

Michigan's Transition to Postsecondary Education and the Workplace



II. Overview of Transition Models

**Workforce Development Agency State of Michigan
Education and Career Readiness
Office of Adult Education**

Executive Summary

Postsecondary education and training has never been more important than in today's 21st century workplace. Although the immediate goal of many students who enter Michigan's adult education programs is to obtain a GED[®] credential, students must be prepared to successfully transition to postsecondary education and training, as well as the workplace of today and tomorrow.



Transition is a process. Effective transitioning requires a plan that identifies both the destination and the steps needed to obtain the training, skills, and experiences necessary to reach the identified goal.

Many GED[®] graduates have not had the experiences to navigate the postsecondary education environment or to successfully use the academic vocabulary of the system. How to read college texts, research materials to write a supporting paper, reason through college algebra, and how to complete admissions paperwork, financial aid, and select courses that lead to a credential are just a few of the skills that a GED[®] graduate faces. This is in addition to often working full-time and raising a family. Juggling child care and work schedules in order to attend classes and find adequate time for studying and completing assignments are often barriers to the individual's persistence in attaining a degree or credential.

Most states have a transition initiative in place. Because a GED[®] credential is no longer an ending point, but rather a bridge to the future, a strong transitional program for GED[®] graduates is an absolute necessity to assist them in attaining their career goals through successfully enrolling, persisting, and completing the coursework necessary for the credential or diploma that makes a career goal a reality.

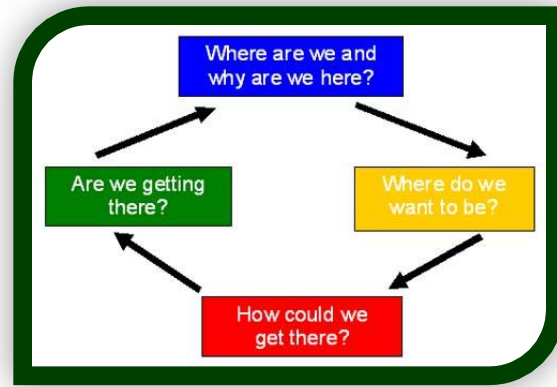
There are many types of transition programs. This introductory segment of the Transition Toolkit will provide you with information on different types of transition programs, as well the pros and cons of each type of system.

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Introduction

Any significant effort to assist adult learners in their transition to postsecondary education requires a systematic process for developing information and procedures for linking with postsecondary institutions, as well as an enhanced curriculum that is aligned with the requirements for credit courses in the college system and technical training programs. Recognizing that many adult learners in Michigan's adult education system need support to make a successful transition to postsecondary education, the GED® Preparation to College Transition Program will provide an enhanced curriculum for those learners.



Critical to the success of the GED® Preparation to College Transition Program in enhancing curriculum and creating new services will be a local program's capacity to develop relationships within and outside their institutions, as well as implementing an enhanced curriculum, and ensuring that instructors obtain necessary professional development.

Michigan adult education programs will need to identify local partners, such as local community colleges, counseling services, and business organizations, which can work with them in providing the necessary services for learners. Michigan's Office of Adult Learning will facilitate these relationships through their partnerships with state higher education offices and other state entities supporting services to enable adult learners to pursue further education and employment.

Through the development and implementation of a GED® Preparation to College Transition Program, Michigan's Office of Adult Education is offering a vision to guide adult education providers in transforming their services to expand opportunities for adult learners and to provide those learners with a successful transition into the postsecondary system.

Helping more adults earn marketable postsecondary credentials is critical to the twin national goals of increasing economic competitiveness and sharing the benefits of economic prosperity more widely.

Postsecondary Transition Models

Although there are many different types of transition models, the research generally identifies five different models: Advising, Plus, ESOL/ESL, Career Pathways, and College Preparatory. Many of the transition programs use a blended approach where there are segments of more than one model incorporated. However, it is useful to view the specific focus of each model before one is selected for development and implementation



Transition Models

Advising Model

Overview

The primary goal of an advising model is to raise a student's awareness of postsecondary education options and admissions processes. Key features of this model include: dissemination of information through presentations and workshops and individualized advising, rather than class or cohort advising.

Developing an advising model requires that the institution determine the intensity of support to be provided. Some advising models provide a presentation or orientation to the college process to a group of students followed by individual counseling sessions upon an individual student's request.

More intensive advising models provide an orientation session followed by college success workshops on topics such as financial aid, admissions, time management, study skills, and career guidance. Students are provided with a transition counselor who assists individuals throughout a specified time frame.

Because many advising models offer a more limited approach to transition, these results are more effective with those students who already have the academic skills necessary to successfully transition to postsecondary education and training. The advising model provides the support and skills requisite for students to successfully enroll and persist in a program.

Strengths and Limitations of Advising Model

<p>Advising Model Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires less of a time commitment from students than classroom-based transition programs and may therefore appeal more to adults who want to be on a fast track to college; • Tends to be open entry, which allows advisors to serve students at any point during the semester or year rather than making students wait until a new session begins; • Is less expensive for programs to provide than more intensive classroom-based models; • May be incorporated into already-funded counseling hours; • Provides individualized counseling that can be customized to students' needs; and • Reaches and accommodates more students than classroom-based models.
<p>Advising Model Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic skills development is commonly limited to short-term workshops; • Academic deficits are addressed in tuition-based developmental education; • Advisors' caseloads can be high; • Students may choose to opt out of important experiences when offered a menu of voluntary workshops; • The open entry nature of the program can make it difficult to recruit a critical mass of students for particular workshops; and • Students do not typically get the benefit of a learning community or cohort as part of the transition experience.

Zafft, Cynthia, Kallenbach, Silja, and Spohn, Jessica (2006). *Transitioning adults to college: Adult basic education program models*. NCSALL Occasional Paper. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. p. 18. Cambridge, MA

Examples of Advising Model

The advising model incorporates a wide variety of programs from individualized workshops to a long-term process where an adviser follows a student through his/her first year of postsecondary education.

The following are examples of different types of advising models.

Post-Secondary Transition Program – Springfield Technical Community College

The Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) Post-Secondary Transitions Program works with adult learners who have achieved their GED® credential and wish to further their education. Prior to completing their GED® credential, orientation and follow-up advising sessions are held for those students who wish to attend STCC. This provides students with a beginning support system. The Transitions Coordinator also assists the students in applying to the college, filing for financial aid, selecting a degree or certificate program that best suits their needs and goals, and creating an individualized educational plan. Academic advising and follow-up support is provided to students while they are attending Springfield Technical Community College.

STCC Handbook: <http://www.stcc.edu/handbook/student-services.asp>

STCC Post-Secondary Transitions Program Brochure:

http://www.stcc.edu/adulteducationcenter/pdf/adult_education_center_brochure.pdf

ABE Transition Program – Maricopa Community College District

The mission of the ABE Transition Program is to provide information, support, and guidance to Rio Salado College adult GED® and ESOL students as they transition into postsecondary opportunities within the Maricopa Community College District. Counselors visit students prior to their entrance into the community college system.

Rio Salado College, Tempe Arizona:

<http://www.riosalado.edu/programs/abe/Pages/transition.aspx>

Washtenaw Community College

Another example of an advising model is found at Washtenaw Community College. Adult transition counselors assist students in obtaining their GED® credential, as well as successfully transitioning to the postsecondary education and the workplace. Students request assistance from the counseling staff. The staff provides on-going support for the students throughout the postsecondary education process.

Washtenaw Community College:

<http://www4.wccnet.edu/resources/learningassistance/adulttransitions/index.php>

Backpacks to Briefcases

There are many different types of advising models. Backpacks to Briefcases is a program designed by Davidson County Community College. The program is focused on career planning and college knowledge for 18-24 year-olds who are within six to eight months of graduating with a GED® or adult high school diploma. The program focuses on student motivation, college success factors, and an orientation to different postsecondary education and training programs to familiarize students with career planning.

Backpacks to Briefcases:

<http://www.collegetransition.org/promisingpractices.briefs.backpackstobriefcases.html>

Project RIRAL

Mentoring programs can also be integrated as part of the advising model. One example is Project RIRAL (Rhode Island Regional Adult Learning) which provides two 16-week Transition to College (TTC) programs each year. The program has created workshops that encourage learners to identify their individual skills and abilities, create realistic goals, and gain confidence to succeed in postsecondary education. Mentors work with students prior to and during their enrollment in postsecondary education, as well as follow-up if a student needs to stop out for a period of time.

Project RIRAL: <http://www.collegetransition.org/promisingpractices.briefs.mentor.html>

ESL/ESOL Model

Overview

The goal of the ESL/ESOL model is to focus on advancing language skills required for academic settings. Although this model develops academic language skills for college, it does not often include other academic areas, such as the study of mathematics. Completers of this type of transition model often require additional ESL instruction in a postsecondary setting, as well as instruction in other academic areas.

Strengths and Limitations of the ESL/ESOL Transition Model

<p>ESL/ESOL Transition Model Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops academic language skills for college; • Lends itself to addressing curricular alignment with credit-based ESL or introductory composition courses; • Tends to have clear academic benchmarks for admission to the transition-level classes; and • Tends to monitor student learning gains closely.
<p>ESL/ESOL Transition Model Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits academic skills development to language arts and tends not to include math; • Tends to have high caseloads for advisors; and • Graduates of the transition classes often still need more ESL instruction in college and may use up financial aid to obtain the instruction.

Zafft, Cynthia, Kallenbach, Silja, and Spohn, Jessica (2006). *Transitioning adults to college: Adult basic education program models*. NCSALL Occasional Paper. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. p. 23. Cambridge, MA

Examples of ESL/ESOL Model

Mira Costa ESL Transitions Program

Mira Costa College has integrated its EL Civics curriculum into a transition program to help students progress from noncredit adult education classes into credit-earning community college and vocational courses. In the Level 7 “Bridging” ESL classes, EL Civics units are tailored specifically to teach students about transitioning to credit courses. Students are given focused writing instruction, and they are able to participate in a tutoring program. Students complete an admission application and learn how the credit college system is structured.

Transitions Webinar Q&A with Sylvia Ramirez, Mira Costa College

http://www.cambridge.org/other_files/downloads/esl/ventures/webinars/TransitionsQA_Webinar.pdf

Cape Cod Community College

The Cape Cod Community College adult education center offers a free ESOL transition program. The program’s goal is to provide students with the composition skills necessary to avoid enrollment in tuition-based ESOL classes.

Cape Cod Career Planning for Success

<http://www.collegetransition.org/promisingpractices.briefs.careerplanning.html>

http://www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/briefs/transition.html

Plus Model

Overview

The goal of the Plus model for GED® preparation is to accelerate learning for adult education students interested in pursuing postsecondary education. Key features of this model include: some alignment of the GED® curriculum to incorporate academic and/or student success skills needed for entry into postsecondary education and concurrent preparation for the GED® test and postsecondary education and/or dual enrollment in adult and postsecondary education.

This model covers a wide variety of activities and services ranging from programs that address academic skill development, educational counseling, and college survival skills, to programs that add stand-alone workshops on the college admissions process or a course in a specific academic area such as algebra. The Plus model may use strategies contained in other models, such as the workshops incorporated in the Advising model or classes seen in the College Preparatory model.

This specific model is used with those students enrolled in GED® classes. The model has the potential to have an impact on a large number of non-traditional adult learners because the GED® credential is an established educational pathway for adults. The Plus model integrates additional academic content, such as critical thinking skills and concepts, into the GED® curriculum and responds directly to access to postsecondary education.

Strengths and Limitations of the Plus Model

<p>Plus Model Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accelerates learning for students who have the goal of attending postsecondary education; • Has the potential to have an impact on a large number of nontraditional adult learners because the GED® credential is an established educational pathway for adults; • Is less expensive for programs than the college prep model; • Integrates additional academic content, such as critical thinking skills and algebraic concepts, into the GED® curriculum; and • Responds directly to the increased emphasis on access to postsecondary education under current WIA Title II guidelines.
<p>Plus Model Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional academic objectives may be viewed as irrelevant by students who do not have the goal of attending postsecondary education; • The requirement of the new GED® test for more direct instruction may limit the amount of time instructors can spend on college transition objectives; • The GED® credential, like the traditional high school diploma, is not well aligned with college placement requirements, reducing its effectiveness as a means to prepare for college, particularly in the area of critical thinking and math; and • Places additional requirements on GED® instructors.

Zafft, Cynthia, Kallenbach, Silja, and Spohn, Jessica (2006). *Transitioning adults to college: Adult basic education program models*. NCSALL Occasional Paper. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy. p. 20. Cambridge, MA

Examples of Plus Model

Hartford Urban League

The Urban League of Greater Hartford, Connecticut operates a Plus program that offers three academic college transition classes: critical thinking and inquiry, algebra, and study skills. These courses enhance the current GED® preparatory program. The courses assist students in attaining the additional skills necessary for college-level course work. A fifteen-hour workshop on preparing for the College Placement Test is also provided.

Hartford Urban League: <http://www.ulgh.org/>

Florida GED® PLUS

The Florida GED® PLUS program was designed to assist adult students earn their GED® credential with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to be successful in college and careers. This enhanced curriculum provides resources that correlate to the skills assessed by the college placement tests, as well as college-ready skills such as the use of technology. A counseling component is strongly recommended.

Florida GED PLUS: <http://www.floridatechnet.org/GEDPlus/>

Hudson Valley-Catskill Partnership Plus Program

This New York project is piloting transitional services in different regions of the state. An enhanced reading, writing, and mathematics curriculum is currently under development. Some sites are incorporating the program into their current GED® preparatory programs.

Hudson Valley-Catskill Partnership:

http://www.hvcp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=66&Itemid=67

Career Pathways Model

Overview

The goal of the Career Pathways model is to get students with limited education into advanced training and college-level programs in high-wage, high-growth employment sectors.

Key features of a Career Pathways model include:

- a contextualized approach to teaching learning skills based on a specific employment sector;
- differentiated instruction;
- curriculum that is “chunked” into segments that are recognized by employers (e.g., specific certificates with increased job responsibilities and higher pay) and articulate to academic and career advancement pathways; and
- support services to assist students in being successful in their selected career.

Career Pathways programs ideally work closely with area employers, municipalities, and community colleges to develop and implement contextualized curriculum relevant to prevailing employment trends. The model builds on short-term, academic steps for students.

Although a career pathways model provides access to college-level occupational training for students who are not academically prepared for college-level courses, this model may not adequately prepare students for future college-level courses, thus limiting the student’s options. This type of model creates a stepping stone to career preparation programs.

Strengths and Limitations of the Career Pathway Model

Career Pathway Model Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides access to college-level occupational training for students who are not academically prepared for college-level courses; • Accesses resources for adult transition from public workforce development programs and private employers; • Makes instruction more immediately relevant to students’ career interests through a contextualized curriculum (which likely improves retention); • Creates steppingstones to career preparation programs that can lead to an academic credential; and • Ensures the relevance of the curriculum to available jobs when accompanied by employer involvement.
Career Pathway Model Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can limit students’ options to whatever sector-specific training is available; • May prematurely narrow students’ vocational options; and • May not adequately prepare students for future college-level courses, which can inhibit ability to move from certificate-level programs into associate degree programs and beyond.

Zafft, Cynthia, Kallenbach, Silja, and Spohn, Jessica (2006). *Transitioning adults to college: Adult basic education program models*. NCSALL Occasional Paper. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (p. 27). Cambridge, MA

Examples of Career Pathways Model

Washington I-Best

Washington I-BEST integrates basic math and English into community college technical courses. Geared towards adults in need of basic education or ESL, local I-BEST programs “contextualize” academics to a particular career field—students learn the reading, writing, and math within the context of job-related tasks. To achieve the dual purpose of delivering job training and academics, I-BEST programs are co-taught by an adult education instructor and a career-technical college faculty. The state of Washington requires community colleges to incorporate I-BEST programs into a one year technical certificate or other occupational training program that has been proven to enable graduates to secure higher-wage jobs.

I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training (2005). Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges’ Offices for Adult Basic Education and Workforce Education: http://www.sbctc.ctc.edu/docs/data/research_reports/resh_05-2_i-best.pdf

Southeast Arkansas College Fast Track

As part of Arkansas’s TANF-funded Career Pathways initiative, Southeast Arkansas College has integrated basic concepts related to allied health careers in its Fast Track developmental education program. Fast Track compresses two semesters of remedial reading, writing, and math into one semester in order to move low-skilled students more quickly into allied health courses. Fast Track participants are four times more likely to complete developmental education than students in traditional remedial courses.

Policy Points: http://www.southerngoodfaithfund.org/pdf/pub_pp/pp_v27_6_06.pdf

Oregon Pathways Statewide Initiative

Many states have developed a statewide career pathway initiative, such as Oregon. Since 2003, Oregon’s 17 community colleges have developed partnerships with the state’s high schools, workforce investment boards, and adult education systems. A contextualized approach assists students to master the basic skills necessary to assist them in attaining degrees, certificates, and credentials for high-demand careers.

Career Pathways: <http://worksourceoregon.org/index.php/career-pathways>

Kentucky Remediation Bridge Pilots to Career Pathways

Kentucky is integrating a number of different types of strategies for connecting basic and developmental education into their state’s Career Pathways initiative. Ashland Community and Technical College has integrated remedial math and writing into a credit-bearing anatomy and physiology course to expedite transitions to healthcare degree programs. Jefferson Community and Technical College has partnered with the local adult education center to integrate academic tutoring into first-year HVAC courses. This tutoring program provides skills to assist students in bypassing developmental coursework.

Kentucky Career Pathways Initiative:

http://www.kctcs.edu/en/System_Initiatives/Career_Pathways.aspx

Career Bridge to Hospitality

The Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC) developed a contextualized program on hospitality careers that integrates GED® skills with beginning skills in the area of hospitality. This program provides students with real-world learning activities that assist them in reaching their career goals while studying for their GED® credential.

VALRC Hospitality Program: <http://www.valrc.org/publications/hospitality/index.html>

Chicago Bridge Program

This bridge program in Chicago, Illinois, requires that students have a GED® credential or high-school diploma and a minimum academic score. The various bridge programs provide participants with employability skills, as well as improved academic reasoning and thinking skills, as well as the skills necessary for specific careers, such as health care, manufacturing, and automotive technology.

A Pre-Bridge program is available for students with limited English proficiency and lower academic skills levels. This program provides the workplace math, English, and computer skills necessary to enter the bridge program. All skills are taught through a contextualized approach.

Policy Lessons from the Chicago Bridge Training Program Pilots:

http://www.idpl.org/images/publicationsPDFs/JenkinsKossy_PromisingPrac_2007.pdf

College Preparatory Model

Overview

The goal of the College Preparatory or “College Prep” model is to enable students to transition successfully into college-level courses or, at the very least, begin their college career at the upper tier of developmental education. To participate in a College Prep model, students must have a GED® credential, an adult diploma, or a traditional high school diploma.

The college preparatory model requires instructors to align their instruction with the academic requirements of the postsecondary institution and to meet a wide range of student academic needs. Typically this model serves fewer students than other models and has no clear federal public funding stream. Strengths of the model are the building of a cohort group for student support and the alignment of the curriculum with the postsecondary institution’s program of study.

Strengths and Limitations of the College Preparatory Model

College Preparatory Model Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides direct instruction to build academic skills, e.g., algebra, reading, and critical thinking; • Is designed to meet the multiple needs of adult students, including academic, psychosocial, and career development; • Lends itself to addressing curricular alignment between the adult education and postsecondary systems; • Helps students conserve personal financial resources and time in college by working toward direct placement into college-level coursework or the highest levels of developmental education; • Creates cohorts within the transition program; • May allow for dual credit for coursework; and • Encourages partnerships with other educational and social service providers and businesses.
College Preparatory Model Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be considered too time-consuming by students, making them reluctant to sign-up for classes; • Requires instructors to align their instruction with academic requirements of the postsecondary institution; • Requires programs to meet a wide range of student academic needs, which can be challenging in terms of instructional methodology and the learning community; • Has no clear ownership by the adult education or the postsecondary education systems; • Has no clear federal public funding stream and is the most expensive program type; and • Typically serves fewer students than other models.

Zafft, Cynthia, Kallenbach, Silja, and Spohn, Jessica (2006). *Transitioning adults to college: Adult basic education program models*. NCSALL Occasional Paper. National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (p. 30). Cambridge, MA

Examples of College Preparatory Transition Model

There are many different types of college preparatory transition models. Some of the models are somewhat of a blended approach.

Maine College Transitions Program

The Maine College Transitions Program provides pathways to post-secondary education for adults. Adult education programs throughout the state provide multiple levels of reading, writing, and mathematics courses, dependent on the skills required by students for successful entrance into the college system. Courses are aligned with the College Placement Tests – generally the Accuplacer and Compass.

Maine College Transitions Program:

<http://www.maine.gov/education/aded/dev/transitions.htm>

New England ABE-to-College Program

Another example of the College Preparatory model is the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project, designed and managed by the New England Literacy Resource Center (NELRC)/World Education with funding from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. This project, begun in 2000, comprises 25 adult education programs and over 40 college partners in six New England states. Participating programs must provide a minimum of six hours a week of direct instruction in reading, writing, math, use of computers, and study skills for a minimum of 14 weeks in an academic cycle. In addition, these programs offer educational and career counseling, mentoring, academic tutoring, and access to support mechanisms on the college campus. To participate, students must have a GED® credential, an adult diploma, or a traditional diploma. At the end of 2005, 80% of program completers (1,381 students) had successfully entered postsecondary education through this project.

New England ABE-to-College Program: <http://www.nelrc.org/expertise/transitions.html>

The Transition Program at Bristol Community College in Massachusetts

This program is one of eight piloted by the Massachusetts Department of Education. Like the New England ABE-to-College Transition Project, the number of students served at any one time is small, capped at 20, and students must have completed an adult education program with a GED® credential or adult diploma. Courses, such as pre-algebra, reading, writing, and “Technology Tools for College Success,” are offered each semester based on the needs of the particular cohort of transition students.

Massachusetts ABE Transition to Community College Programs:

<http://sabes.org/administration/ma-transitions-programs.htm>

Capital IDEA College Prep Program

Yet another program example in this category is Capital IDEA. The Capital IDEA College Prep program in Austin, Texas, seeks to provide long-term education and training to place low-income, low-skilled adults into jobs that pay a living wage, and offer benefits and a career path.

To support the attainment of this goal, Capital IDEA offers a comprehensive college transition program where students attend classes in reading, writing, math, and study skills full time, Monday through Friday, for at least one 12-week cycle. The application process for this free program consists of several steps that take 4-6 weeks to complete, starting with an initial orientation, followed by career exploration and a meeting with the counselor to begin the development of an individual educational plan, including a financial plan.

Capital IDEA College Prep Program:

http://www.capitalidea.org/academic_sponsorship/educational_programs/college_prep_academy.html

Highland Community College

After obtaining a GED® credential, students at Highland Community College are enrolled in a series of college transition workshops, offered through the adult education program, in preparation to enter the college system.

Student Profiles: <http://www.highland.edu/adulted/profiles.asp>

Get Ready for College

The Get Ready for College program at The Adult Learning Center in Nashua, New Hampshire, provides adults who are interested in pursuing post-secondary education an opportunity to learn about their options, assess their career skills and interests, and bring their academic skills, including advanced math and writing, up to required levels for enrollment. A college visit with information about admissions and financing is included. All students who complete the 15-week Get Ready for College program receive one college credit at the Nashua Community College.

Get Ready for College: http://www.adultlearningcenter.org/programs_adult/college_prep.htm
<http://www.nhadulted.org/college.html>

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