

Adult Education Transition Services

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Introduction

Basic literacy, including high school completion, must be the starting point for adult education students rather than the “end point.” Adult education program staff must take a proactive approach to addressing students’ basic literacy, post-secondary and career needs, affording students opportunities for self-sufficiency, including employment with adequate incomes.

Purpose

As students leave adult education, the purpose of providing program transition services is to provide answers to the question, “What is the next step?” Transition includes attainment of citizenship, literacy, initial post-secondary and career planning, resources and referrals to improve self-sufficiency and independence.

Transition Services Defined

- Transition services refers to transition from one focus to another; movement, passage, or change from one subject, concept, etc., to another.
- Transition means change in academic instruction focus by providing information and strategies that assist students with furthering their education at post-secondary/career training institutions or providing information specific to given careers.
- Transition services are to be provided throughout a student’s enrollment; however, where appropriate, transition information and specific assistance regarding post-secondary/career training and career attainment should be given following graduation, or 90 contact hours post-graduation or separated.

Program Responsibilities

In designing and implementing transition services for adult education learners, programs must consider the needs of students as well as the service and resource options within the community.

Transition should be part of a program’s “culture,” starting at the time students enroll. Transition should be a constant focus and backbone of educational services.

Transition services are for all students, whether they are completing a secondary credential, obtaining citizenship, or improving their literacy or English language skills.

Transition services should be focused and specific:

- As part of the Student Education Occupation Plan (SEOP) process, students should be asked about their education and career plans after adult education. Information should be used to build the student’s SEOP.

- For high school or GED® completers, transition services should consist of no more than 90 hours of instruction.
- Completers whose academic skills are below AHSC 1 may continue for limited literacy instruction in the areas of math or English only. Instruction should be limited to no more than 120 instructional hours. Transition to post-secondary and careers should be addressed.
- Transition services should have a strong recruiting process in place, ensuring that students participate.
- Career credit courses should include transition components.

Transition Services Resources—What Works

The following are suggestions and comments from programs that provide transition services.

- Transition services should have a beginning, middle and end. The end should be at or after graduation.
- Transition services should be a central part of all components of an adult education program.
- From the date of initial enrollment, students should know that program staff believe they are ALL college/career training material and that college/career training is more than degrees.
- Students who have graduated but have not received transition services may be invited back as alumni.
- Develop transition services workshops. Consistently remind students when the next workshop is or, if services are 1:1, encourage students to make an appointment to see an assigned counselor or staff member.
- Proactively recruit students into a transition program.
- Post fliers that advertise transition services (when, where, why, etc.).
- Staff must be great salespeople and help students to buy into attending transition services workshops/classes.
- Partner with DWS to provide students with information regarding job fairs and additional DWS services to see what they may qualify for.
- Host college nights—invite local post-secondary and apprenticeship representatives programs to your program to provide school and training information.
- Utilize www.UtahFutures.org resources; however, make UtahFutures an interactive experience with a counselor, “working through” college and job websites together. This allows students to have a forum to ask questions and “dig deeper.”
- Assist students, early in their education programming, in completing a FAFSA form for student aid with a staff counselor or staff from a higher education institution. By seeing that they may qualify for free money for college, students are more likely to complete the rest of their high school education, register for college, look for careers, etc.

- Have students who have received transition services give you copies of their college acceptance letters; remove their personal information and post the letters where other students can see them – celebrate successes openly with current transition students.
- After a student initially enrolls in a program, counseling staff should meet with him/her again after ten hours of instruction to “check in” regarding the student’s plans and focus.
- Consider making a transition services class a mandatory part of your program before students take the GED® or complete their adult high school secondary diploma.
- For any student (regardless of academic focus, including ABE and ESOL) leaving the program, requiring a mandatory exit interview provides staff with student follow-up information, as well as an opportunity to discuss and assist the student with his/her education and career plans. Use this information to follow-up with the student three months after he/she has left the program to see what his/her status is and how the program can be of further assistance to him/her.
- Consider developing and distributing a program transition services brochure. This is a great way to provide students with basic information that they can reference on their own. The brochure should be given to students at the time of enrollment, as well as before they leave the program.

Transition Services—What Does Not Work

The following are comments from programs providing transition services.

- Phone calls generate a low return for time and effort.
- Do not wait to start talking about transition services until students are almost finished. By then, the student is focused on completing and leaving. Rather, transition services must be understood to be part of the adult education experience from the first day of enrollment in the program.
- Learning center-style transition services should not be the primary tool. Rather, programs should have a very clear plan that includes dates/times for transition services (workshops/seminars) and counselor appointments.

Transition Services—Strategies

The following are suggestions and comments from programs providing transition services.

- The culture of your program is important. Every student is a college student. Remember that high school/GED® is part of a pathway.
- The intake process is important. Develop the student’s SEOP with him/her and then follow up with the student on a regular basis well before the end of his/her involvement with adult education, ensuring that he/she will meet with success and you have afforded him/her sufficient opportunity for success.
- Transition services should be provided throughout the student’s adult education experience, including transition between service focuses.

- Teach note-taking with an emphasis on post-secondary uses. Consider using Cornell Notes (http://www.ehow.com/how_4818064_take-cornell-notes.html).
- Prepare students for taking tests – what tests are and how to take tests.
- Offer Math 1010 or Accuplacer Test preparation courses.
- Organizational skills are essential; teach study skills and other simple skills, including writing name and date on the top of assignments. Don't assume that students know how to be organized.
- Teach time management.
- Transition services could look like:
 - Offer two nights of 1:1 counseling sessions.
 - Host a three-day college seminar (one hour a day for three days).
 - Day 1: UtahFutures-Career assessment; develop a resume; college awareness presentation by college staff
 - Day 2: Financial aid day—complete FAFSA, provide information on Stafford loans and scholarship information, introduce the student to www.gocollege.com
 - Day 3: Actual registration at college; college tour
 - Host the seminars once a month strategically after GED® testing.
- Transition services should be given to students who need 2.0 credits or less to complete for their adult education secondary diploma or are within ten hours of registering to take the GED® Test.
- Transition services could be offered either before students' high school completion classes start or after they end.
- As a reminder, call students participating in a transition class four or five hours before the class is scheduled.
- Add a counselor to your program's staff. Pay an hourly rate to counselors who are already working in a school district to work with your program after hours.
- Pay a contract staff person one time per month to provide predetermined transition services.
- Identify transition services staff as Career College Readiness Coaches.
- Follow up with graduates three months after graduation.
- Meet with local partners, including DWS, Office of Rehabilitation, etc., to discuss progress of common clients.
- Stay connected with your transition services students. Establish a free Google Mail account through which you can text messages to students with transition "hints of the day" or other messages (does not show the number that the text is coming from). Use <http://www.google.com/mobile/sms/mail/> or utilize the student's Facebook account at <http://www.facebook.com/> to directly communicate with the student.
- Skills Tutor (<http://www.skillstutor.com/hmh/site/skillstutor/Home>) offers instructional resources, either in "hard copy" or computer instruction, that focus on remedial instruction as well as employability skills.
- The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) at <http://www.asvabprogram.com/> is a free career exploration program.

- Partner with the local applied technology college. Determine what credentials the institution can offer that meet the needs of students.
- Establish a working relationship with the alternative high school and traditional high schools, meeting with potential students before the end of each school year to “continue the connections” with education. Adult education can easily be the next stepping stone.