



Case Study: Individualized Instruction

Issue

Students come to adult education programs with a wide range of skills, experiences, long- and short-term goals. Serving such a varied population defies the old model of one-size-fits-all instruction.

Challenge

Of the 2,000 students who pass through the adult education program at Calhoun Community College, no two are there for the same reason. Or so it must seem to program director Chris Miller.

Her college serves military families, rural and urban students, non-native speakers, and two prison populations.

“It’s very diverse here – a mish-mash of cultures and students at all levels,” she said. “So we’ve been trying for years to refine the way we set goals. ‘I want a job’ or ‘go to college’ are too nebulous. And they won’t keep students engaged.”

Individualized instruction is what students need and what teachers want to provide; however, in the face of growing demand and shrinking budgets, many schools feel they lack the resources to respond.

Solution

A flexible online program that allows instruction to be customized to the individual student was the solution that Miller chose. For Calhoun Community College, that meant *Workforce Connects*.

“It gave us the ability to provide a total package for students,” she said. The assessment and tracking allowed teachers to tailor instruction and students to set meaningful goals.

By combining curriculum with career path exploration and integrating instruction, students could see an immediate real-world application. Many students could also see the possibility for their horizons to expand.

“The more we can open up their options, help them explore and identify concrete goals for the future, the more likely we are to keep them in the classroom,” Miller said.

“This tool really allowed them to refine their goals, as well as look at so many more opportunities.”

Benefits

Individualized instruction builds student engagement, keeps students in programs longer, and leads to more meaningful outcomes.

Miller also points out that the tool increases student options while consolidating tasks for teachers and administrators. Students get to explore careers as well as

developing and refining the skills they need to succeed in the workplace, all while building a portfolio. Instructors get assessment and reporting. Having it all in a single tool is a real benefit, according to Miller.

“All the different pieces that Adult Education programs are tasked to do, it’s all there.”