During the Assessment Session, administrators were asked to address the following questions specific to assessment practices:

1. What are some of the promising practices in your program? What are the positive things happening?
2. What are your greatest challenges?
3. As a group, identify one or more challenges and offer solutions to address the problem/challenge.

**POSITIVES:**

- Pre and post testing is emphasized during orientation and reinforced consistently.
- Staff has begun to understand the value of assessment.
- Computerized testing using “Test Mates” program provides complete diagnostics of student’s performance TABE online also.

**CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS:**

Pre test results can be misleading depending on students frame of mind, situations, etc.

*SUGGESTED SOLUTION:
Separate orientation from pretest to give students opportunity to mentally prepare*

Increasing numbers of non-readers entering program – very difficult to to assess

*SUGGESTED SOLUTION:
Created remedial class for non readers.*

Additional time and resources needed to appropriately assess beyond standardized tests.

*SUGGESTED SOLUTION:
Modify the way and amount that we’re funded so that we can focus on quality assessment practices.*
**Positives**
- Provide comfortable and relaxed atmosphere for testing
- Purpose of assessment is explained to students
- Periodic retraining on TABE administration

**Challenges:**
Student retention
Having students understand the importance of post testing

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:**
*Incentives for student retention*

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**Positives**
- Pre and post testing
- Pre testing helped teachers monthly
- Individual testing – good results
- Changing process in giving smaller and more organized testing
- Individual coordinator to organize

**Challenges:**
Students don’t take it seriously
Lose instructional time
No relationship to what is taught in class
Align curriculum to tests
Work hard to get instructors and students to buy into it
Maintain integrity of assessment

**SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:**

1. **Challenge of TABE**
   *Take concepts of diagnostic test and make sure they are incorporated in curriculum. Tell instructors the areas of student weakness.*

2. **Getting results to teachers**
   *Additional money to hire assessment coordinator, TA, etc.*
Positives:
- Post-test scores
- Retention
- ESL Students

Challenges & Solution:
- Finding the time
- Students wanting to test
- Students Leaving the program too soon

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:
- Early alert form
- Retention specialist to provide follow-up
- Test on students demonstrated ability

Challenges:
- Teach to the test
- Open enrollment impacts achieving the 65%
- Off campus sites present challenges in testing environment and conditions and consistency
- Searching for the best way to pre and post at all the different sites

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS:
- Consequences for students who don't post test
- Staff who are responsible for registration and testing
- ABE orientation video
- Run a new orientation at a specified time each month
- Scheduling mass registration for open enrollment program helps with pre-tests
Challenges:
◊ Attendance can be a problem
◊ Open enrollment – someone who comes in September is ready for post test in October but someone who enrolls in Oct. needs to be post tested at a different time.
◊ Stronger incentive programs
◊ Special accommodations
◊ Curriculum design is a problem
◊ Placement is off

SUGGESTED SOLUTION:
Standard tests used
TABE/CELSA/BEST
Official GED
Alternative Assessments, writing samples writing prompts, quizzes, informal teacher interviews, teacher observation, peer tutors
Demonstrations and presentations, role play
Monthly program evaluations

Positives:
➢ Made one teacher the TABE test coordinator = one hour per day and post test rate went to about 95%
➢ NRS training made huge impact on instructors - funding attached
➢ Review TABE test with instructors to see difficulties
➢ ESL post-test rate higher; ASE especially hard to capture – take GED quickly
➢ Write up teacher agreement – responsible for post testing

Challenges:
◊ Too much testing as perceived by students/test anxiety
◊ Students don’t always see the benefit particularly high school credit
◊ Teachers feel they are doing something unpleasant to the student
◊ Harder to convince younger students
◊ Testing instrument – 9and 10 don’t seem comparable/scale score issues
◊ Some people just don’t test well
◊ Fear of failure – better to not try, than try and fail
◊ Timing the tests

Challenge: Attitude of students and teachers toward testing
SUGGESTED SOLUTION:
Let students know how they have improved – recognize progress
Tie learning gains to performance dollars to motivate teachers
Give teachers the big picture – let them know federal and state expectations
Focus on the purpose – why we do we what we
Positives:

- Good post-test rate
  - reminders are sent out
  - counselors have set designated times to post test
- Letting teachers look at and analyze their own data
  - as a group looking at the program individually
- Looking at changes in process to increase testing accessibility
- Trying to accommodate as many as possible
- Informally use math (Pre GED contemporary) pretest to guide instruction
- Revamping ESL Testing
  - turning 1 day (mass confusion) to 2 (another transition from assessment to instruction)
- Looking at which ESL assessment (standardized) is most appropriate for program
- Lost of informal assessment going on in classrooms by instructors

Three Greatest Challenges

ESL assessments-no 1 good tool that meets all needs
  - all levels
  - cost
  - efficiency

TABE
  - hard to standardize conditions

STAR doesn’t inform instruction well
  - instructors need something easy to administer, standardized to guide instruction
  - instructors is what they do use informally, telling them what they need to know

all based on pre and post test

SUGGESTED SOLUTION: universal-out of program’s hands
Positives:

- 1 person does all testing
- Assessment Team
- Assessment Area
  - special needs
  - Adult Ed
- Timed Entry-to assure entry testing
- Assessment not always formal “test”
- Teacher observation
- Self-evaluation
- News for You/Info/Discussion – able to express opinions
- Feedback to give confidence
  - Tie-in for formal testing

Challenges

- Assessment = Fed percentages
- Part-Time Instructors
  - commitment
  - amount of training
  - amount of time for students
  - timing issues for post testing
- Retention of students
  - revolving door syndrome
  - post-test timing

Solutions:

Need to know what drives the student: money, praise, being valued

Help students find skills-dorms - can see why to study, dorms-total immersion
Let students see the goals-why are they there?

Money for “adult versions” of Lincoln challenge and upward bound
Motivation is more than just “the grade”
Positives:

- Low level students – BEST plus (large program)
  - effective job of implementation
- CLC has testing center – constitution test
- Use classroom teacher to test
- Having dedicated/persistent staff
- Portable computer work (laptop)
- Americorps-provided tutors

Proud of:

- We’re doing something 82.5%
- Ongoing assessment-portfolio
- Teachers

Challenges

- Finding an assessment that works with students
  - Work keys not approved
  - CASAS show learner gains (not approved)
- Lack of uniformity through system
  - Start adult ed go through credit programs
- Celsa-tests are limited in what they measure
  - may not reflect student progress
- Cost is always an issue
Works Well

- Quicker – time, same day/place
- Student friendly placement ABE/ASE
- Math test used for diagnostic-for specific instruction

Proud of:
- all students pretested
- 78% - 85% Post test
- Properly placing students
- Properly placing students
- All pre; 60-70 post
- Quick ID for GED fast-track

Challenges

◊ Time for test-students don’t return
◊ Time to take complete battery
◊ Recycling-students create the challenge of test rotation with in same year...throwing off the cycles

Solutions:
“Flag” recycles to different testing areas
Appointments
Use different test format (i.e. survey v. complete)
Works Well

- Different placement measure that is correlated with curriculum (in-house) oral and written
- Placement in adult ed is coordinated with federal coordinated guidelines
- Faculty is more involved with testing but grading is centralized through the assessment center

Positives:

- pre-post test in same environment
- one person does all testing
- consistency
- non-threatening presentation
- stable environment
- long-term teachers and staff

Greatest Challenges & Solutions:

- Getting students to take process seriously
  Solution:  
  a) Stress importance-free program – test scores maintain program
  b) Timing-party for improving students
- Getting valid post tests
  Solution: See above
- Teachers don’t know test content
- standards based on what is tested
  Solution: have teachers take test