group suggestions. *Items with a “\*” denote an idea that was shared with the larger group during the Consortium meeting report back.*

  - Focus on writing skills
    - o Incorporate language common to the workplace or postsecondary education
    - o Institute an “Essential English Class”- Transition class that focuses solely on teaching students the language they will encounter in job situations.
    - o Make writing a part of each class meeting, so students feel more comfortable with longer and more complex writing assignments. \*

- Revise EL Civics to add a COAPP for writing a personal essay. This would benefit students who want to attend college courses. \*
- Align adult education course curriculum with postsecondary course curriculum
  - Adult education instructors should work closely with community college instructors to ensure that the skills students are working on in adult education classes will help them to succeed once they get to college courses.\*
  - Form Professional Learning Communities (PLC) among staff and instructors so that everyone in an agency shares similar goals and is able to exchange best practices.
- Counseling and Orientation procedures
  - All students should attend an orientation upon starting the program. During the orientation, they are introduced to transition options and discuss their goals for attending adult education classes.
  - Orientation and counseling should be discussed with transition always being the end goal. Hire a transitions specialist if possible.\*
  - Follow-up with students and monitor their progress throughout their time in adult education classes. This may require updating their career or educational goals.
  - Invite former adult education students (“student ambassadors”) who have transitioned to college, training or work to come back and speak to classes. Their experiences are the ones that usually mean the most to current students.
- Focus on workplace soft skills
  - Incorporate workplace soft skills into all aspects of the day-to-day classroom interactions.
  - Implement structured workplace programs such as the Workforce Skills Certification System (WSCS) to create a formal pathway from adult education into meaningful employment, and to equip students with skills that will help them on-the-job. \*
- Create partnerships with community colleges
  - Plan field trips to local colleges.
    - During field trips students map out important services on campus and identify where their classes would be.
  - Invite college counselors and advisors to speak to adult education classes and act as mentors.
- Work with employment partners in the community (one-stops, WIB’s, local businesses or job training agencies):
  - Invite job training partners to give presentations to classes
  - Partnerships are integral in learning what types of jobs and skills are in demand in the area. This information should be used to shape curriculum or plan for future courses.